

**HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
BUDGET MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318 OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Crowley & Nacerino

Tuesday October 10, 2023
(Immediately following Economic Development Budget Mtg. beginning at 6:30pm)

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested that Legislator Crowley lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Crowley, Nacerino and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 - 2024 Budget Review

Community College – Page 51

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this has increased \$200,000 from the 2023 budget. She requested clarification from Commissioner of Finance William Carlin.

Commissioner Carlin stated the County reimburses the cost of Community College at a State approved chargeback rate. He stated the chargeback rate for Westchester Community College, which is the community college attended most by Putnam students, is increasing from \$3,960 to \$4,960.

Legislator Addonizio questioned how many students this funding is for.

Commissioner Carlin stated approximately 1350-1400 full-time students.

Legislator Addonizio clarified that it is all the SUNY Schools.

Commissioner Carlin stated it is, as well as FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology).

Legislator Gouldman questioned if it would be an even split for each town.

Commissioner Carlin stated it depends on each residency.

Health Department – Pages 52-53, 93-113, 207-208

Chairwoman Sayegh began by recognizing Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat, who was awarded for his exceptional leadership during the COVID-19 Pandemic by NYSACHO (New York State Association of County Health Officials).

Dr. Nesheiwat thanked Chairwoman Sayegh for the recognition. He stated he is accompanied tonight by Health Department Fiscal Manager Bill Orr and Director of Environmental health Shawn Rogan to address any questions regarding the Health Department's proposed budget.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on the increase in line 54414, Care at Private Institution, and the decrease in line 54441, Itinerant Services. She questioned if there was a correlation.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated there is no correlation. He stated there is an increase in children that use this program and a decrease in services at the home.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned why there were no funds requested in line 54210, Vehicle Leasing/Rental, on page 93.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated the Health Department has moved around some of their vehicles. He stated the Legislature will see increases in other sections of the budget, as well as decreases.

Legislator Montgomery questioned the increase in line 51094, Temporary, on page 93.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated it is because they are requesting a 21-hour position, as it has been difficult to hire someone for the 10-12 hour position.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why line 54313, Books and Supplements, on page 93 never seems to be fully used.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated that purchases did not happen as they normally would during the COVID pandemic.

Legislator Montgomery stated in the past it does not seem like more than \$5,000 has been used.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated there is already \$3,000 more earmarked for purchases.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on the revenue in line 416020, Fines-Food EHS, on page 101.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated it is fines for food services.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned why there was an increase in this line in 2020 and if it was due to COVID.

Director Rogan stated it is hard to say, it depends on the establishment. He stated it is general food service enforcements.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on page 107, which pertains to COVID-19 Grant funding, and why there was no funding indicated.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated this is due to how the grants work. He stated whatever funding is left over from 2023 will rollover to 2023.

Legislator Nacerino questioned the decrease in line 54417, Evaluations, on page 111.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated there just seems to be a decrease in the number of children needing these evaluations.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what line 54483, Assistive Tech, on page 111 is for.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated it is primarily hearing devices for children.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the need for these devices is trending upwards, due to the increase in requested funding.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated the need has been increasing.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what ages this is for.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated it is up to two (2) years old.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how many children are in the Early Intervention program.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated there are 150.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on line 54484, Comm Dis Trmt, on page 113, and why the funding is not fully used.

Fiscal Manager Orr stated a large portion of this pertains to travel, and there has been much less travel due to COVID. He stated this line is all the items that need to be purchased for communicable diseases and travel vaccines.

Legislator Montgomery stated as recently as 2019 there was a Partnership Initiative for \$7,500 that was for garbage removal due to tourism in the Village of Cold Spring, but it has been taken out of the budget since then. She requested, considering the sales tax that the Village of Cold Spring generates, if this funding could be restored. She stated it is a public health issue. She stated New York State Parks has indicated that 10,000 people per weekend travel through Cold Spring.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated no other towns or villages have a line item for garbage removal.

Legislator Jonke stated Legislator Montgomery should have given notice before the budget. He stated she can make a motion at future budget meetings.

Legislator Albano stated this is more of a town or village issue. He stated Carmel has lots of tourism and generates a tremendous amount of sales tax.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she wonders what other Hudson River towns do to handle the tourism and the garbage.

Legislator Montgomery stated this has been requested in the past, the Health Department is fully aware of the request. She stated her request has been ignored.

Fiscal Manager Orr clarified that the Health Department had no control over the program that Legislator Montgomery is referring to. He stated it was put into and taken out of the budget by the Administration.

Mental Health – Pages 49, 114-124

Chairwoman Sayegh stated unfortunately, Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza could not be here tonight. She stated the Committee will go through the budget and document any questions to be answered at a later date.

Legislator Montgomery questioned where transportation for the Office for Disabled can be found in the Budget.

Commissioner Carlin stated it depends on the specific program and type of transportation.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on Account 4230 on page 114, Substance Abuse Common Sense.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that is something we can ask of Commissioner Pizza.

Legislator Montgomery stated she does not see any increases in mental health, and combating substance abuse.

Commissioner Carlin stated there have been no cuts and there is \$50,000 in sub-contingency to enhance mental health services with the Emergency Response Team. He stated the County is very well aware of the mental health issues.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on the lack of funding on page 116, in account 4250 OASAS Contracted Svcs.

Commissioner Carlin stated this is due to the drinking and driving program changing formats. He stated it is now through a sub-contractor instead of a temporary employee.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the “CANDY” in the title of line 434878 on page 117, entitled MH Clinical Infrastr CANDY.

Commissioner Carlin stated he is sure it is an acronym, but he would have to find out what it stands for.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the increase in line 51094, Temporary, on page 118 and why it has been increased when it never seems to be fully used.

Chairwoman Sayegh noted that the actual figures for 2023 are only through October 31, 2023 so there may be more to be spent through year end.

Social Services – Pages 130-154

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned which contract(s) line 54646 on page 130 is for.

Commissioner Carlin indicated he would have to find out.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she will seek clarification from Commissioner Piazza on the Warming Shelters and Rapid Rehousing programs on page 141. She requested Commissioner Carlin provide details on page 145, account 6100, Medicaid to State.

Commissioner Carlin stated this is the single largest line in the budget. He stated this has been complicated due to the federal funding due to COVID, which has held the County's share lower than what it usually is. He stated there are many moving parts. He stated the County currently pays \$157,961 weekly to the State, as opposed to the \$178,961 weekly which was paid in 2019.

Legislator Albano requested clarification on line 54670, Travel Non Employees, on page 144.

Commissioner Carlin stated it is federally mandated. He stated Commissioner Piazza would be able to provide more details on this particular line.

Legislator Montgomery noted that a similar line item is in the Health Department's budget as well.

Office for Senior Resources – Pages 172-185, 203-204

Office for Senior Resources (OSR) Director Michael Cunningham provided a handout with a budget overview.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

OSR Director Cunningham gave an overview of some of the changes in the budget, such as resuming normal operations after the pandemic, and renewing the bus fleet with two (2) new buses. He stated the 2023 budget is a modest increase over 2022. He stated OSR is planning on spending \$18,000 more on increased wellness and recreation classes. He noted that some of these classes will continue to be done remotely. He stated this helps fulfill a need for seniors who are homebound. He stated OSR will have some restructuring due to the retirement of a longtime employee, but it will not have any effect on the budget. He spoke to the various grant funding that is used.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on line 52650, Motor Vehicles, on page 172.

OSR Director Cunningham stated this is for the two (2) new buses.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated there is also requested funding in line 54210, Vehicle Leasing/Rental, on page 172.

OSR Director Cunningham stated this is for two (2) vehicles that are replacing a car and a van that OSR owns.

Legislator Jonke stated there has recently been an issue with accommodating a constituent in a motorized scooter. He questioned if the new buses will be able to accommodate this kind of scooter.

OSR Director Cunningham stated they will.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the leased vehicles are for the nutrition staff.

OSR Director Cunningham stated the van is for transporting frozen meals and the car is for the head cook to transport food from site to site.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned what the new name of RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), on pages 175 and 176 is.

OSR Director Cunningham stated it will now be called Putnam Senior Corps.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how many volunteers are in the program.

OSR Director Cunningham stated at its peak it was around 500 volunteers, but that has diminished due to COVID.

Legislator Nacerino questioned why line 54640, Education and Training, on page 175 has no funding.

OSR Director Cunningham stated some of that was mandatory training for the RSVP training, but now that the program is not part of the RSVP umbrella, those trainings are no longer necessary. He noted there is still funding for other trainings.

Legislator Montgomery questioned line 54310, Kitchen Supplies and Utensil, on page 177. She suggested considering the feasibility of using dishwashers in the Senior Centers, due to the money spent on plastic utensils. She noted this would help move the County forward with Climate Smart certification.

OSR Director Cunningham stated OSR has considered this and there are many factors to consider in regards to the dishwashers, such as staffing, the maintenance, and the inventory of utensils. He stated based on the estimate they worked with, it could cost up to \$80,000 a year in additional time. He stated OSR will continue to research this.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if this line also includes the containers for the home delivered meals.

OSR Director Cunningham stated it does. He noted the supply chain issues are expected to continue and are affecting the quality of supplies that are available.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on account 6775, Unmet Needs Grant, on page 180.

OSR Director Cunningham explained the struggles surrounding this. He noted this program is for home health aides. He stated agencies have trouble filling these positions while only offering 10-20 hours per week.

Legislator Addonizio questioned how the fall prevention program is done remotely.

OSR Director Cunningham stated it is scripted.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the seniors are on laptops and if OSR provides laptops.

OSR Director Cunningham stated they are. He stated OSR is starting to provide notepads.

Youth Program – Pages 191-195

Youth Bureau Executive Director Janeen Cunningham stated there are not many changes to the Youth Bureau's budget. She stated the SIDNE (Simulated Impaired Driving Experience) go-kart, which has been used for about 10 years, needs to be replaced. She stated the blue van that the Youth Bureau uses was taken off the road and also needs to be replaced.

Chairwoman Sayegh noted that it appears this was budgeted for in 2023, but that funding has not been used yet.

County Historian – Pages 197-198

Commissioner Carlin stated the Historian position is funded again at 25 hours per week.

Item #4 - Other Business

Item #5 - Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:09 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.