

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

**Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Albano**

**Tuesday**

**6:00PM**

**February 18, 2020**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested that Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Gouldman, Addonizio, and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

**Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – December 9, 2019**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 - Discussion/Keep Putnam Beautiful Initiative/Legislator Ginny Nacerino**

Legislator Nacerino stated every spring the topic of roadside litter is discussed. She stated this is the only time that cleaning up the litter is discussed. She stated in the past the Towns and County partnered in “cleanup days” and provided gloves and other materials. She stated many community groups participated. She stated in an effort to maintain a clean environment in Putnam County, she believes an ongoing campaign to clean up litter would be beneficial instead of just focusing on it in the springtime. She stated the intention is not to override any town cleanup events, but to unify the endeavor. She stated she would like to reinstate the “Keep Putnam Beautiful” slogan as well as a campaign that would establish countywide coordinated efforts between the County, Towns, and Villages to alleviate the issue of litter year-round. She stated she reached out to Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan to share this idea. She stated she also reached out to County Executive MaryEllen Odell and Solid Waste Program Coordinator Jane Meunier. She stated they all have been supportive. She stated Director of Tourism Tracey Walsh will also play a part in this initiative. She stated she respectfully requests the establishment of the Keep Putnam Beautiful Initiative and for a proclamation declaring April as “Keep Putnam Beautiful Month.”

Director Rogan stated we are noticing more and more roadside litter and a renewed energy and emphasis will help combat litter. He stated this program can act as an education liaison to the towns and villages. He stated this is probably the beginning of a larger initiative.

Solid Waste Program Coordinator Meunier stated it is sad that this program went by the wayside but bringing it up again is exciting. She stated roadside cleanup is a serious issue. She stated there is a focus on teaching municipalities to have safe cleanup for the community. She stated businesses and other community organizations can be involved. She stated the County is offering their services in any way to help.

Director of Environmental Services Rogan stated it would be great partnership with tourism, which relies on the beauty of Putnam County.

Director Walsh stated she will work with the team and will promote this initiative. She stated she will take before and after pictures of the cleanup.

Director of Environmental Services Rogan stated there are already some community groups that are cleaning up but their efforts are going unnoticed. He stated collaboration can build additional awareness, even if it is just people taking more responsibility. He stated Legislator Nacerino's timing with this is perfect and added that Earth Day is in April. He stated there is no money attached to this initiative and will rely on in-house talent of those involved.

Legislator Addonizio noted the Town of Kent has a dedicated cleanup day and she believes all towns do. She questioned how this program would collaborate with the towns to make it more effective.

Director of Environmental Services Rogan stated they are considering a mailing packet. He stated each Legislator can be an advocate for their districts to make sure people know about it.

Solid Waste Program Coordinator Meunier stated social media is a great way to make everyone aware and bring the smaller organizations together.

Legislator Albano stated this is a great idea and there needs to be a focus on preventing littering as well, such as advertising. He stated he used to walk on Hill and Dale Road weekly and was able to fill up a garbage bag each week. He stated Legislator Gouldman brought up at a past Health Committee meeting that the Town of Yorktown has cameras to combat littering.

Director of Environmental Services Rogan stated part of the campaign needs to include asking people to call the police if they see people littering. He stated they also want to highlight the existing work being done by PARC, in partnership with the County. He stated their work is fantastic.

Legislator Sayegh clarified the County would play more of a promotional and educational role.

Solid Waste Program Coordinator Meunier stated it is a coordinated effort. She went over the potential options for coordinating the cleanup. She stated the County will make sure everything will go well.

Legislator Montgomery stated she loved this program when it was first active. She stated she has reservations with requiring anything of the towns because they are already stressed for time, money, and resources. She stated the e-waste matter needs to be figured out, because it used to be something that the County handled but does not anymore. She stated the Climate Smart Communities Program could help with this initiative and added that the County has not done anything with the Climate Smart Program. She read a list of Climate Smart action items pertaining to this.

Legislator Albano stated a lot has been done with Climate Smart and green energy initiatives in Putnam County.

Legislator Montgomery suggested reporting the steps that the County is taking to the State, so that the County can receive credit.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated in regards to Climate Smart, only the resolution was required, there was no time limit on the action items. She stated the County is not required to have a Climate Smart Committee or Coordinator, but the County has both. She stated the grants are still available to be applied for by the County.

Legislator Nacerino stated the Keep Putnam Beautiful Initiative is not an attempt to take away from what the Towns and Villages are already doing. She stated this is merely about bringing everyone together for the same purpose. She reiterated that there would be no monetary requirement from the municipalities. She stated she is just hoping that the County can adopt this initiative so that it can move forward. She stated she would also like a proclamation in conjunction with Earth Day.

Erin Crowley, resident of District 9, suggested getting the municipalities together to utilize the probation program for manpower via community service mandates.

Legislator Addonizio stated there is a program for incarcerated work.

Legislator Nacerino stated she is hoping this is based on volunteer work.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that suggestion is something for the courts to decide.

Solid Waste Program Coordinator Meunier stated students who need community service hours to graduate can also partake.

Director Walsh stated community service is vitally important, but that not is what this program is promoting. She stated this is about promoting people who are out helping make Putnam beautiful without having to be out there.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this is a great discussion.

Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat stated community Rotaries are eager to help beautify the community.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is great to take pride in where you live.

Legislator Nacerino requested approving the reinstatement of the program and the proclamation.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if there is verbiage for the proclamation

Legislator Nacerino stated it is being worked on.

Solid Waste Program Coordinator Meunier suggested there be a meeting with key stakeholders before moving forward with the proclamation.

Chairwoman Sayegh state something can be approved in concept.

Legislator Nacerino questioned Legislative Counsel Robert Firriolo if we can move forward with the reinstatement.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated technically there is no need for reinstatement because it is not a funded program, it is a slogan, and the Administration is going to be doing the work.

Ms. Crowley questioned if there is a budget that goes with this.

Legislator Nacerino stated no there is not.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move forward in concept; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

#### **Item #5 - FYI/New York State Ban on Plastic Bags**

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she would like to make sure that everyone is aware that the State ban on plastic bags goes into effect on March 1<sup>st</sup>. She stated retailers can provide paper bags, but it is up to the store if they want to charge for them. She stated some exceptions to this are bags for take-out food, bags for meat and produce, garment bags at dry cleaners, and bags to carry out pharmaceuticals. She stated stores are also required to have plastic bag recycling receptacles. She asked that everyone recycle their plastic bags properly, after reusing them.

Legislator Albano stated we need to be conscious of this issue because we do not realize how many plastic bags we throw away. He stated this is a great step for the future.

#### **Item #6 - Presentation/Search for Change/Housing Project and Continuing Efforts to Increase Supply of Supportive and Affordable Housing in Putnam County/CEO Ashley Brody**

Chairwoman Sayegh introduced Ashley Brody, CEO of Search for Change.

Mr. Brody gave the attached PowerPoint presentation. He stated Search for Change has plans to address the lack of affordable and supportive housing, which has been a longstanding issue in the community. He stated Putnam is not alone in the state with its shortage. He stated fair market rents are higher in Putnam County than anywhere in the State. He stated Search for Change has operated in Putnam County for close to 40 years. He stated Search for Change has diversified over the years to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable members of the community. He stated Putnam County is very unique with its housing stock. He stated it is very difficult to find viable land for developing housing, especially considering the watershed restrictions. He stated Search for Change will keep the Legislature apprised of information on the development plan.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the grant that was received for 50 housing units must all be in one (1) space, or can they be separated.

Mr. Brody stated it could conceivably be separate properties. He stated it would be more cost effective to have one (1) site.

Legislator Addonizio stated it could be easier to find multiple smaller parcels, rather than one (1) large one (1). She questioned how much the grant was for.

Mr. Brody stated it is a services and operating reward to administer the property once it is in place. He stated it is about \$25,000 per year and per person, for a 50 person housing unit.

Legislator Addonizio questioned how many years it is for.

Mr. Brody stated it is a five (5) year contract but it can be renewed as long as the housing exists.

Legislator Addonizio questioned how Search for Change is looking for a property.

Mr. Brody stated they have a realtor and a development partner.

Legislator Albano stated it seems like a close to impossible task considering the zoning restrictions in this area. He stated there may need to be some creativity with the proposal.

Mr. Brody stated that is very true and is why Search for Change has been looking for suitable land since 2016.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the need analysis.

Mr. Brody stated multiple analyses indicated there is a shortage of affordable and supportive housing.

Legislator Montgomery stated if a certain threshold is met during the 2020 Census, affordable housing will be mandated. She stated she knows properties with water and sewer are preferred. She questioned if there is a way to move forward without those preferences.

Mr. Brody stated this has been a topic of discussion between stakeholders. He stated having water and sewer is preferred.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the makeup of the community within the housing project.

Mr. Brody stated it would be about 50% people with special needs and about 50% who fall under certain income standards.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the property would be subject to taxes.

Mr. Brody stated there are a few ways this could be handled. He stated typically there is a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes). He stated their development partner will help discuss that with the community so they are not taking a viable property off the tax rolls. He stated with that said, as a non-profit, they are limited in the tax burden they are able to take on.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if Search for Change manages the housing units or if there is a management company.

Mr. Brody stated in the smaller facilities they manage it, but with a facility this large, they would bring in a management company to ensure it is managed properly.

Social Services Commissioner Michael Piazza stated this project is a big part of addressing the needs of the community. He stated he would like to acknowledge the great work that Mr. Brody does.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated if someone loses their home, there are very few, if any options, in Putnam County. She stated she believes these people need to be taken care of.

Ms. Crowley questioned if there is Section 8 housing in Putnam County.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated there is.

Ms. Crowley questioned if that would be a part of this project.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is different.

#### **Item #7 - Presentation/2020 4-Year Plan/Office for Senior Resources/Director Michael Cunningham**

Chairwoman Sayegh began by offering her condolences to Office for Senior Resources (OSR) Director Michael Cunningham for the passing of his mother.

Director Cunningham thanked Chairwoman Sayegh for her thoughts. He went on to state that the State requires OSR to provide a four (4) year plan, per the Older Americans Act. He stated OSR also provides an annual update to the plan. He stated 2020 starts a new four (4) year cycle. He stated there is a particular plan for developing business acumen in recognition of what agencies like OSR do. He stated there is a growing aging population, particularly with the baby boomer generation. He stated there needs to be integration between the healthcare system and the social system. He stated hospitals are being pushed to make sure there are not repeated hospitalizations. He stated this business acumen initiative will change the way OSR operates. He stated OSR operates mainly with grants, and they report back with what they are able to provide with those grants, but it does not show the full effect. He stated the main objective is to ensure better health outcomes for older New Yorkers.

OSR Coordinator of Services Doreen Crane stated discharge planning has been taken away by HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

Director Cunningham stated even with the growing aging population, there will not be much more funding provided. He stated healthcare providers will be incentivized. He stated OSR will start billing, which they have never done before.

OSR Fiscal Manager Terry Wolf stated they have been analyzing costs and the number of unduplicated clients.

Director Cunningham stated OSR will identify services to essentially market.

Coordinator of Services Crane stated they have always had the programs in place, they are now proving that they are at a point where OSR can get reimbursed for the programs.

Director Cunningham stated part of this is informing the residents. He stated OSR is still unsure of how the future will play out. He stated they will partner with the Social Services and Health Departments. He stated this is just the beginning of exploring the possibilities. He stated there will be costs, but insurance companies will reimburse, so there will be revenue. He stated this can help with handling future growth in Putnam County.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if this means OSR will be moving only to billing instead of grants.

Director Cunningham stated no, it will be both. He stated the current grant funding is not being threatened, but there may not be more available. He stated if this all works out, it will result in more revenue and a more healthy senior population.

Legislator Nacerino questioned how HIPAA could be circumvented to help with discharge planning.

Coordinator of Services Crane stated OSR has been in contact with hospitals. She stated this matter will have to be decided at the top of the food chain.

Director Cunningham stated hospitals have become more corporate and more risk averse over the years. He stated OSR is looking to build relationships with the hospitals. He stated they will also look to partner with other counties.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the goal is that preventative measures will be taken to ensure patients are not consistently revisiting hospitals.

Director Cunningham stated that is the goal. He stated there is great cost for each visit.

Legislator Nacerino stated she hopes that it works out.

Ms. Crowley stated she had a social worker after she gave birth to triplets and the social worker asked if she wanted an at-home nurse. She questioned if something like this can be done for seniors.

Director Cunningham stated they are looking into similar programs, but not the nursing side of it. He stated it is more about activities and social aspects. He stated the medical system needs to be aware of the needs of the population. He stated OSR will work on building that collaboration.

#### **Item #8 - Discussion/Coronavirus Update/Commissioner of Health Dr. Nesheiwat**

Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat provided the attached PowerPoint presentation. He stated he has been on dozens of conference calls over the past two (2) weeks. He stated there are usually 10,000 travelers from China per day in the United States, but it is now down to 1,000. He stated the symptoms resemble the flu, so if someone has not travelled from China, it is most likely the flu. He suggested people get flu shots, if they have not already. He stated as of today, all New York State labs are able to process tests, which will lead to quicker turn-around time. He stated there are active investigations into a vaccine. He stated he believes it will be about a month to three (3) months until there is a vaccine. He commended the staff at the Putnam County Health Department (PCDOH) for doing a tremendous job. He stated there are some people in Putnam County who are now being monitored. He stated the PCDOH has reached out to spaces in the county that could potentially be used for additional hospital space.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how the PCDOH learns of people who are coming into the county from China.

Commissioner Nesheiwat stated everyone who comes into the country from China is screened at the airports. He stated if someone is allowed to continue their travel, the New York State Health Department and the local County Health Department are notified. He stated the PCDOH immediately contacts the person and sets parameters for a 14 day isolation period.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Commissioner Nesheiwat for this presentation. She stated she hopes to bridge the gaps of communication.

Commissioner Nesheiwat stated the medical community shares information, even globally, and he is proud of that. He stated he shares information with neighboring municipalities.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is just hoping the communication can be improved. She stated she would like better communication for protocols regarding response measures. She questioned if there is a known shortage of supplies such as masks.

Commissioner Nesheiwat stated there is no shortage of supplies.

Legislator Castellano stated what is concerning about COVID-19 is the medical workers in China who contracted the virus.



Commissioner Nesheiwat stated he did not provide the statistics from China, because those numbers cannot be validated. He stated fortunately, the cases in the United States have been mild, and only two (2) of the 15 cases were from person to person transmission. He provided additional documentation.

Legislator Albano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Chairwoman Sayegh. All in favor.

Eric Gross, reporter, clarified that there are two (2) people in Putnam County in isolation.

Commissioner Nesheiwat confirmed and added that they have been very cooperative. He stated they are asymptomatic.

Director of Tourism Tracey Walsh questioned if they came from mainland China or Hubei province.

Commissioner Nesheiwat stated they came from mainland China and are being monitored for any symptoms. He stated the only people allowed into the country right now from China are citizens or family members.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked Commissioner Nesheiwat for all this information.

#### **Item #9 - Approval/Fund Transfer 19T480/Health Department/Reallocate Funds to Cover 2019 Placements**

Social Services Commissioner Michael Piazza stated these are placements made by the school district. He stated the County is responsible for a share of the cost. He stated there were more placements than originally planned for so more funding is needed.

Legislator Albano made a motion to move Fund Transfer 19T40 to the Audit and Administration Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

#### **Item #10 - Approval/Memorialization/Clara's Law/Requiring Health Care Facilities to Report Incidents of Sexual Offense to the State Departments of Health and Education**

Chairwoman Sayegh stated there is no such law like this in the State right now.

Legislator Montgomery stated a constituent came to her regarding this issue because she was affected by it. She requested that this memorialization be passed so the State can be aware of where Putnam stands. She stated she would like this memorialization to include mental health facilities.

Legislator Addonizio stated this was named after Clara Mae Bowman, who was sexually abused by an intensive care unit nurse in Florida. She stated she wants to send a strong message to the State. She stated we must hold all abusers responsible.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the Memorialization of Clara's Law to the Full Legislative Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

**Item #11 - Approval/Resolution Calling on the Governor and New York State Legislature to Preserve the Zero Percent Medicaid Growth Cap**

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Medicaid is jointly funded by the Federal and State Governments. She stated New York is one of the few states that requires counties to contribute to the funding. She stated the State splits its cost with the County. She stated the Medicaid program has grown tremendously in New York State and is very complex. She stated New York's Medicaid program is only slightly smaller than California's, with half the population. She stated the local share of Medicaid is \$7.6 billion, which is higher than the State contribution of 43 states. She stated the State has expanded Medicaid eligibility and enrollment has increased almost 70%. She stated the State agreed to cap the growth. She stated the cap worked, and property taxes have only risen at or below the rate of inflation. She stated County Executive MaryEllen Odell also sent a memo regarding this matter and it is included in the backup material. She stated the County has more than doubled its Medicaid recipients since 2015, all due to mandates by New York State. She added that the cost to Putnam County rose by \$4 million from 2018 to 2019. She stated counties do not have the ability to control the Medicaid program growth.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move Approval/Resolution Calling on the Governor and New York State Legislature to Preserve the Zero Percent Medicaid Growth Cap to the Full Legislative Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

**Item #12 - Other Business – None.**

**Item #13 – Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 8:03 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn: Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.