

**HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD VIA AUDIO WEBINAR
PURSUANT TO TEMPORARY EMERGENCY ORDERS**

Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Albano

Thursday

6:00PM

July 23, 2020

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:04 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Addonizio, Albano, and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – May 12, 2020

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 - Discussion/COVID-19

- **Testing Delays and Travel Restrictions/Health Department**
- **FYI/Emergency Purchase of N95 Masks**

Chairwoman Sayegh noted that New York's businesses were paused by the Governor on March 22, 2020. She stated this was to be a temporary measure, but it is still in place. She stated Putnam County has 22 active cases of COVID-19 as of July 16, 2020. She thanked the Health Department and the Administration for their tireless efforts during this pandemic. She stated the increase in cases in the southern states has caused testing delays in our community. She stated she has heard from some constituents who have had difficulty getting their test results back. She read an email from Dr. Jean Ralston, Senior Public Health Nurse, regarding the testing delays. She stated the Governor has issued travel restrictions on States that have surging numbers of COVID cases. She stated the rate of positivity in testing is an important indicator as a high positivity rate usually means only the sickest people are being tested, while a low rate means that the community is also testing asymptomatic people. She stated the World Health Organization reported countries that have extensive testing for COVID should have a rate of approximately 5% for at least 14 days. She stated Putnam County currently has a 0.9% positivity rate. She stated she has asked Putnam County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) President Kathleen Abels to speak on how this pandemic and the travel restrictions are affecting summer travel.

EDC President Abels stated New York has had great success slowing the spread of COVID-19. She stated Putnam County is exceptionally safe. She stated on June 24, 2020 Governor Cuomo announced the quarantine requirements for travelers from certain areas, in order to maintain the low positivity in the State. She stated there are additional protocols for essential workers. She stated there are forms that travelers need to fill out when they arrive. She noted that it is illegal for a cop to pull over a car for having an out of state license plate. She stated people who break quarantine could face a \$10,000 fine.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how the quarantine will be enforced.

EDC President Abels stated all points of entry will be monitored. She noted that some airlines have enhanced their ventilation and have kept the middle seat vacant.

Legislator Albano stated he has noticed sign in sheets in some businesses. He questioned if this is required.

EDC President Abels stated it depends on the industry. She stated it is considered “best practice,” but not mandated. She noted she has heard of some people putting down false information when signing in.

Legislator Addonizio requested clarification on the enforcement.

EDC President Abels stated it is mainly tracked through complaints to the Health Department.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there would be more COVID-19 related discussion because she has questions not for EDC President Abels. She questioned where more information on enforcing travel restrictions can be found.

EDC President Abels stated she believes the enforcement process is evolving.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked EDC President Abels for the update. She reviewed the backup material that was provided for informational purposes, including a memorandum from Purchasing Director Alessandro Mazzotta regarding the purchase of N95 masks.

Legislator Montgomery stated the vendor of the masks is not indicated. She questioned if the vendor is known.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the Purchasing Department has that information.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there is anyone from the Purchasing Department on the webinar.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated no, this memorandum was included for informational purposes.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there is anyone from the Health Department on the webinar.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated there is not, they were not available tonight.

Legislator Montgomery stated she has additional questions for the Health Department regarding future preparedness. She stated she sent a memorandum yesterday regarding the resignation of the Health Department’s Epidemiologist, who also serves as the Public Health Educator. She stated this is a great loss of expertise in major areas. She stated she would like to hear from the Health Department on this subject.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it was not possible for it to be addressed at this meeting. She added that it will be discussed at a future meeting.

Legislator Montgomery stated she has COVID related questions that she would like to read into the record so they may be answered at a later date. She questioned how the County will properly respond, prepare, and analyze COVID data without a trained epidemiologist on staff. She questioned how the Health Department will maintain proper communication.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this is not the time to discuss personnel issues.

Legislator Sullivan stated the COVID numbers in Putnam County, and the Mid-Hudson region, have been extremely low. He stated this is not an emergency right now and not the big issue it was a few months ago. He stated he believes there are people in the Health Department designated to take over the Epidemiologist and the Public Health Educator positions. He stated he knows there is another Epidemiologist on staff. He suggested calling individual departments when a Legislator has questions and leave the Committee meetings for addressing significant issues.

Legislator Montgomery stated Legislators cannot freely call departments.

Item #5 - Approval/Appointment/Putnam County Mental Health Community Services Board/Baumann

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this appointment is filling a vacancy.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move Approval/Appointment/Putnam County Mental Health Community Services Board/Baumann to the Full Legislative meeting; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment 20A037/Department of Social Services/Reflects Spending Adjustment Request approved by NYS Office of Victim Services for the period October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza stated additional space has been being looked at for the Child Advocacy Center. He stated this Budgetary Amendment will be used for renovation.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she believes this is the remainder of a grant that was not used.

Commissioner Piazza stated that is correct.

Legislator Albano made a motion to move Budgetary Amendment 20A037 to the Audit & Administration Committee meeting; Seconded by Chairwoman Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #7 - FYI/Budgetary Amendment 20A038/Office for Senior Resources/Caregiver Respite Grant through the Field Hall Foundation

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the Field Hall Foundation is a wonderful organization and this grant is for \$15,000.

Item #8 - Other Business – None

Item #9 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 6:39PM Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn;
Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.