

**PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD IN ROOM 318  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairman Jonke & Legislators Addonizio & Birmingham**

**Tuesday**

**March 11, 2025**

**(Immediately Followed 6:00pm Personnel Meeting)**

The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm by Chairman Jonke and who requested Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio, Birmingham, and Chairman Jonke were present.

**Item #3 - Acceptance/ Protective Services Meeting Minutes/ December 17, 2024**

Chairman Jonke stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

**Item #4 – FYI/ Sheriff’s Office – Update on K9 Dogs and Handlers/ Sheriff Kevin McConville**

Sheriff Kevin McConville stated he wanted to update the Legislature that the Sheriff’s Office remains in the same number of K9 dogs that were granted a year ago. He stated there is a new Bloodhound, who is replacing a dog that retired, due to medical matters. He confirmed that there would be no fiscal impact, and there may be a savings because they had been paying for the treatment of the dog that retired. He stated the new dog will provide the same service as the dog that retired.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what is the average age of a dog to retire.

Sheriff Kevin McConville stated the average is to get 8 – 10 years of service from a dog, depending on several factors.

Legislator Crowley questioned if there are a diversified group of dogs, serving in different roles.

Sheriff Kevin McConville stated they have the number of dogs that they are approved to have and in terms of the expertise the dog gets trained in depends on the breed, and the handler’s interaction with the dog. He stated that the Sheriff’s Office currently has five (5) dogs: a bloodhound, an explosive, electronics, and narcotics dogs and another bloodhound getting trained.

**Item #5 – Approval/ Sheriff’s Office – Grant Application -Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY25 Connect and Protect: Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program/ Sheriff Kevin McConville**

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Waive the Rules and Accept the Additional; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio; All in favor.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and Youth Bureau Sara Servadio stated the Co-Responder Team (CRT) is funded from the Mental Health side through a Federal Grant that is due to expire at the end of September 2025. She stated they are currently looking for Grant funding to sustain that position. She stated they did request that the current Grant be extended, and they are waiting for a response. She stated until they receive an answer, they need to keep all their options open. She stated this grant would require a County Match. She stated also a change to this is, the current grant is held at the Sheriff’s Department and that will be switched to her Department. She explained the reason for that change is because the majority of the spending is through her Department. She stated therefore, the grant would be submitted by her Department.

Chairman Jonke questioned when does the grant application have to be in.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and Youth Bureau Sara Servadio stated next month. She stated the goal is to fund the Mental Health Crisis Worker from her Department and pay for the overtime of the Deputy assigned to the CRT.

Legislator Addonizio questioned when they will be notified if the existing grant is renewed.

Sheriff McConville stated they are not sure. He stated they have made several inquiries.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and Youth Bureau Sara Servadio stated they have also requested an extension. She stated the existing grant is scheduled to end at the conclusion of the third quarter. She stated they hope to be able to spend the money through the fourth quarter to be able to pay for the salary. She stated in the event they do not get a grant they will look to secure this funding through the budget process.

Legislator Birmingham questioned what the match amount for the County is.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and Youth Bureau Sara Servadio stated it is 20% for the first two (2) years, and 60% in year three (3). She stated that she will continue to look for additional grant opportunities.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Approve Sheriff’s Office – Grant Application -Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) FY25 Connect and Protect: Law Enforcement Behavioral Health Response Program; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

**Item #6 – Update/ Putnam County Radio Project/ Commissioner BES Robert Lipton and Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon**

Chairman Jonke stated this is a project that has been going on for a long time approximately eight (8) years. He invited Commissioner BES Robert Lipton and Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon to address this item.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated that was correct. He explained that it was finance driven, which means they searched for grants and as they were awarded the work progressed. He stated the Putnam County Radio Project is up and running. He stated the testing with Motorola was done in October of 2024. He stated there are a few remaining Towers that are being worked on and will go up, but they were given the approval to go live without them. He stated the remaining Towers will help strengthen the portable coverage.

Chairman Jonke questioned where are the remaining Towers that are not yet up.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated Piano Mountain in Putnam Valley, Airport Park, and Nelsonville Park in Philipstown. He stated currently those using the system are: Putnam County DPW, OSR, Transit, the Sheriff's Office, Village of Cold Spring Police, and the Village of Brewster Police Department. He spoke to some of the specifics of the channels et.

Chairman Jonke questioned what the feedback is overall.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated there was a small problem with patching that was resolved, other than that the system is working well. He also briefly spoke to an issue with the Fire Department's low band pagers and what action has been taken to address that.

Chairman Jonke stated there were many First Responders present from the Volunteer Fire Departments and he questioned on their behalf the status of their ability to use the system.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated in the past two (2) weeks the members of the Emergency Operations Center were put on the system. He stated the Battalions and his staff are all on the system and it went well. He stated the original goal was to have the Fire Departments (FDs) on the system by May 1<sup>st</sup>. He stated they believe now that the FDs will get on even sooner. He continued to speak to the plan to roll it out and projected that everyone would be on by mid-April. He spoke to some of the questions that have been raised by the Legislature. He started by saying a meeting with the FDs will be scheduled in the next week or so. He addressed broadly some of the questions raised.

Chairman Jonke questioned if there was a breakdown in communication with the members of the FDs. He stated he does not believe that all the folks present at the meeting would have been there if there had been a good line of communication.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated the last time they met was towards the end of 2024.

Chairman Jonke stated with plans to roll out the system in a couple of weeks he believes the

FDs should have received some courtesy by giving them open lines to communication. He questioned what are some of the advantages of this radio project going forward that we did not have in the past.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated the communication is a lot clearer and the penetration of the signal is so much better. He stated previously the dispatcher had to pick the Tower they wanted to work off. He stated with this system you do not have to do that, your communication from a vehicle can be heard by every dispatcher.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton offered a personal example of having both a low band and new band radios in his vehicle, and the clarity with the new band radios far surpassed the low band radio. He stated the communication from the Dispatcher and the communication between the FD and the 911 Center.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated another benefit is previously the County on the police frequencies were divided into two halves, now it is a unified system. He stated they have already received positive feedback for the police officers on that change.

Chairman Jonke questioned if the radios will integrate with the Body Worn Cameras.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated they will not.

Legislator Crowley spoke to some history as to what generated the need for the new system, which stems from the lack of communication in some instances during 911. She stated she would like to know which Department used the new system and reported they could hear it up to Wappingers and down into Westchester.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated it was a Sheriff's Officer who was traveling home to Wappingers in their take home vehicle and the person traveling into Westchester was one of Commissioner Lipton's Coordinators.

Legislator Crowley stated we are waiting on the Towers for Airport Park, Piano Mountain and Nelsonville, which are the two (2) Wi-Fi instead of microwave, which will help with the operability.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated the Towers at Piano Mountain and Airport Park will be microwave and Nelsonville is not.

Legislator Crowley stated she asked a question way back about having certain kinds of channels available such as secure channels, at that time she was told that was not capable. She stated she knows that is not true. She questioned if there will be secure channels allocated for the Police Departments if a need arises.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated yes they are called encrypted channels, and they will have them.

Legislator Crowley questioned if there is a comprehensive list of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) required that will need to be in place with the FDs. She stated she believes they would need to be in place when their systems will be wiped clean to get ready to move forward. She stated it was stated earlier that Division 4, FD is going to be testing the system, will they have backup.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated when we are in the testing, it is not the primary form of communication they will still have the analog way that they communicate now. He stated what they will be able to do is use P25, if it does not work, they still have the other option. He stated the system being used now will not be done away with until everyone signs off confirming the new system is working great for them, and they give the approval to turn off the old system.

Legislator Crowley questioned how long will the Division 4 testing go on for.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated approximately two (2) weeks.

Legislator Crowley continued with her inquiries in relation to programming etc., the radios. She questioned when will the Police Departments in Kent and Carmel begin testing.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated both Carmel and Kent Police Departments have “test” vehicles. He stated once they communicate they are good to go, they can be deployed whenever they want. He confirmed the County is ready when they are.

Legislator Crowley questioned if they have interoperability and have established the MOUs with, as an example, Kent and East Fishkill.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated that is up to them.

Legislator Crowley confirmed a meeting with the FDs will be set up in the next two weeks, with the Fire Advisory Board. She stated that was her main request. She stated it is her opinion that they have been left out of the communications for over a year. She stated her hope is to see them at the next Fire Advisory Board Meeting.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if it will be the County or each individual FDs responsibility to cover the costs of the Radios.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated the County purchased an assortment of Radios for the FDs. He stated the original purchase was Radios for all of the Chief's cars, the ambulances and one (1) piece of apparatus. He stated when County Executive Byrne came on board he had him reach out to the FDs and buy them additional radios. He stated grant funding was used to purchase those.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if there are any dark spaces with the high band radios. He cited areas such as Putnam Valley and Philipstown.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated none that they are aware of. He stated in fact it worked all the way up 9D to the area of Breakneck Ridge Mountain. He stated the testing done with Motorola was very thorough. He stated they would travel a quarter mile at a time and test the connection in all directions.

Legislator Ellner stated there were many First Responders and Chiefs present at the meeting, and stated appreciation for their service. He stated when there are so many people who show up for a topic, it says to him they are less than satisfied. He stated with not getting all of the stakeholders in a room for over an extended period of time, he is curious to hear from the stakeholders. He stated it is his opinion that this should be a very collaborative effort.

Legislator Montgomery requested a list of the Radios each Department has. She stated also it was mentioned that MOUs are in place in Westchester and Dutchess Counties.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated he would provide the list. He clarified that they are working on getting the MOUs in place.

Legislator Montgomery requested since the Putnam County Marine Patrol does not cover the Hudson River, which is in her district, could there be an MOU put in place with Orange County and Rockland County. She stated she also heard that the FDs will have to work on their own MOUs in regards to the extra channels they would like to have. She stated that is cumbersome to the FDs. She requested that a template be set up and sent to them, to assist in that requirement.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated there have been discussions on that and the County is working with the FDs on creating a Template and simplifying the process.

Legislator Montgomery recognized the insurmountable amount of work that has gone into this and thanked them for all of the work they have put into this. She stated she believes it will make our first responders safer. She stated her hope is that there is a collaborative understanding with the FDs.

Legislator Crowley questioned if every Putnam County Firefighter and Police Officer have a Radio right now.

Commissioner, Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated he does not have the answer to that.

Legislator Crowley requested that Commissioner Lipton get that information. She questioned if interoperability inside the basement of the hospitals and the schools has been checked and have there been boosters put in.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated that is the next step that Motorola will do. He stated they are waiting for Piano Mountain to be up, because it will change how things work.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if Piano Mountain Tower will be up this summer.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated he would say yes.

Legislator Crowley requested confirmation that once the testing period is over then the departments can use different Radios if they choose.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated once they are certified, yes that is correct. He stated the purpose of that is to make sure the Motorola System works the way they advertised it. He stated the only restriction would be that any Radios picked must be P25 compliant.

Chief of Mahopac Volunteer Fire Department Gabriel Rivera stated on behalf of his Department and some other Volunteer Departments he is very encouraged by what was discussed. He stated communication and transparency are very important to the Volunteers. He stated it was good news to hear that they are not “married” to using the Motorola Radios, because the cost of those radios are expensive. He stated that in regard to the question as to who has Radios, he can report that most of his apparatus only have one (1) Radio, and it was provided by the County along with the apparatus. He stated in response to a comment made by Commissioner Lipton saying the FDs would never be satisfied, he believes the fact that the FDs are staffed by Volunteers so the costs balance out. He stated in a letter sent that one of their main focuses expressed is the importance of interoperability. He spoke about different scenarios that highlight the need for that and spoke to their challenge currently with their Radio communications with Westchester County. He stated in the critical moments first responders find themselves, muscle memory is critical in terms of the radio they use. He stated as important as interoperability is, so is consistency in the equipment used. He spoke to the need for MOUs, that is tough at the FDs level. He stated he believes that should be done at the County level between Dutchess and Westchester. He stated Westchester does that. He questioned why Putnam County cannot do it.

Chairman Jonke questioned if Putnam County has attempted that.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated the County does not have authority over a lot of the frequencies used by the FDs. He stated that is the problem.

Chief of Mahopac Volunteer Fire Department, Gabriel Rivera stated when this was architected, he thought this would have all been addressed. He stated that is his opinion.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated per Motorola the challenge of if another system is “patched” into the County’s System it will use the resources possibly leaving a lack of resources to run the System. He stated Motorola’s advice was to be careful of what is put onto the system.

Chief of Mahopac Volunteer Fire Department, Gabriel Rivera stated he hopes in the future this is considered and if the system has to be expanded to handle additional licenses it will be done. He spoke to the challenges of programming the Radios. He spoke to ways that he hopes can simplify this system and process.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated he does believe there has been information shared with the FDs by Commissioner Lipton and stated they will be sure to do so again and that will assist with the programming.

Carmel Chief of Police Anthony Hoffman expressed his appreciation to Director Lannon and Commissioner Lipton for their work on this project. He stated from the Police side the testing is going well. He stated they are also concerned with the matter of interoperability, as stated by Chief of Mahopac Volunteer Fire Department, Rivera. He spoke to that briefly. He stated during 9/11 he experienced firsthand the inability to communicate with different agencies. He stated pushing forward over 20 years later, we are still having conversations about interoperability.

Legislator Gouldman stated he questioned if we are able to communicate with Connecticut, as it borders our Eastern side of the County.

Director IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated yes. He stated they are currently working to get Danbury into the system. He stated Connecticut is a bit easier because they have a Statewide system.

Chairman Jonke expressed his appreciation to all who were present to speak to this important. He stated that he hopes moving forward communication with the First Responders is better.

#### **Item #7 - Other Business**

Legislator Birmingham stated Legislator Montgomery put forward two (2) Bills from last year. He stated he does not believe there are companion bills this year. He stated the topic of last year's bills is requesting an amendment to the General Municipal Law and the Public Health Law in Relation to Emergency Medical Services. He stated there has been a resolution drafted to support this, however as he stated there is no active bill currently. He stated that he supports the concept.

Legislator Birmingham made a motion to Accept this item as Other Business.

Chairman Jonke stated he communicated with Legislator Montgomery. He stated he is sure this is a matter the Legislature will get behind. He stated however at this time there is no bill. He stated he would like this to come to committee in its entirety.

Legislator Montgomery expressed her opinion that it would be appropriate to move forward with a memorialization. She stated this is a topic that has been on the table before the State Legislature for three (3) years. She stated that EMS is not essential in her opinion is ridiculous. She stated this Legislature memorializing this would not involve a level of expertise. It would be an act of support.

Chairman Jonke stated this has been going on for three (3) years, it does not have to be done today.

Chairman Jonke confirmed there was not second on the motion. Motion fails.

**Item #8 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 6:32M Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.