HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
ROOM 318 PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512

Members: Chairwoman Montgomery and Legislators Addonizio & Russo

Wednesday 6:00PM June 10, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chairwoman Montgomery, who requested that Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Addonizio, Russo and Chairwoman Montgomery were present.

Item #3 - Acceptance of Minutes – November 17, 2025 Meeting

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Chairwoman's Report

Chairwoman Montgomery provided an update on the food insecurity initiative, and after conferring with stakeholders, recommended building upon the existing food system coalition established by Cornell Cooperative Extension rather than creating a new task force. She provided details on the work of the coalition and requested broader participation by food pantries and County agencies. She requested recommendations from the coalition for the $150,000 food security allocation, beyond using it for cold storage and pantry assistance.

Item #5 - Update – Status of ARPA Funds Appropriated for Mental Health and Contract With People USA, and $2.1M Mental Health Fund – County Executive Byrne

Director of Compliance & Intergovernmental Relations Jennifer Caruso stated that executive session would be needed if contracts or personnel were going to be discussed.

Chairwoman Montgomery reported that the prior evening's Rules Committee resolution had been revised after receipt of the People USA contract cancellation for convenience, executed June 8, 2026. She stated that the late correspondence confirmed a separate $2.1 million County fund balance assignment for mental health. She stated that only a corrected letter of necessity is needed to ensure the public record is correct, with the correct contract cancellation date.

Director Caruso agreed that the letter should be corrected.

Legislator Addonizio stated that $2.1 million was allocated for mental health and that everything appears to be in order now.

Legislator Russo stated that she was pleased the matter had been resolved.

Chairman Birmingham stated that his forthcoming proposal would return authority to assign fund balance from the Commissioner of Finance to the Legislature so assignments would occur publicly.

Chairwoman Montgomery emphasized the importance of obtaining documentation of cancellations and fund assignments.

An unidentified resident requested clarification of the canceled stabilization center contract and remaining service proposals.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that $2.5 million of the County's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) allocation had been designated for mental health, with approximately $2.1 million remaining. She stated that the proposed Carmel location failed review by the Town Planning Board, and that she advocated seeking stabilization services instead through new requests for proposals before the December 31, 2026 spending deadline. She stated that the reallocation for paving remained subject to U.S. Treasury approval, and that the separate County mental health assignment of $2.1 million would not carry ARPA restrictions.

Legislator Crowley clarified that potential center locations in Brewster and Carmel had both been pursued unsuccessfully.

Director Caruso disputed portions of the Chairwoman's account, citing the County's efforts, lack of location and legal limitations on alternatives.

Chairwoman Montgomery maintained that a new request for proposals could have sought mental health services, including mobile response earlier this year, rather than a center and having to reallocate the funds for paving projects.

The unidentified resident questioned possible services in Garrison and the Rose House's residential location and operation.

Chairwoman Montgomery distinguished the existing Rose House respite program from the canceled stabilization center contract. She stated that the Rose House property was for sale, that she had suggested funding its purchase to retain services and that no formal proposal existed. She recommended that any further questions regarding zoning be referred to the building inspector in Philipstown.

Item #6 - Update – Co-Responder Team (CRT) Program – Sheriff Hess and Commissioner Servadio of Department of Social Services

Chairwoman Montgomery requested an update on the CRT Program, as the federal grant approaches its June 30, 2026 expiration.

Commissioner Servadio of the Department of Social Services, Mental Health & Youth Bureau (DSS) stated that an alternative model is being developed with DSS and law enforcement partners, as the CRT program is dissolved. She stated that the mental health worker in the program was relocated back to DSS, following reassignment of the police deputy, but continues responding as needed to families, providers and residents.

Sheriff Brian Hess stated that the reassigned deputy remains available as needed and that the de-policed Jeep is awaiting transfer to DSS, and he is awaiting a proposal defining the Sheriff's future role.

Legislator Crowley questioned differences between the Sheriff's CAD (Computer-Aided Dispatch) records and mental health service records and emphasized the value of a trained deputy accompanying the worker.

Commissioner Servadio stated that several health records companies are being vetted and that the ability of all law enforcement, emergency services and DSS to have a shared electronic records system and crisis-response portal are being explored.

Sheriff Hess explained that CRT contacts had call classifications and that deputies could still obtain the mental health worker's assistance.

Legislator Russo questioned if the salary of the mental health professional partnering with the Sheriff's department was still being paid for by the grant.

Sheriff Hess stated that a prior budgetary transfer covered the Jeep balance and salary through January 2027.

Chairwoman Montgomery requested continued coordination and updates on alternative CRT plan models. She suggested plans include consideration of clinician-led or mobile response model and a five (5) year mental health services plan.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if a plan proposal could be ready before October budget season.

Commissioner Servadio confirmed and stated that there are upcoming meetings with police chiefs and Sheriff's command staff.

Chairwoman Montgomery supported considering deputy funding and asked about additional mental health training.

Sheriff Hess stated that more than 90% of patrol personnel had basic crisis intervention training and that advanced training would require overtime costs.

Legislator Regan noted that other municipalities face similar challenges and supported evaluating effective models.

Chairwoman Montgomery emphasized data-based evaluation and training to protect residents and deputies.

Legislator Addonizio supported budgeting for advanced training and how it supports deputies' emotional well-being.

Commissioner Servadio stated that her office could submit a corresponding request.

Legislator Russo questioned whether these services continued despite the changes.

Commissioner Servadio stated that the current arrangement is not the best practice co-responder model that her department would follow, which requires a consistent two (2) person team. She stated that she would work to figure out the plan moving forward.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if the law enforcement individual in CRT would have arrest authority or only security responsibilities.

Commissioner Servadio explained that both are relevant and that other models existed.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that monthly updates might be requested.

Item #7 - Update – Department of Health – Status of Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) from Supervising Public Health Educator Shanna Siegal

Chairwoman Montgomery made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional updated presentation; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Supervising Public Health Educator Shanna Siegel provided a summary of the Community Health Impact Assessment (CHIP) priorities. She stated that outreach to town boards, civic groups, seniors and targeted community populations identified healthcare access, economic stability, mental health, suicide prevention, and food access as priorities. She stated that CHIP is due June 30th, and NY State requires three (3) priorities, with two (2) addressing disparities. She described expanded mental health and trauma-informed training, outreach to older adults outside friendship centers, resource guide distribution and DSS cross-training. She stated that food access partnerships are in development, combining nutrition outreach with smoking and vaping prevention supported by restricted JUUL settlement funds, as is HPV vaccination education targeting affected ZIP codes with the proposed immunization grant support.

Chairwoman Montgomery asked how priorities chosen and stated that this data is important in guiding state funding requests.

Supervising Public Health Educator Siegel stated that worsening indicators, regional comparisons and disparities were presented to residents, so that they could rank those priorities.

Legislator Russo asked about survey participation, event outreach and data presentation methods.

Supervising Public Health Educator Siegel explained that residents reviewed data before ranking priorities and that presentations were adapted for families affected by disabilities, Spanish-speaking residents and pregnant and parenting families. She described several outreach events and presentations.

Legislator Regan asked whether community preferences differed from identified needs.

Director Rodriguez confirmed, and explained that data and residents' experiences were combined, with impact and feasibility guiding interventions.

Supervising Public Health Educator Siegel stated that economic and other community needs often exceeded public health's direct authority, making partnerships and communication with policymakers essential, and that that zip code detail varied by indicator.

Michael Strauss, a resident of Putnam Valley asked about emerging health threats and discontinuation of the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) resource.

Director Rodriguez stated that CHR&R would sunset and described ongoing monitoring with partner agencies and collaborative efforts to identify alternative data sources and emerging threats.

Supervising Public Health Educator Siegel stated that the six (6) year CHIP did not encompass all department activity, including environmental health, that underlying data remained available elsewhere, and that the NY State Prevention Agenda dashboard would be updated twice annually.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated a progress update would be requested in the future.

Supervising Public Health Educator Siegel stated that the final plan would be shared with the Legislature and submitted to NY State on time.

Item #8 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A049 – Department of Health– NYSACHO Immunization Action Plan Grant and Contracts

Chairwoman Montgomery described the budgetary amendment and that there is no fiscal impact.

Supervising Public Health Educator Siegel explained that five (5) counties combined their $5,000 grants through the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) for a $25,000 regional immunization campaign, with Putnam as fiscal lead. She stated that approval followed a time-sensitive application, and that this Hudson Valley Public Health Collaborative would develop targeted Meta advertisements focusing on HPV and influenza vaccination content in county zip codes experiencing a dropoff in vaccination rates.

Chairwoman Montgomery supported the collaboration and Putnam's lead role.

Chairwoman Montgomery made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #9 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26T139 – Department of Health – Deputy Director Position and Reorganization Plan

Legislator Russo made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that the $80,245 transfer was to fund the Deputy Health Director position, with no fiscal impact in 2026 or 2027. She stated that all the information she requested in her last memo was received, including the job description, and that her concern is to allow a bachelor's degree and experience for a managerial position that could act for the Public Health Director without the same State review requirements.

Legislator Addonizio requested the Department's explanation.

Director Rodriguez stated that the reorganization supported operational continuity, succession planning and internal advancement. He described the proposed internal candidate's cross-divisional skills and his discussions with the State, in which it was confirmed that this could be a conditional appointment.

Chairwoman Montgomery questioned the salary, consideration of employees with master's degrees and selection of a candidate before creation of the position, emphasizing concerns about and qualifications rather than the individual and not having a hiring process.

Fiscal Manager William Orr stated that the annual salary would be approximately $136,000 and that the transfer was prorated from June 1, 2026.

Director Rodriguez stated that credentials alone did not establish suitability and that his staff assessment considered experience, cross-divisional ability and career progression.

Acting Personnel Officer Adriene Iasoni explained that the position is competitive, and that is a provisional appointment pending exam, open to all qualified internal candidates.

Legislator Addonizio asked about the competitive exam, and if it would be given, and the succession timeline.

Deputy Personnel Officer Iasoni explained that any internal candidate that qualifies would be eligible to take the exam, and that the top three (3) would be on the future eligible list.

Director Rodriguez stated that he intended to complete his appointment and that approximately 4.5 years remain.

Legislator Crowley supported the alternative degree qualifications, the candidate's nursing background and graduate study, and opportunities for advancement.

Chairwoman Montgomery maintained that this position should require qualifications equal to that of the Health Director, as the Deputy would have to act in that same capacity if needed. She questioned the job description's timing and allowing the bachelor's degree option for this position.

Director Rodriguez stated that Personnel had used comparable counties, including Tompkins, to develop the description.

Chairwoman Montgomery reiterated appreciation for the candidate's work and her concerns about the process and educational requirements.

Legislator Sayegh supported the Director's ability to organize the Department, retain staff and plan for succession without treating a master's degree as the sole measure of suitability.

Legislator Addonizio made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor. By poll vote: One Nay-Chairwoman Montgomery. Motion carries.

Item #10 - Other Business

There was no other business.

Item #11 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:54 p.m., Chairwoman Montgomery requested a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.