

Chairman Oliverio opened the meeting for discussion.

Legislator Anthony DiCarlo stated that approximately two months ago he had brought this up as an issue of concern. We really need to be working with all branches of Government which includes the State, Federal as well as the Senatorial branch to really see if it is possible to receive short term money from them. We are also talking about 47 Employees, which are Putnam County residents, which also becomes a major issue. He stated that the kids are the utmost important. We are also looking at a model program, as children not only from the Carmel School District, but also from Lakeland, Somers, as well as the Yorktown School Districts also send children to this program, which is how good it is. He believed that helping PARC fund their Pre-school program this year is a STOP/GAP Measure. It will buy us a year so we can be proactive and say to the State of New York that they really need to up their funding for this program. We also need to get our Federal people involved. Back in the 70's, there was IDEA, where the Federal Government promised the State about 45% funding and the most they have ever gotten is about 16% or 17%.

Legislator DiCarlo went on to state that this is a win/win situation and we really need to move forward.

Chairman Oliverio stated that if this school is not funded it will be necessary to transport the children to other facilities that would suit their needs. By law, children with special needs have to be educated, and if PARC is not here, we would have to seek elsewhere for the children's educational purposes.

Chairman Oliverio made a motion to accept the additional. Seconded by Legislator DiCarlo. All in favor.

Vincent Tamagna, Chairman of the Transportation Task Force stated that the Gross cost per child for transportation is \$23,659.00. The County's portion is \$16,721.00 per child. Currently we have 12 Pre-K students that attend the PARC Program that we now transport. There are other children that come from Lakeland, Yorktown and Westchester schools as well as the children from Putnam County. On May 16th Mr. Tamagna will be meeting with all the Superintendents of each of the Schools. We really need to problem solve, as this is not a permanent solution.

Mr. Tamagna stated that there has been a survey sent out to the parents of these special needs children. There are approximately 78 children that are active at this time. The deadline for these surveys is this Sunday, and Mr. Tamagna stated that he will have more information after all of these surveys are returned to him. He stated that these children are the most vulnerable to begin with and to transport them to another location that is miles away would be detrimental for these children. There will be more information available at the end of May or the beginning of June. Mr. Tamagna posted a chart explaining the student bus runs. He believed it would be extremely helpful in showing the distance that the children would need to travel if they had to be transported to another area. The children would need to be transported to Hawthorn or White Plains.

Legislator Scuccimarra questioned if there was any way that we could have Westchester County contribute to this as well as Putnam and make it a joint effort.

Ms. Limongello stated that she has a call into the County Executive to talk about that, as well as asking for support from them. Ms. Limongello went on to state that they have also been working with the State Education Department and have already received support from them to increase their rate. If that does indeed happen, it may not be for this school year but it could be for the following school year. It was a very positive conversation. Whether or not it is going to be approved in the division of Budget is the question.

Chairman Oliverio acknowledged Colin Schmitt, a representative from Senator Ball's Office to come forward and discuss this situation. He stated that he has personally spoken to Senator Ball and he is appalled by the actions of the State as he is very committed to children with disabilities.

Mr. Schmitt stated that his office has received calls and e-mails regarding this matter. Unfortunately when all the messages had been received it was already towards the end of the budget being shut out for this year. He stated that the Senator will be doing everything in his power to help with this situation.

Ms. Limongello stated to Mr. Schmitt that she is available to help him in any way that he may need her assistance.

Legislator LoBue stated that this is an embarrassment that we have to be here today discussing this. Unfortunately the Legislature does not have the authority to write the checks and she wants everyone to understand that the reason that they are all here this evening is that the cutoff date is May 1st. She stated that we have to make a decision tonight whether or not we are able to help keep the Pre-school program running. She stated that everyone here has to canvas each one of their Legislators in their Respective District and let them know how you feel. The County Executive is aware of the deadline.

Legislator LoBue went on to state that she is rarely against spending and for her, the money that has been set and Bonded on construction is not a priority.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that decisions have to be made for next year regarding the programs for the children. If we pass this out of Committee this evening and then it goes to the next Full Legislative Meeting, there is not enough time.

Legislator LoBue stated that she had heard that the parents should be asked to contribute, and asked for Ms. Limongello to advise the committee about that.

Ms. Limongello stated that the parents can contribute to PARC, but they cannot contribute to their child's education, as that is an entitlement. That has to come from the State Education Department.

Legislator Nacerino stated that it is our role to protect the children. She cannot imagine children on the buses so long. If we have the money to do it, this would buy us some time to formulate some solutions. Legislator Nacerino feels that the main concern is the children.

Chairman Oliverio stated that we do need to buy time for these children.

Chairman Oliverio went on to state that at the end of this meeting, the Committee is going to ask that the County Executive release funds out of this year's Budget, as the County Executive is the only person who can do that, for at least the first part of the school year which is September through December. When we meet again at Budget time, they can install the remainder from January to June. The Legislature can do that at that time, but once the Budget is passed, we have no power to outfit money. He stated that we need to make it very clear that the funds being proposed are to assist PARC and buy them valuable time needed.

Legislator LoBue stated that in the event that we are lucky and the State does in deed come through, Ms. Limongello stated that PARC will return the money to the County.

Chairman Oliverio asked Dr. Beals, the Commissioner of the Health Department for his perspective on the situation.

Commissioner of Health, Dr. Beals stated that the fiscal impact is adverse for transportation expenses. We need to reach out to Dutchess and Westchester Counties as 50% of the students are from those Counties. These Counties are facing the very same problems if PARC were to close.

Legislator Scuccimarra agrees other Counties need to be involved.

Chairman Oliverio stated he agrees with Legislator Scuccimarra that the other Counties need to be involved, but we are now under a time constraint. The annual reviews are going on at the schools at this time and the Committee of Special Education are meeting with the parents of Pre-School kids and deciding where they will be placed. PARC is not on the table at this time, and not to mention the devastating impact to these children having to travel two hours or two and a half hours to the school. What he would say now is that we ask the County Executive to allocate that money that we need.

Chairman Oliverio also stated that we have to contact our fellow Legislators in these other counties to see if they can help our most vulnerable constituents that they represent. Ask the County Executive to also be in contact with those other Counties, and to ask their County Executives for help and support as well.

Chairman Oliverio went on to state that he would be in favor of putting forward a request for that amount of money for September to December, which would not be the full amount of \$300,000.00 but probably \$90,000.00. In the meantime we can ask these other Counties to join in for the rest of the school year. We are all putting our Budgets together and let us do it cooperatively, which gives all of next year for PARC to work with the individuals in Albany, to get this done. Chairman Oliverio stated the he does not want to leave these children out there hanging, as he is very uncomfortable with that. He believed if it meant that Putnam County

fronts PARC the money for this year and hopes that in good faith of our neighbors in Dutchess and Westchester Counties contribute, then he is willing to take that risk.

Dr. Beals stated as far as the budgetary consideration, you should also realize that the preferred outcome is that the State should expedite a way to increase the rates. He believed that would solve the problem. You should also understand that the \$300,000.00 deficit that PARC is facing, the Legislature is budgeted by departments to provide these services. He stated that if PARC closes, and say your labor stays the same, the rate in these other facilities is about 20% higher. He stated that he has not done the numbers as yet, but for all we know the impact amount could come out to almost \$300,000.00.

Chairman Oliverio stated that the key to this is to keep the children as close to home as possible.

Legislator LoBue stated that the timeframe is a huge issue in this situation.

Chairman Oliverio stated that he is leaning towards asking the County Executive for the funding for this school for September through December.

Chairman Oliverio opened the meeting to the Public for comments.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she wanted to acknowledge all of the dedicated people in this room as they are very special.

Chairman Oliverio stated he would like to have a motion requesting the County Executive allocate, out of this year's fund balance, money to assist PARC in opening from September to December. He stated that at Budget time we can allocate funds in the Budget for the remainder of PARC's school year. In the meantime, we will communicate both legislatively with our counter parts from Dutchess and Westchester Counties and ask the County Executive to do the same with the County Executives in those Counties as well. He stated that if the other counties turn their backs on their constituents, Putnam County will stand proud as Chairman Oliverio believes we will find the rest of the funding during our budget process.

Legislator DiCarlo questioned that fact that if we needed to be specific on that exact amount of money that needs to be funded for that three month period of time.

Ms. Limongello stated that she will ask her Board of Directors to take the deficit through the first part of the year.

Chairman Oliverio stated it is imperative that we take affirmative action at this time otherwise the Counties of Westchester and Dutchess will not join us. He would like to be sure that the money is allocated to the PARC Pre-school Program through December. The amount would be \$150,000.00. At that time we can go to the other Counties and ask if they will be willing to help support the second half of the school year.

Chairman Oliverio went on to state that there will be a Full Legislative Meeting next week, and if all nine members of the Legislature agree, this can be placed on that Agenda, so all nine

members will be asked to sign off on this. He stated that if for any reason that does not happen; we are holding a Special Meeting on May 22, 2013 to address the Veto that happened regarding the safety precautions at Indian Point. This measure could be added on that Agenda. We need to formally give a request to the County Executive asking that the money be released to assist PARC in its endeavors to open up the Pre-school from July to December. He stated that at Budget time we will have even more information through Dr. Beal's Office, in the the Health Department, to see how our neighboring counties can contribute to the overall issue at hand.

Ms. Ann Fanizzi stated she was a Special Education teacher and Administrator and also involved in the Committee for Special Education. This is a children's first Resolution, and she cannot believe that the Legislators would not put the children first. She stated that she has confidence with this aspect. Ms. Fanizzi stated that she wishes to commend everyone for all of the efforts to reach a solution with this matter and relieve the anxiety of the parents.

Legislator DiCarlo made a motion that at the next Full Legislative Meeting, upon agreement of all nine Legislators, we present the County Executive with a request to release \$150,000.00 to empower PARC to have their Pre-K program up and running from July to December. Then during Budget process we would endeavor to figure out that second half of the year.

Seconded by Chairwoman Scuccimarra. All in favor.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that Chairman Oliverio will be in touch with those Legislators who are not in attendance this evening to explain the situation.

Chairman Oliverio stated that hopefully this Wednesday we can power this Resolution. It is then up to the County Executive to sign off on it. He stated that it must be understood that the Legislature cannot manipulate the Budget. This is the power of the County Executive under the County Charter once the Budget is set. He stated that it will be up to County Executive Odell to release that money upon our request.

#4) Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

#5) Adjournment

Being no further business to discuss, Legislator DiCarlo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chairman Oliverio. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted:
Claire E. Muller/Administrative Assistant

