

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

**Members: Chairwoman Scucimarra, Legislators Gross and LoBue**

**Tuesday**

**June 9, 2015**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairwoman Scucimarra who requested Legislator LoBue lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Gross, LoBue and Chairwoman Scucimarra were present.**

**Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – May 12, 2015**

Legislator LoBue made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

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

**Item #4 – Discussion/Toxic Children’s Toys**

- a. Presentation/American Chemistry Council & Toy Industry Association**
- b. Westchester County Local Law/Prohibiting the Sale of Children’s Products Containing Certain Chemicals**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated representatives from the American Chemistry Council and the Toy Industry Association were not able to be present at tonight’s Committee meeting. She stated this matter will be discussed at another time. She stated she would like to mention that Westchester County has passed their toxic toys ban. She stated when the Committee discussed this matter, it was questioned how the County would enforce such a local law. She stated in Westchester County their Department of Consumer Protection will enforce the local law. She stated she would like to speak with Director of Consumer Affairs Jean Noel to see how this local law on the toys would be enforced.

Legislator Addonizio stated according to the backup information of Westchester County, the budget impact would be approximately \$111,000 to enforce this local law.

**Item #5 – Presentation/Increasing the Age of Purchasing Tobacco Products/POW’R Against Tobacco Coalition/Coordinator Denise Hogan**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated that the presenters were unable to attend this month’s Committee meeting; however they are planning to attend the September Committee meeting.

**Item #6 – Discussion/Town of Putnam Valley/Spur Beach/Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen Beals**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she is honoring a request to not discuss this item tonight.

Legislator LoBue questioned who originally requested to discuss this matter.

Chairwoman Scucimarra stated the Town of Putnam Valley originally requested to discuss this matter.

**Item #7 – Approval/Budgetary Amendment 15A043/Public Health Emergency Preparedness (“PHEP”)/Ebola Funding**

Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen Beals stated the PHEP Grant has benefited the County for a number of years. He stated after the Ebola outbreak, \$38,000 was given the New York Department of Health who will award some counties with the funding. He stated the requirements to receive funding is very restrictive; the Grant is predominately to cover a percentage of salaries for those who do work in preparing for an Ebola outbreak or other mass epidemics. He stated the County will be able to meet the requirements to receive the some of the \$38,000 awarded to the New York State Department of Health. He stated the use of the money given to the Health Department will help offset a percentage of the salaries within the PHEP Grant and purchase additional emergency preparedness equipment without additional County expenditure. He stated the Legislature should be aware on August 12<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. there will be a Point of Distribution (“POD”) exercise. He stated this POD exercise needs approximately 400 people to meet one (1) of the requirements to receive the funding for the Ebola Preparedness.

Legislator Gross questioned what the POD exercise entails.

Commissioner Beals stated the purpose of the POD exercise is to act as if an outbreak occurred and the public needs to receive antibiotics. He stated this drill assists in refining the County’s emergency response to health epidemic situation.

Legislator Gross questioned if the POD exercise will take place at the Health Department.

Commissioner Beals stated that is correct. He stated in terms of the Ebola outbreak the County had to shift funds. He stated the Health Department monitored those who traveled in areas where Ebola was an issue. He stated looking back at the Ebola outbreak in Dallas, Texas around 200 people were exposed. He stated at the time of the outbreak the County was not able to withstand such event. He stated after he realized there needed to be an improvement to be able to respond to such health epidemic. There is now coordination with Putnam Hospital, Bureau of Emergency Services, Sheriff’s Department and the Coroner. He stated currently, he is positive that the County would be able to handle a situation like the past Ebola outbreak. He stated considering “today’s world” it is a good idea to keep a high level of preparedness in the County.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the concern for contracting Ebola has decreased.

Commissioner Beals stated although the concern has decreased the Health Department still periodically monitors the Ebola outbreak and those who traveled in areas where Ebola epidemic occurred.

Legislator Albano questioned if the grant money is used to balance out certain salaries and certain equipment.

Commissioner Beals stated the grant is used for items going forward and not to compensate for past expenditures regarding the Ebola outbreak. He restated the importance of having 400 people to participate in the POD exercise in order to be eligible to receive the grant.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature will participate in the POD exercise.

Legislator LoBue made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 15A043 for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (“PHEP”); Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

**Item #9 – Approval/Budgetary Amendment 15A040/Office for Senior Resources/Amendment to 2015 Budget/System Integration Grant**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this budgetary would also be discussed at the Audit & Administration Committee.

Legislator LoBue stated it appears that the County was not awarded as much funding as predicted.

Legislative Counsel Clem Van Ross stated that is correct.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment (15A040)/Office for Senior Resources Amendment to 2015 Budget; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

**Item #10 – Discussion/Schoharie County/Press Conference Calling for FERC to Routinely Include Comprehensive Health Impact Assessments**

Chairman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature has addressed the issue of calling for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) to routinely conduct a comprehensive health impact assessment on gas pipeline projects. She stated the Legislature has also passed similar resolutions that called for such assessment with the Algonquin Pipeline Project in 2014.

Legislator Albano stated he would support this initiative and he would like to send a letter to reaffirm this Legislature’s stance for the importance of health impact assessments with gas pipeline projects.

**Item #11 – FYI/ProAct Discount Card- Duly Noted**

**Item #12 – Other Business**

- a. FYI/Legislator Roger Gross/ “What’s Flushable” Pamphlet

Legislator Gross stated he found this pamphlet when he was in New Hampshire. He stated it reminds those that use a septic system that not everything is flushable. He stated some items that are not supposed to be flushed that are can create long-term damage for the community and homeowner.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated in regards to flushable items, it is important to remind the public to not flush prescription medicine as well.

**Item #8 – Discussion/Common Core State Standards**

**a. Memorialization/In Support of the Passage of State Assembly Bill A5142 & Any Senate Companion Bill to Discontinue the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards**

**b. Correspondence/Ann Fanizzi/Common Core**

Constituent Nick Castellano stated he has four (4) children who attend the Mahopac Central School District. He stated he has previously written a letter to the Legislature expressing some of his concerns pertaining to Common Core. He stated those who argue for and against the Common Core both express the needs for standards. He stated in Finland, students' educational performance is much higher than other countries, including the United States. He stated interestingly Finland does not have standardized exams for their students; they have one (1) college entry exam. He stated students in Finland have longer recesses than most other "civilized countries." He stated teachers in Finland are highly respected and are given guidelines but have a lot of autonomy in the classroom.

Constituent David Crebs stated he has a daughter that attends Mahopac Central School District. He stated always reviews his daughter's tests after to go over the questions. He stated in this instance it was his daughter's fifth grade test on Western Hemisphere Government. He stated one (1) question from this test was "people in the United States elect representatives to vote on their behalf. As a Nation we are known as a \_\_\_?" He stated the average person would answer democracy; however the correct answer is constitutional republic. He stated he emailed the teacher to inform her of this error. The teacher was then going to complain for receiving the wrong answer. He stated New Jersey Governor Christie has backed away from the use of Common Core and has been quoted stating the system is not working for the students of New Jersey. He stated children who attend private schools have a more enriched curriculum and do not have to take the Common Core Exams. He stated Common Core has the ideology of "one size fits all" and it deters students to think creatively.

Constituent Ann Fanizzi facilitated the discussion with highlighting an article from the most recent issue of the Teacher Magazine. She stated no one is suggesting to go back to the old educational system. She stated she has looked at the New York State Common Core kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Framework. She then listed the outline of Social Studies curriculum grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade learn. She stated the outline of the curriculum for the grades has not changed since she was a teacher.

Ms. Cathleen Substa stated she is concerned with how Common Core is affecting the children. She stated younger students, 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, are not capable of critical thinking. She stated the testing for Common Core takes away precious time for "pleasant engagement." She stated teachers are teaching to

the test because their careers are based on how well their students do on the Common Core Exams. She stated the current standards are negatively impacting children to enjoy learning.

Legislator Addonizio stated the United States has always been superior in critical thinking and thinking outside the box. She stated the United States is the leading country with Nobel Prize Awards. She stated one is awarded the Nobel Prize for outstanding contribution in; physics, chemistry, literature, physiology, medicine and peace. She questioned the audience if we want puppets or critical thinkers.

Legislator Nacerino stated the Common Core has some merit. She stated the Legislature has sent a memorialization to slow down the implementation of Common Core. She stated the Common Core is a “cookie cutter” approach to education. She stated teachers’ careers are contingent upon how the students do on the exams. She stated she supports the rescinding of Common Core. She stated this standard is flawed and any positive aspects of Common Core are severely outweighed by the bad.

Legislator Gross stated the United States excels at being awarded Nobel Prizes because this Nation supports creativity and embraces individuality. He stated he is aware of a study done that showed Japanese students failing in college while Americans excel at college. He stated it is important to discuss the specifics of history; if people do not learn from the past mistakes, the same mistakes will be repeated. He stated children are becoming frustrated. He stated the schools need to assist in preparing students for the future. He stated it is unfair to compare the United States with other countries because of our diversity and high population. He stated teachers are severely affected by the results of the exams and can even lose their jobs because of the test results. He stated the high evaluations of teachers are due to a teachers pay.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated there is also concern with the length of the exams.

Constituent Christine Zirkelback stated in regards to the statement Chairwoman Scuccimarra made, special education students have to sit for the exams twice as long. She stated younger students are losing dexterity in their hands because there is more emphasis on learning to think critically than to learn how to play. She stated because of Common Core, high school students are dropping. She stated special education students have to read passages such as, Stephen Hawking and String Theory for the English Language Arts Exam; if these students do not pass the exam they will not be eligible to graduate high school. She stated these exams are poorly designed. She stated the Federal Government only requires for one (1) exam for the high school years; this could easily be done with ACT Exam, which some States do. She stated if a person cannot graduate high school and cannot find a job because they do not have a high school diploma it is easy for them to turn to drugs like heroin.

Legislator Albano stated he supports the opposition of the Common Core. He stated children learn differently at all ages.

Legislator Gouldman stated he supports the opposition of the Common Core as well.

Legislator LoBue stated the Legislature would pass a memorialization to the State Assembly Bill A5142 and other Senate Companion Bills. She stated there currently is no Senate Companion Bill. She stated

she respects all of the comments made today. She stated she feels that those in the audience are at the wrong juncture because the Legislature can only support a memorialization. She stated she hopes all of the comments from the audience are heard by Senate and Assembly leaders.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this memorialization can be sent anyway as another voice of support.

Legislator Gouldman stated many other counties have sent a memorialization regarding this matter. He stated if the Legislature sends this memorialization it will send the State a message.

Legislator LoBue stated she recommends that the Legislature wait because she does not want the memorialization to “get lost” because the Legislative Session has ended.

Legislator Nacerino stated the memorialization can be sent to the State again.

Mr. Castellano stated many in opposition to the Common Core have already spoken to State Legislators and the County Executive in the very beginning of the Legislative Session in January. He stated he would like to see the memorialization pass.

Legislator Gross stated he is aware that Assemblyman Katz and Senator Murphy are very passionate about the concerns of Common Core.

Legislator Gross made a motion to approve the Memorialization in Support of the Passage of State Assembly Bill A5142 & Any Senate Companion Bill to Discontinue the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

### **Item #13 – Adjournment**

**There being no further business, at 7:31 p.m. Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.