

HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Held In The
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 318
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512
Members: Chairman Oliverio, Legislators LoBue and Scuccimarra

Tuesday

August 12, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 P.M. by Chairman Oliverio who requested Putnam County Chambers of Commerce President Bill Nulk lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators LoBue, Scuccimarra, and Chairman Oliverio were present.

Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – July 8, 2014

Chairman Oliverio made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

**Item #5 – Early Intervention/ Pre-School Presentation/ Commissioner of Health
Dr. Allen Beals**

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

Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen Beals stated that part of the Health Department’s \$9.5 million go towards Early Intervention and Preschool Programs. He stated these programs provide services and assistance to children in the age range of infant to five (5) years old. He stated the Women Infants and Children (“WIC”) Program provides nutritional assistance for lower income individuals. He stated the other program, Maternal Child Health (“MCH”) Program provides nurses to be able to make free home visits to assist with adjusting to motherhood and conduct minor examinations of infants. Commissioner Beals began to discuss his credentials and experiences in dealing with premature infants when he was a practicing physician. He stated learning from his experiences, premature infants can survive however; premature infants may need services such as WIC and MCH. He stated if low birth weight and premature births can be prevented there will be a major impact on the decrease in cost of Early Intervention and Preschool Programs. He stated two (2) major benefits from the MCH Program is breast feeding and lactation support, which results in improved outcomes for the mothers and infants. He stated the two (2) nurses in the MCH Programs are International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (“IBCLC”) certified. He stated Putnam County is the only county in the Lower Hudson Valley Region with such trained nurses in a Health Department. He stated the MCH Program use has increased 72% within the last four (4) years. He stated the WIC Program aids in decreasing premature birth, decreasing low birth weight and lessens the chances of fetal and infant death. He stated the use of the WIC Program has increased 4% over the last four (4) years. He stated the cost to the County for the WIC program has decreased 77% over the last four (4) years.

Chairman Oliverio questioned what caused the decrease in cost for the WIC Program.

Commissioner Beals stated the personnel changes made contributed to the decrease in cost. He stated the cost to the County for the MCH Program has increased 4% over the last four (4) years. He stated the reason for the increase for the MCH Program is due to the CSEA Contract. He stated now focusing on the Early Intervention and Preschool Program; the program provides services to those families who may require assistance. He stated the cost of the Early Intervention and Preschool Program has decreased 10%. He stated there is a decrease of cost because there are fewer children in the Early Intervention and Preschool Program due to being a decline in “problematic” children.

Item #4 – Discussion/National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Putnam County/Crisis Intervention Training/ NAMI President Lorraine Bushnell

National Alliance on Mental Illness (“NAMI”) President Lorraine Bushnell stated NAMI is a support organization that assists the parents and caregivers of individuals who have a mental illness. She stated since 1998 one (1) program that NAMI is involved with is the Crisis Intervention Teams (“CIT”). She stated the CIT Training is a program that improves the way law enforcement and the community responds to people experiencing a mental health crisis. She stated police officers who are trained in CIT understand how to respond safely to an individual who has a mental illness. She stated there are many scenarios of mental illness cases and the criminal justice system struggling to coordinate. She then described two (2) stories to support her statement. The first story took place in North Carolina and a family had a son who had schizophrenia. The schizophrenic son was having an “episode” and was threatening his mother with a screwdriver. Then, two (2) police officers arrived at the scene and was calming the situation down, but shortly after, a detective arrived and ordered the police officers to resolve the situation with their guns; which resulted in the boy’s death. She then discussed a second story which was about a dispatcher receiving a 911 phone call from an emotionally disturbed man. The emotionally disturbed man stated three (3) unknown people were following him and “sending vibrations into his body”. A report was written and sent to the Navy Base that the emotionally disturbed man worked at. Approximately one (1) month later the Washington Navy Yard Shooting occurred. She stated the two (2) stories illustrate the need for CIT training for those who work very closely with the public. She stated there is the potential to receive grants to fund the CIT Training.

Chairman Oliverio questioned if Commissioner of Social Services Mike Piazza is going to increase the Department of Social Services’ budget to provide funding to train police officers for CIT.

Commissioner Piazza stated this matter is not being added to the Department of Social Services’ (“DSS”) budget because the cost of overtime to conduct the CIT Training would be expensive. He stated the Department of Social Services filled out applications to the State asking for \$25,000 to fund the CIT Training in Putnam County. He stated the \$25,000 would be used to cover for the overtime costs to train the police officers.

Chairman Oliverio stated NAMI President Bushnell makes a very strong case regarding this matter. He stated health and safety of the County’s residents is paramount. He questioned the cost to set up the CIT Training.

NAMI President Bushnell stated in areas of Georgia it cost approximately \$150.00 per police officer. She stated originally NAMI and the DSS were going to ask for \$50,000.

Commissioner Piazza stated NAMI President Bushnell is correct, DSS was going to originally ask for \$50,000. He stated he attended a three (3) day CIT Training Course. He stated it is a 40 hour training course for the police officers. He stated due to the fact the training takes 40 hours, there is the issue of overtime being used to cover for the police officer being trained. He stated if the Department of Social Services receives any funding for training, it is proposed to train the School Resource Officers (“SRO”) when there is a weeklong break for the school.

NAMI President Bushnell stated the issue with Commissioner Piazza’s suggestion is the SROs will not be patrolling the streets.

Commissioner Piazza stated it is a start to get the police officers trained.

Chairman Oliverio stated one (1) tragedy in our County can create a financial strain. He stated the Legislature has to be conscious of the taxes for our County’s residents however, the health and safety of the County’s residents has to be paramount. He stated to ask for \$50,000 from an approximately \$135 million budget is not a lot. He stated the budget has been spent on numerous unnecessary items.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she understands that this matter has been a concern of Commissioner Piazza’s. She stated she will support Commissioner Piazza’s recommendation in how the Legislature should move forward on this matter.

Commissioner Piazza stated the largest mental health provider in New York State is the jails.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the individuals with mental illnesses are not getting the help they need in jail.

Commissioner Piazza stated those with mental illnesses are getting some assistance in jail. He stated it is still a long term goal to have all of the police officers trained to have an understanding of how to handle an individual with a mental illness. He stated the plan on how to accomplish this goal is still being questioned.

Chairman Oliverio questioned if the Department of Social Services presented the budget to the Administration.

Commissioner Piazza stated no, the budget is planned to be presented next week.

Chairman Oliverio suggested Commissioner Piazza include some money in his budget for the CIT Training. He stated he would support the CIT Training.

Legislator LoBue stated she would support the CIT Training. She stated this County has wasted a lot of money. She stated the issue of mental illness is also linked with drug use.

Chief Assistant District Attorney Chana Krauss stated the matter of mental illness affects the District Attorney's Office. She stated there used to be a mental health court. She stated police officers are trying their best when called out to a call that involves an individual with a mental illness. She stated the police officers need more training.

Chairman Oliverio requested the Health, Social, Educational & Environmental Committee forward a letter to the Sheriff's Office to contribute \$25,000 towards the training. He stated the Department of Social Services can then contribute \$25,000.

Legislator LoBue stated \$25,000 is not enough to carry the program in the long run.

Commissioner Piazza stated the DSS has submitted the application to New York State to request to receive funding.

Legislator Albano stated he supports the proposal of the CIT Training. He suggested training the least experienced officers with the CIT Training.

Legislator Gross stated as Chairman of the Protective Services Committee he has toured the jail numerous times. He stated the tour made him aware that males in the County Jail have mental illnesses. He stated the County Jail acts as a psychiatric hospital.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the County Jail also acts as a drug rehab center.

Legislator LoBue stated in the hospitals today there is a reluctance to keep patients for a long period of time.

Legislator Albano questioned if there are any other municipalities who are implementing the CIT Training.

NAMI President Bushnell stated she is not aware of any and will conduct further research.

Commissioner Piazza stated Rochester County is the leading municipality in New York to implement a program like CIT Training.

Chairman Oliverio restated with the approval of the Committee he would like to move forward and send a letter to Sheriff Smith requesting to contribute \$25,000 towards the CIT Training. He thanked NAMI President Bushnell for bringing this matter to the Committee's attention.

Item #6 – Discussion/ Health Risks/ Pesticides & Insecticides/ Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen Beals

Chairman Oliverio stated he would like Commissioner Beals' opinion on the matter of pesticides and insecticides.

Commissioner Beals stated the County cannot create regulations for pesticides and insecticides. He stated these chemicals are neurotoxins and carcinogens. He stated the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) establishes tolerance levels. He stated people are consuming the toxins from their food. He also stated when individuals spray a pesticide or insecticide around their home it is being released into the air.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she feels that this matter was important to bring forth to this Committee to educate the community. She stated many individuals do not realize the impact pesticides and insecticides have. She stated many people are quick to use pesticides and insecticides.

Commissioner Beals stated recently there was an article in the New York Times that discussed the use of Roundup in New York City Parks to control weeds. He stated the article stated this is potentially dangerous for younger children because Roundup is carcinogenic.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the use of pesticides is making an impact on the environment. She stated this substance is already showing signs of deforming frogs and other wildlife.

Commissioner Beals stated the EPA is the governing body that regulates pesticides and insecticides. He stated to reassure the community; in 2003 there was a grant to test the community water supplies. He stated the study concluded that the water was not above the tolerance level. He stated this is a positive outcome however, there can always be a debate about defining the tolerance level can be debated.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the pesticide or insecticide will affect more than just that one (1) organism that a person is trying to kill.

Commissioner Beals stated he agrees that education is needed. He stated he supports the trend of eating organic.

Legislator LoBue state the issue with eating organic is expensive.

Commissioner Beals stated from a farming perspective, just because the label states organic does not mean the item is 100% organic.

Legislator Albano stated the issue with testing the water is that water is not stagnate and the water quality will change. He stated he believes it is important to promote growing food at home.

Legislator Gross stated in terms of Roundup, the pesticide will kill the invasive species like the Oriental Bittersweet Vine.

Cornell Community Educator Jennifer Stengle stated in terms of organic, just because a food is listed as organic does not mean that it is truly organic. She stated when labeled organic it may mean it has lower toxicity. She stated in terms of invasive species the DEC recommends very

targeted use of the pesticides on them. She stated there are other options to rid of the invasive species, such as pulling the weeds.

Legislator Tartaro stated there are home remedies that will work.

Item #7 – Discussion/ Memorialization/ Chenango County/ Children’s Camp Regulations/ Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen Beals

Chairman Oliverio stated this is another matter that the Committee would like Commissioner Beals’ opinion on.

Commissioner Beals stated the Public Health Law and the New York Sanitary Code authorizes the Health Departments to check the safety and permit full service camps. He stated there are approximately 28 full service camps in Putnam County. He stated the Health Department inspects the camps twice throughout the camp season to ensure the safety of the children. He stated Chenango County is proposing to expand the regulations and permitting to single purpose camps. He stated single purpose camps include a camp such as a soccer camp. He stated the safety issues are non-existent. This proposal would be giving a solution to a matter that does not have a problem.

Legislator Albano stated there is a lot of over regulation when not needed.

Item #8 – Update/ Town of Putnam Valley Spur Beach/ Commissioner of Health Dr. Allen Beals

Chairman Oliverio stated he would like for Commissioner Beals to present the Committee with an update on the issue of opening Spur Beach in the Town of Putnam Valley.

Commissioner Beals stated an issue with Spur Beach was the modifications done to Spur Beach without an engineer approving any of the work conducted. He stated the Town of Putnam Valley Supervisor Robert Tendy stated the work was conducted with an engineer’s approval. He stated Supervisor Tendy did not submit a plan that was approved by a New York Certified Engineer.

Chairman Oliverio stated the plan was approved by a laborer and not by a certified engineer.

Commissioner Beals stated he received a report from a contractor who is not a certified engineer and is also not permitted to work in Putnam County.

Item #9 – Discussion/ Recommendation on Invasive Bamboo/ Cornell Cooperative Community Educator Jennifer Stengle

Chairman Oliverio stated the Legislature received a memorandum stating the State is going through the laws regarding invasive species.

Community Educator Stengle stated the comment period is closed and the State expects to act in August 2014. She stated she was told that the bamboo species is remaining on the invasive species list. She stated there was a big discussion in terms of the impact prohibiting or regulating invasive species will have on the nursery industry and other industries. She stated due to the regulations or prohibitions some invasive species will no longer be able to be moved, sold, and traded. She stated invasive bamboo is not a part of the regulation list. She stated due to the regulation invasive species are allowed to be sold but not permitted to be in a “free living” state. She stated she is not sure what the “free living state” exactly entails.

Chairman Oliverio questioned when the law will be passed in the State regarding invasive species.

Community Educator Stengle stated a law will not be passed; it is actually a regulation that will be passed. She stated she was told the regulation can potentially be passed in August. She stated there will be penalties for not abiding by the regulation.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated it is her understanding the power to regulate invasive species will be to the Soil and Water Districts to regulate and educate.

Community Educator Stengle stated she is not aware of that. She stated the DEC has six (6) groups of non-profit government organizations and concerned citizen groups throughout the State. She stated these groups go and educate the public about invasive species and create invasive species lists.

Chairman Oliverio questioned if Putnam County’s Soil and Water District is part of the group.

Community Educator Stengle stated the Putnam County’s Soil and Water District is invited.

Chairman Oliverio stated he believes it is important for Putnam County’s Soil and Water District be involved.

Community Educator Stengle stated it would be great if the Putnam County’s Soil and Water District got involved.

Legislator Scuccimarra read part of the proposed regulation that discussed Soil and Water Districts being involved in regulating invasive species.

Community Educator Stengle stated she has been contacting Soil and Water District Manager Lauri Taylor and keeping her up to date on what is available for the Soil and Water District. She stated there is money available from the DEC.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the proposed legislation does not mention funding to assist with regulating invasive species.

Community Educator Stengle stated she has tried to reach out to other organizations that can receive aid and partnership for eradication or educating the public.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she believes educating the public on this matter is important.

Legislator Albano stated the Soil and Water District within Putnam County currently does not have much input on the matter of invasive species.

Community Educator Stengle stated Legislator Albano is correct. She stated DEC is the deciding body.

Legislator LoBue stated if the regulation regarding bamboo is passed, Putnam County does not have the means to enforce it.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she understands this Committee initially looked at invasive bamboo however, it is important to look at the big picture of this issue.

Community Educator Stengle stated there have been town ordinances created regarding bamboo.

Legislator LoBue stated bamboo originally was used to resolve issues like a buffer for neighbors and now there is a challenge to get rid of the bamboo.

Community Educator Stengle stated that is where there is concern of the “free living state”. She questioned how that will be defined.

Legislator LoBue stated the “free living state” concern will be a town issue.

Legislator Albano stated it has to be clear that it is the responsibility of the individual who owns the property.

Chairman Oliverio questioned who the liaison is for Cornell Cooperative Extension and if that individual can inform Manager Taylor about the Legislature wanting her to be more involved in the decision making process.

Legislator Albano stated he is the liaison and he will inform Manager Taylor.

Item #10 – Update/ Application for Consent to Use Land as Cemetery/ Deputy County

Attorney Andrew Negro

- a. Rabbinical Seminary of America**
- b. Beverly Hills Cemetery Corporation, Inc.**

Chairman Oliverio stated it is his understanding that there have been two (2) requests for expansion or placement of a new cemetery.

Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro stated the Law Department received the applications and have reviewed them. He stated Section 1506 of the Non-for-profits Corporations Law and Section 451 of the New York State Property Law only applies to Putnam County, Westchester County, Rockland County, Nassau County, Suffolk County and the five (5) Boroughs. He stated these two (2) laws require obtaining direct town approvals and approval from the county’s

Legislature. He stated both matters are being represented from the same law firm. He stated both matters are before the Town of Putnam Valley's Planning Board for approval.

Legislator LoBue questioned if the County is in conflict due to selling the property to both matters.

Chairman Albano stated no, this is a separate issue.

Deputy County Attorney Negro stated based upon review, the requests before the Legislature is premature. He stated the requests have not been fully vetted out at a town level. He stated based on the "home rule" principle and procedure it would be premature for the Legislature to weigh in on the requests.

Chairman Oliverio questioned if the Town of Putnam Valley can proceed forward with their deliberations without the Legislature's consent.

Deputy County Attorney Negro stated the Town of Putnam Valley can proceed without the Legislature's consent. He stated the two (2) requests are before the Town of Putnam Valley's Planning Board and they will be lead agency on these requests. He stated there is case law from Nassau County that states the approval on a town level is not contingent upon the County's approval before hand. He stated the requests should be handled on a town level first and then follow the procedure in Section 451 and Section 1506 to discuss the requests before the Legislature.

Legislator Scuccimarra questioned if there will be an environmental issue for creating the cemeteries.

Deputy County Attorney Negro stated in part of the application from the Rabbinical Seminary of America there was a letter submitted from a hydrolysis. He stated the environmental concern makes it important for everything to be vetted out before the request comes before the Legislature.

Chairman Oliverio suggested a letter be sent stating the Legislature is waiting for the Town of Putnam Valley to complete their review of the requests.

Deputy County Attorney Negro stated he agrees with Chairman Oliverio in sending a response stating after the Town of Putnam Valley has completed their review, the Legislature will then review the requests.

Chairman Oliverio stated the request from the Rabbinical Seminary of America is not controversial. He stated the request from Beverly Hills Cemetery Corporation is because it will occupy a residential area. He stated before the Legislature takes action, he would like to see what happens on a town level.

Legislator Tartaro stated the letter should include the case law that states the town should review the request first.

Legislator LoBue stated she believes the Town of Putnam Valley intentionally put the Legislature in a bad position. She stated she suggests the Legislature remain silent and let the two (2) requests be vetted out on a town level first.

Deputy County Attorney Negro stated he can assist the Legislative Counsel and the Legislative Clerk in drafting the letter to the Town of Putnam Valley regarding the two (2) requests.

Item #11– Correspondence/ Putnam County Coordinating Council for People with Disabilities/ County Executive/ PARC Litter Patrol Contract/ FYI

Chairman Oliverio stated the Legislature received a letter from Putnam County Coordinating Council for People with Disabilities President Steve Unger requesting the PARC Litter Patrol Contract be reinstated for the following year. He stated this is a wonderful program and he would like to see the funding continue. He stated he would like to send a letter to the Administration during budget time requesting that funding continue.

Legislator LoBue stated she agrees with Chairman Oliverio.

Item #12 – ProAct/ Putnam County Discount Card/ FYI- Duly Noted

Item #13 – Other Business- None

Item #14 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 6:10 p.m. Chairman Oliverio made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.