

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

**Chairwoman Addonizio, Legislators Ellner & Russo**

**Tuesday**

**6:00PM**

**March 18, 2025**

This meeting was called to order at 6:03pm by Chairwoman Addonizio who requested Legislator Ellner to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Ellner, Legislator Russo, and Chairwoman Addonizio were present.

**Item #3 - Discussion – Update – Putnam Hospital – Hospital President Dr. Mark Hirko**

Chairwoman Addonizio stated Dr. Hirko was not present at this time.

**Item #4 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A025 – Department of Social Services – Opioid Settlement Funds**

Department of Social Services (DSS) Fiscal Manager Kristen Wunner stated their request for 2025 is to fund the appropriate agencies that submitted a proposal through an RFP (Request for Proposals) for both the continuation and startup of new programs. She stated this is a use of their Opioid Settlement Funds which is awarded to different agencies as deemed fit.

Chairwoman Addonizio requested clarification on the contracts.

DSS Commissioner Sara Servadio stated they received 6 proposals with 5 being awarded funds. She stated all agencies are essentially continuing what they were doing in 2024 which was the first year the program was in place. She stated they expect to have more funds available over the next several months. She stated they were unable to fulfill all the funds requested for 2025 due to the amount requested exceeding the available funds.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned if this is the reason why one of the 6 proposals was denied funds.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated the request was not able to be done by a local agency.

Legislator Birmingham questioned what type of programs these agencies are producing and how they are utilizing the funds.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated the agencies are using the funds for staff salary increases, education and prevention programs, and continuation of services.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if this is going to be an ongoing grant.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated that this is a concern. She stated it is uncertain if they will go through an RFP process in 2026 since they are unsure of the funds they may receive as well as when they will receive it.

Chairwoman Addonizio raised a question about the total amount of funds they were promised.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated she will obtain the amount.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the staff for these programs are aware of what they are permitted to utilize the funds for.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated yes, the staff is aware of how they are able to utilize the funds. She stated the purpose for hiring the Dual Recovery Coordinator was to grant her oversight of the allocation of funds. She stated that they hold monthly meetings with the providers, perform data collections, and track what is being reported compared to what was promised in the RFP.

Fiscal Manager Wunner stated that they issue the funds in quarterly payments. She stated that before they advance the next quarterly payment, they are requesting for substantiation of the first quarterly payment to ensure it is within the line of the budget.

Legislator Crowley thanked DSS Commissioner Servadio and Fiscal Manager Wunner for their efforts with this program.

Legislator Gouldman questioned how many years they expect to continue to receive the funds.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated they expect the funds to come in for about 13-15 more years.

Fiscal Manager Wunner stated that the payments come in as the lawsuits are settled.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the amount of funds requested compared to the amount of funds granted. She questioned since the funds are currently at \$908,000 and the amount awarded was \$613,175, how was the remaining balance going to be utilized.

Fiscal Manager Wunner stated the total amount of funds requested was slightly over \$1 million.

DSS Commissioner Servadio not every agency received the funds they requested at this time. She stated they are going to look at the funds they can get back from 2024 and work out the issues that occurred in the first year. She clarified that they are not going to withhold the remaining funds, and these funds will go out to the agencies.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the agencies that did not meet their deliverables last year are being funded this year.

Fiscal Manager Wunner clarified that these were new programs for these agencies.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated not all agencies that received funds in 2024 are receiving funds this year because they did not request funds again.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the one agency that did not receive the funds they requested for this year was an existing agency.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated this agency that did not receive the funds they requested for is not an existing agency and is not a local agency.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why a new agency they have not funded in the past is receiving greater funds than an agency that has been serving them for a substantial period of time.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated the Mental Health Association is expanding their services in Putnam County therefore having more of a presence locally. She stated due to the fact this agency is in their beginning phases they received 100% of the funds they requested for.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the criteria that determine the allocation of the funding.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated they follow the procurement process the Department of General Services provides them.

Fiscal Manager Wunner stated there is a grading scale based on the agency's past performances, scope, the funds requested, and the County's need.

Legislator Montgomery questioned who is on the committee that approves the applications.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated the original RFP committee was composed of representatives from various departments. She stated this year it was an internal committee within the Department of Mental Health.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there was legislative oversight for the committee this year.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated there was no legislative oversight this year.

Legislator Birmingham stated the state law requires the Board of Health to have a Legislative Representative. He clarified he does not believe this law exists for the Department of Mental Health and most of the Departments do not have a Legislative Liaison.

Legislator Montgomery stated in the past there has been legislative involvement with provider meetings.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated the network meetings have been altered to be provider meetings. She stated the meeting is more streamlined to the delivery of services in Putnam County. She stated it is a smaller scaled meeting compared to the original provider meeting.

Legislator Montgomery expressed her disappointment that some of the agencies did not receive more funds. She suggested a cap on the amount of funds agencies can request for the next application cycle.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated she is unable to take action on this suggestion since it is outside of their scope.

Legislator Montgomery questioned who is responsible for placing a cap on the grant.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated she is not in charge of the entire grant process. She explained her involvement in the grant process consists of reading through the grants that are submitted.

Legislator Montgomery stated her concern for the agencies that are expecting funds but have not yet received them. She questioned if these agencies may expect to receive more funding in the future.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated they have to see what funds they are able to recover. She stated they do not expect to recover all the funds immediately.

Legislator Montgomery questioned where the remainder of the funds are being allocated.

Fiscal Manager Wunner stated it is going to 2026 initiatives.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she was under the impression the Opioid Settlement was going to be a significant amount of money being received in faster manner than they are currently being acquired.

Legislator Sayegh discussed the process of when the grant first began. She thanked DSS Commissioner Servadio and Fiscal Manager Wunner for the work they have done.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 25A025; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

**Item #5 - Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T063 – Department of Social Services – Contract with Resource Center for Accessible Living**

DSS Deputy Commissioner Nicolle McGuire stated currently, an adult protective services case worker takes in the Social Security funds and then appropriately distributes the allowances for food, clothing, bills, etc. She stated they have looked into a contract agency called RCAL (Resource Center for Accessible Living). She stated DSS is requesting to have a budgetary transfer for the grant they currently have to outsource to the agency. They currently have approximately 22 clients which totals \$46 per month per client. She stated there will be no fiscal impact for 2025 due to the existing grant.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated if the grant funds are not available, they will discuss this during the budget process for the following year.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if the 22 clients were all in Putnam County.

DSS Deputy Commissioner McGuire stated all 22 clients are within Putnam County.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to approve Budgetary Transfer 25T063; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in Favor.

#### **Item #6 - Approval – Appointment – Board of Health – Burdick**

Legislator Sayegh stated the State of New York changed the law dealing pertaining to membership on Boards of Health. She stated the law now permits the Board of Health to have members from surrounding counties. She clarified that although Teresa Burdick lives in a bordering county because of the alterations to the law she is eligible to apply.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to approve the appointment; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in Favor.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she would now address Item #3 as Dr. Hirko is now present.

#### **Item #3 - Discussion – Update – Putnam Hospital – Hospital President Dr. Mark Hirko**

Dr. Hirko stated Putnam Hospital has seen an uptick in patient population. He stated their census indicated an increase of about 15% in the last quarter. He stated there has been a major change in the past year. He stated that cancer care has also seen an increase of almost 100% over the past year. He stated they are pleased with the increase in primary care. He stated in October of 2023 there was no primary care based in Mahopac. He stated as of last week they have 7 in Mahopac, 8 in Brewster, and 2 in Carmel. He stated how their GoHealth Urgent Care Clinic helped with their emergency room wait times. He stated their Leapfrog Safety rating has improved from a C to an A.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned how the safety rating is obtained.

Dr. Hirko stated it is a national standard which looks at the hospital's mortality rate, readmission rate, surgery infection rate, sepsis rate, overall cleanliness, and overall upkeep of the facility. He stated women's health is another area they are seeing growth in. He stated they are predicting close to 100 births for 2025. He stated the inpatient units have been able to accommodate the influx in patients without having to hire more staff or let go of staff.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned how the inpatient psychiatric unit is performing.

Dr. Hirko stated this unit is busy and is close to 90% utilization. He stated they are also a clearinghouse for the New York Nuvance based hospitals for inpatient care. He stated they are updating the unit with new furniture as well as the overall upkeep. He stated the area he would

like to see growth in is the partial hospitalization program. He stated this program is having difficulties due to the federal funding for telehealth ending.

Chairwoman Addonizio requested clarification on why the OBGYNs in Putnam Hospital have chosen to only deliver in Mount Kisco.

Dr. Hirko stated the OBGYNs are part of a private medical group that made this choice. He stated there are a lot of reasons why this happened. He stated they made it known to Optum that they can come back if they are willing to.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned how many births they had last year.

Dr. Hirko stated in 2024 there were 62 births.

Legislator Ellner questioned the basis of their projection of 100 births this year.

Dr. Hirko stated they look at the current number of patients who are pregnant that are visiting the practice and utilizing this information to project the number of births in the hospital for the year.

Legislator Ellner questioned if there are other medical groups the hospital can attract so the birthing centers can be used.

Dr. Hirko stated they are constantly looking into finding other medical groups. He stated they are also looking at the demographics of Putnam County which is projected to have a leveling off of the population. He stated there is a projected increase in patients 65 and over and a decrease in patients 18 and under. He stated they would like to see more patients come to the hospital.

Legislator Crowley questioned about the possible merger.

Dr. Hirko stated they are optimistic about the merger. He stated they need the approval of three (3) agencies: New York State, the Federal Government, and the State of Connecticut - and are now in the final stages of negotiations. He stated they expect to have positive news.

Legislator Crowley questioned how this will affect the union situation they currently have.

Dr. Hirko stated Northwell Hospital is already unionized with the same union. He stated there are no changes anticipated with their current union situation.

Chairwoman Addonizio requested clarification on the hospital's 2023 employee pay increase situation.

Dr. Hirko stated the union negotiators are currently working on it.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if there are any plans on expanding to the western side of Putnam County.

Dr. Hirko stated that is a possibility they may look at in the future. He stated with the current resources available they have made the first outreach of growth to the Mahopac area. He stated in the future they are anticipating a provider shortage solely in Primary Care.

Legislator Gouldman mentioned the uptick of senior citizens in Putnam County. He stated senior citizens account for about 25% of the residents in the county.

Dr. Hirko stated this is an area they are pivoting in. He stated the services that are offered at the hospital are fitting the criteria for chronic health issues.

Legislator Montgomery encouraged looking into women's health for the aging population due to this area often being ignored. She questioned the overdose treatment in the emergency room.

Dr. Hirko stated the patients receive Suboxone in the facility and are then provided with a limited supply when discharged. He stated they are also looking into more funding in order to obtain more access to Suboxone.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on if the hospital receives any funding from the Opioid Settlement Fund.

Dr. Hirko stated they do not receive funds from the Opioid Settlement Fund. He explained they utilize grants and other avenues to fund this area.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Dr. Hirko for his work as well as responding to her questions.

Dr. Hirko followed up on Legislature Montgomery's question on women's health for the aging population. He stated when the labor and delivery unit reopened, they also pivoted their focus to the aging population as well. He stated over 350 patients have come through for women's health in general. He explained their intentions to integrate Cardiology and Gynecology to benefit this area.

A Member of the Public questioned if the administration is going to be involved in the current issue with the pay negotiations.

Dr. Hirko stated they are notified on the current negotiation with the union.

A Member of the Public questioned if they view this as a legal or ethical situation.

Dr. Hirko stated he cannot answer this question. He stated this is a situation that must be resolved between the union leadership and the negotiators.

A Member of the Public questioned if Dr. Hirko believes this issue should have been dealt with in a timely manner.

Dr. Hirko stated he cannot discuss this. He recognized that there have been people working on this for almost 2 years.

A Member of the Public questioned if HR or the administration has been communicating with the employees.

Dr. Hirko stated there has been communication with the employees.

A Member of the Public stated there has been poor communication from the administration

Chairwoman Addonizio thanked Dr. Hirko for attending this evening.

**Item #7 - Other Business - None**

**Item #8 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 6:47pm Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Aubrey Dall, PILOT Intern.