

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

Chairwoman Montgomery, Legislators Addonizio & Russo

**Wednesday July 22, 2026
(Immediately following the Protective Meeting that started at 6:00 p.m.)**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 p.m. by Chairwoman Montgomery who requested that Legislator Russo lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio, Legislator Russo and Chairwoman Montgomery were present.

Item #3 - Acceptance of Minutes – February 11, 2026

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Update – Food Insecurity

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she would provide an update since last month's meeting. She stated that she has spoken with stakeholders, community partners and Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi regarding how the \$150,000, which the Legislature previously voted to move into sub contingency to address food insecurity, could be used lawfully, effectively and within the available time frame. She stated that one possibility is for Cornell to administer a County-wide food purchasing and distribution program through the existing coalition, to help stabilize our food pantries and address the loss of the Meals on Main Program. She stated that stakeholders indicated that the Bountiful Meals program needs support, which is a collaboration with Second Chance Foods. She stated that the potential funding framework could be \$100,000 for food pantry stabilization and \$50,000 to expand Bountiful Meals and that more cold storage is needed. She stated that she hopes to finalize the plan at this meeting, and invited stakeholders present to contribute their ideas.

Commissioner of the Putnam Department of Social Services Sara Servadio stated that she met with Martha Elder, Executive Director of Second Chance Foods, and Stefanie Hubert, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) to identify the top issues to focus on. She stated that there are a significant number of individuals in the County who are just over the annual earnings amount to receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), including seniors, disabled individuals and veterans. She stated that transportation to food resources was also an issue discussed.

Chairwoman Montgomery questioned if CCE is just a pass-through for funding and does the County have existing relationships with eleven County food pantries, so that getting funding to them would involve passage of a resolution and not entering into new contracts. She stated that Meals on Main still go to certain areas of the County, but there are gaps to fill and the Western side lacks food resources. She questioned what Commissioner Servadio, Executive Director

Elder and Executive Director Hubert would like to happen, and stated that they were sent a draft resolution, and so she would like to know their thoughts.

Director Elder stated that the plan is good and supports existing programs to help Second Chance Foods ramp up and help more seniors. She stated that she spoke to Marisa O’Leary, the Director of Putnam CAP (Community Action Program) about expanding the base of people that can access meals.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she would like feedback on items in the resolution draft, including administrative expenses and staff not exceeding 10% of total funding without Legislative approval.

Executive Director Hubert stated that 10% is the standard, and she is happy that was addressed.

Chairwoman Montgomery requested feedback on the reporting requirement in the draft resolution and questioned if it seemed too cumbersome, such as submitting a detailed implementation plan before funding is distributed. She stated that the funding will be distributed based on need; not evenly to every food pantry.

Executive Director Hubert stated that everything seems standard to what is already done by CCE, and as long as there is agreement on the metrics and data to be provided that is fine.

Legislator Addonizio questioned where the cold storage would be located, if freezers are purchased.

Commissioner Servadio stated that there was discussion about using newly acquired space in the Department of Social Services (DSS) basement and that Cold Spring and Philipstown are also in desperate need of refrigeration. She stated that DSS and Office of Senior Resources (OSR) receive continuous feedback from individuals that prepared meals go the furthest in helping them most, and she has discussed having Bountiful Meals delivered twice a week instead of once to their current locations.

Chairwoman Montgomery thanked all stakeholders for their input and stated that it gave her a lot to consider in drafting a resolution. She questioned if the draft resolution could be submitted to another committee this month, such as the Audit Committee, and then to the Full Meeting.

Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi stated that it could be passed in concept here in Committee, since the resolution was described, and then it can go to the Audit Committee, where everyone would have the chance to review it.

Legislator Montgomery requested that the Health Committee pass in concept, a food security resolution and budgetary to release the \$150,000 from sub contingency for the County-wide food insecurity initiative.

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

Item #5 - FYI – Collaboration between Mental Health & Probation – Commissioner Sara Servadio and Probation Director John Osterhout (Discussed in Protective Meeting, Item #6)

Duly noted.

Item #6 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A066 – Department of Health – School Flu Clinics

Public Health Director Rian Rodriguez stated that last year there were no school flu clinics due to the lack of nurses on staff, but now that there is full staffing, the program was reinstituted. He stated that requested funds will cover biologics and medical supplies and is 36% reimbursable under state aid, making the overall ask \$11,540.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she is pleased to see this program back and wants to be sure that there is enough nursing capacity to manage this program without taking away from other nursing programs.

Public Health Director Rodriguez stated that there is a core of new nurses in training and FTEs (Full-Time Equivalents) available.

Legislator Russo made a motion to prefile the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #7 Discussion – Update – Department of Health – PFAS Pilot Program Quarterly Update – Public Health Director Rian Rodriguez and Associate Public Health Sanitarian Brian Stevens

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that the pilot program to address well contaminants has been very popular and she believes it has been a lot of work.

Public Health Director Rodriguez stated that he is thankful to the State for funding the program and the Legislature for supporting it.

Public Health Sanitarian Brian Stevens stated that the program is in the fifth month, and there have been 540 testing applications, 480 sample tests completed and the State is notifying residents of results and approvals to install treatment where needed. He stated residents are installing treatments and initial requests for rebates are being received by his department. He stated that next week, the State will be providing training on how to process rebates.

Chairwoman Montgomery questioned if the rebates are for the repair work and if the State has released any results of the testing.

Sanitarian Stevens stated yes and that the State has released some testing results and has given them a general idea regarding exceedances throughout the County, which seem to be widespread.

Chairwoman Montgomery questioned if there are any areas where this is concentrated.

Public Health Director Rodriguez stated it's important to remember that at this point, the program is a Proof of Concept to create a baseline, so a wide net was cast. He stated that although we have an exceedance rate of a little over 20%, it's early in the program and we don't know yet if the exceedance rate is a result of who is being tested versus cluster rates. He stated that he will provide that information as the program develops as the results are preliminary to create a baseline. He stated that he will bring all the information forward hopefully on a quarterly basis.

Chairwoman Montgomery questioned if there is State guidance as far as homeowner's privacy regarding results.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that the State controls that information and members of his office have had to sign disclosure agreements, as the information is needed in order to process the rebates, however, they cannot make it available to the public.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she is aware of homeowners who thought about testing and deciding not to do it out of concern for the resale of their home.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that he has also received calls of concern as well, and people were talked through the process and advised that the information is guarded.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if results would have to be disclosed if a home is put up for sale.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that he is not sure.

Legislator Addonizio stated that yes, it would have to be disclosed.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the \$300,000 allocated was spent and how much is left.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that none has been spent yet, as rebate applications are now just being received, and money is encumbered by the State but not yet passed down.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if it seems like all of the \$1.5 million allocated will be used, based on the success of the program.

Public Health Director Rodriguez stated that it seems the funding will be used much sooner than anticipated here, but it was originally supposed to be a five-year program.

Legislator Addonizio stated that this is a great program and she is glad to see a lot of people will be helped as it is very important for safety and resale of homes.

Legislator Russo questioned if every resident is reimbursed the same amount or will it vary.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that there are three categories for reimbursements, which are reimbursement of \$5,000 for a full system, \$1,000 for homes with space constraints where a system will be installed just at the kitchen sink, and \$10,000 in the rare case that hook up to a public water supply is available.

Legislator Regan questioned if there is one vendor that people have to use or are there options.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that residents can call any companies that do this type of work, as long as the required components are installed. He stated that he doesn't yet know how the prices will run for repair, versus the amounts of the rebates. He stated that the State wants to capture the information about the costs incurred.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if pricing would be the same across the board regardless of the company doing the repair.

Sanitarian Stevens stated that he recommended to residents that they ask for a couple of price quotes, as the cost would vary based on where the company sources their parts and other factors.

Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi questioned if the reimbursements are up to the amounts by category, or a flat rate. She questioned what about if the cost is under.

Sanitarian Stevens confirmed it's up to the amount based on receipts, but he believes repairs could exceed those amounts.

Item #8 – Other Business

Item #8a.) Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) -Putnam County Soil & Water District Chair Cassandra Roth

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

Chairwoman Montgomery recognized Chairwoman Cassandra Roth of the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and called her forth to discuss the harmful algae blooms (HABs) and related beach closures in Putnam County, and how SWCD can help by looking more closely at contributing watershed conditions.

Chairwoman Roth stated that as the SWCD has become autonomous and is now staffed, the best use of resources is being considered, and collaboration with local Lake Communities present opportunities that SWCD is excited about. She believes there was a detached approach before, and that the communities being in different Towns may be the obstacle, but they need resources. She stated that SWCD could play a role in researching and providing ways to prevent and mitigate HABs. She stated that she's here for ideas on how to go forward and that she knows of

many State grants available, that total \$200 million and include those specifically for HABs research and pollution mitigation. She questioned if the Legislature or Department of Health can advise if there are any grants already being applied for, and who is the lead agency, as she'd like to help but not have SWCD's efforts be duplicative.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she appreciates this initiative and that constituents have often alerted her to funding opportunities, which she provided to the previous Soil & Water Department. She stated that she does not recall seeing any applications for grants.

Chairwoman Roth stated that she doesn't think it would have been through Department of Public Works (DPW) but perhaps through the Department of Health (DOH), and she questioned Public Health Director Rodriguez if there was anything he was aware of.

Public Health Director Rodriguez said no.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she would welcome a relationship with SWCD and the Department of Health, as it's one of the hot topics with her constituents. She stated that most of the Lake Communities have associations that meet monthly, and this presents the opportunity for SWCD or the Health Department to attend and provide education and advise them of grant opportunities. She stated that the County could be advised of SWCD's research and perhaps SWCD could assist the administration with planning or applying for grants.

Chairwoman Roth stated that SWCD could do both, but they have no jurisdiction over these properties, so IMAs (Intermunicipal Agreements) or MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) would have to be entered into by parcel or across the County. Chairwoman Roth stated that she would like to know if this is wanted by the County, before having her staff work on this.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she would want these resources, to answer to her constituents' needs, and that a lot of these civic associations are not legal homeowner associations, which may present a legal issue when grants are found that support a private community. She questioned Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi if she knows of any obstacles here.

Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi stated that the Lake Communities can receive outreach and education directly from SWCD, with no middleman, and that the Health Department already has a role and function in making the public aware of concerns related to contaminated water. She stated that SWCD is looking for a way to help the County, and in her opinion, all of these services are not mutually exclusive, but possible.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that this is a great opportunity, there's already Legislative representation on the SWCD Board, and only one organization in the County that meets annually, has been addressing this.

Chairwoman Roth stated that she knows of three, with different structures, and two that need County agreements so SWCD can work with them. She stated that Dixon Lake and Lake

Gleneida are parcels owned or maintained by Putnam County, and she would love to work in collaboration on those but would need to know if that is wanted by the County.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated that there is already an IMA with SWCD, and if there were projects of interest to the Legislature, the infrastructure from a contract standpoint is already there to enable the Legislature to allocate funds, authorize grant applications for SWCD and approve utilization of grant funds, and that only Legislative authorization would be needed.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that this would be on an individual basis.

Chairwoman Roth stated that SWCD is already educating and advising that there are grants out there, but they are not looking to step on anyone's toes.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that there is nothing to vote on and that a more formal agreement can be worked on.

Legislator Addonizio and Legislator Russo stated that they agreed.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Chairwoman Roth for her work.

Public Health Director Rodriguez stated the Department of Health is happy to collaborate with any agencies promoting better stewardship of the environment and perhaps offer letters of support or grant application assistance, where applicable. He stated there may be limitations though where Department of Health could not be the lead agency. He stated that according to the data, the majority of the County beach closures are due to bacteria, not HABs, and so it would be good to broaden that research.

Legislator Addonizio stated that she would like to recognize that July is Bereaved Parents Awareness Month, globally honoring parents who have lost a child due to any circumstance, in the hopes that they receive community support and understanding.

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that there are local resources for grief and loss that can help, such as Putnam, County Social Services and Philipstown Behavioral Health Hub, and she is happy to provide the information.

Item #9 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 9:10 p.m. Chairwoman Montgomery requested a motion to adjourn. Legislator Russo made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Dechiaro, Administrative Assistant.