

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

**Chairwoman Addonizio, Legislators Ellner & Russo**

**Monday**

**6:00PM**

**November 17, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Chairwoman Addonizio who requested Legislator Ellner lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Ellner and Chairwoman Addonizio were present. Legislator Russo arrived at 6:10 p.m.

**Item # 3 - Discussion – Update – Programs Affected by Federal Government Shutdown – Social Services Commissioner Sara Servadio**

Social Services Commissioner Sara Servadio stated that federal funding cuts have negatively affected programs, so she requested that the Director of the Child Advocacy Center (CAC), Marla Behler and the Executive Director of the Putnam/ Northern Westchester Women's Resource Center (PWRC), Paiget Solpiaget provide program updates.

Executive Director Behler stated that the Office of Victim's Services (OVS) funds programs on a 3-year cycle, making up 75% of the CAC budget and that bidding for 2028 funding was successful, with a 2025-2028 award of \$610,000, which was \$200,000 more than the prior contract, and was included in their budget. She stated that two weeks into the new contract, OVS rescinded all awards, based on a decision from the NYS Comptroller's Office, due to one program's appeal of the application process. Director Behler stated that funding reverted to the previous year's level, leaving a gap of \$116,000, and that the plan is to partner with PWRC to provide additional onsite mental health services, clinical and forensic interviewing support. She stated that although there is some state advocacy urging the Governor to continue the funding, the children of Putnam County will absorb this impact, so that is why funding is being requested now to maintain services to ensure continuity of care to safeguard our most vulnerable victims.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned if the funding needed is \$116,000.

Executive Director Behler confirmed that the request is for just over \$116,000.

Commissioner Servadio stated that this funding is relied upon for three clinicians, and that there will be waitlists if the positions can't be funded.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated that she supports this as she does not want to see children suffering in Putnam County.

Legislator Ellner stated that he'd like to see 100% of the funding given and questioned if \$200,000 is enough to maintain services.

Executive Director Behler stated that with the difference in the grant, just over \$200,000 is needed.

Commissioner Servadio stated that she and Executive Director Solpiaget should discuss, as they are partnering on resources and offsetting where possible; but they can come up with a firm amount.

Executive Director Solpiaget stated that he believes \$116,000 would be enough.

Legislator Ellner stated that if the grant comes through, it can be structured to go back to the general fund and that he would like to do this right, as these are critical programs. He stated that audit results are pending from Finance Commissioner William Carlin, and he suspects funding may be coming back, and so it should be put to good use as opposed to hoarding it.

Legislator Sayegh stated that it was her understanding that PWRC also lost funding and questioned if any was recovered.

Executive Director Solpiaget stated victims' services providers were destabilized in New York State due to what occurred. He stated that once the \$300,000 grant award was rescinded, staff were laid off, and that even though the grant was later reinstated, budget adjustments had already been made, and as the contract is already six months in, no further budget amendments can be made until March 2026. He stated that due to this, the agency is currently stuck in previous contract lines, and the surplus of the grant reinstatement can't be utilized yet. He stated that it is unrealistic to hire more staff now, as he believes the agency will have to sustain further future funding cuts. He stated that PWRC's partnership with CAC is making a difference and thanked the community for their support as well as the Legislature.

Legislator Sayegh stated that as an Advisory Board member of CAC, she is in support of any funding that the Legislature could assist with in closing the gap.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she would like to better understand what happened with the grant, as she had not heard of this previously. She questioned if they are working with the County Administration, what are their comments, and have they advocated to our state partners.

Commissioner Servadio confirmed that County Administration is helping and that Executive Director Behler and Director Solpiaget have contacted elected officials outside of the county as well.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she is happy to do what she can to make funding whole and help advocate on the state level.

Carmel resident Brett Yarris stated that, in his opinion, the investment in mental health services should not only be seen as making up a fiscal shortfall, but can potentially yield a return on investment in other forms; including less Emergency Room and psychiatric visits, to lower the costs working families sustain and therefore create a good return, approximately 10-20% return on investment in the long run.

Legislator Sayegh requested an update on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) from Commissioner Servadio.

Commissioner Servadio stated that HEAP remains on hold until further notice and that the season was supposed to open on November 3. She stated that with Code Blue temperatures now, a few constituents have reached out, and were connected instead to Putnam CAP (Community Action

Program) for assistance. She stated that last year 900 families were assisted, totaling about \$1,000,000, with more expected this year.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated that this is first time that we have had this issue.

Legislator Montgomery questioned whether any of the \$150,000 allocation made last week to address food insecurity went to CAP.

Commissioner Servadio confirmed that some of it went to CAP.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if CAP, based on our contract, could be used as the mechanism for residents to receive assistance that is not currently available through HEAP, using vouchers.

Commissioner Servadio stated that there have been conversations with CAP on this, but it would not be easy, as there are many oil and electricity companies, however, there have also been conversations on the State side on this as well.

Legislator Montgomery questioned Commissioner Servadio if an allocation to CAP is needed for HEAP, as she believes there were no restrictions on the line item of the food insecurity allocation.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned if a \$1,000,000 allocation is needed for November 2025 to March 2026 timeframe, or about \$200,000 for one month.

Commissioner Servadio stated that those who received HEAP assistance last year are being contacted and as that she can move things around internally if CAP can't assist, so that people are not left in freezing homes. She stated that she needs to collect more information in her department before she is comfortable stating the amount needed to cover HEAP assistance.

Chairwoman Addonizio requested that Commissioner Servadio work on providing an amount needed, and can do that via email, so that work can be done to cover at least a month of funding quickly.

Commissioner Servadio stated that all Putnam County SNAP recipients received November benefits and that she has been looking at the allocations to provider agencies for the past month.

Legislator Ellner stated his concern that with extended cold, pipes could freeze and so the HEAP issue needs to be addressed as soon as Commissioner Servadio says it's necessary, which may mean special meetings are needed.

Commissioner Servadio agreed.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated that the update on daycare would be next.

Commissioner Servadio stated that as there was a decision to change applicant statuses from waitlist to denial, cases will be reexamined every thirty days, and that most other counties have done the same so as not to give false hope to applicants.

Commissioner Servadio questioned Executive Director Behler if she knew when funding is expected.

Executive Director Behler stated that she didn't know and there is an additional \$250,000 allocation that has not yet been used that she hopes will come again this cycle, so that the most vulnerable will continue to receive services.

Legislator Montgomery asked how many denials there were, since September 15.

Executive Director Behler stated it would include existing and new and that she will provide the number.

**Item # 4 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T412 – Social Services – Cover Projected Costs through Year End**

Executive Director Behler stated that Items #4, 5, 6, and 7 are all similar, for reallocation of funds based on her review of projections for services through the end of the year and came up in the budget meetings where large increases were expected in daycare, Committee for Special Education, and Safety Net and are zero fiscal impact.

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

**Item # 5 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T413 – Social Services – Cover Projected Costs through Year End**

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

**Item #6 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T414 – Social Services – Cover Projected Costs Through Year End**

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

**Item #7 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T415 – Social Services – Cover Projected Costs Through Year End**

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

**Item # 8 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A112 – Social Services – Utilize Opioid Settlement Funds**

Commissioner Servadio stated that there are six local agencies being awarded \$351,223 in 2026, with continued focus being as it has been for the last two years: harm reduction, prevention, education, treatment and stigma marketing campaigns.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Commissioner Servadio for the allocation to St. Christopher's Inn, and in her opinion, they are one of the best treatment facilities in the country and that she has worked with constituents to get them in. She stated that she hopes to find a way to get more treatment facilities in the County, especially for women, since St. Christopher's is only for men.

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

**Item # 9 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A113 – Social Services – Adjusting Mental Health State Aid Levels**

Executive Director Behler stated that this is pass through funding received from the Office of Mental Health, for supportive housing per bed stipend allocated to three agencies.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned if \$21,000 is enough.

Executive Director Behler stated it is a slight increase to their current rates.

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

**Item # 19- FYI – Fund Transfer 25T370 – Social Services – Furniture**

Executive Director Behler requested that Item #19 be discussed next, since it concerns Social Services.

Legislator Ellner made a motion to go out of order to address Item #9; Seconded by Chairwoman Addonizio. All in favor.

Executive Director Behler stated that this funding is in the furniture budget line and would be appropriated across other units in Social Services and to cover chairs in a waiting area, a desk and a filing cabinet.

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

**Item # 10 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A102 – Historian – Purchase “History of Putnam County” Books**

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

**Item #11 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T398 – Health Department – Early Intervention-Itinerant Services**

William Orr, Fiscal Manager of the Health Department, stated that the next six items, #11 through #16 are zero fiscal impact, attributed to the increase in children from 215 to 225 in 2025 for Early Intervention, Pre-K and the Early Learning Center. He stated that these are housekeeping items, to pay vendors based on the whole years’ outcome.

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

**Item# 12 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T400 – Health Department – Pre-School Non-Employee Travel**

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

**Item # 13 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T401 – Health Department – Districts Billing for Pre-School Special Education**

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

**Item # 14 - Approval – Fund Transfer 25T403 – Health Department – Pre-School Care at Private Institution**

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

**Item # 15 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A105 – Health Department – Classroom Staffing for Universal Pre-Kindergarten Children to be Reimbursed by Carmel Central School District**

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

**Item #16 - Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A106 – Health Department – Special Education Itinerant Services**

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

**Item #17 - Approval – Health Department – Lead Agency – SEQRA Determination – Solid Waste Management Plan**

Commissioner of Planning Barbara Barosa stated that SEQRA is required for any plan adoption and that the Legislature is considered as the lead agency, since they are considering adopting the plan.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Commissioner Barosa for all the work put into this important plan.

Public Health Director Rian Rodriguez stated that public comment on the plan will open tomorrow, and remain open for 45 days, and that he is looking forward to that process.

Legislator Sayegh questioned when and where the public hearing is being held and if information is online.

Savannah Usher, Solid Waste Program Manager, stated that the public hearing is tomorrow and that presentation is also available on the County website. She stated that there will be time

for public comment in person, online or residents can call in to the Health Department and leave voice mails, which will be transcribed.

Director Rodriguez stated that the plan was made available to all local Town Boards and libraries in print; keeping residents and officials well- informed.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if there is food scrap pick-up available County-wide.

Solid Waste Program Manager Usher stated that Philipstown currently has drop off locations at 59 Lane Gate Road & Kemble Avenue for Cold Spring and Nelsonville residents, and that 300 residents use the program. She stated that a County-wide program is being evaluated.

Legislator Sayegh stated that this is a great program that cuts down garbage going into landfills and that she would love to see Carmel in a similar program.

Legislator Montgomery stated that Philipstown was able to do this because of NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority) grant, that was used for consulting and to buy the compost boxes, and that she is unsure if a grant would be available to the entire County.

Solid Waste Program Manager Usher stated that an assessment will be conducted of the existing grants and funding opportunities available, and if they aren't County-wide, towns and municipalities will be notified of what is available.

Legislator Montgomery stated that New York State has announced Local Government Efficiency Grants and questioned if they could be used for these programs. She stated that consolidating food scrap recycling efforts County-wide should be considered.

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

#### **Item # 18 - Approval – Board of Health Appointments – Nesheiwat and Luce**

Chairman Addonizio stated that Dr. Nesheiwat would fill a vacant seat on the Board of Health until December 31, 2026, and that Shelby Luce would resume the unexpired term previously held by Dr. Schoolman, concluding on December 31, 2025. She stated that both candidates were reviewed by the Board of Health and received unanimous support for their appointments.

Legislator Ellner asked Senior Deputy County Attorney Heather Abissi if there is a conflict of interest for Dr. Nesheiwat, as he works full time for the County.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Heather Abissi replied stated that she is not aware of any conflict.

Solid Waste Manager Savannah Usher stated that in addition to this role, she is the Recording Secretary for the Board of Health and spoke to NY State legal counsel as well as to County legal counsel to make sure there is no conflict of interest.

Legislator Sayegh stated that she sat in the interviews for four qualified candidates and she is happy there are appointees for the County with the institutional knowledge of Dr. Nesheiwat and professional caliber of Shelby Luce.

Public Health Director Rodriguez thanked Dr. Schoolman for his steadfast representation on the Board of Health for so many years.

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

**Item # 20- Other Business – None**

**Item #21 - Adjournment**

There being no further business at 6:45 p.m., Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Mary Dechiaro