

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

Chairwoman Montgomery, Legislators Addonizio & Russo

Wednesday

September 9, 2026

(Immediately following the Protective Meeting that starts at 6:00 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Chairwoman Montgomery. Legislator Russo led the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Addonizio and Russo and Chairwoman Montgomery were present.

Item #3 - Proclamations

National Recovery Month - September 2026 - Department of Mental Health

Legislator Addonizio presented the proclamation recognizing September 2026 as National Recovery Month to Lauren Johnson, Dual Recovery Coordinator of the Department of Social Services.

Coordinator Johnson thanked the Legislature, recognized multiple agency recovery partners including CoveCare and People USA, and the important role of peer advocates. She announced free Mental Health First Aid training is available on October 28, 2026.

Recognizing September 2026 as Hunger Action Month - Regional Food Banks

Legislator Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept Additional for Item #3; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Chairwoman Montgomery presented the proclamation to Regional Food Bank Senior Public Affairs Officer Barry Lewis.

Senior Public Affairs Officer Lewis reported that approximately 1.1 million pounds of food had been distributed within Putnam County during the prior year, but a meal gap of approximately 1.6 million meals remains. He discussed anticipated negative effects of federal SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) changes on residents, counties, and food banks and requested County support for a two-year federal delay. He stated that Orange County's Legislature passed a resolution calling for a delay, and that he asks Putnam County to do the same, as counties would assume an additional 25% of SNAP administrative costs that would be estimated at \$168 million.

Item #4 - Acceptance of Minutes - July 22, 2026 Meeting

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #5 - Chairwoman's Report

Chairwoman Montgomery stated that she would provide an update on the food security initiative that recently came out of the Health Committee. She reported that the County's food security plans are ready to move forward, and implementation plans were reviewed. She stated that

Second Chance Foods would use \$50,000 to expand prepared-meal production, freezer capacity and countywide distribution to those unable reach traditional food pantries. She stated that Cornell Cooperative Extension would use \$100,000 for food purchasing, credits, transportation, delivery, and refrigeration, and that both plans retained the 10% cap on administrative expenses.

Item #6 - Update - Mental Health Funding - Social Services Commissioner Sara Servadio

Chairwoman Montgomery requested an update on \$2.1 million ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds previously identified for mental health and crisis-stabilization initiatives, now set-aside in the County budget for mental health initiatives.

Sara Servadio, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, Mental Health & Youth Bureau, stated that a comprehensive plan is being developed to strengthen access, crisis response, employee support, education, and sustainable community services to provide an accessible behavioral health system to meet community needs. She stated that she anticipates a draft will be ready by November. She provided additional updates, including that there was a Request For Proposal for 2027 opioid-settlement funding that has a September 30th response deadline, and that the crisis residence would temporarily relocate to Brewster without changing bed capacity or the service agency.

Legislator Birmingham suggested that Chairwoman Montgomery send a memo to County Auditor Michele Alfano-Sharkey to assure that the \$2.1 million funding is preserved beyond 2026 year-end, and that there should be a resolution ready to encumber the funds for the November Health Committee Meeting.

Item #9 - Other Business

a. Approval - Budgetary Amendment 26A075 - Department of Social Services and Mental Health - Adjust State Aid Levels

Chairwoman Montgomery made a motion to waive the rules and change the agenda order to Other Business Items #9a and #9b before Item #7; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Chairwoman Montgomery made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business items #9a and #9b; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Legislator Montgomery stated that this amendment increases estimated appropriations and revenues by \$247,700 to reflect adjusted State Aid levels, with zero County fiscal impact.

Commissioner Servadio stated that the funding includes a \$36,000 grant for rural suicide prevention and funding for assisted outpatient treatment infrastructure, and that there are State allocation and spending-plan requirements, including the permitted use of certain funds to help recipients meet identified goals.

Legislator Regan questioned whether the grant was based on the work that was done.

Director of Mental Health Social Services Paul Tang stated that each county receives this NY State funding for Assisted Outpatient Treatment and court ordered treatment programs.

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

b - Approval - Budgetary Transfer 26T247 - Department of Social Services - Director of Eligibility Pay Differential

Chairwoman Montgomery described the budgetary transfer, stating that it extends \$4,068.01 pay differential through approximately September 30, 2026, for the employee performing Director of Eligibility responsibilities during recruitment and hiring, and uses funds from a vacant Fiscal Technician position, with no fiscal impact.

Commissioner Servadio stated that this is for the TA (Temporary Assistance) Medicaid Units, as the previous director retired and it will be a promotion from within.

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

Item #7 - Approval - Budgetary Amendment 26A069 - Putnam County Historian - Digitization of Putnam County Courier Archives 1946-1955

Legislator Sayegh thanked the donor for the \$1,000 donation for the newspaper digitization and stated that no tax dollars would be used.

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

Item #8 - Approval - Adoption of the Putnam County Local Solid Waste Management Plan and Resolution - Department of Health

Public Health Director Rian Rodriguez stated that the plan is the first phase strategy to reduce, divert and manage solid waste in Putnam County.

Solid Waste Program Manager Dr. Savannah Usher provided a summary of the ten-year plan for 2025-2034 and stated that it evaluates waste generation, transportation, disposal, reduction, and resource recovery, establishes Putnam County as the planning unit, and is required by NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). She stated that implementation would include a two-year countywide food-scrap recycling pilot, targeted education based on a waste-characterization study, and possible enforcement concerning permitted haulers. She stated that programs would begin as pilots, be evaluated, and pursue available grants before larger commitments, and that some grants could require matching funds.

Legislators Montgomery and Legislator Russo spoke of their support for the plan.

Legislators Sayegh and Regan stated that educating the public and haulers about proper recycling and adding stickers to waste receptacles are an important consideration.

Further discussion ensued regarding potential need for future Legislation to enforce these rules.

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

Item #9c - Other Business - Putnam County Soil & Water Conservation District Grant Program

Chairwoman Montgomery made a motion to waive the rules and accept Other Business Item #9c; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Chairman Montgomery called forth Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Chairwoman Cassandra Roth, Vice-Chair and Treasurer Brett Yarris, and Conservation District Technician Amy Titcomb to speak on this item.

Chairwoman Roth introduced Conservation District Technician Titcomb, described her role, explained the role of the SWCD as a non-regulatory agency, and provided an update on recent district activities, opportunities and outreach programs.

Vice-Chair & Treasurer Yarris explained how the SWCD is participating in the Agricultural Environmental Program (AEM) and how it is a pathway for County farms to become Certified Organic and NY State Grown & Certified.

Chairwoman Roth explained how the SWCD Grant Program works, and \$180,000 in grants are available, as follows: \$60,000 for agricultural conservation, \$60,000 for lake and watershed conservation, \$20,000 for municipal partnerships, and \$40,000 for education and technical assistance that includes \$10,000 for an income-qualified septic technical-assistance pilot. She explained the applications process, timeline, eligible conservation projects, technical assistance available for private landowners, municipalities, farms, and lake communities. She stated that that identified needs would guide future funding efforts.

Vice Chair & Treasurer Yarris stated SWCD is slated to receive roughly \$300,000 in Part C funding this year, as the district is hitting all of its performance measures that will be used to help with local community challenges.

Legislator Birmingham recognized the SWCD for all of their hard work and for earning additional funding.

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:30 p.m., Legislator Russo made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Chairwoman Montgomery. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Mary Dechiaro.