

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

Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Nacerino

Monday

6:30PM

December 13, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio, Nacerino and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to proceed with Items #4 and #5 first; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #4 - FYI / Fund Transfer (21T324)/ Health Department/ Enhanced Laboratory Capacity-Enhanced Detection (ELC-ED) Grant Covering POD Costs February-June 2021

Senior Fiscal Manager Bill Orr stated the County received \$418,000 in additional funding to cover certain COVID expenses. He stated this transfer is simply to move the funding to the appropriate budget lines.

Item #5 - FYI / Fund Transfer (21T333)/ Social Services/ Chargeback Contracts/ Funds Needed for the 2021 Cooperative Agreement with the Sheriff's Department for an on-site SPO at DSS

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza stated this transfer is to make the account whole.

**Item #3 - Approval/ Opposing Government Mandated COVID-19 Vaccination/
Chairwoman Addonizio**

Legislator Addonizio stated on December 2, 2021, she held an event at the Paladin Center in Carmel with over 200 people attending. She stated she had this event at the request of her constituents who were concerned and wanted to have their voices heard. She cited Assembly Bill A8378 which "Authorizes the Commissioner of Health to develop and supervise the execution of a program of immunization against COVID-19 for purposes of state aid to schools; requires immunization against COVID-19 for attendance at school." She also cited State Senate Bill S4244C which grants schools and other agencies the ability to administer immunizations without a parents' consent to a child 14 years or older. She read the resolution being considered tonight. She clarified that the resolution is not anti-vaccination, it is pro-choice.

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes this resolution is very clear and concise in expressing the sentiments regarding the right to choose, especially for children and for parents. She stated she

is vaccinated and has her booster shot, but that does not mean everybody else has the same feeling or opinion on their personal health.

Chairwoman Sayegh reiterated that this resolution is not anti-vaccination, it is anti-mandate. She stated her belief is that people should be able to make the choice without government intervention. She stated the vaccines are widely available for anyone who wants it. She stated please get vaccinated if that is what you choose. She stated no child or adult should be required by a government bureaucrat to receive a vaccine or suffer the consequences such as cutting aid or being held out of school.

Legislator Albano stated he agrees with this resolution, especially where it pertains to our children. He stated there is no real evidence to support mandating children to receive these vaccines. He stated making a blanket mandate does not seem logical.

Legislator Sullivan stated it was originally stated that if the population was able to get 70% vaccinated, we would be in good shape moving forward and there would be herd immunity. He stated right now it is at 68.3% fully vaccinated and 77% of the population has at least one (1) shot. He stated we are at the point where the government said we would be in good shape, but they keep moving the goalposts. He stated he feels very comfortable with where we are and he does not like telling people what to do. He stated the hospitals are not crowded and the number of deaths are decreasing.

Legislator Jonke stated the thought that the government is considering passing a law that allows a school official to administer a vaccine to a child without their parents' consent is frightening. He stated he believes it should be in the parents' hands, so he will be supporting this resolution.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the bills being considered by the State are the definition of totalitarianism.

Legislator Montgomery stated she feels that this resolution needs more work. She stated she disagrees with combining children with adults, which she believes are separate issues. She noted that the potential vaccine mandate for workplaces would only affect businesses with more than 100 employees. She stated Putnam County only has 25 businesses with that many employees. She stated it would not be that cumbersome and it would be in the best interests of Putnam County residents. She disagreed with several claims in the resolution. She stated the County recently changed its policy for sick leave in the County Jail and now there is a COVID outbreak in the Jail. She stated the State Government has studied the disease and vaccination. She questioned if there are any studies that support this resolution. She stated she would like to hear the County Health Department's opinion.

Legislator Addonizio stated the County Health Commissioner has nothing to do with this resolution. She stated he will follow the State guidelines.

Chairwoman Sayegh cited a study from the Summer of 2021, done by the CDC, which concludes that "...public health practitioners should consider vaccinated persons who become infected with COVID-19 to be no less infectious than unvaccinated persons." She stated studies show that

children are in no danger of serious side effects. She stated parents and the healthcare providers should have final say over a child getting a vaccine.

Legislator Albano stated people should be able to decide with the available information.

Legislator Nacerino stated the essence of this resolution is the choice that people should have. She stated we do not know the future ramifications of the vaccines. She stated it would be a travesty to have government telling people what to do.

Chairwoman Sayegh noted that Florida is handling COVID better than other States and has no mandates.

Legislator Albano noted that certain COVID vaccines do not have full FDA (Food & Drug Administration) approval.

Legislator Montgomery stated there has been a 32% increase in cases in Putnam County over the past six (6) days. She stated she is hoping to avoid another shutdown.

Steve Salamone, Brewster Resident, stated he is not a political person, but this is an issue about people's rights. He stated the government overreach is outrageous and it has been done with fear. He stated the statistics prove the opposite. He stated we do not know what the long term effects of the vaccine are. He continued expressing his disagreement with vaccination mandates.

Phyllis Hoenig, Mahopac Resident, stated when COVID first started hospitals were overrun and it was a horrible time. She questioned if the County is open to being fined since it is not enforcing the State's mask mandate.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated we are talking about vaccine mandates. She stated she is happy to stand up for personal freedom.

Legislator Addonizio noted that there are 12 counties that are against the State's mask mandate.

Leon Cameron, Carmel Resident, stated that the political and pharmaceutical elite are ignoring that there are large groups of people who are against the mandates. He stated that the mask mandate is an infringement of people's First Amendment rights. He noted that the vaccines, other than Pfizer, are highly experimental and are not fully approved by the FDA. He stated a mandate would be unconstitutional.

Chris Harrigan, Mahopac Resident, thanked the Committee for considering this resolution. He stated this is about allowing people to make a choice.

Liz Armstrong, Reporter from the Highlands Current, questioned if this resolution sets a precedent that the Legislature will consider passing resolutions that oppose any kind of mandatory vaccination for children before they can attend school.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the focus is only on the COVID vaccinations.

District Attorney Robert Tendy stated he is speaking as a private citizen, not as District Attorney. He stated he respects everyone's opinions. He stated he is vaccinated and boosted, but he took a risk doing that. He stated this is the first time in history a vaccine was rolled out so quickly. He stated we do not know what the long-term side effects are. He stated we cannot tell people that the risk is worth it for them. He stated it is not the government's place to decide that.

Legislator Montgomery read a letter from a constituent who indicated they did not feel comfortable coming to Legislative Meetings due to COVID concerns.

Susan Salamone, Brewster Resident, expressed her disagreement with the executive orders and mandates from New York State.

Legislator Jonke stated he believes parents know best for their child.

Legislator Nacerino stated this resolution is to give people the right to choose for themselves.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve the Resolution Opposing Government Mandated COVID-19 Vaccination; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Legislator Addonizio clarified that this resolution will be voted on by the Full Legislature at its December 22, 2021 Year End Meeting.

Item #6 - Other Business – None

Item #7 - Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:36PM, Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.