

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Jonke, Legislators Addonizio & Nacerino

Tuesday

August 9, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 6:43pm by Chairman Jonke who requested Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Nacerino, Legislator Addonizio, and Chairman Jonke were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – July 12, 2022

Chairman Jonke stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (22A056)/ Dept. Social Services & Mental Health/ Caseworker -Liaison for School Mental Health Services Effective Sept. 1, 2022/ Commissioner of Social Services & Mental Health Michael Piazza

Chairman Jonke stated Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Mike Piazza was present to speak to this agenda item.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Mike Piazza stated he had with him Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Sara Servadio and Supervising Public Health Educator, Public Information Officer Shanna Siegel, RN with him who would also be speaking to this request.

Supervising Public Health Educator, Public Information Officer Shanna Siegel, RN stated there have been several grants that were awarded from the Federal Government to the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) through to the State Health Department. She explained the grants were issued and used to offer support to the Schools during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated Putnam County still has a balance of that funding and the grant period has been extended. She stated they have gotten approval to use the balance of said grant funds to assist in addressing the mental health issues that have come about because of COVID-19 in our schools.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Mike Piazza stated that the County's Commissioner of Finance is not in favor of hiring employees whose salaries will be paid for out of grant funding, because at the end of the grant period the County will face unemployment costs, etc. He stated there is a county employee in his department who is currently a Caseworker with School Behavioral Health experience. He stated this employee is planning to retire in the Spring of 2023. He stated they have asked the employee if he would consider staying on until the end of the school year, June 2023. He stated the individual would go from a Caseworker to Liaison for the schools. He stated that the County Executive and the

Commissioner of Finance were both comfortable with this. He stated he and Deputy Commissioner Servadio have been meeting with the School Superintendents. He stated they have met with five (5) of the six (6) to date. He stated this position will serve to assist the students who are experiencing anxiety and having difficulty staying in school.

Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Sara Servadio stated the employee who is currently a Caseworker who would fill this position brings a great deal of experience in working with school age children. She stated the hope is the Liaison will have a bi-weekly or weekly contact with the identified School Employee so they can have the opportunity to discuss any child they have concerns about. She stated the goal is to prevent a crisis. She stated the Liaison would also serve to bridge the gap for a call for outpatient help. She stated currently there is still a 6 – 8 week wait before a client can be seen. She stated sometimes when there is a person who calls from the County, it can help get the appointment sooner.

Legislator Nacerino expressed her support for this proposal and position.

Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Sara Servadio stated they feel so fortunate to have the Caseworker who is willing to take on this role.

Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Piazza stated the Caseworker worked in DSS as a Students Assistance Counselor at one time, many years ago. He stated the individual has an affinity for this work and for the kids.

Legislator Sayegh expressed her support for this position and questioned how the students are identified.

Supervising Public Health Educator, Public Information Officer Shanna Siegel, RN stated since currently the funding can be used only for students who have tested positive for COVID-19 the parent would have to attest their child has tested positive during the grant period, and the Liaison would have to track that, for auditing purposes.

Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, Social Services and The Youth Bureau Servadio stated they are also hoping to utilize some of the grant money to provide mental health first aid training to the entire school buildings staff, not just the teachers. She stated the goal is to equip each school employee with the basic knowledge of what to look for.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment (22A056)/ Dept. Social Services & Mental Health/ Caseworker -Liaison for School Mental Health Services Effective Sept. 1, 2022; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #5 - Approval/ Fund Transfer (22T161)/ Office for Senior Resources (OSR)- Pay Differential for OSR Staff Working Out-Of- Title/OSR Director Michael Cunningham

Chairman Jonke stated that he will make a motion to move this request to the August Audit Meeting. He requested that a memo be sent to OSR Director Cunningham requesting he attend the August 29, 2022, Audit Meeting to speak to this request.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (22T161)/ Office for Senior Resources (OSR)- Pay Differential for OSR Staff Working Out-Of- Title; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

**Item #6 - Presentation/ Proposed Salary Structure for the District Attorney's Office/
District Attorney Robert Tendy**

Chairman Jonke stated this is a topic he has discussed with the District Attorney for a couple of years. He stated this was briefly discussed at the July 12, 2022, Personnel Meeting. He stated Legislator Nacerino requested that the District Attorney correspond and meet with the County Executive. He stated he understands that did not happen. He stated a memo from Legislator Nacerino has been sent to his attention as Chair of the Personnel Committee. He stated, he wanted to make it clear this is a topic he requested the District Attorney work on, create a salary structure for his department, and District Attorney Tendy is present to discuss it. He questioned if anyone had any comments.

Legislator Nacerino stated she would like to make a motion to Table this item, and since that is not debatable, she would like to speak to her rationale for doing so. She read from a prepared statement, in summary she stated: her request for the District Attorney to meet with the County Executive regarding his 2023 budget request was not carried out. She explained that is the proper procedure applicable to all the Departments. She stated she confirmed with the County Executive, herself, that the District Attorney never called or sent her an email regarding this matter. The confidential presentation the District Attorney sent has been distributed to the Legislators for their review. She remains steadfast in her resolve that any discussion regarding salaries for 2023 be reserved for the budget meetings. It is her opinion, it would set a bad precedent to submit a preview of what would be presented to the Administration beforehand. She feels strongly that the solicitation of the Legislators verbal support or comments would be inappropriate at this time and would clearly circumvent the budget process. She reported that she did consult with Legislative Counsel and has spoken to the Commissioner of Finance who agrees with her. She stated Commissioner of Finance Carlin said he nor Deputy Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis have the authority to approve anything, however she interpreted comments in District Attorney Tendy's memo to imply that Deputy Commissioner of Finance Lewis approved the plan. She stated she wants this matter Tabled so the item can be discussed in greater detail at the Legislature's Budget meeting in October. She clarified that her reason for making this motion to Table, is no reflection of her position on the matter at all. She believes the comment stated in the District Attorney's memo that Tabling this matter this evening would jeopardize \$125,000 of State funding, is not true. She stated there was no action of approval requested by the District Attorney in relation to this agenda item. She stated therefore her motion stands.

District Attorney Tendy stated he would like an opportunity to address the statements made by Legislator Nacerino.

Chairman Jonke stated there is a motion to Table, he asked if there is a second.

Legislator Addonizio stated she would second that motion.

Chairman Jonke requested a Roll Call Vote.

Legislator Nacerino made a Motion to Table Agenda Item #5 - Presentation/ Proposed Salary Structure for the District Attorney's Office; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio.

By Roll Call Vote:

Legislator Addonizio- Aye

Legislator Nacerino – Aye

Chairman Jonke - Nay

Motion Carries

Item #7 - Discussion/ Administration Staff Changes/ Legislator Nancy Montgomery

Chairman Jonke stated Legislator Montgomery sent a memorandum requesting status updates for some of the positions throughout the County Departments. He stated he finds it uncomfortable when he writes a memo to the head of a department and then learns the individual has left employment with the County. He stated he understands currently there is a department head who is in the process of leaving the County's employment. He stated if not for social media, he probably would not have discovered this for a month or longer. He stated the County Executive responded to Legislator Montgomery's memo and he believes it stands for itself. He stated he does wish the Legislature received the courtesy of being informed of when a Department Head or a person in a major role, who is employed by the County, switches position or leaves the County.

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes it would be the practical thing to be done. She stated often the Legislators discover this kind of information second hand, or on social media. She stated she understands the County Executive's position that the day-to-day operations would be too cumbersome. She stated when speaking of fundamental Department Heads and/or employees who are instrumental to the daily operations of that said department, she believes it would be very beneficial for the Legislature to be apprised.

Chairman Jonke stated he agrees, and clarified he was in no way suggesting the Legislature needs to know the day-to-day operations.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to be notified when there is a significant change in County staffing. She stated it is important information for her to communicate with her elected officials in her district as well as when she communicates with her constituents. She stated the level of disrespect in communication that exist in the Administration has now, in her opinion has stemmed over to the Legislature. She stated she does not believe Roberts Rules were followed in relation to the last agenda item. She stated she will confer with Legislative Counsel regarding that. She stated the County has been without a Commissioner of Planning, and she is not sure when the vacancy began. She stated the Director of EMS was apparently let go and she has heard, unofficially, that a new Director of EMS has been hired. She stated there has been no official notification of this information. She stated over the past year it was reported in the local

newspapers that the County's Transportation Manager was named the Climate Smart Coordinator. She stated it was reported to the newspapers by the person who was appointed to said position. She stated another key position to our municipalities is the Senior Environmental Planner. She stated that position also served as the Soil and Water Conservation District Manager, the Liaison to the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board and was the Climate Smart Coordinator. She stated the Legislature has no information on where the County is with these key positions. She stated she recalled when it was announced that the County hired a Full-Time Farmer at Tilly Foster Farm. She stated she recently learned there is no longer a Full-Time Farmer at Tilly Foster Farm. She stated the Legislature, to her knowledge, has not been informed as to if there have been any salary changes to the people who have taken on these interim roles. She stated the lack of communication causes suspicion as to what is going on. She stated her memo to the County Executive was a request to be informed. She stated she is aware the Charter does not require the County Executive to inform the Legislature of these personnel changes, she questioned if that means she shouldn't. She stated the success of the County lies in the hands of all the County elected officials. She stated there needs to be communication. She stated she believes The Office of the Legislature deserves the dignity to be informed when key personnel changes are made.

Legislator Albano stated if there are real concerns about this, maybe consideration should be given to amending the Charter.

Chairman Jonke stated it is his opinion that there should not need to be a Charter change to put into action a simple courtesy.

Legislator Montgomery stated additionally there is a proposed resolution, that will be addressed at the August Physical Services Meeting regarding "Class C Streams Statewide". She stated there is verbiage in the proposed resolution that refers to a "level of expertise in the Putnam County Soil and Water Board". She stated there is no expert currently on the County's Soil and Water Board.

Item #8 - FYI/ Accident Report - Duly Noted

Item #9 - FYI/ Incident Report - Duly Noted

Item #10 - Other Business

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification of a procedural point - Robert's Rules of Order in Reference to a Motion to Table:

Legislator Montgomery requested that Legislative Counsel clarify Robert's Rules when an item is Tabled. Legislator Nacerino made a motion to Table. Legislator Montgomery thought a second was required immediately. She stated however in this instance a statement was read by Legislator Nacerino first, yet no one else was allowed to speak. She questioned if that is allowable.

Legislative Council Firriolo explained since the motion is nondebatable the person making the motion is entitled to explain the basis of the motion. He stated as soon as the Chair calls for a

second, and it is seconded, there is no debate it must be voted on immediately, with no discussion. He stated that is exactly what happened.

Item #11 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:15PM Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk of the Legislature Diane Trubulsky