

HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Held In The
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 318
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512

Members: Chairwoman Scucimarra, Legislators Gross and LoBue

Monday

August 17, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairwoman Scucimarra who requested Legislator LoBue lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator LoBue and Chairwoman Scucimarra were present. Legislator Gross was absent.

Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – July 14, 2015

Legislator LoBue made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Legislator Gross made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #4 – Discussion/Microbeads Environmental Impact/Riverkeeper/Director Kate Hudson

Chairwoman Scuccimarra requested to play the Riverkeeper video on Microbeads for the audience.

Riverkeeper Director of Cross Watershed Initiatives Kate Hudson stated she appreciated the opportunity to speak at the Health, Social, Educational & Environmental Committee (“Committee”) meeting tonight. She stated her Summer Associate Jake Hayes is the Director of Environmental Health Program for PSC Healthy Energy.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature became aware of the issue with Microbeads when former Riverkeeper John Cronin mentioned it during a presentation about Polystyrene Foam. She stated the State Assembly Bill A5896-2015 passed a ban on Microbeads.

Director Hudson stated New York State Attorney General conducted a report on Microbeads and the impact they have on the Great Lakes. She stated the report determined annually approximately 19 tons of Microplastics are going through New York water bodies.

Director Hudson then provided samples of the Microplastics that can be found in the New York water bodies.

Summer Associate Hayes stated Microbeads are simply tiny plastic beads that are used in cosmetics and personal care products such as toothpaste and facial scrubs. He stated they are added to products to add color, texture and acts as an exfoliant. He stated they have only been implemented in products since the 1990’s and therefore it is considered a relatively “new” issue. He stated Microbeads range in size and is considered anything less than 5mm in size. He stated as the products are being utilized the plastic beads are running down the drains and then into waste water systems. He stated most waste water treatment

plants are ill-equipped to capture Microbeads. He reiterated that roughly 19 tons of Microbeads enter State water ways per year. He stated plastic takes a long time to degrade and therefore remains in the environment for a long period of time. He stated most individuals are unaware that the plastic acts as a toxic sponge and infuses hydrophobic pollutants. He stated the concern surrounding Microbeads is an environmental issue and a health issue because they are consumed by fish and other aquatic organisms; therefore entering the food chain. He stated 18 States have considered passing a ban on Microbeads.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she has heard the Cosmetic & Personal Care Products Industry (“Industry”) that utilizes the plastics have stated they plan to phase out Microbeads. She questioned if that statement is true.

Summer Associate Hayes stated some factories are phasing out the use of Microbeads, but not all. He stated those who plan to phase out have varying time frames.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated there are alternative products to use other than Microbeads.

Summer Associate Hayes stated that is correct. He stated some alternative products that can be used are oatmeal and seeds.

Legislator LoBue questioned if there was a cost factor that led factories to start implementing Microbeads.

Director Hudson stated there is a cost differential, however it is not a lot. She stated with the public becoming aware of the issue, consumers have begun to seek out products that do not have Microbeads, which will result in a huge impact on the companies. She stated she is aware that dentists and dental hygienists are finding the beads in their patients’ gums.

Summer Associate Hayes stated it is important to acknowledge that the Industry is taking some steps to resolve the issues that arose from using Microplastics. He stated it is important to acknowledge the bans that have been implemented thus far have been bipartisan. The State of Illinois was the first state to issue a ban that went into effect last year. He stated it is important to discuss some issues that have occurred in passing the ban on Microbeads. He stated one (1) issue is the definition of plastic and the term of a substances being biodegradable. He stated the term biodegradable inserted in a ban results in a weaker ban because biodegradable plastic does not actually degrade in natural conditions. He stated in order for a plastic to be degraded the microplastics need to be heated to approximately 120 degrees and then be treated in industrial scale composting facilities. He stated the implementation of the terms biodegradable will allow the Industry to have a loophole in the bans put in place.

Director Hudson stated the Industry has been trying to have weaker bans passed. She stated there has been significant effort to introduce legislation in the State Legislature. She stated the legislation brought forward was modeled on a program bill that the State Attorney General put forward that does not contain the term biodegradable. She stated the State Assembly Bill A5896-2015 was passed by a huge majority. She stated the Senate was not willing to act on the Bill. She stated the Bill on a Senate level has 36 co-sponsors and therefore if it would have been allowed to be voted on, it would have passed.

Legislator LoBue questioned if there was a reason voting on the Bill was stalled in the Senate.

Director Hudson stated she believed there has been a tremendous amount of lobbying conducted by the Industry who especially has been focused on lobbying in New York and California because these two (2) states tend to set initiatives for the Country. She stated while the State Legislature is not in session she wanted to take an opportunity to speak with county governments to inform them on this issue. She stated if county legislatures pass county wide bans it would send a big message to the Capital. She stated Erie County is the first county in New York to pass a ban on Microbeads. She stated certain chain stores, such as Wegmans, are pulling the microplastic products out of their stores by choice.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if Erie County had lapse time in implementing the Microbeads Ban to assist the stores in being compliant with the newly instated ban.

Director Hudson stated Erie County provided the stores 180 days to pull the products containing Microbeads.

Summer Associate Hayes stated there are many reasons why it is worth pursuing a local ban. He stated enacting such as ban would result in the following: put pressure on the State to act; motivate the industry to seek a state wide ban to simplify their business; retailers voluntarily phase out the products with Microbeads; have a substantial positive impact on the environment.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated when reviewing the ban it is important to consider the positive effects it would have on the New York City Reservoir and the Hudson River within the County.

Legislator Gross questioned how one knows what types of products have Microbeads in them.

Director Hudson stated the ingredients can be seen on the labels. She stated polyethylene and polypropylene are two (2) ingredients that will be on an ingredient label that informs the buyer there are Microbeads in the product. She stated on the Riverkeeper's website there is a list of products with Microbeads in them.

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes it is a great idea to raise awareness. She stated there are numerous of alternatives products that can be used instead of Microbeads.

Director Hudson stated the Industry is even stating there are alternatives.

Legislator Albano questioned if the matter of Polystyrene is related to the Microbeads issue.

Director Hudson stated Polystyrene is a plastic product and it is a source of Microplastics.

Legislator Albano questioned if there are negative health impacts correlated to the use of products with Microplastics.

Summer Associate Hayes stated there have not been long-term studies on the effects of Microplastics on the body because the issue is relatively new. He stated it is known that the chemicals adhering to the plastics do have dilatory effects on human health.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the alternative substances to Microbeads are more expensive.

Director Hudson stated she does not have the exact amount in the cost difference because a market study would need to be conducted. She stated is aware of a small price differential but not a substantial difference. She stated there are products that have never used Microbeads in their products.

Summer Associate Hayes stated it is not just the small organic companies that are not using plastic beads in their products; there are also larger companies who are removing Microbeads from their products. He stated the change in using other products is very feasible.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the Industry as a whole is starting to no longer use Microbeads in their products.

Summer Associate Hayes stated he would not say “as a whole” but rather some “key players” are no longer using it in their products.

Legislator Gouldman questioned why there is a need to pass legislation when “key players” are already phasing out the use of Microbeads.

Summer Associate Hayes stated it is only a few “key players”, not all. He stated the restrictions that the Industry places on itself is somewhat inadequate and the time frame the Industry is considering is important to note. He stated it is also important to remember that most companies are still using Microbeads.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what the Industry’s feedback was.

Director Hudson stated she did not directly communicate with the Industry; however, she is aware that the Industry is targeting two (2) states; New York and California. She stated she has spoken to individuals in the State Assembly who stated a Microbead Ban will not be passed this year because they do not want a weak ban. She stated she needs support from State Senators to be proactive when they are in the 2016 session.

Legislator Nacerino stated she would like to write a letter of support to Senator Murphy.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature can send a letter of support for the ban of Microbeads or the Legislature can pass a ban of Microbeads within the County.

Legislator Gouldman stated he believes it is important to hear the Industry’s point of view.

Director Hudson stated the Riverkeeper did draft a proposed ban on Microbeads as a guide.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature will review the material that they were provided with this evening.

Legislator Gross stated he was unaware of the issue. He questioned how this came to surface.

Director Hudson stated the Attorney General's focus on the matter, such as the study conducted on the Great Lakes, assisted in making the public aware of this issue. She stated the Attorney General went to sewage treatment plants around the State and was informed that 72% of municipal sewage treatment plants do not have the ability to filter the plastic beads out.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if the Hudson River was searched.

Director Hudson stated past sample records were reviewed but she is unaware if a similar test to Lake Erie waterways was conducted on the Hudson River. She stated there is no reason to believe that Microbeads would not be in the Hudson River.

Summer Associate Hayes stated the model ban drafted by the Riverkeeper is modeled after Erie County's Microbead Ban. He stated Suffolk County is currently considering a ban and the State of Illinois passed a ban on Microbeads.

Former Legislator Sam Oliverio stated he agrees with Legislator Gouldman that the other side needs to be represented. He stated however, the County has always been the forefront of many health issues. He stated once the other side is represented he would recommend considering the Microbead Ban.

Legislator Addonizio stated she would be in favor of the Microbeads ban. She stated it is important to know that the average person does have high levels of BPAs in their systems.

Item #5 – Discussion/Putnam Community Action Program (CAP)/Funding for 2016 Fiscal Year

Putnam CAP Director Judy Callahan stated CAP is a program that serves individuals with low income. She stated this is the first time CAP is requesting financial assistance from the County. She stated CAP's primary source of funding is a federal grant, Community Services Block Grant. She stated CAP receives other small grants that assist in funding the food programs. She stated in the six (6) years she has worked at CAP the federal grant has decreased almost by 50%. She stated the food programs are still sustainable because of donations made by the public and supermarkets. She stated she has additional information for the Committee that will show CAP's budget and how the funds are spent.

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

Director Callahan stated as the backup provides the Organization operates on a very modest budget. She stated CAP relies heavily on volunteers. She stated there are only five (5) employees with only one (1) employee working full-time. She stated CAP assists in programs such as food programs and assisting with providing school supplies for children. She stated there is a social worker on staff that works with families and assists them with maintaining their homes. She stated she also provided the Committee with a Client Demographic Profile. She stated CAP is coming up a little short in funding their projected 2016 budget. She stated fundraising is done, but the County is small, which creates a challenge with corporate donations. She stated a majority of donations are made by the general public.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated CAP provides a lot of services to the County. She questioned if a formal letter requesting funds was sent to the Administration.

Director Callahan stated she met with the Administration today to inform them of the financial struggle CAP is facing. She stated she received positive feedback in the meeting and there was a discussion in how the Administration can assist CAP.

Legislator LoBue stated the average person who utilizes the programs at CAP are not the typical image people have when picturing the needy. She questioned if Director Callahan can describe the average demographic of individuals that use the programs at CAP.

Director Callahan stated most of the individuals that utilize CAP are generally those who live pay check to pay check. She stated some individuals who utilize CAP's services are employed but are underemployed.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if senior citizens tend to use the services that CAP provides.

Director Callahan stated on the first page of the Client Demographic Profile handout illustrates there are approximately 104 Seniors who are assisted on a regular basis.

Legislator LoBue questioned what would occur if CAP cannot financially sustain their organization.

Director Callahan stated CAP is a primary organization where people can receive financial assistance.

Legislator Gross stated the programs that serve the public are very important. He stated he recalls Director Callahan previously mentioning that those that have contributed to CAP in the past are now the individuals who need assistance. He questioned how much CAP is requesting to receive from the County to assist in funding their organization.

Director Callahan stated CAP would need \$20,000.

Legislator Gouldman stated as listed on the second page of the Client Demographic Profile 407 individuals receive food stamps. He stated the handout also states that 693 people do not receive food stamps. He questioned why there is a substantial difference in the numbers.

Director Callahan stated individuals could not be receiving food stamps because they either did not apply or they are not eligible. She stated the income requirements for the food stamp program may be different than CAP's income requirements. She stated CAP serves people up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline.

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza stated there are new guidelines where food stamps have dropped to \$14 per month. He stated the food program at CAP helps families receive additional help.

Legislator Nacerino stated CAP has assisted the community for a number of years. She stated the funding request is not a substantial amount.

Legislator Gouldman questioned what the definition of homeless is.

Director Callahan stated someone who is homeless is an individual who does not have their own residence and will likely stay with friends, cars, or at a shelter. She stated the County has programs in place to help families with minor children locate housing. She stated if an individual is a homeless single adult it is challenging to locate housing.

Commissioner Piazza stated the County is responsible for single adults. He stated there are more options for families when trying to locate housing. He stated some homeless single adults choose to live in their cars.

Director Callahan stated she concurred with Commissioner Piazza. She stated she believes a lot of homeless single adults choose to live in their cars because of a mental illness or other issues.

Item #6 – Discussion/Septic Systems in Lake Communities

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she received a phone call from Director of Environmental Health Robert Morris requesting that this matter be tabled to allow him to conduct a more comprehensive review on this matter. She stated this matter will be discussed at next month's Committee meeting.

Item #7 – Discussion/Delaware County Resolution/Amend Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated Commissioner of Health Allen Beals had a conflict in his schedule and was unable to speak to this item tonight. She stated the County does have issues with this matter and would like to hear Commissioner Beals' opinion. She stated Delaware County has a resolution calling for State Representatives to amend the New York State Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act. She stated in the Town of Philipstown it is hard to have electronic equipment picked up and there are no locations to recycle these items. She stated there are no big grocery stores within her District that would take back old electronic equipment. She stated she would like this item to be discussed next month and have Commissioner Beals provide his professional opinion on this matter.

Legislator Nacerino stated she has issues with constituents in her District not being able to recycle their equipment. She stated she believes it is not clear whether or not the County has a contract with Vintage

Tech, Inc. for recycling the electronic waste; therefore she sent a memorandum to the Law Department for clarification.

Legislator Gross stated the Town of Southeast has a large bin by the Town of Southeast Highway Department that is full of electronic equipment to be recycled. He stated it is very easy for constituents to drop of their old electronics.

Legislator LoBue stated in her District, Mahopac, there is a trailer to drop of old electronic equipment. She stated it is separate from the carting company. She stated it is very important that the Towns maintain the contracts for recycling electronic equipment because it prevents people from throwing electronics into the environment.

Legislator Gouldman stated there are issues with recycling electronic equipment.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to table the discussion on Delaware County Resolution/Amend Electronic Equipment Recycling and Reuse Act; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #8- Discussion/Initiatives for Seniors

- a. New York State Senate Bill #S00479 & New York State Assembly Bill #A05337/Amend the Public Health Law/Amend Elder Law/Model Community Programs for Local Agencies**
- b. New York State Senate Bill #S00676 & New York State Assembly Bill #A01323/Amend Public Health Law/Identification of Caregivers**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she has been researching the Senate Bills pertaining to the senior population and would like to see if it would be beneficial for the Legislature to send a letter of support pertaining to the two (2) Senate Bills (*NYS Senate Bill #S00479 & NYS Senate Bill #S00676*).

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

Director of Office for Senior Resources (“OSR”) Patricia Sheehy presented a slide show on the Senate Bills for the Committee Members and audience. She stated the first bill being discussed is Senate Bill #S00479. She stated this would provide municipalities with model community programs. She stated the Bill passed in the Assembly and no action was taken on it in the Senate. She stated the model program would provide local municipalities with a template to establish a telephone reassurance program or visiting program. She stated she believes that Senate Bill #S00479 is unnecessary legislation. She stated OSR has very good programs installed to assist with the Seniors. She stated the Sheriff’s Department has the “ARE YOU OK?” Program. She stated OSR implements a voluntary reassurance program where volunteers call the homebound recipients and speak with them. She stated OSR home delivery meals are done by County employees; they see the same people every day which is a visitation reassurance. She provided an example how the drivers for the delivery meals assist the seniors with certain situations. She stated she believes it is important for municipalities to create their own programs to assess what the community’s needs are. She stated Senate Bill S#00676 is part of the Care Act. She stated the Care Act would have Seniors who go to the hospital identify who their caregiver is as part of the medical record. She stated before a Senior is discharged from the hospital the caregiver is notified

on the treatment plan is for the Seniors and then the caregiver can be trained on the services that the Senior needs.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she is aware that many caregivers would like to keep their loved ones home. She stated she believes it would be very beneficial for individuals be identified as a caregiver so the doctor can be permitted to speak to them about the Senior patient.

Director Sheehy stated Senate Bill #S00676 will help in preventing further readmissions. She stated on a daily bases people are discharged from a hospital and the caregiver is not notified. She stated eventually from lack of personal care the Senior will be readmitted to the hospital. She stated she supports the passing of Bill #S00676. She stated both the Senate and the Assembly passed a bill in support of the CARE Act unanimously. She stated it is waiting to be submitted to the Governor's Office to be signed.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature could send a letter of support for Bill S#00676.

Director Sheehy stated that would be helpful.

Legislator LoBue questioned the legality when an individual that is not a relative is selected as the caregiver for a Senior.

Director Sheehy stated as long as they are considered to have a sound mind a Senior can identify another individual as a caregiver.

Legislator Castellano stated if there are disagreements in who the caregiver is the matter may be resolved in court by proxy.

Director Sheehy stated Legislator Castellano is correct, but that issue was never discussed when the Senate or Assembly vetted out the Bill. She stated she believes it is important to have the caregiver identified when a Senior is in the hospital.

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes many Seniors are better when they remain at home. She stated with that said it may be a case by case situation.

Director Sheehy stated the legislation being discussed is mainly for Seniors that go to the hospital for an emergency.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she would love to send a letter of support for Senate Bill #00676 to Senator Serino.

Director Sheehy stated she recommends sending the letter to Senator Hannon because the Bill is currently on "his desk."

It was agreed by the Committee that they will send a letter of support for Senate bill #00676.

Item #9 – Approval/Fund Transfer Request (15T145)/Office of Senior Resources/Staff Shortage

Director Sheehy stated the fund transfer is to fund temporary lines for the OSR Drivers. She stated OSR has two (2) Drivers who have been out for a long period of time. She stated one (1) employee has been out since January and the other employee has been out since June.

Legislator LoBue questioned if Director Sheehy is aware when the employee who has been out since January will return.

Director Sheehy stated the employee who has been out since January 2015 is a workman's compensation case. She stated she is requesting to move approximately \$13,000 to cover for both positions. She stated approximately \$2,000 of the requested funding will be moved to the overtime line because a part-time employee can work additional hours to cover some of the vacancies.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to approve Fund Transfer Request 15T145/OSR Staff Shortage to be discussed in the Personnel Committee; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #10 – FYI/ProAct- Duly Noted

Item #11 – Other Business

a. Discussion/Roaring Brook Lake Concerns

Legislator Gouldman stated there is an issue in the Town of Putnam Valley's Roaring Brook Lake ("Lake"). He stated there is a coagulated substance in the Lake. He stated it could have perhaps developed from algae or a septic issue. He stated he would like the Health Department could conduct a sample to establish what the substance is and eradicate it.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if the Health Department closed Roaring Brook Lake because of this matter.

Legislator Gouldman stated a Health Department representative has not been at the site.

Item #12– Adjournment

There being no further business, at 6:49 p.m. Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Lobue. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.