

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

Members: Chairwoman Scuccimarra, Legislators Gross and LoBue

Tuesday

May 12, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 P.M. by Chairwoman Scuccimarra who requested Legislator LoBue lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Gross, LoBue and Chairwoman Scuccimarra were present.

Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – April 20, 2015

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

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

Item #4 – Discussion/Litter Along County Roadways/Litter Patrol

Director of Probation Gene Funicelli stated one (1) of the components of the Alternatives to Incarceration (“ATI”) Program is community service. He stated a lot of the individuals in the ATI Program work with the Highway & Facilities Department on a variety of County projects. He stated the ATI participants are also assigned to other areas that are not affiliated with the County; these areas are generally not-for-profit organizations. He stated on a County level, the Highway Department would be in charge of monitoring the ATI participants for cleaning up the litter. He stated he recently spoke with Deputy Commissioner of Highway & Facilities John Tully who stated there are other assignments that the ATI participants are currently working on and he will try to assign the ATI participants to clean up the litter along the County roadways. He stated on a Town level, ATI participants will be assigned to different projects that the Towns’ would be working on. He stated there is a lot of background work conducted before ATI participants can be assigned to projects to ensure they are being properly monitored.

Legislator LoBue stated it is her understanding that the cleanup of litter falls under the Health Department. She stated the County has a contract with the Partner, Achieve, Reach, Connect (“PARC”) Organization for litter patrol. Therefore, she is confused as to why the Highway Department would be in charge of cleaning up the litter.

Director Funicelli stated his understanding is there was a suggestion at the ATI Board meeting for the ATI participants assist in cleaning the litter. He stated he believes that PARC primarily does litter pick-up and the Sheriff’s Department has an inmate patrol working on some community projects.

Legislator Albano stated in the past the ATI participants cleaned around Lake Gleneida.

Undersheriff Convery stated the Sheriff's Department has a Work Project Group that does labor projects. He stated the Work Project Group does not do litter patrol.

Legislator LoBue stated PARC does an incredible job keeping the County clean. She stated PARC also employs 12 to 14 people with disabilities.

Legislator Gross stated several years ago inmates from the County Jail cleaned around Morningthorpe Bridge. He stated on April 25th the Village of Brewster and the Town of Southeast had a joint cleanup day. He stated bags were left on the side of the road and the Town picked up the bags. He stated communities need to be involved in keeping the litter off the County roadways. He stated as a community we need to be responsible for our neighborhoods.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she is part of the Garden Club and they recently cleaned up along Route 9D. She stated she agrees with Legislator Gross that there is a need for the community to be responsible for keeping the neighborhoods clean.

Legislator Nacerino stated when she was on the Patterson Town Board there was a joint effort to clean up the litter. She stated the County did provide the Town with the tools needed to clean up the litter such as the gloves and orange vests. She stated there needs to be a shift in the campaign to be involved in keeping your own community clean.

Director Funicelli stated he will make the ATI participants available when requested.

Legislator Gouldman stated on May 30th the Town of Putnam Valley will be having a town cleanup day. He stated he reached out to the County to receive the tools needed from the Highway Department to clean the litter up along the County roadways.

Constituent Ann Fanizzi stated she would like the work of PARC to continue. She stated it is important to keep employment for the special needs population.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature does not want to take away anything from PARC. She stated her and her colleagues were stressing the importance of having a collaborative effort in cleaning up the litter.

PARC Executive Director Susan Limongello stated she appreciates the positive comments made about PARC and the litter patrol. She stated there is currently a State Mandate to transition more people out of the shelter workshop and into the community. She stated it is important to maintain the 12 to 14 workers to have projects such as litter patrol. She stated PARC welcomes any requests made for cleanup.

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes the Legislature is not eluding to take anything away from PARC. She stated those in PARC are valued citizens of the community. She stated there needs to be a raise in the awareness of litter and people being responsible for the litter. She stated she was appalled by the amount of litter along the County roadways.

Item #5 – Discussion/Toxic Children’s Toys

- a. Proposed Westchester County Local Law/Prohibiting the Sale of Children’s Products Containing Certain Chemicals**
- b. Correspondence/Jerry Ravnitzky/Toxic Children’s Toys**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this matter was proposed in Westchester County to prohibit the sale of children’s products containing certain chemicals. She stated the Legislative Office has received a request from the American Chemistry Association to discuss their opposition for this matter next month. She stated she is concerned with children’s toys containing chemicals such as arsenic and formaldehyde. She stated the Legislative Office also has received a correspondence from Constituent Jerry Ravnitzky who expressed his concerns regarding this matter.

First Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro stated a local law as such would need to be worded very carefully and be narrowly drafted to not prohibit economic development.

Legislator Gross stated the additional document accepted tonight, from Toy Industry Association Director David Garriepy, states the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission regulates and checks all of the products. He stated he believes that the County is out of there league in creating such proposed local law.

Legislator Addonizio stated it is important to recognize that people could be poisoning their pets as well. She stated if there is an “off” smell with any plastic toys it means that off gassing is occurring; which means the chemicals are leaching out from the product. She stated an individual can purchase a kit to test products at home. She stated products such as dinnerware can have chemicals present enough to be picked up on the testing kit.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated there are concerns with the products coming from countries such as China.

Legislator LoBue stated she does not know how the County can regulate such a local law nor does she believe that the County has the funding to do so.

Legislator Gouldman stated this matter is uncontrollable on a County level.

Legislator Nacerino stated bringing awareness to this matter is important and the responsibility of the Health Committee. She stated young parents should be aware of the potential chemicals in their children's toys and be able to know they can test them. She stated individuals need to be cognizant of pet food and toys. She stated enforcing such proposed local law would be an impossible task.

Legislator Albano stated it is important to look at all of the facts and perhaps maybe a fine can be attached to ensure there are no dangerous chemicals in children's products.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated it would be interesting to follow Westchester County's actions on their proposed local law. She stated it is her understanding Westchester County's Director of Weights & Measures would enforce the proposed local law.

First Deputy County Attorney Negro stated in regards to Legislator Gross' concerns the local law would have to be carefully drafted to ensure it would not conflict with any State and/or Federal laws.

Item #6 – Discussion/Common Core State Standards/Memorialization/In Support of the Passage of State Assembly Bill A05142 & Any Senate Companion Bill to Discontinue the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated at last month's Committee meeting Cathy Sapeta gave a presentation on Common Core State Standards ("Common Core"). She stated she would like the input of all of the Legislators present tonight on this matter.

Legislator Addonizio read a passage from Senator Sue Serino's political website that pertained to Common Core (<http://www.sueserino.com/issues>). She stated she believes it is important for the Legislature to support the New York State Bill A7994 and S6267 which would discontinue the implementation of Common Core.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Legislature passed Resolution #268 of 2013 which called for slowing down the process of implementing Common Core.

Legislator Gross stated the implementation of Common Core was terrible. He stated under Common Core, children with special needs suffer; they may go through high school and never receive a diploma. He stated schools are becoming a "testing factory".

Legislator Gouldman stated he supports the memorialization of the State Senate Bill.

Legislator LoBue stated she feels conflicted on this matter. She stated she is not in favor of teachers being evaluated on one (1) test nor is she in favor of special needs children facing immense challenges in the schools. She stated she does believe there is a need to upgrade educational standards. She stated the Nation needs to be able to compete on a global economy.

Legislator Albano stated the statistics can be deceiving because other countries test differently. He stated he supports the proposed memorialization of the bill.

Retired School Psychologist Cathy Supsta stated the Common Core curriculum is above the grade level. She facilitated the discussion further by providing an example with first graders learning how to solve word problems. She stated there is an overload of stimuli when young children are learning critical thinking. She stated there are no longer any safety nets for those who are English Language Learners or those with special needs. She stated there are other options other than Common Core for educational standards.

Ms. Fanizzi stated she is a former school teacher. She stated the “roll out” of any new program is very important. She stated there is a need for higher expectations in the school system. She facilitated further discussion by providing examples of when she was a teacher. She stated she disagrees with Legislator Albano’s comments about the statistics being deceiving. She stated in Europe there are higher educational standards and most countries have their own national educational standards. She stated she supports the philosophy of Common Core. She stated she believes more discussion needs to take place before such memorialization is passed by the Legislature.

Legislator Nacerino stated there is an agreement that there is no desire to have “cookie cutter” children. She stated she works at the Brewster High School and spoke to the faculty on this matter. She stated her colleagues believe there is some merit to the Common Core. She stated she believes that the discussion on this matter needs to continue and she is not sure if the entire Common Core Standards should be thrown out.

Legislator Gross stated that he is a former school teacher. He stated modifications are made to curriculum every year. He stated there are big issues with the cookie cutter mentality and those with special needs being neglected. He stated in terms of Europe, by 8th grade if a student does not meet the expectations they are “weeded out”. He stated socioeconomics plays a role in education; our County does not have as many challenges as inner city schools. He stated Common Core was poorly implemented.

Legislator LoBue stated not everyone is in an agreement with this matter; therefore she believes it would be in the best interest to table this matter. She also stated that the proposed memorialization would have to be amended to remove New York State Senator Dean Skelos.

Legislator LoBue made a Motion to Table the proposed memorialization to support the passage of State Assembly Bill A5142 & any Senate Companion Bill to discontinue the implementation of the Common Core State Standards; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Ms. Fanizzi stated she would like to have someone come to the next Committee to provide an opposite view of Ms. Sapeta regarding Common Core.

Item #7 – Approval/Proposed Memorialization of U.S. Senate Bill/Mental Health First Aide Act of 2015

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza stated Mental Health First Aide training is being provided for adults. He stated the Social Services Department did apply for Youth Mental Health First Aide Grant so a staff member can be trained. He stated this Grant can be used to train teachers, coaches or others.

Legislator LoBue stated this training would not be exclusive for the Sheriff's Department and first responders.

Commissioner Piazza stated that is correct, the training is open to the public.

Legislator Nacerino stated this Mental Health First Aide training would benefit first responders and the general public. She stated a mental health task force was recently created at the Brewster High School to recognize the signs of mental health crisis. She stated hopefully such training can be a preventative effort in avoiding an event such as what happened in Newtown, CT.

Legislator LoBue stated she likes the proactive approach in preventing a mental health crisis from occurring.

Legislator LoBue made a motion to approve the memorialization of the U.S. Senate Bill/Mental Health First Aide Act of 2015; Seconded by Chairwoman Scuccimarra. All in favor.

Item #8 – Approval/Resolution Supporting the Great Healthy Yard Project

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this is a voluntary resolution to educate the community on the effects of pesticides. She stated she would like to place the Great Healthy Yard Project Pledge (http://tghyp.com/?page_id=468) on the Putnam County Legislature webpage.

Legislator Gross stated he supports this idea because homeowners fertilize their lawns and use pesticides. He stated the products do end up in the water system.

Legislator Nacerino stated she is very supportive of this resolution. She stated it is a proactive approach that is not a ban.

Legislator LoBue made a motion to approve the resolution supporting the Great Healthy Yard Project; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #9 – FYI/Crude Oil Trains

- a. Journal News Article/ “Oil Train Rules Bolstered”**
- b. Senator Charles Schumer/Press Release/ “Schumer Announces Legislation to Fix Major Shortcomings of Recent Promulgated Fed Rule on Oil-By-Rail”**

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated Legislator Gross brought the Journal News Article “Oil Train Rules Bolstered” to her attention. She stated by April 1, 2020 all crude shipments by rail will be required to be

in the new tank cars or be in retrofitted cars. She stated there have been several accidents since River Keeper Paul Gallay came to give a presentation to the Committee in February. She stated she is glad Senator Schumer is working to change the regulations. She stated all of the counties near the Hudson River have sent resolutions requesting for more safety regulations.

Legislator Gross stated he commends Chairwoman Scuccimarra for bringing this matter forward for discussion.

Item #10 – FYI/The Mental Health Association/Events

Commissioner Piazza stated tomorrow is the Mental Health Association Recognition Breakfast. He stated on May 27th there will be a Public Hearing on the local government for Mental Hygiene Services.

Item #11 – Other Business- None

Item #12 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:45 p.m. Legislator Gross made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.