

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

Members: Chairwoman Scuccimarra, Legislators Addonizio and LoBue

Wednesday **6:00 P.M.** **June 22, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 P.M. by Chairwoman Scuccimarra who requested Legislator LoBue lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators LoBue, Addonizio and Chairwoman Scuccimarra were present.

Item #3 –Approval of Minutes-May 19, 2016

Legislator Nacerino stated she would like the May 19, 2016 minutes to be amended. She stated she would like the third sentence of the second paragraph on page five (5) be amended to state “she believed that imposing a fee or tariff is an unfunded mandate and will present hardships for those in a lower socioeconomic class.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to approve the amended minutes; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #6 – Discussion/Possible Banning of Synthetic Cannabinoids on a Local Level

Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Joseph DeMarzo stated synthetic cannabinoids are mind-altering drugs that are sprayed on dried or shredded plants. He stated they are often misleadingly called “synthetic marijuana” because it affects the same brain cell receptors as marijuana. He stated originally the drug was package and labeled at “K2” or “Spice”.

Putnam County Communities that Care Coalition Co-Chair Kristen McConnell stated up until recently it was very easy to obtain synthetic cannabinoids at local gas stations and grocery stores. She stated the package will typically be labeled not for human consumption and indicate that there are natural ingredients when in fact many chemical tests show they are made of synthetic chemicals. She stated the synthetic compounds mimic the same effects of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (“THC”). She further discussed the different chemical compounds of cannabis versus synthetic cannabinoids *(pictures on slides 3 &4 of attached presentation).*

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated it is important to no longer call synthetic cannabinoids “synthetic marijuana” because it encourages the miseducation of the drug. He stated as seen on slide four (4) of the presentation, it is easy to change one (1) molecular structure of the compound. He continued in stating that if that particular compound is not on the Drug Enforcement Agency’s (“DEA”) drug list, it is then legal. He facilitated the discussion with an example of the challenges faced with enforcing the law. He questioned who would enforce an ordinance on the synthetic cannabinoids.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated currently there is the New York State Senate Bill #S06039A and matching New York State Assembly Bill #A08409A being discussed in their respective committee. She

stated if passed they would criminalize the sale of any synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones. She questioned if the two (2) bills are stalled because there is a concern of enforcement.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated unless each chemical compound is identified, it is almost impossible to enforce.

Putnam County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Enforcement Unit Senior Investigator Mark Gilmore stated the chemical compounds for the synthetic cannabinoids constantly change on a daily basis, which makes it very challenging to enforce.

Co-Chair McConnell stated the drug tests do not detect the synthetic cannabinoids, which is another major issue.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated whether an individual is on probation or in drug treatment court, one has to specifically attempt to test for that specific synthetic drug compound.

Legislator Addonizio stated it seems that consumer awareness may be the best approach at tackling this issue.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated that is correct.

Legislator Albano stated it may be beneficial to notify the stores on this matter.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated that is a good suggestion. He stated the Communities that Care ("CTC") will check the stores for the synthetic cannabinoids packages. He stated many stores in our community do not sell it. He stated a majority of this substance is sold over the internet. He stated CTC has already done press releases and opinion columns regarding the concerns of this drug.

Legislator Gross questioned if the schools can get involved with informing students of the dangers synthetic cannabinoids have.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated CTC can work with the school superintendents.

Legislator Nacerino stated the community needs to become aware of the effects that this drug imposes. She stated the schools can be proactive by utilizing public services announcements.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo continued the presentation by stating synthetic cannabinoids are usually smoked, brewed as tea or if it is in a liquid form it can be put in e-cigarettes. He listed the various affects the drug has on the brain such as elevated mood and symptoms of psychosis. He stated another symptom is hallucinations, which sometimes can be permanent. He listed the health effects the drug has on the user such as, rapid heart rate and suicidal thoughts. He stated CTC, the local police departments and Putnam County Sheriff's Department run a program called Second ID. This program was implemented to help businesses who sell alcohol by informing them that they can ask for a second ID if they have any questions or reservations about an ID being valid. He stated he would like to implement a similar program to combat against synthetic cannabinoids.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she wished it was feasible to enact a local law to help combat this issue.

Legislator LoBue questioned if the Health Department can reach out to the store owners regarding this matter when permits are issued.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated he can speak to the Health Department regarding that suggestion.

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

Item #5 – Approval/Fund Transfer (16T114)/Office for Senior Resources/Temporary/Staff Shortage

Office for Senior Resources Director Patricia Sheehy stated an employee is out due to a worker's compensation case. She stated she is requesting for money to be transferred to the temporary line.

Legislator LoBue questioned if it is the intention of the employee to return to work.

Director Sheehy stated she is unsure.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 16T114/Coverage for Staff Shortage at the Office for Senior Resources; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #9 – Other Business

a. Approval/Budgetary Amendment 16A034/Office for Senior Resources/Elder Abuse Education and Outreach Program

Director Sheehy stated at the March Committee meeting she advised the Legislature that the Office for Senior Resources ("OSR") applied for the Elder Abuse Education and Outreach Program grant. She stated OSR was awarded the grant and they need a budgetary amendment to put the funding in the budget.

Legislator LoBue questioned how much money was awarded.

Director Sheehy stated it is approximately \$6,500. She stated OSR is using about \$5,000 from their miscellaneous line to pay for the mailings.

Legislator LoBue questioned how the funding will be spent.

Director Sheehy stated flyers are going to be created and mailed to the seniors in the community advising them about elder abuse. She stated OSR is planning to host a training in September as well.

Legislator LoBue questioned if there will be a phone number, similar to a hotline listed on the flyer.

Director Sheehy stated yes.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 16A034/Office for Senior Resources/Elder Abuse Education and Outreach Program; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #4 – Approval/Department of Social Services/Victim and Witness Assistance Grant Program

Department of Social Services Commissioner Michael Piazza stated the State requires a County resolution to allow his Department to accept the additional funds awarded, approximately \$135,000.

Legislator LoBue made a motion to approve the additional funding from the Victim and Witness Assistance Grant Program; Seconded by Chairwoman Scuccimarra. All in favor.

Item #7 – Discussion/Erie County Proposed Local Law/Concussion Law

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated Acting Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat was unable to attend tonight's Committee meeting and he requested that this item be tabled for next month.

Legislator Nacerino stated she spoke with the athletic director from the Brewster High School regarding this item. She stated in 2012 it became State Law that all school districts be certified for concussion guidelines and procedures. She questioned the need in having a Local Law when there is a State Law in place regarding this matter. She facilitated further discussion by listing the procedure that occurs when it is suspected a student may have gotten a concussion.

Legislator LoBue read the proposed Erie County local law's legislative intent into the record.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she is concerned about children who play sports outside of school, such as recreation sports teams.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to table the discussion on Erie County Proposed Local Law regarding Concussions; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #8 – FYI/Department of Environmental Conservation/Facts on Harmful Algal Blooms

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this is a follow up to last month's discussion on invasive species. She stated there are many bodies of water in Putnam County and sometimes there are harmful algal blooms in the water, which are unsafe for humans and pets. She stated if an individual sees it, she encourages them to contact the New York State Department of Conservation.

Item #10 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 6:35 p.m. Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.