

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

Members: Chairwoman Scuccimarra, Legislators Addonizio & LoBue

Wednesday

6:30 P.M.

November 9, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairwoman Scuccimarra who requested that Legislator Gross lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Addonizio and Chairwoman Scuccimarra were present. Legislator LoBue was absent. Chairwoman Scuccimarra requested Legislator Gross sit on the committee in Legislator LoBue's absence.

Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – September 14, 2016 and October 13, 2016

The minutes were approved as submitted.

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

Item #4 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment (16A074)/Department of Social Services/Child Advocacy Center Grant Funds

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza stated this is an amendment to the budget. He stated it accommodates the Tier 1 grant for the Child Advocacy Center. He stated it rearranges funds in order to buy a Digital Video Recorder, have a training budget, and to have a contractual agreement with a consultant. He stated this is only changing the appropriation of funds, with no fiscal impact.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to move Budgetary Amendment (16A074) to the Audit and Administration meeting; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Item #5 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment (16A078)/Health Department/Account for Increased Early Intervention and Pre-K Mandated Costs

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this increase was discussed at the Health Budget Meeting. She stated there is a fiscal impact due to the transportation costs increasing. She stated the private institution costs have also gone up.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to move Budgetary Amendment (16A078) to the Audit and Administration meeting; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she would be proceeding through the agenda out of order.

Item #7 - Discussion/Protecting our Borders from Drugs/Sheriff Donald B. Smith

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she feels that it is very important to discuss the drug crisis in Putnam County and all across the Country. She stated hearing from the Sheriff will provide a different angle on the discussion. She thanked the Sheriff for coming to address the issue.

Sheriff Donald B. Smith thanked Chairwoman Scuccimarra for the invitation to come speak on the drug issue. He also thanked the rest of the Legislators. He stated that he is honored to have served in the Armed Forces and as a Law Enforcement executive. He stated this gives him a unique perspective because the fight against drugs involves both the military and law enforcement. He stated that the primary mission of all levels of government is to protect the citizens and keep them safe. He stated it is his first priority to protect the citizens of Putnam County so that they can enjoy the freedoms of our Nation. He stated being here in Putnam County as an illegal immigrant is a civil violation of immigration law and that crossing the border in Texas or New Mexico is a criminal violation. He cited instances of illegal immigrants committing crimes to demonstrate the dangers of having unsecure borders. He stated that securing the borders will not completely stop the flow of drugs into America, but it will play a role in decreasing the volume of drugs getting into our community and poisoning people. He noted the lack of focus on border security from the Federal Government, which has put the burden of policing the illegal immigrants on local authorities. He stated the main issue is the people who have come here illegally, committed crimes, served jail time and then are not deported to their country of origin.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned why they are not deported.

Sheriff Smith stated it is the policy of our country to only send back the most dangerous. He stated that over the past two (2) years over 50,000 illegal immigrants have committed crimes and have not been deported. He stated that there are illegal immigrants in the community that do not even have an identity until they commit a crime and are put into the criminal justice system. He stated that the frustration felt by law enforcement is nothing compared to the grief of the families affected by the crimes of the illegal immigrants who should have been removed from the country before committing crimes. He cited many instances of illegal aliens committing crimes, including one where an alien murdered a 32-year old even though he had been deported multiple times but was released from a San Francisco jail due to their status as a Sanctuary City. He stated these are not isolated instances because, at the Federal Level, people are more concerned about protecting illegal aliens than protecting the American people. He stated he has been working with the New York State Sheriffs' Association, National Sheriffs' Association, and was part of a national ad campaign speaking on the behalf of law enforcement against the reckless policies that keep our immigration laws from being enforced federally. He stated that is why he and the Sheriff Associations are taking a stand on the issue of illegal immigration and protect the people they have been entrusted to protect. He stated over the past several months he has worked with a number of Sheriffs around the country, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, Sheriff Sam Page from Rockingham County, North Carolina, Sheriff Mike Chapman from Loudoun County, Virginia, and Sheriff Ana Franklin from Morgan County, Alabama. He read the script of the national ad campaign they have worked on. He stated the ad is really about criminal illegal aliens being released back on the street, securing our borders, Sanctuary Cities,

and keeping our communities safe. He cited numerous articles and write ups in local papers to show that he is doing his part to keep the public aware of what is going on.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned what a Sanctuary City is.

Sheriff Smith stated they are cities or counties that, by policy, resolution, or some form of governmental action, law enforcement has been directed not to cooperate with federal partners or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Legislator Gross stated Bridgeport, Connecticut is a Sanctuary City.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if there are any others in the area.

Sheriff Smith stated that there are many. He stated in New York there is Franklin County, Nassau County, all 5 boroughs of New York City (NYC), Onondaga County, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Suffolk, St. Lawrence, and Wayne Counties.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned who designates areas as Sanctuary Cities.

Sheriff Smith stated that it is locally decided, for instance if Putnam County wanted to become one, the Legislature would have to pass a resolution.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned why a place would want to be a Sanctuary City.

Sheriff Smith stated he really could not answer that question because he believes it makes the area less safe. He stated laws are supposed to be enforced and law enforcement is leaving immigration reform up to the next President and Congress. He stated there are approximately 11 million illegal aliens in the country. He stated law enforcement is not worried about the total 11 million, only the ones who come here and commit crimes. He stated Howard Buffet, a philanthropist who has philanthropic projects in more than 80 third world countries, is partnering with the National Sheriffs' Association because he sees the adverse impact of illegal immigration. He stated he hopes the President and Congress work together to secure our borders. He quoted former President Ronald Regan saying, "A country without borders is no country." He stated ICE, who are restricted by policy and resources, should be allowed to do their job and the public should not have to wait for an illegal alien to commit a heinous crime to be deported. He stated there should be an end to state and local sanctuary policies that result in dangerous, deportable criminals being released into our communities. He noted the economic cost and burden of responsibility on law enforcement from the illegal aliens being released. He stated the Federal Government has not always acted responsibly against illegal immigration. He requested the Legislature help the National Sheriffs' Association, the New York State Sheriffs' Association, and law enforcement across the Country to get the message out about illegal immigration's impact on crime and drugs. He stated that drugs come through the porous borders. He acknowledged that every drug will not be stopped with secure borders but there are a lot of drugs coming over the borders. He stated many people coming into the Country are carrying drugs. He stated Putnam County can be a voice with Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney and elected officials at the state and national levels, like Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Senator

Charles Schumer. He stated they need to know where we stand on the issue. He stated Americans have a right to be protected. He stated the Putnam County Sheriff's Office is doing everything they can to keep the people safe but would like some help at the National level, because the problem is bigger than Putnam County.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if either the State or National Sheriffs' Association has a resolution the County could sign on or, if not, is it something Putnam County could start, with the Sheriff's leadership and take it to the State and Federal level.

Sheriff Smith stated he serves on the committee for the National Sheriffs' Association that deals with immigration policy and illegal immigration. He stated it is a wonderful idea to have a resolution endorsing the fact that we need secure borders and immigration reform. He clarified that the main issue he is talking about are the people who are here illegally and commit crimes. He stated he would help craft a resolution that could be sent to the State Sheriffs' Association and ultimately the National Sheriffs' Association, if the Legislature and County Executive want to. He stated he believes it would send a powerful message, especially coming from a safe County like Putnam.

Legislator Gouldman stated his support for crafting a resolution.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she is definitely in favor. She stated a resolution can be created between the Sheriff and Legislative Counsel Clement Van Ross.

Legislator Albano stated he has experience dealing with undocumented immigrants. He cited multiple occasions where unlicensed drivers were involved in car accidents.

Mr. Eric Gross, Reporter, questioned if the judiciary system is to blame. He cited instances where people are freed after multiple offenses.

Sheriff Smith stated repeat offenders are always a point of concern for law enforcement. He stated while Putnam is a safe area, it is only a 50 miles from the biggest Sanctuary City in the world, NYC. He stated the whole criminal justice system has to work together to deal with this issue. He stated it is clear that cooperation is needed with federal partners, who need to be resourced and allowed to do their job. He stated Putnam County has had a great relationship with ICE. He stated the safety of the people is first priority.

Legislator Gouldman questioned how many illegal immigrants are in the Putnam County jail system.

Sheriff Smith stated there are very few in Putnam right now. He stated he did not know the number in the jail system for the State but there are approximately 750,000 illegal immigrants in New York.

Legislator Gouldman suggested putting the number in the resolution, if it is high.

Lynne Eckardt, Town of Southeast Councilwoman, questioned if the majority of drug arrests are illegal aliens.

Sheriff Smith stated it is a mixture of both. He stated he does not have a breakdown of the numbers, but most of them are not illegal immigrants.

Councilwoman Eckardt questioned if she could call the Sheriff's Office for more specific statistics. She stated Churches in Southeast have homeless shelters and do not ask for documentation. She questioned if the Sheriff sees this as a problem.

Sheriff Smith the illegal immigrants who are only here, are committing a civil violation of immigration law, they are not committing a criminal act. He stated the biggest concern is the people who are in the system, who have committed crimes and are released back into the population. He stated at some point it will really start to affect Putnam County due to the proximity to NYC, Danbury, Newburgh, and Poughkeepsie. He stated this is about solving a problem before it happens.

Councilwoman Eckardt questioned if the Sheriff foresees any issues with Massachusetts legalizing marijuana, considering how close it is.

Sheriff Smith stated he is against legalization of marijuana. He stated it can cause safety problems. He stated he is concerned about the proximity. He stated Putnam County has a low crime rate, but is close to Operation Impact Counties, which are now known as Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Counties. He stated these counties have high crime rates by guns. He stated there are 17 GIVE Counties in New York State. He stated Westchester, Rockland, Orange, and Dutchess are all GIVE Counties and they surround Putnam.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned exactly what an Impact or GIVE County is.

Sheriff Smith stated the Governor and Legislature have identified 17 Counties outside of NYC that comprise 79-80% of crime outside of NYC. He stated he is very proud of local law enforcement, schools, and religious institutions. He stated Putnam County is a very unique place. He stated he worries about the crime surrounding the County.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated Putnam County is fortunate to not have a major city.

Sheriff Smith agreed and stated Putnam County is very rural. He stated he will do his best to get whatever statistics Councilwoman Eckardt requests.

Legislator Gross thanked the Sheriff for exposing and bringing information on this problem. He expressed his anger over federal immigration laws that are not being enforced. He stated he was at a conference at Putnam Hospital where he was told about a Task Force fighting drugs coming in from Waterbury and Pennsylvania.

Sheriff Smith stated they work with the Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and Federal and State partners. He stated more State Troopers are always requested to patrol Putnam County.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated our own borders need to be taken care of. She commended the working relationship between Putnam County and the neighboring counties.

William Nulk, President of the Putnam County Chambers of Commerce, emphasized the fact that drugs are coming over the borders and there is definitely a problem with drugs in Putnam County.

Sheriff Smith stated the drug problem is a national problem. He stated the secure borders will not stop the drugs, but will have an impact. He stated the fight against prescription drugs has gone really well. He cited the Medication Take-Back Day and the new E-Script system where a person cannot get their prescription filled at multiple pharmacies due to it all being computerized now. He stated unfortunately this has made heroine, which is very cheap, the drug of choice. He stated part of the problem with the overdose deaths are that the users do not know the strength of the drug.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if Putnam County would be the first to draw up a resolution.

Sheriff Smith stated he is unaware of any other county, but he will check with the Sheriffs' Association. He stated he thinks it would be wonderful coming from Putnam County.

Legislator Addonizio suggested asking other counties to join in on the resolution.

Sheriff Smith stated the Sheriffs' Association also works with the New York Association of Counties and that could aid with getting other county support. He stated he knows the State Sheriffs' Association would welcome it and he is sure the National Association would as well.

Legislator Gross noted that law enforcement is going after doctors who give out too many prescriptions.

Sheriff Smith stated there was a doctor in Southeast who law enforcement investigated for that.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if E-Script is only in New York State.

Sheriff Smith stated he believes it is going across the country.

Acting Commissioner of Health Michael Nesheiwat stated E-Script is nationwide. He stated I-Stop is only in New York so someone can go across the border to Danbury and get their prescription filled again.

Legislator Gouldman noted that Putnam County is in a central location so "doctor shopping" is still happening and people are filling multiple prescriptions.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated E-Script is mandatory nationwide as of March 2016.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra thanked Sheriff Smith for his presentation and stated the resolution will be worked on.

Sheriff Smith thanked Legislator Gross for his time served on the Legislature.

Item #6 - Approval/Health Department/Household Hazardous Waste Grant

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this is a grant the Health Department receives every year. She stated it is very important to get the hazardous waste out of our homes. She questioned Legislative Counsel Van Ross if this was approving a resolution or if a resolution was going to be done.

Legislative Counsel Van Ross stated a resolution will be done based off of last year's.

Item #9 - FYI/Plastic Bags/"Caught In The Act"/Health Department

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the last time plastic bags were discussed at the Health Committee, it was decided that it is important to educate the public. She stated that is exactly what the Health Department is doing with the "Caught in the Act" initiative.

Acting Commissioner Michael Nesheiwat stated that plastic bags are also known as plastic film. He stated this means it is very lightweight. He listed examples including the plastic covering dry cleaning, napkins, and paper towels. He stated that this has become a problem for the Nation, not just Putnam County, because it adds to pollution and gets into landfills. He stated it can kill animals when it gets into the waterways. He stated when recycling gets to a recycling center, the plastic film is separated from the harder plastics because the film jams up the machines. He stated the plastic film is only recycled to make the decking Trex. He stated the United States uses approximately 100 billion plastic bags per year, with less than 1% being recycled. He stated the entire world uses a couple trillion bags per year. He stated that November 15th is the day for "Caught in the Act". He stated this is being done to bring awareness to the public that these plastic films need to be recycled the correct way. He stated the bags have to go back to a "Recycling Collection Center," which is any store that rents more than 10,000 square feet. He listed some examples including Home Depot, Tops, etc. He stated that these stores are required to take the bags back from people. He stated that if any store gives plastic bags, there should be a posted notice for recycling. He stated there is a list on the County website of locations where people can bring their plastic bags for recycling. He listed some of the stores including Marshalls, Kohl's, ACME, Rite Aid, etc. He stated for the "Caught in the Act" initiative, members of the Health Department will be taking pictures of and talking with people who are properly recycling their plastic bags.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if the people recycling will be given reusable bags.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated they will.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned when and where the Health Department will be doing this initiative in Cold Spring, as she would like to be there.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated he would let her know.

Legislator Albano stated he is glad the Health Department is adding to the awareness of recycling. He questioned if maybe it is necessary to mandate that stores print a notice on the bags about the importance of recycling.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated that Ireland is a world leader in recycling and they put a 37¢ tax per plastic bag.

Legislator Albano stated that a tax is money that disappears. He suggested a refundable fee would provide people with an initiative to bring their bags back for recycling.

Legislator Gouldman questioned when Ireland started the tax.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated he believes it was 2001.

Legislator Albano stated that even the reusable bags will wind up in the garbage at some point. He added that plastic bags are very convenient. He stated a lot of people believe that if they simply put them in the recycle bin, they will wind up in the right place.

Legislator Nacerino commended Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat for his presentation. She stated that she is supportive of raising awareness and that is exactly what the Health Department is doing. She stated she is against a fee or tax. She stated increasing awareness is more important.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat clarified that he is not saying there should be a fee. He stated he is a firm believer in educating the public.

Legislator Gouldman stated he is more interested in learning about the tax that Ireland imposed.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated it would be disingenuous to call it a tax if it is being returned to the person, it would be a fee.

Legislator Nacerino stated whether it is a tax or a fee, it is a mandate, and that may impose hardship on people.

Legislator Gouldman questioned where the money goes.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated the money goes back to the person returning the plastic bags.

Item#10 - FYI/Antibiotic Usage in Putnam/Health Department/Acting Commissioner Michael Nesheiwat

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated the week of November 14 to November 20 is “Get Smart about Antibiotics Week”. He stated this is a national problem and that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports the Country is using a lot more antibiotics to treat non-bacterial infections, such as viral infections. He stated patients feel dissatisfied if they go to the doctor when they are sick and leave without a prescription. He cited MRSA and how it used to be cured using one (1) antibiotic but it has now grown resistant to it. He stated “bugs” are now becoming “superbugs” due to antibiotic resistance. He stated this is due to patients being prescribed “supercillin” which treats everything, as opposed to a direct antibiotic for the problem. He stated the Health Department wants to get the message out to patients that it is normal for a doctor to say an antibiotic is not needed. He stated the Health Department is also reeducating doctors to have them focus on viral infections. He added that educational posters will be brought to every doctor’s office in the county. He cited examples of sicknesses that do not need antibiotics.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra noted that many of the animals we eat are given antibiotics.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated it is not just antibiotics, it is steroids and hormones.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the educational poster is available online.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated it is.

Legislator Nacerino stated it is great to raise awareness about this issue. She stated a lot of the responsibility falls back on the doctor to not overprescribe. She stated there are many potentially dangerous outcomes for having too much medicine. She added if a patient is not satisfied with not being prescribed medicine, it is up to the doctor to firmly state what the remedy is. She stated the doctor should not appease the patient because it is actually to their detriment.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated that unfortunately the Health Department cannot dictate every practice. He stated it takes a long time to convince patients to not take antibiotics and only do supportive care. He stated he agrees that the responsibility lies with the doctors.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra noted that it helps to make the patients aware of the dangers of taking too many antibiotics.

Item #12 - Other Business

a. FYI/Fund Transfer Request (16T340)/Office For Senior Resources/BIP-NYCONNECTS

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this provides information on what programs are available to seniors.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to move Fund Transfer Request (16T340) to the Audit and Administration meeting; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #11 - FYI/ProAct Report

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated Putnam County residents are saving money at a rate of 62%.

Item #8 - Verbal Update/E-Waste

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the Town of Southeast is moving their e-waste container and considering adding a security camera. She stated the hope is to keep people from different areas, like Connecticut, from dropping their e-waste off.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated the e-waste is just left all over the place, not in the specified container.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated the e-waste is currently being picked up free of charge and without a contract.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated she has talked with the Town of Southeast Highway Superintendent Michael Bruen about this issue.

Legislator Gross questioned where the container will be moved.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated she believes it will still be at the Town of Southeast Highway Department.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated it will now be behind a fence.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated only doing drop off on Saturdays was considered, but the town is worried e-waste will just be left all over. She stated it was decided to put up security cameras.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra noted that most other towns have the drop off point either secured or have security cameras.

Item #13 – Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Ed Gordon.