

**PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM #318
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Gouldman & Legislators Castellano & Jonke

Tuesday

September 19, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 6:00p.m. by Chairman Gouldman who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Castellano, Jonke and Chairman Gouldman were present. Legislator Jonke had to leave the meeting approximately 6:15p.m.

Item #3 - Approval/Protective Services Committee Meeting Minutes July 18, 2017

Chairman Gouldman stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/NYS STOP-DWI Foundation Grant for 2017-2018/Probation Director Funicelli

Probation Director Funicelli stated the Probation Department has applied for this grant, each year it has been offered. He stated the grant is run through the NYS Stop DWI Foundation. He stated Putnam County is eligible to receive \$10,000. He stated he has already applied for the grant in order to not miss the deadline, which was September 15, 2017. He stated unfortunately, each year from the time that the grant is announced to the due date for the application it is a very short window. He stated certain times throughout the year the police agencies do extra patrols, especially around holidays. He stated the officers who cover the shifts submit their overtime to the Probation Department. He stated then the Probation Department submits for reimbursement to cover the overtime costs with the funds from this grant.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to approve NYS STOP-DWI Foundation Grant for 2017-2018; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #5 - Approval/FY2017 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)/Bureau of Emergency Services

Deputy Commissioner Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated this is the same grant that is applied for yearly. He stated it is a 100% match in-kind that goes against his salary and EMS Director Bob Cuomo's salary.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to approve FY2017 Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG)/Bureau of Emergency Services; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Item#6 - Approval/Fund Transfer (17T212)/Drug Testing Supplies/Probation Director Funicelli

Probation Director Gene Funicelli stated he is requesting that funds be transferred from a vacancy budget line and be transferred to offset the cost of the drug testing equipment.

Chairman Gouldman requested the average cost of the drug testing.

Probation Director Gene Funicelli stated that they have expanded the testing that is done through the Probation Department. He stated the cost is related to the supplies such as the reagents and the testing materials to run the tests. He stated that per year they are tracking a cost of approximately \$45,000. He stated they do the testing for the Drug Treatment Court participants as well as the probationers that are on supervision.

Chairman Gouldman questioned if there is going to be a need to increase the budget for the drug testing in 2018.

Probation Director Gene Funicelli stated a local law was passed (*R/199-2014, LL#9*) giving authorization to the Probation Department to collect a drug testing fee from those who come in for the testing. He stated that revenue helps to offset the expense. He stated currently a review is being done of the cost to the Probation Department to do the drug testing versus the fee that is being charged to the participants. He stated that he anticipates there will be a change to the fee.

Legislator Castellano questioned what the percentage is of the people who actually pay the fee.

Probation Director Gene Funicelli stated the Drug Treatment Court participants are ordered to have the testing done and to pay the fee. He stated there is a waiver built into the law. He stated if a waiver is submitted it is reviewed against specific guidelines to determine if it would be appropriate to grant a waiver. He stated approximately 10% are granted a waiver. He stated if a waiver is granted it is usually for a specified period of time. He stated those granted waivers are reviewed periodically to see if the applicants' circumstances have changed, providing them the ability to pay the drug testing fee.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what the fee charge to the participants is.

Probation Director Gene Funicelli stated it is a fee of \$150 for the year.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if monthly payments are an option.

Probation Director Gene Funicelli stated that is an option. He stated they prefer getting it at the beginning of the year to evaluate the budget they have to work with for the year.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to approval/Fund Transfer (17T212)/Drug Testing Supplies; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #7 - FYI/Budgetary Amendment (17A048)/Road Patrol /T-Commission Funds to Purchase Simunitions Training Equipment and Other Weapons Equipment/Sheriff's Department

Sergeant William Meyer stated the funding will be used for equipment that is used during active shooter drills for the Sheriff's Department.

Chairman Gouldman explained that the T-Commission is a budget line in the Sheriff's Department that is funded through payments from inmates to make phone calls.

Item #8 - Discussion/Breakneck Ridge/Representative from NY/NJ Trail Conference: Hank Osborn, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference, Regional Programs Manager & NY East of Hudson Program Coordinator

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she was recently at a Chamber of Commerce Meeting where Hank Osborn, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference spoke on the topic of Breakneck Ridge. She stated she is well versed about the challenges which exist at this extremely popular hiking location. She stated she requested that Mr. Osborn come and share his wealth of knowledge with the Legislature. She stated that this is becoming a critical issue. She stated there is a huge drain on the emergency services community, volunteer fire department and the Village of Cold Spring. The parked cars and pedestrian traffic along the Route 9D corridor is a hazard. She stated that this situation has become a real threat to the safety of the residents and the visitors. She stated she has been advocating and will continue to do so to get action taken to increase the level of safety for all involved. She stated she met with Sheriff Smith to request that an Officer be dedicated 2-3 days a week to patrol the Route 9D corridor and issue tickets to the illegally parked vehicles. She stated that there is another location facing similar problems. She stated that is the Falls at Philips Brook.

Chairman Gouldman stated recently on a Sunday afternoon he took a train from Peekskill to Grand Central. He stated the train was packed with young people with bikes and those who had been hiking at Breakneck Ridge. He stated it is certainly a revenue maker for the MTA.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated that the MTA has approximately six (6) more stops to the Breakneck Ridge stop on the weekends. She stated the amount of people who travel to this location is tremendous.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to Waive the Rules and Accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Chairman Gouldman stated this is a news article printed in the Highlands Current, reporting that the Breakneck Ridge hike will be closed as of January 2018.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated Linda Cooper, Regional Director of NYS Parks told her that her department is understaffed.

Hank Osborn, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference, stated that he and his team run programs throughout the different regions of New York State and New Jersey. He stated three (3) of the programs he is managing are based around Breakneck Ridge. He stated the programs are: Trail Maintenance, Trail Re-Building, and tonight he will speaking about the 3rd program, Trail Steward Program. He stated that Breakneck Ridge is considered the #1 most popular day hike in North America. He stated the Trail Stewards have been manually counting the number of hikers on Saturday and Sunday from 8:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. from Memorial Day weekend through to Columbus Day Weekend for the past four (4) years. He stated there are over 100,000 hikers that visit the Breakneck trail annually. He stated that accounts only for the one (1) trail, there are three (3) other trails nearby. He stated they count the hikers as they ascend the trail. So if a hiker goes up

and comes down a different trail they are not included in the count, nor are the weekday hikers included in the total. He stated as a result of all of this traffic on the trails they are eroding and getting degraded. He stated hikers are getting lost, hurt and EMS is being called in quite often. He stated in 2013 when the Trail Steward Program (Program) first began they were there on duty on the weekends for a month. He stated in that time the number of 911 calls to EMS went from two (2) a weekend to zero (0). He stated since 2013 then they have increased their Program. He stated the Breakneck Ridge hike is a challenging and difficult one. He stated many people arrive unprepared for the level of hike that Breakneck Ridge is. He stated the Trail Stewards (TS) will make recommendations of other things those folks, the ones in flip flops, to do in the area. He stated the TS will also offer the option to them to head into Cold Spring to buy the proper gear. He stated the MTA did increase the number of stops at Breakneck last year and this year from two (2) to six (6) per weekend day. He stated they have estimated of the total amount of people who they have counted 2/3 arrive by car and 1/3 by train. He stated the highest counted number of hikers getting out at the Breakneck Ridge stop was 425. He stated on a nice weather day on Saturday and Sunday the average amount of hiker is 1,000 per day. He stated on a rainy day there have been still a couple of hundred hikers. He stated the TS are trained in Advanced First Aid Certification and CPR. He stated it is an eight (8) day training course. He stated they are also trained in the "leave no trace principles": plan ahead, prepare, travel on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize impacts, respect wildlife and be considerate of others. He stated they pass out to each incoming hiker a business card with a cell phone number on it in the event that the hiker needs help. He stated the cell number is also on the map. He stated so in a big number of cases the hikers use that cell number. He stated although it does not eliminate the need for 911, but the TS can evaluate the call/situation and then determine if the situation requires additional assistance. He stated the funding for this program is self-funded through the Trail Conference. He stated they work to raise money privately. He stated up until this year the Putnam County Tourism gave funding. He stated Dutchess County Tourism still does give them funding. He stated that REI gives funding and the local Outfitters retail in Beacon provides them the uniforms. He stated this year they did find a private donor. He stated they have not been able to receive money from New York State yet. He stated the New York States Parks Department is trying to find a way to distribute some funding to the Program. He stated the office of New York State Parks approached NY/NJ Trail Conference in 2013 and said they needed help managing the crowds at Breakneck Ridge. He stated since 2013, as stated earlier the crowds have increased dramatically. He provided statistics in terms of rescues, lost hikers, hikers who were turned away, hikers sent to Cold Spring and hikers sent to Beacon. He stated the number of injuries treated, 16, this year to date is slightly up from the past years. He stated the lost hiker numbers have gone down from previous years. He spoke to a slide in his presentation that displayed the following: 2013 the largest number of hikers in a day was in the 600s, 2014 on two (2) days there were 1,000 hikers counted, 2015 on 14 days there were 1,000 hikers counted and in 2016 there were 32 days that there were 1,000 hikers counted. He stated this year, 2017, it is about the same as 2016. He stated through social media the NY/NJ Trail Conference is gearing hikers to other great hiking spots. He stated he attributes that campaign to keeping the number of hikers this year in line with 2016 rather than experiencing the continued increase. He stated another challenge at Breakneck Ridge is the graffiti. He stated there are volunteers who help maintain the trails. He stated the NY/NJ Trail Conference has only a staff of 30 employees. He stated they leverage

over 2,000 volunteers per year. He stated last year there were over 140,000 volunteer hours logged throughout the entire region.

Legislator Sullivan questioned if a fee could be charged for parking, and have that money collected put towards the expenses incurred by this popular hiking location.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated that she has looked into that. She stated any money collected would go to the New York State general budget. She stated there is a need for more New York State Park employees and funding for the NY/NJ Trail Conference. She requested that her colleagues support her in her request that a dedicated Sheriff's Road Patrol Deputy be assigned to the area, at least on a part-time basis. She stated currently the Sheriff does assign patrols to the area, every now and then, and it is very effective. She stated at the meeting earlier today regarding this topic, resulted in hearing that the EMS responders are being drained. She stated the TS and Park Police will find the lost hikers, she stated any calls involving injuries are directed to the Volunteer Firefighters to respond. She stated it not only takes them away from fighting fires, it puts them at risk. She stated there are calls that come in 4:30p.m.- 5:00p.m. of an injured hiker, and then that means the injured hikers and the Volunteer Firefighters are up on the mountain in the dark.

Legislator Nacerino stated that it was stated earlier this year that rope rescue was going to be a rescue method used by the newly created Technical Rescue Team and in turn help to alleviate some of the burden on the Volunteer Fire Department (*approved Reso#168-2017- Creation of Technical Rescue Team.*) with the calls that come from Breakneck Ridge.

Acting Bureau of Emergency Services Commissioner Kenneth Clair stated to date the Technical Rescue Team has 44 members going through training. He stated that it has been decided to add more of a search and rescue to the training for the Technical Rescue Team. He stated as Legislator Scuccimarra stated the Cold Spring Volunteer Fire Department members and local volunteers are totally being taxed. He stated a trailer is being stored at the North Highlands fire house. He stated then the team will be ready to be deployed. He stated again, the Technical Rescue Team is made up of volunteers.

Barney Malloy, Resident, questioned if the MTA has been asked to contribute funding.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she brought that up at her meeting today as part of the discussion.

Hank Osborn, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference stated he asked the MTA if they would help fund the Program, but was told no, several times. He stated roughly MTA is making \$1 million a year just from the Breakneck Ridge ridership.

Chairman Gouldman questioned if there are any statistics kept in terms of the number of hikers who go into the Village of Cold Spring.

Hank Osborn, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference stated he can provide an estimation. He stated the TS track the number of people they send to Cold Spring to buy gear, just counting those folks, there are hundreds per weekend. He stated that does not include those who go into Cold Spring to shop or get a bite to eat.

Legislator Sullivan questioned the percentage of local visitors to the mountain versus those from out of Town.

Hank Osborn, Senior Program Coordinator for NY/NJ Trail Conference stated that the State in 2016 did a survey. He stated that it showed almost 100% are from New York City and New Jersey.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated local hikers would never go on the weekends. She stated also the merchants along Cold Springs Main Street say the majority of the hikers come in to buy water and use the restroom.

Legislator Nacerino stated it is confusing to her in term of where the responsibility of this issue lies. She stated the fiscal responsibility may be at the Town/Village level or/and the State level. She stated it is a multifaceted problem. She stated it is a positive for Cold Spring in terms of tourism. She stated at the same time it is a double edge sword because this type of volumes of people create many challenges.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated exactly.

Legislator Sullivan questioned who owns the property.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated New York State. She stated they have said they do not have the money.

Legislator Castellano stated at some point of this discussion there was mention of the use of a helicopter. He questioned if a drone could be useful.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated that was discussed at her meeting today. She stated a drone would certainly help. She stated it comes back to finding the funding to buy one.

Chairman Gouldman stated that this will be an ongoing discussion.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated that is correct. She stated that she would like consideration be given on her proposal to have a Sheriff's Deputy assigned, at a minimum, part-time to the site.

Chairman Gouldman stated a letter from this committee will be sent to the elected officials in reference to this matter.

Item #9 - Other Business - None

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business, at 6:50 p.m., Chairman Gouldman made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk of The Legislature Diane Trubuly.