

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**Held via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders**

**Members: Chairman Nacerino and Legislators Jonke & Montgomery**

**Thursday** **August 13, 2020**  
(Health, Social, Educational & Environmental Committee Mtg. to Follow)

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:00pm by Chairwoman Nacerino who requested that Legislator Montgomery lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Jonke, Montgomery and Chairwoman Nacerino were present.

**Item #3 – Approval/ Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – July 14, 2020**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 - Approval/ Proposed Personnel Changes in Health Department/ Fiscal Manager Health Department William Orr**

Chairwoman Nacerino stated on the webinar are Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat, Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan, Fiscal Manager Bill Orr and Personnel Director Paul Eldridge. She stated they will be speaking to the proposed Personnel changes in the Health Department.

Commissioner of Health Dr. Nesheiwat stated the proposed plan will enhance the Department and benefit the people that are served by the Department. He stated additionally it will have a favorable impact on the budget. He stated approximately one (1) year ago the position of Director of Engineering was vacated. He stated since then the Public Health Engineer has taken on the responsibilities of reviewing and approving plans as well as managing the day to day functions of the department. He stated that employee will continue to do those functions. He stated he proposes that an entry level Assistant Public Health Engineer be hired. He stated he will now request that Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan speak to the proposed Personnel changes in the Environmental Health Division of the Health Department.

Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan stated they are proposing a re-classification of a Director of Engineering position, as Commissioner Nesheiwat explained. He stated the said position is currently a vacant position that was approved in the 2020 Budget. He stated since January 1, 2020 he has been managing all of the environmental health services programs, including engineering. He stated he will continue to manage the administrative functions and as Commissioner Nesheiwat stated the lead Senior Engineer will be doing the day to day operations. He stated it has been determined that the department would be better served by hiring an entry level employee to do the field inspection. He stated as a point of reference since work has re-opened from the shut down caused by COVID-19, there are 50% more septic repair permits to date, since all of 2019. He continued to explain how the department remained fully staffed during the shutdown in order to meet the demands of COVID-19.

He stated that he believes this proposal will not only be beneficial to the department today, he believes it will be very valuable in terms of a succession planning for the future of the department.

Fiscal Manager Bill Orr stated as depicted in the backup provided in Table A, the Environmental Health division proposal would result in a total net savings in 2020 of \$71,467. He stated in 2021 the projected net savings with the proposed changes would be \$35,503.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated in reference to the Environmental Health proposals, after speaking with Commissioner Nesheiwat and Director Rogan and looking at the fact that another Assistant Public Health Engineer, who is doing outstandingly well, he was convinced this is the best way to go. He stated he believes the overall strength of the Department is going to be increased in terms of offering future options for the County as far as succession planning as Director Rogan mentioned. He stated he fully supports this proposal.

Legislator Jonke stated he has reviewed the proposed changes in personnel and is in agreement with moving forward with the way it is presented.

Legislator Montgomery stated she wanted to confirm this is a proposed hire from within and the individual meets the minimum qualifications. She requested that the qualifications of the Assistant Public Health Engineer position be stated.

Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan provided clarification that the current funded position in the budget is the Director of Engineering. He explained that is the position they are proposing be re-classified to an entry level position. He stated they do not believe the high-level position is needed. He stated what is needed is an entry level "boots on the ground" so to speak. He stated the requirements, he did not have them in front of him, but believes either a master's in engineering, or a bachelor's degree in engineering with a year experience or a Professional Engineer License.

Legislator Montgomery stated the qualifications do not sound like what someone would imagine would be an entry level position.

Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan stated that position is considered entry level for that career path. He stated it is a very technical position. He stated again this proposal is part of the succession plan.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there is anything in a union contract or job description that would prohibit the Supervising Public Health Engineer from going out to the field.

Director of Environmental Services Shawn Rogan stated no, and it is encouraged. He stated the Senior Engineers go out on the more complex jobs such as commercial developments or subdivisions. He stated as the more entry level hires develop their

skills, they will take on higher level work. He stated there is a lot of work in the Engineering Department of the County beyond approving septic systems.

Legislator Albano stated that he is in favor of this proposal. He stated that the Engineering part of the Health Department is crucial.

Commissioner of Health Dr. Nesheiwat stated on July 24, 2020 the position Supervisor of Health Educator was vacated. He stated since then they have disseminated the responsibilities of that position among the Health Education team members. He stated there have been many regular meetings with the Health Education team to ensure the continuity of services, which has been working out very well. He stated they are proposing a 21 hour a week part-time Epidemiologist position. He stated he did confer with some of his colleagues who informed him that they have a pool of well-trained Epidemiologists who would be available to work for the Putnam County's Department of Health. He stated in the meantime a Health Department Employee who is trained will be the Public Information Officer (PIO). He stated also the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEPP) is being overseen by an employee in the County who is a trained Epidemiologist, who has agreed to assist the County until an Epidemiologist is secured to fill the position. He stated they need the Legislature's support.

Fiscal Manager Orr provided the corresponding financials to the proposed changes in Personnel in the Health Department.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated there is already an Epidemiologist on staff who will be filling the void.

Commissioner Nesheiwat stated the continuity of care and services from the County's Health Department has not been interrupted at all. He stated the teamwork in the Health Department is outstanding. He stated we do need the Legislature's support in order to move forward.

Legislator Montgomery stated she does not recall ever not giving the Health Department what they have petitioned the Legislature for. She stated, last fall when the Health Department reorganized, there was very little question and it was approved. She stated she is aware that there is a qualified Epidemiologist on staff. She stated she did raise the concern that the employee who was the Public Health Supervisor and the Epidemiologist was being asked to do too much, especially during the time of a pandemic. She stated when she raised her concerns there was nothing done. She stated but she sees it is being addressed now, and she is grateful for that. She stated the person who has been referenced as an Epidemiologist who will fill in until someone is hired, has a full-time position, which she believes her salary is funded through a Preparedness Grant. She stated the position this person has in the PHEPP is very important, there have been many events the County Health Department has had to prepare for. She stated she believes at this time the county could use a full-time Epidemiologist. She stated that she believes a full-time Epidemiologist would be able to collect the data needed and be prepared for the next wave of this. She stated she is glad the County has this qualified employee right now and she will support the hiring of

a part-time Epidemiologist. She stated for the record she believes the County needs a full-time Epidemiologist.

Legislator Sullivan stated he would like to thank Commissioner Nesheiwat, Manager Orr and Director Rogan for their work on this. He stated he would like them to know that they have our full support. He stated we see the great jobs they are doing for the people of Putnam County day after day. He stated they have showed their ability to be flexible with their staffing while remaining efficient. He stated it is not our job as Legislators to tell Commissioner Nesheiwat, a medical doctor, how to run the Health Department. He stated the Legislature is here to provide guidance and ask questions. He stated Commissioner Nesheiwat is the medical expert. He stated that he completely trusts Commissioner Nesheiwat. He stated he and his team have been doing a terrific job through this time of dealing with a pandemic. He stated to question Commissioner Nesheiwat from a Legislator's perspective really confounds him as to why anyone would do that. He stated the Legislators are here to listen, to approve, to trust and to verify. He stated he would also like to thank Personnel Director Eldridge for all that his office has been doing.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated in her opinion the experts in the Health Department are the ones that can make the assessments needed to determine what is needed not only in terms of the Department, but for the overall greater good of the people in Putnam County. She stated everyone is certainly entitled to their opinion. She stated she echoes Legislator Sullivan's comments.

Legislator Addonizio she stated that she supports this proposal and thanked Commissioner Nesheiwat, Director Rogan and Manager Orr for their hard work and all that they are doing in the Health Department.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to Approve the Proposed Personnel Changes in Health Department; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Roll Call Vote:  
3 – Ayes

**Item #5 - FYI/ Overtime/ Temporary Report/ Finance Commissioner William Carlin (also copied to Audit Mtg)**

Chairwoman Nacerino stated there are not many differences from last month's report. She provided a quick overview of the report.

**Item #6 - FYI/ 2020 Accident Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #7 - FYI/ 2020 Employee Incident Report – Duly Noted**

## **Item #8 - Other Business**

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to Waive the Rules and accept the Other Business; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

- a. **Approval/ Fund Transfer (20T143)/ Cover Dispatch Temporary Line/ Bureau of Emergency Services Commissioner Kenneth Clair (also went to 8/11/20 Protective Svcs Mtg)**

Chairwoman Nacerino explained that this item was also addressed at the August 11<sup>th</sup> Protective Services Meeting. She stated this is from Bureau of Emergency Services Commissioner Clair. She stated this request comes as a result of the passing of an employee, the resignation of another all coupled with the demands of COVID-19 and the necessity to keep the department working efficiently and effectively.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (20T143)/ Cover Dispatch Temporary Line; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

## **Item #9 - Adjournment**

There being no further business at 6:40 PM Chairman Nacerino made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.