

**HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD VIA AUDIO WEBINAR
PURSUANT TO TEMPORARY EMERGENCY ORDERS**

Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Nacerino

Wednesday

6:00PM

February 10, 2021

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:01 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Addonizio, Nacerino, and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – November 12, 2020 Meeting

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she would begin with Item #5.

Item #5 - Update/COVID-19 Vaccinations/Health Department

Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat stated the Health Department has completed its seventh vaccination POD (Point of Distribution). He stated there are side effects that people have been feeling with the second dose of the vaccines including a low-grade fever, headaches, pain and swelling at the injection site, and malaise. He stated these side effects usually last no more than 36 hours. He stated hospitals have been given the task of immunizing health care workers. He stated pharmacies will immunize those over 65 years of age, and the Health Department will handle the essential workers. He stated the Health Department receives about 100-200 vaccines per week and distribute those vaccines within 48 hours. He stated the Health Department is hoping to get clearance to immunize senior citizens, but right now the best way for seniors to get a vaccine is through their physicians or at a pharmacy. He stated the sites that the Health Department has been using are the Carmel Senior Center and the Philipstown Recreation Center. He stated there are multiple pharmacies distributing vaccines.

Supervising Public Health Nurse Kathleen Percacciolo stated 1,529 people have received their first dose and 593 have received their second doses. She stated the Health Department could easily vaccinate 500 people an hour, but there is limited supply of the vaccine. She stated the Health Department is looking at larger sites for distribution.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested that Dr. Nesheiwat respond to questions raised in correspondence from Legislator Albano.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated he cannot speak for the vaccination rates at the hospitals. He noted that the County vaccinates with its supply within 48 hours. He stated the rate of vaccinations has increased.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she did check the statistics today and the numbers have increased. She stated 88% of the residents in long term care facilities have been vaccinated and 54% of the staff.

Legislator Nacerino commended Dr. Nesheiwat, Nurse Percacciolo, and the entire Health Department for their efforts. She stated many of the problems with vaccine availability are universal throughout the Country.

Legislator Addonizio also thanked the Health Department for their hard work.

Legislator Albano questioned what the goal is for the percentage of the population being vaccinated.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated the goal is 85% for the vaccines to be most effective and he believes we will reach that goal.

Legislator Gouldman questioned how the vaccine allotment is broken up between first or second doses.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated the State is allocating 100-200 for first doses and then there is another batch for the second doses.

Legislator Gouldman noted that senior citizens have expressed that there are not many pharmacies distributing the vaccines. He questioned if Dr. Nesheiwat had a list of the pharmacies currently distributing the vaccine to help make senior more aware.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated the Putnam County website, and the Health Department website are being kept up to date with the pharmacies list. He stated a lot of the issues are with the lack of vaccine supply. He stated once the vaccination appointments are posted online, they are filled within minutes.

Legislator Gouldman requested more clarification on the vaccine appointments at pharmacies.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated the pharmacies set up their own appointments links and it is for any senior citizen even if they are not customers of that pharmacy. He stated people can also reach out to their private physicians.

Nurse Percacciolo stated there have been complaints from seniors that some pharmacies have told them they would not vaccinate them because they are not customers, which is illegal. She stated she contacted the pharmacies to apprise them of that.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if that continues to happen, where should the seniors go to for assistance.

Nurse Percacciolo stated they should contact the State, but they can also contact the Health Department at 845-808-1390. She stated, if it keeps happening, those pharmacies will not be supplied vaccines.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated the Health Department has reached out to pharmacies to offer assistance with vaccinating seniors.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is relieved to hear that restaurant workers can be vaccinated beginning February 15th. She questioned how that rollout will work, considering there are many essential workers who need to be vaccinated still.

Nurse Percacciolo stated restaurant workers already became eligible this week, and the most recent link for appointments was filled in minutes. She stated it is difficult because there are many people trying to sign up and the Health Department is not allowed to target a specific group for vaccination.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if mobile vaccination units are planned to be used.

Nurse Percacciolo stated the Health Department could not staff mobile vaccination units.

Dr. Nesheiwat stated the mobile units are great idea but require a lot of resources.

Legislator Montgomery stated she hopes when vaccine allocation increases, these concerns could be alleviated. She questioned if there is any update on when food pantry workers will be eligible to be vaccinated, as they are often on the front lines with the public.

Nurse Percacciolo stated she will put a written request in to the State regarding food pantry workers.

Legislator Sayegh stated she hopes that librarians could be eligible for the vaccination soon.

Legislator Sullivan thanked Dr. Nesheiwat and the Health Department. He stated these are unforeseen circumstances and the staff is under extreme pressure. He noted that the Health Department is not the one making the decisions on vaccinations. He stated the public should be reaching out to the State and Federal Representatives such as State Senator Pete Harkham and Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney. He stated the vaccine allotment that Putnam County receives is ridiculous and not nearly enough. He stated his issues with the way the State and Governor Cuomo have handled this situation.

Legislator Sayegh thanked Dr. Nesheiwat and Nurse Percacciolo for the information provided. She noted that the Health Department is working on an informational press release about the schools.

Item #4 - Update/Solid Waste Plan/Jane Meunier, Solid Waste Program Coordinator

Solid Waste Program Coordinator Jane Meunier stated the Solid Waste Management Plan is a 10-year plan that is submitted to the State Department of Environmental Conservation. She stated it is a guide for the implementation and projection of reducing waste. She stated the goal is to reduce waste and increase reusing and recycling. She stated a focus group was created and she is happy that there is input from throughout the County. She stated there are 20 members on the focus group and there is representation from every Town and Village, as well as the Tourism Department and the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation. She stated they are collaborating with Cornell Cooperative Extension. She stated the plan that was submitted in 2012 was written by an outside consultant and was not what the DEC was looking for, as it contained a lot of “fluff” and was not specific enough to Putnam County. She stated the plan they are constructing will have a comprehensive breakdown of each Town. She stated they will be submitting the plan in chapters to the DEC. She added that the entire plan, including public comment, will be submitted to the DEC by the end of July. She stated the biggest aspect is promoting education and they will be teaming up with a company called Recycle Coach, who will be providing an app to help educate people on how to recycle correctly. She stated it will give location-specific recycling information. She stated a main focus is raising awareness and educating people. She stated there will be stricter enforcement with garbage haulers following regulations.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this is great information and thanked Coordinator Meunier.

Legislator Nacerino stated this is a very exciting and needed initiative. She stated she applauds these efforts.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if there are resources online which detail how to recycle various items such as wine bottles.

Coordinator Meunier stated yes it can be researched online. She noted that wine bottles can be recycled in the regular recycling bins.

Legislator Albano stated it is great to increase enforcement on the garbage haulers sorting the garbage.

Coordinator Meunier stated the verbiage in the local laws needs to be clarified in order to best enforce it.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Coordinator Meunier for this report. She questioned when the public will be able to provide input.

Coordinator Meunier stated there is room on the focus group for residents who are interested. She stated the completed report will be done by the beginning of July 2021 and then there will be a comment period.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there is a list of people on the focus group. She stated that way Legislators can know who is representing their district and can correspond with them.

Coordinator Meunier stated there is currently a representative from each municipality, except for the Village of Brewster. She noted that there is at least one (1) representative from Legislator Montgomery's District. She stated she will send an updated list of members to Chairwoman Sayegh.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if condominium complexes seem to be less proactive with recycling and sorting garbage.

Coordinator Meunier stated she has not experienced that, but it would not surprise her if it were true. She stated her hope is that educating people will help.

Legislator Gouldman requested clarification that anyone could reach out to join the focus group.

Coordinator Meunier stated that is correct. She stated they can call her at 845-808-1390 extension 43153.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked Coordinator Meunier and stated this is a wonderful program.

Item #6 - Approval/Fund Transfer 21T013/Department of Social Services/Funds Needed to Reappoint the Coordinator of IT/Staff Development on a Part-Time Hourly Basis

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza took a moment to recognize the Health Department's efforts with the COVID vaccinations.

Commissioner Piazza stated Social Services uses the State's systems to better share information Statewide. He stated there is much that comes with that, as well as the shift to virtual services. He stated this would result in a savings of \$39,646.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if this is a split position.

Commissioner Piazza stated it is because this position took the responsibilities of the Staff Development Coordinator, which was a full-time position before 2013. He noted that the savings is in salary, not benefits.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move Fund Transfer 21T013 to the Personnel Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #7 - FYI/Grant Application/Office for Senior Resources/2021 Empowering Communities to Reduce Falls and Fall Risk offered by The Administration for Community Living

Director of the Office for Senior Resources Michael Cunningham stated this is a very competitive grant. He stated it is anticipated that there will be six (6) awards nationwide, totaling \$1.5million. He stated this is a collaboration between Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland Orange, and Ulster Counties, which is a key element of the goals of the grant. He stated the main goal is promoting and increasing fall prevention programs. He detailed some of the various

programs. He stated Putnam County has the fastest growing senior population in New York State, which makes sustainability important. He detailed the seriousness of falls for seniors. He stated there is evidence that these programs reduce the cost of long-term care for seniors.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked Director Cunningham for this information. She detailed the costs associated with falls and noted that they are devastating.

Director Cunningham stated the first goal is to prevent the fall, and then to have a coordinated effort in the recovery if there is a fall.

Legislator Nacerino stated this is a wonderful grant opportunity and a great collaborative effort. She stated it is also good for socialization.

Legislator Addonizio noted that there are not matching funds. She stated she hopes it is awarded to Putnam County.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked Director Cunningham and the Office for Senior Resources for their efforts.

Director Cunningham noted the struggle for senior to receive the COVID vaccine. He stated it is a widespread issue. He detailed the efforts of the Office for Senior Resources to assist in the vaccination distribution.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this is an issue that everyone is trying to solve. She stated she is hoping it will be alleviated when the vaccine allotment is increased. She questioned if senior citizens could contact the Senior Centers and the Office for Senior Resources with questions on the vaccine process.

Director Cunningham stated they have already been receiving hundreds of calls and they are doing all they can to assist the seniors who reach out to them.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she appreciates all the information.

Item #8 - Other Business – None

Item #9 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:30 P.M. Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.