

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

Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Crowley & Gouldman

Tuesday

6:00PM

August 20, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested Legislator Gouldman lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Crowley and Gouldman and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 - Acceptance of Minutes – June 10 & July 11, 2024 Meetings

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Discussion/Update/Plans for Stabilization Center/Social Services Commissioner Sara Servadio

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated there is not much to report. She stated the project is in the hands of engineers at this point. She stated that she, the County Executive's Office, and People USA have weekly meetings for updates and to discuss progress. She stated she is hoping to have contracts in hand in September. She stated unfortunately there has not been a lease signed yet. She stated there are structural changes that need to be made in order to move forward. She stated the County is still motivated to continue.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if this project is being funded by ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act).

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated it is ARPA funding.

Legislator Montgomery stated this means the lease is needed by the end of 2024.

Legislator Nacerino stated this project has been discussed for a long time and it is crucial and necessary. She questioned how long after everyone comes to an agreement will this project come to fruition.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated it is a septic issue and the Health Department is involved and then Town of Carmel Planning Board will be involved.

Legislator Crowley questioned if there is a secondary location picked, just in case this does not work out.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated that conversation has started.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this is upsetting and noted the time crunch with committing the ARPA funds.

Legislator Jonke questioned if this is the same location as discussed in the past.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated it is.

Legislator Nacerino suggested committing the funds to another project so that there is no danger of losing the funding. She stated she is disappointed to hear this as the Stabilization Center is necessary, especially for adolescents.

Chairwoman Sayegh suggested speaking with Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis on the potential options.

Legislator Crowley questioned if it is feasible that the funds can be committed by year end.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated her belief that if it was not feasible, that would have been discussed already.

Legislator Montgomery stated there is a Stabilization Center in Poughkeepsie. She suggested investing in transportation for people to go to that Center. She agreed with Legislator Nacerino that the funds should be reallocated to another project, hopefully one that involves social services and mental health. She stated that there are staffing issues in this field and even if the Stabilization Center is built, there would not be staff for it.

Chairwoman Sayegh noted that the Stabilization Center would be run and staffed by an outside agency.

Legislator Montgomery stated she knows firsthand that these agencies do not have enough staff.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated she has not been told that they do not have the staff.

Legislator Crowley stated besides the Poughkeepsie location, there were other Stabilization Centers being planned in the area. She questioned where they are, so that the public is aware.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated she has heard the Westchester location is going to be in the southern part of the county. She stated the Ulster County location has not been identified.

Item #5 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment 24A076/Social Services/Purchase Items Needed by the Co-Response Team's Crisis Intervention Specialist using Opioid Abatement Funds

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated they are looking to purchase a bulletproof vest, a computer, and a desk. She stated these items did not qualify to use grant funding, so they are using the Opioid Abatement Funds.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is approximately \$4,300.

Legislator Crowley questioned who the vest is for.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated it is for the mental health worker.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 24A076; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment 24A075/Social Services/Use Funds from Vacant Personnel Line for Equipment & Supplies

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated they have had a vacant Forensic Interviewer position and it is a grant funded position. She stated they are looking to reallocate and spend the funding elsewhere until they are able to fill the position. She stated they are working with Personnel Director Eldridge to reclassify the position. She noted they are using much of the funding for training and education, as well as supplies.

Legislator Montgomery stated her concern over the vacant positions in DSS. She stated there is a mental health crisis and DSS needs enough staff. She noted there have been recent suicides. She questioned DSS Commissioner Servadio about what DSS needs.

DSS Commissioner Servadio stated DSS will come back to the Health Committee to address various issues.

Legislator Crowley suggested implementing de-escalation training for our first responders.

Legislator Montgomery thanked DSS Commissioner Servadio and her staff for their response to a recent drowning incident. She stated Putnam County does not have a Psychological Response Team, like Dutchess and Westchester Counties do, so DSS handled those responsibilities.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 24A075; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Item #7 - Other Business - None

Item #8 - Adjournment

There is no further business at 6:18pm, Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.