

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

**Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Crowley & Nacerino**

**Tuesday**

**August 8, 2023**

**(Immediately Followed the Personnel Meeting at 6:00PM)**

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested that Legislator Crowley lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Crowley, Nacerino and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

**Item #3 - Acceptance of Minutes – April 17, 2023 & May 9, 2023**

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

**Item #4 - Approval/Changes to Putnam County Youth Bureau By-Laws/Amend Resolution #109 of 1978**

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the Youth Board is looking to decrease the members from 29 to 11, due to difficulties in having a quorum for their meetings.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Changes to the Putnam County Youth Bureau By-Laws/Amend Resolution #109 of 1978; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

**Item #5 - Discussion/Update/Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza**

**• Opioid Settlement Funds**

Commissioner Piazza stated the RFP (Request for Proposals) was released last Wednesday. He stated there are two (2) pots of money: the settlements from the Attorney General's Office and the Abatement Funding from OASAS (Office of Addiction Services and Supports). He stated from the settlement funding, the County has received \$731,163 of which \$85,000 was expended to assist The Prevention Council. He stated more funding is going to come in. He stated the abatement funding is \$586,182 and must go through an approved plan through OASAS that will come before the Legislature. He stated they are looking to fund programs that will be able to continue and be consistent. He stated the abatement funding will continue annually through 2036. He noted that, for both pots of money, the funds can be rolled over to the following year if they are not all used. He stated DSS Deputy Commissioner Sara Servadio was instrumental in writing the RFP. He stated the County Executive has asked for a panel to be formed to review the proposals. He explained that the proposals are due on September 1, 2023, but it is not a hard deadline and applications can be submitted after that date. He stated the panel will be himself, Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis, Purchasing Director John Tully, Deputy Commissioner Servadio, a representative from the Health Department, and two (2) community stakeholders who would not have a conflict of interest, meaning they would not apply for the funding. He stated those spots will be filled by Executive Director of Search for Change Ashley Brody and John Rock, who is on the Community Services

Board and is retired from the Office of Mental Health. He added that a member of the Legislature will be on the panel, so they asked Chairwoman Sayegh as Chair of this Committee. He stated they are hoping to meet around the beginning of September when the first applications are in.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they worked with Purchasing Director Tully and the County Attorney's Office on the RFP. She stated they are hoping to move quickly on it.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how much of the funding will be going out with this RFP.

Commissioner Piazza stated it depends on the proposals that come in and what the County deems appropriate.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if there is a limit on the amount that can be asked for in the proposals.

Commissioner Piazza stated there is no limit on the RFP, but it is noted that the County is looking to fund programs that can be continuous and sustained, not just one (1) year.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they are encouraging the providers to think outside the box and consider adding to programs that are already up and running.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned what the priorities are for the funding.

Commissioner Piazza started listing the seven (7) priorities: 1. Harm Reduction, such as Narcan or prescription drop boxes. 2. Peer Support. 3. Technology.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they are working with the providers in the community on a central referral and record system, which is called Bridge Alliance.

Commissioner Piazza continued listing the priorities: 4. Counseling, especially in the area of co-occurring disorders. 5. Support for Families. 6. A memorial for those who have passed away. 7. Prevention.

Legislator Ellner questioned if any of the remaining approximately \$1.2 million is already encumbered.

Commissioner Piazza stated no, that is what is left to be distributed.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the RFP will need to be put out annually.

Commissioner Piazza stated it depends, but it may need to be amended.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if a local court could apply for this funding if they had a specialty program.

Commissioner Piazza stated there are parameters, but it depends on the program. He believes Drug Court would be an acceptable use.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they are looking to potentially create a Dual Recovery Coordinator with these funds. She noted that this position could help with implementing a Drug Court Program or similar.

Legislator Montgomery stated this funding is wonderful news but long overdue. She questioned if the Abatement Funding is more restrictive than the Attorney General's Settlement Funds.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated she does not feel that it is more restricting.

Commissioner Piazza stated they just have to go through OASAS with the plan for the Abatement Funding.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the Legislature could have a copy of the RFP.

Commissioner Piazza stated yes.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how providers were made aware of the RFP.

Commissioner Piazza stated they are scheduling a provider meeting and are sending the RFP to them.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how bids are being sent in.

Commissioner Piazza stated they are going to the Purchasing Department.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how the records for the Bridge Alliance are being stored.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated names are not on the records.

Legislator Nacerino stated this funding is a wonderful opportunity to improve efficiencies. She questioned if the Bridge Alliance will be able to be utilized by various agencies such as the Sheriff's Department.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated that is the goal. She stated they want to have checks and balances in place.

Legislator Nacerino stated this is wonderful and will help families.

Legislator Crowley questioned how information will be shared without getting consent from the person and considering HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they are identified with a number, but there needs to be consent from the patient. She stated the addition of more peers will help with outreach.

Legislator Ellner suggested reaching out to local media companies to get the word out of the RFP.

- **Stabilization Center**

Commissioner Piazza stated a site has been identified for the Stabilization Center. He stated it is 2505 Route 6 in Brewster. He stated the location is in the back of the building so there is privacy for the clients. He stated it is a wide-open space which lends itself to the necessary renovations. He stated the lease will be signed within the week and a Director has already been identified. He stated this will be a dual licensure with OMH (Office of Mental Health) and OASAS, one (1) of the first of its kind in New York State. He stated the renovations could be done by December, but he is unsure of the timeline.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated the identified Director has already accepted the position and has been the Lead Clinical Social Worker at the Dutchess County Stabilization Center since its opening. She stated we are excited about the location. She stated People USA has also started the process of getting approval to become a licensed Clinical Outpatient Clinic, which would be great for school-age and adolescents, and would fill a large gap in Putnam County.

Commissioner Piazza stated there have been a lot of discussions with the schools. He stated the Stabilization Center will provide an alternate to using the emergency room and will provide a lot more support for the child, family, and the school. He noted that Sheriff McConville will be doing a tour of the Dutchess County Stabilization Center. He stated all the law enforcement agencies are looking forward to having a Stabilization Center in Putnam County.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if this will be available for the 2024 school year.

Commissioner Piazza stated potentially opening in March 2024.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they are hoping to open even sooner.

Commissioner Piazza stated the budget plan is for the Stabilization Center to be self-sustaining by the third year.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on the process of consent for school-age children to go to the Stabilization Center.

Commissioner Piazza stated generally in a crisis, it is up to the SRO (School Resource Officer) who has the right to take the child to the emergency room with or without parental consent. He stated the goal is to have the parents be willing to have them taken to the Stabilization Center.

Legislator Nacerino stated this is wonderful news. She stated it is traumatic for children to have to go to the emergency room. She stated it is a dream come true for Putnam County to have these resources.

Commissioner Piazza noted they would be happy to take any of the Legislators to see the Dutchess County Stabilization Center.

Legislator Crowley questioned if this will be open 24/7.

Commissioner Piazza stated yes, it is. He noted the Dutchess County Stabilization Center is being used by 48% youth/adolescent and 52% adults. He stated a person can stay up to 23 and a half hours and a plan must be made for them to be discharged.

Legislator Crowley stated it is great that there will be a plan for follow up care.

Commissioner Piazza stated the goal is that when a person uses the Stabilization Center, that they have an appointment set up at a clinic for the next day. He stated we need more agencies and more staff.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what the expected ratio would be for the Stabilization Center.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they expect the number of youth and adolescents using the Stabilization Center to increase from Dutchess County's ratio.

Commissioner Piazza stated the current emergency room admissions trend toward children.

Legislator Jonke stated the location is where the Vet2Vet Program used to be. He questioned who is paying for the renovations and performing the work.

Commissioner Piazza stated that is currently being negotiated by People USA and the Landlord. He noted that the County will not be doing the renovations.

Legislator Jonke questioned how many employees are expected to work there.

Commissioner Piazza stated he can find out that information.

Legislator Jonke questioned if it will be equivalent in size to the Dutchess County Stabilization Center.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated it is set up differently, but she prefers the plans for Putnam County's Stabilization Center.

Commissioner Piazza stated they are very similar in size.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the organizational structure of the Stabilization Center. She stated her understanding is that the County is contracting People USA to operate the Stabilization Center.

Commissioner Piazza stated yes, the contract will utilize the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding. He stated after those funds are used, there will be no more contract with the County.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if people in her district would have the choice of going to the Dutchess County Stabilization Center because it is closer.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated it helps that both will be run by People USA.

Commissioner Piazza noted that the Brewster location will be closer for people in Pawling and Amenia to use.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the dual licensure with OMH and OASAS.

Commissioner Piazza stated it is bureaucracy. He stated the Stabilization Center is a special circumstance that requires dual licenses with both.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the County has input in the construction and require sound proofing in this facility.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio stated they plan to and are confident they will have a lot of oversight.

Chairwoman Sayegh noted the benefit of having the Director coming from the Dutchess County Stabilization Center.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio they will bring the Director to the Legislature to introduce her.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is very exciting to have these initiatives moving forward, both the Opioid Settlement Funds and the Stabilization Center.

Deputy Commissioner Servadio noted that the new Coordinator for People with Disabilities has started as well.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that is good news. She thanked Commissioner Piazza and Deputy Commissioner Servadio for their time and providing this information.

**Item #6 - Other Business – None**

**Item #7 - Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 7:02 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.