

HEALTH, SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Held In The
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 318
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512

Members: Chairwoman Scucimarra, Legislators Addonizio and LoBue

Thursday

February 18, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Chairwoman Scucimarra who requested Legislator Gross lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Chairwoman Scucimarra was present. Legislator LoBue arrived at 6:40 P.M. Legislator Addonizio was absent.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra requested that Legislator Gross sit on the Committee as Legislator Addonizio and LoBue were not present at the beginning of the meeting.

Item #3 –Approval of Minutes-December 15, 2015

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #5 –Discussion/Statistics of Lead Found in Children/Putnam County/Acting Commissioner of Health Michael Nesheiwat

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated in light of the current situation in Flint, Michigan, she would like Acting Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat to speak to this matter.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated from 1993 to 2016 there have been a total of 53 cases of lead poisoning in Putnam County. He stated there are different types of lead poisoning. He stated the contributing factors of lead poisoning in the County are lead based paint and lead based paint hazards. He stated a lead based paint hazard is paint peeling off, chipped paint or it in dust form. He stated the County has found an increase in lead testing because the Health Department implemented a post card mailing system that is sent to all families who have a child in the age range of one (1) to (2) years old. He stated in Putnam County there are two (2) clusters, Village of Brewster and Village of Cold Spring, which have the highest potential for lead poisoning because they have old structures that are being renovated. He stated if the Health Department becomes aware of an area with a potential lead hazard, a team will go to the location and rectify or make recommendations of how to rectify the situation.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned how lead poisoning is tested.

Director of Environmental Health Robert Morris stated it is done by a blood test.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if individuals who are restructuring or remodeling their homes are educated on how to reduce a potential lead hazard.

Director Morris stated yes, the Health Department informs the homeowners through informational material. He stated there are various procedures and tools such as masks and HEPA vacuums to prevent lead poisoning to occur.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned when the use of lead based paint stopped.

Director Morris stated for household paint, 1978. He stated lead paint is still used commercially.

Legislator Gross questioned if the clusters in the Village of Brewster and Village of Cold Spring can be identified.

Director Morris stated it is not just one (1) section of those Villages; it is that area in general because of the age of the buildings. He stated the County, State, and Federal Health Department is concerned with children from birth to six (6) years old because that is when a child's brain is the most sensitive to development. He stated it is important to note, lead can affect anyone at any age. He stated as more studies are conducted regarding this matter, doctors are saying the effects of lead on a person's body are permanent and irreversible. He stated there is no safe level of lead in one's body. He stated the County has a lead level of 10 micrograms per deciliter, which is low.

Legislator LoBue questioned if people are instructed about lead pain hazards on a local level, such as the town or a local Home Depot.

Director Morris stated people/homeowners are not instructed of lead on that small of scale; however in the home addition application advises the person to beware of lead.

Legislator LoBue stated she is concerned for the average homeowner who repaints their home themselves.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated perhaps legislation can be established to have a lead inspection be conducted on a property that predates 1978 before a purchase closing can be completed.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the water in the Village of Brewster or Village of Cold Spring is tested and if so, has there been an increase in the percentage of lead found in the water.

Director Morris stated all public water is tested for lead. He stated there has not been an increase in lead found in public water.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra believed the Flint, Michigan water issue arose when the water system was shut down and the pipes were unused for a long period of time.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if there is any information regarding lead posted on the Health Department website.

Director Morris stated no, the Health Department is currently discussing how to move forward with informing the public.

Legislator Gross stated he heard it is beneficial to let water run before utilizing it.

Director Morris stated yes, all water should be ran to reduce the contaminants.

Legislator Castellano questioned why commercial properties, such as bridges, still use lead based paint.

Director Morris stated it is used because lead based paint is more durable.

Item #9 – FYI/Update/Health Dept. Press Release/First Case of Zika Virus Confirmed in Putnam County

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated the Health Department sent out several press releases regarding the Zika Virus. He stated the Zika Virus is a mosquito born disease and is predominately found in Central America, South America, Mexico, and the Caribbean Islands. He stated this Virus is responsible for causing microcephaly and brain defects in newborn children. He stated that the Center for Disease and Control (“CDC”), State Health Department and the County Health Department all recommend that women who are trying to get pregnant or are pregnant to not travel to those areas affected with the Zika Virus. He stated a person infected with the Virus shows mild symptoms; conjunctivitis, joint pain, fever, headaches and rash. He stated recently there has been one (1) person who has tested positive for the Zika Virus and this person contracted the disease in a region where the Virus is located. He stated there is a second individual that resides in the County that has been tested and the results from the test are still pending. He stated this Virus lives in two (2) body fluids; semen and blood. He stated due to the cold weather our County and areas surrounding it do not have mosquitos; however when the weather gets warmer it is recommended homeowners remove any type of stagnant water.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned when the weather becomes warmer if mosquitos carrying the Zika Virus will be in our area.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated it is unknown. He restated preventative actions to take to avoid getting the Zika Virus. He stated if an individual is bitten by an infected mosquito they will develop symptoms within two (2) to seven (7) days. He recommends if a pregnant woman traveled to one of the Zika-affected countries to make an appointment with their OB/GYN regardless of having symptoms.

Legislator Albano questioned what the duration of the Virus is and if there are other effects other than the mild symptoms listed.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated it is unknown how long the Virus will remain in the bloodstream. He stated it is a “learning curve.” He stated in Brazil their government warned women not get pregnant until 2018. He stated the Health Department will continue to follow the recommendations of the State Health Department and the CDC.

Legislator Castellano stated it is his understanding that some people that have been bitten by an infected mosquito may not even realize they are infected.

Acting Commissioner Nesheiwat stated that is correct, some people may not even know they have it because the symptoms are common; however the symptoms have to be associated with recent travel to the affected Countries.

Item #6 – Discussion/Synthetic Cannabinoids

Captain Vincent Martin stated in the last 18 days there have been 11 drug arrests in the Mahopac-Carmel area, two (2) in Philipstown, two (2) in Putnam Valley and two (2) in Southeast.

Undersheriff Convery stated the Sheriff's Department has become quite concerned regarding the "War on Drugs." He stated not only are young adults using drugs, they are selling them as well. He stated recently Captain Martin assisted in a major arrest in Yorktown, which involved the U.S. Attorney General's Office and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated New York State Assembly Bill A08409A being discussed would criminalize the sale of synthetic cannabinoids, also known as K2.

Deputy Commissioner of Social Services Joseph DeMarzo stated people or middle aged people see synthetic cannabinoids as synthetic marijuana and think that this drug is not dangerous. He stated this type of drug is very dangerous because it is herbs and/or spices sprayed with a chemical compound. He stated in 2011 synthetic cannabinoids were deemed illegal; however the chemists will change one (1) of the compounds that the drug is sprayed with to make it "legal." He stated it is his understanding that this proposed bill will make all synthetic cannabinoids illegal. He believes this is a step in the right direction in the War on Drugs.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated to her knowledge the synthetic cannabinoids are sold in grocery stores, gas stations in the disguise of incense.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated that is correct. He restated the dangers of synthetic cannabinoids. He stated depending on the compound, the side effects are breathing issues, heart attacks, and hallucinations. He stated it is challenging for the Probation Department to conduct a drug test on the synthetic cannabinoid users because the chemical formulas constantly change. He stated in 2010, in the United States there was over 11,000 people admitted to the hospital from overdoses or side-effects of synthetic cannabinoids. He restated he is in support of the passing of Assembly Bill A08409A.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned how this proposed Bill would be enforced.

Undersheriff Convery stated it would be enforced by a store check similar to the alcohol and cigarette checks.

Legislator LoBue questioned if the cost of synthetic cannabinoids are similar to the price of heroin.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated it is around the same price of heroin. He stated it is more expensive than a bag of marijuana. He stated it costs approximately \$10 to \$15 at a grocery store or minimart. He stated there are not many places in the County that sell synthetic cannabinoids. He believed the main concern is the black market.

Legislator Albano questioned if individuals who are arrested for selling drugs are then used to assist in arresting main drug dealers.

Captain Martin stated the Sheriff's Department is currently implementing that concept.

Undersheriff Convery stated drug dealers do not have borders and therefore, surrounding police forces are working together combat for the War on Drugs. He stated a regional approach is the best way to stop the drug dealers.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if there is an online market for prescription drugs, and if that is an issue.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated there is an online market and it is an issue because it is challenging for law enforcement to enforce the law. He stated in the County, at this time and within the last three (3) years, has had individuals admitted for treatment because of synthetic cannabinoids. He stated because the high from synthetic cannabinoids is not pleasant, most will use the drug a few times and then use another. He stated it is important to stress even using this drug once can be very dangerous.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if synthetic cannabinoids are a gateway drug.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated he believes it is a gateway drug.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if all of the surrounding police agencies are collaborating together on this issue.

Undersheriff Convery stated yes.

Legislator Gouldman questioned who the lead agency is.

Captain Martin stated many of the task forces have started locally and then as the task force grows by involving agencies like the Strike Force, DEA, and the Northern Westchester Initiative.

Legislator Albano stated he recalls hearing a statistic that middle aged individuals are the highest group using these drugs. He stated he believes this is caused by doctors prescribing pain medicine.

Undersheriff Convery stated law enforcement is a victim of their own success. He stated because of the crackdown on prescription drug abuse from doctors, people are now using street drugs such as heroin.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated Legislator Albano is correct in his statement that people in the age range of 30 to 48 are the abusers.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she believes the education program provided to the younger population is positively contributing to them not getting involved with drugs.

Legislator LoBue stated she believes the middle age drug abuse is tied to the economy.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to pass a memorialization of support for New York State Assembly Bill A08409A and matching New York State Senate Bill S06039A; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #10 – FYI/News Article/Carlucci Introduces Bill to Make Naloxone Accessible at Pharmacies

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated every other month there is Narcan training.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo what his opinion is on Narcan being sold at pharmacies.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo stated he has mixed emotions about it. He stated Narcan helps save lives; however he is concerned that it can be abused.

Undersheriff Convery stressed Narcan is only a temporary relief.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo believed there should be legislation requiring a person to seek medical help after being given Narcan. He stated Narcan creates an automatic withdrawal.

Item #4 – Discussion/Climate Smart Community Pledge/Director of Environmental Health Robert Morris

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she went to the County Department Heads Meeting and requested that each department check if they are currently following the procedures mentioned in the Climate Smart Community Pledge (“Pledge”). She questioned what encompasses solid waste.

Director Morris stated everything that is thrown away is considered solid waste. He stated everyone loves the principle of recycling but, it is challenging for people to actually recycle. He stated poor recycling practices perhaps is due to having a hard time locating a place to bring a particular product; such as aerosol cans.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned how many times a year the Health Department hosts a hazardous waste day event.

Director Morris stated the event is hosted two (2) times a year.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra questioned if it is an expensive event to host.

Director Morris stated yes, it costs approximately \$20,000 per event.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she is aware that the Kent Recycling Center is the model recycling center. She stated the Philipstown Recycling Center is limited with a poor location. She questioned if the Town of Carmel had a recycling center.

Legislator LoBue stated there is the E-Waste Recycle Program.

Director Morris stated the County is having some challenges pertaining to the contract with the current e-waste company, Vintage Tech. He stated the Law Department has yet to hear back from them since October so, currently there is no contract.

Legislator Albano questioned how Vintage Tech is paid without a contract.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated it is her understanding that Vintage Tech is paid by the material they pick up. She stated the issue is that the price of the materials has decreased and therefore, it is challenging to find a company like Vintage Tech who does not charge.

Director Morris stated last June, he contacted several e-waste companies and Vintage Tech is the only company in the area that does not charge. He stated due to the challenges in contacting them, the County may have to reach out to a different company that does charge. He stated most companies that produce the electronics are supposed to take back the product; however in speaking with the DEC there are ways around the law for companies to not take the old electronic products.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated at the February 2016 NYSAC Conference she became aware of a suggested resolution to urge the State Governor to “crack down” on this matter. She stated stores such as BestBuy are supposed to take electronics like televisions back.

Legislator LoBue questioned how much would it cost for the County to contract out a different e-waste company.

Director Morris stated he is not aware of the current cost, but he will provide that to the Legislature.

Legislator LoBue stated the cost is outweighed by the need to maintain the environment.

Legislator Gross stated he recently spoke with the Town of Southeast Highway Supervisor Tony Hay notified him that their e-waste dumpsters are overflowing.

Legislator LoBue stated she believes this matter is a long-term issue because there is a high turnover rate for electronics because the constant electronic upgrades.

Legislator Nacerino stated she brought the Climate Smart Community Pledge before this Committee in December and she believes it speaks to the County’s values. She stated the neighboring counties and municipalities have adopted the Pledge. She stated this is something that does not obligate the County to take a specific action, but it provides the incentive to do better for the environment. She stated she would like to see this Legislature adopt the Climate Smart Community Pledge as it is a good faith endeavor.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated this Pledge is labor intensive as reports are involved. She would like to meet with Director Morris and speak to this matter more in depth.

Legislator LoBue stated she believes it would behoove of the County to receive bids from other e-waste companies.

Item #7 – Discussion/Aerosol Container Disposal

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she researched aerosol container disposal and the first suggestion is to not purchase these types of products. She stated if the aerosol container is empty it can be recycled with other metals.

Director Morris stated the DEC suggests using the product to its entirety or if one no longer wants to utilize the product, it is suggested to give it to someone else who will use it completely. He stated as Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated once the product is used, it can be disposed of.

Legislator Gouldman stated in Putnam Valley the garbage company does not even take empty aerosol containers because of the potential hazards, such as exploding.

Legislator LoBue stated she will follow up with this matter and contact the garbage company that Mahopac uses and see if aerosol containers are accepted.

Item #8 – Discussion/NYS Senate Bill S05751A & NYS Assembly Bill A07625/Financial Liability for Major Facilities, Vessels & Railroads (Transport Crude Oil)

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she recently had a meeting with Senator Serino and the Riverkeeper pertaining to this item. She stated she learned that there are serious issues with companies that transport crude oil who are not insured properly. She stated New York Senate Bill S05751A and matching New York State Assembly Bill A07625 proposes to ensure that the oil companies that transport crude oil on trains and barges are insured properly in the case of a serious event such as an oil spill. She stated this prevents the local municipalities from being responsible for cleaning the aftermath of an event.

Legislator Albano stated speaking from his insurance background, the oil companies should be insured. He stated last year this Committee learned that there is one (1) inspector for the approximate 3,000 railroads and bridges in New York. He stated what is even more troubling is that the inspector is not required to examine under a railroad bridge. He stated he is aware that United States Senator Schumer was investigating this matter; however he is unaware of the outcome.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated there is a bill on the floor in the New York State Assembly.

Legislator LoBue stated that the crude oil vessels are substandard.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated there have been oil spills and train derailments carrying crude oil that have created issues around the Country. She stated it is plausible that such a situation could occur in our community. She stated this Bill requires the companies to be able to pay for an incident recovery if one were to occur.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if there is an insurance company that will insure the crude oil companies.

Legislator Albano stated if the crude oil company cannot find an insurance company to insure them, they should not be in business.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she would like to support New York Senate Bill S05751A and matching New York State Assembly Bill A07625.

Legislator Nacerino stated the burden of the aftermath from an event should not be placed on the local municipality.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to approve a memorialization of support for New York Senate Bill S05751A and matching New York State Assembly Bill A07625; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #11 – FYI/Microbeads/U.S. House of Representatives 1321 Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated she would like to update the Legislature that microbeads will be completely banned in the United States by 2019. She stated small counties that did pass a microbeads ban sent a message to the Federal Government. She stated the Legislative Office received a correspondence today from the Personal Care Products Industry stating they are happy and in support of 1321 Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 because it is not piece-meal legislation.

Item #12 – FYI/ProAct/Utilization Report- Duly Noted

Item #13 – Other Business- None

Item #14 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:32 p.m. Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.