

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

Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Jonke

Monday **6:30PM** **February 7, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested that Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio, Jonke and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – November 17, 2021 & December 13, 2021 Meetings

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to proceed with Items #6 and #7 first; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/Budgetary Amendment 22A011/Social Services/Safe Harbor Allocation

Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza stated this is an additional \$43,350 coming from the State to the County. He stated this funding will be put towards a contract with Green Chimneys. He stated they will be doing outreach and ensuring there are long term beds for children.

Legislator Addonizio stated she is happy to see this funding move forward. She stated 25 million victims worldwide are trafficked. She questioned if the schools are involved and how they handle if they believe a child is being abused.

Commissioner Piazza stated they first call CPS (Child Protective Services). He stated there would be a police report.

Legislator Montgomery stated last month was Human Trafficking Month, and there was a very serious case in Putnam County recently. She stated she is surprised at the lack of press and that the Legislature has not talked about it. She stated the Legislature should highlight what happened at the Brewster Police Department and use it to educate people.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 22A011; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #7 - Approval/Fund Transfer 22T008/Social Services/Cover Overtime for Probation Officers to Conduct Curfew Checks

Commissioner Piazza stated this is funding from the State for Supervising and Treatment Services for Juveniles. He stated the State pays 62% of outreach and prevention costs, as well as 49% if a child goes into a residential facility. He stated the point of this program is to keep these youths out of court and out of a facility. He stated they work in concert with the Probation Department and the Youth Bureau.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 22T008; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she would proceed to Item #5.

Item #5 - Discussion/Pollinator Gardens/Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale/Soil & Water District Manager Vincent Tamagna/Cornell Cooperative Extension Executive Director Stefanie Hubert

Soil & Water District Manager Vincent Tamagna stated this is a great partnership between the County and Cornell Cooperative Extension. He stated they have had many meetings already.

Senior Resource Educator Jennifer Lerner stated this year they are focusing on native plants that support pollinators. She stated pollinators are integral to our food system, as one (1) out of four (4) bites of food is on our plate because of a pollinator. She stated they are really focused on educating people on the importance of pollinators.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Executive Director Stefanie Hubert thanked the Legislature for their support of the program.

District Manager Tamagna stated healthy bees equals a healthy environment. He stated they are continuing with the Garden Club at the Desmond Fish Library that is done through a grant. He noted that butterfly bushes do not attract the high nutrient nectar that is necessary for proper pollination. He stated the proceeds from the sale will go towards the Educational Center that Cornell Cooperative is going to have at Tilly Foster Farm. He noted the opportunities for expanding the Soil & Water program.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the sale is up on the County website.

Ms. Lerner stated it is not up yet, but should be up by the end of the week. She stated the pickup dates are at the end of April. She stated the deadline for placing orders is at the end of March. She stated the sale will be run out of Tilly Foster Farm.

District Manager Tamagna stated the last day to order will be March 25th.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if there is any outreach as far as using fertilizers and pesticides.

Ms. Lerner stated the affects are still being investigated. She stated part of the view of the pollinator program is to not use pesticides on pollinator plants.

Legislator Addonizio stated people need to be educated.

Legislator Jonke requested that the Legislature be notified when the website for ordering is live.

District Manager Tamagna stated he will notify the Legislature. He stated they will have a streamlined process.

Legislator Nacerino stated she is happy to see the transition to online sales. She questioned if the available products will be available for viewing.

Ms. Lerner stated they are only online.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the proceeds from the sale.

District Manager Tamagna stated previously Soil & Water would keep the proceeds and they would go into a fund for environmental programs. He stated this year all of the proceeds will go to Cornell Cooperative Extension to put towards their educational center at Tilly Foster Farm.

Chairwoman Sayegh clarified that the Soil & Water Board votes to distribute the money.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how much is in the Soil & Water fund.

District Manager Tamagna stated Soil & Water made \$15,000 from the sale last year. He stated there was \$60,000 in the fund account, and then the Town of Kent received a \$40,000 grant, leaving \$20,000 to roll over to this year.

Item #4 - Discussion/Update/Mahopac Business District Water PFAS/Representatives from the Putnam County Health Department, New York State Health Department, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Public Health Sanitarian Vincent Perrin thanked the Committee for the opportunity to discuss this issue and address any questions. He stated this is a multiple agency investigation.

NYS DEC Assistant Engineer Brianna Scharf stated she is the project manager for the Mahopac Business District Site. She stated this area has been monitored for some time. She stated testing of wells started in Fall of 2020, as a phased approach. She stated they have been doing source evaluation to try to figure out the source of contamination. She stated in January 2022 the community newsletter that is part of the backup material was released.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated according to the map in the newsletter, 18 drinking water wells were sampled.

Assistant Engineer Scharf stated those numbers are a little outdated. She stated approximately 48 wells have been offered alternate water supplies. She stated this is because, based on the testing, their water contained higher than the State's Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL).

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned what an alternate water supply consists of.

NYS DEC Environmental Engineer David Chiusano stated there are three (3) initial options: bottled water, a point of entry treatment system, or connect it to a public water supply. He stated once there is a treatment system installed, and it proves that it removes the contaminants, the bottled water supply is ceased. He stated 21 locations are currently receiving bottled water, while awaiting a treatment system. He stated the estimated timeline for the installation of a treatment system is a month and a half to two (2) months. He stated 14 locations have the point of entry treatment systems installed and are under the State's management. He stated these water systems are tested two (2) to four (4) times a year. He stated it is the State's responsibility until the sampling shows to be consistently below the MCL. He stated there were two (2) owners who refused alternate water supplies and they were given letters which stated they can change their mind at any time.

NYS DOH Region Chief Maureen Schuck stated they are investigating the source, but the main priority right now is to define the extent of the contamination and associated exposures. She stated the information from each tested well provides information on the direction to move forward. She stated of the 48 tested wells, 42 are private drinking water wells which are not regulated, and six (6) public water supplies that are regulated. She stated when the results are received, the property owners are contacted and given an overview and options to proceed.

Legislator Jonke questioned if this contamination is a result of the Mahopac Tailor contamination around 30 years ago.

Assistant Engineer Scharf stated as of now, it is unclear if it is correlated. She stated they are still looking to figure out the source.

Legislator Jonke requested clarification on if these are private or public water supplies. He questioned if the Mahopac Business District is part of a water system.

Public Health Sanitarian Perrin stated it is a complicated area. He stated the intersection of Route 6 and Route 6N are served by the public water system. He stated there are small pockets in the area that are not served by the water district. He stated for instance Mahopac Point is all individual wells.

Legislator Jonke questioned if they are finding contamination on Mahopac Point.

Public Health Sanitarian Perrin stated they are. He questioned if the representatives from the DEC or DOH knew if there were any samples that were under the MCL.

Chief Schuck stated there were no samples that were below the MCL. She stated they have offered sampling to more than the 48 currently sampled.

Public Health Sanitarian Perrin stated not everyone wants their water to be sampled and they have a right to say no.

Legislator Jonke questioned if there is a big picture solution.

Chief Schuck stated they will continue sampling to find the source and then a remedial plan would be put in place, once the source is found.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if homeowners can reach out to have their water sampled if they are in this area.

Assistant Engineer Scharf stated the phone number to reach out is on the community newsletter that is part of the backup material. She stated the area will also be recanvassed.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she is hoping this meeting helps get the word out.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what prompted this investigation and when was this area declared a superfund site. She questioned how this is affecting the restaurants in the area. She also questioned what the health side effects are and if people should be testing their own water.

Public Health Sanitarian Perrin stated the treatment systems that were put in place from the contamination of dry-cleaning chemicals in the 1980s were going to be taken out, as that contamination was gone. He stated they decided to check the water for PFAS and found that multiple sites were well over the MCL. He stated a large majority of the restaurants are served by the water district, so their water is treated. He added that some restaurants are having treatment systems installed.

Dr. Thomas Johnson, Director of the Bureau of Toxic Substance Assessment, stated the health effects they have found in high dose studies in animals are effects on the liver, immune system, and normal growth and development. He noted these doses are much more than what is found in drinking water. He stated these high doses over a long period of time has shown to lead to various cancers in the animals. He stated in humans, there has been associations between elevated exposure and several different health effects such as, kidney and testicular cancer and high blood pressure during pregnancy. He noted that there is still not enough evidence to say that these exposures cause these health effects because they cannot control for other factors that could have contributed to the risk. He stated we still want to minimize the exposure. He stated the exposure levels are not a trigger for health effects, they are a trigger for action. He reiterated that the health risks for these types of exposures are low.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the risks are limited to consumption of the water.

Dr. Johnson stated these chemicals are not volatile, as they do not evaporate into the air or get absorbed through the skin. He stated the exposure from showering or bathing is so small that they would never make a recommendation to avoid it.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on how the cause will be found.

Assistant Engineer Scharf stated they will continue to test and look into old records to gather information. She stated they will drill additional wells to test.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how this affecting Lake Mahopac and its fish.

Public Health Sanitarian Perrin stated there was testing of water coming out of the lake and it was elevated but below the MCL. He stated as far as the effect on the water life, it is not their expertise.

Chief Schuck stated the current investigation focus is on ground water.

Legislator Montgomery questioned what would trigger an investigation into the lake.

Chief Schuck stated currently there is no reason to have concern over the lake water.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked all the participants for the information provided. She stated she hopes people in the area look into this and get their water tested.

Public Health Sanitarian Perrin stated do not hesitate to contact the Putnam County Health Department.

Item #8 - FYI/COVID-19 Update

Chairwoman Sayegh stated a written update was provided by the Health Department in the backup material.

Legislator Montgomery stated she hoped there would be a representative from the Health Department to provide an update. She stated she has written memorandums asking for information, including on how underserved populations have been addressed, but have not heard back. She stated Lake Peekskill has a high positivity rate and a low immunization rate.

Legislator Addonizio noted Putnam County has 81.1% of individuals with at least one (1) vaccination shot, which is higher than the State average, as well as a higher rate with two (2) shots at 71.8.

Legislator Montgomery stated that does not address the statistics in Lake Peekskill.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated there is more information on the Health Department website. She stated their website now notes that active cases are not a valid number for measuring transmission risk.

Item #9 - Other Business – None

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:49 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.