

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
Held via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders
Members: Chairman Jonke Legislators Nacerino & Sullivan

Tuesday

6:00PM

July 13, 2021

(The Economic Development Comm Mtg. Immediately Followed)

The meeting was called to order at 6:02PM by Chairman Jonke who requested that Legislator Nacerino lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Nacerino, Sullivan and Chairman Jonke were present.

Item #3 - Approval/Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes: June 8, 2021

Chairman Jonke stated the minutes were accepted as they were submitted.

Item #4 - FYI/ Retirement Director of Probation/ County Executive MaryEllen Odell

Chairman Jonke stated Personnel Director Paul Eldridge was present to speak to this item.

Personnel Director Paul Eldridge stated Gene Funicelli, if he had stayed to September, would have served as Director of Probation for 20 years. He explained that he conducted some research from 1977, when he first started working for the County, to present and learned each Director of Probation was a promotion from within Probation Department via a promotion. He cited from the County Charter Section 12.02 "There shall be an Office of Probation headed by a Director of Probation appointed in the manner provided by state law". He continued to read from the State Law Section 12a subsection 256. He stated the Director of Probation is an appointment of the County Executive and is not subject to confirmation by the Legislature. He explained it is the only full-time department head position in the County that is in the competitive class. He stated there is a competitive exam for the position. He stated in the New York State Rules and Regulations for Probation. He stated they are found in the regulations to DCJS (Division of Criminal Justice Services). He stated they include the job specifications for the jobs in a Probation Department. He stated that does not include the clerical staff. He continued to speak to the regulations. He stated the County does receive some State reimbursement for the Probation Department. He explained there are different groupings based on the number of Probation Officers that are in the Department. He stated Putnam County has 13 Probation Officers, so Putnam County is in Group A. He stated Group A specifies that an internal promotion must be from the level of Probation Supervisor or a Deputy Director. He explained Putnam County does not have a Deputy Director, Putnam County has two (2) Probation Supervisors. He explained prior regulations permitted that a Senior level could be considered for the Director position. He stated Gene Funicelli was a Senior level when he was appointed as the Director of the Probation Department. He stated when the revamped regulations were published in May of 2019, they eliminated that option. He spoke to the reasons for the change. He stated currently there is an employee in the Probation Department that he considers to be top shelf. He stated this individual has been with the County for 27 years. He stated he progressed from

Probation Officer. He stated he has been working as a Probation Supervisor for 13 years. He stated he personally identified this individual early on as a leader of the future. He spoke to the accomplishments of the individual and to the fact that this person did take the recent test for the Director of Probation position. He stated even though the Legislature does not have a role in the appointment the Director of Probation position, he wanted to inform the Legislators that there are extremely talented employees currently employed in the County that are qualified and deserve of promotions when they come available. He stated the employee in the Probation Department he was speaking about is the only person who took the exam. He stated he is very glad that the County has an employee of this caliber, to fill this position.

Chairman Jonke thanked Personnel Director Eldridge for the information. He stated he was hesitant to putting this matter on the agenda, because the Legislature has no jurisdiction in this matter. He stated again he appreciated the information that Director Eldridge shared.

Legislator Nacerino believes it is important that we realize the talent that is within the County Departments and the progression that is made available to the qualified employees through the internal canvass process. She stated the employees must meet all of the qualifications. She stated in the corporate environment it would be called a promotion at the discretion of the boss, in civil service it is much more stringent.

Legislator Sullivan stated it sounds like there is a tremendous candidate to fill the Director of Probation position. He stated that a recommendation from Director Eldridge means a lot to the members of the Legislature and probably to the County Executive as well. He stated he has never worked in Civil Service. He requested clarification on the term “open competitive” and “internal canvas”.

Personnel Director Paul Eldridge spoke to the terms and provided further detail on the process.

Legislator Castellano questioned why not also have an open competitive list. He stated if the candidate you spoke of does get the Director of Probation position and has worked for the County for 27 years, there is a chance the individual could retire after three (3) years. He stated this way there would be an active list to choose from.

Personnel Director Paul Eldridge stated that would deny the opportunity of another employee from within the department if there was an open competitive list.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion on this matter.

Item #5 – Approval/ Budgetary Transfer (21T128)/ Funding for Two (2) Emergency Service Dispatcher Positions/ Commissioner of Bureau of Emergency Services Ken Clair (Also reviewed at Protective Svcs 7/21/21)

Chairman Jonke made a motion to waive the Rules and Accept the Additional; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Bureau of Emergency Services Deputy Commissioner Robert Lipton stated currently there are 12 Dispatchers. He stated in the past there were 14. He stated 12 Dispatchers creates a great deal of

stress and pressure on those employees. He stated the covering of shifts becomes extremely challenging when anyone is out sick or on vacation. He stated also they are working to get prepared for the consolidation of the 911 Call Center and the Sheriffs Call Center. He stated from the time a dispatcher is hired, it takes 6 months for them to get trained.

Bureau of Emergency Services Director Office of Emergency Management John O'Connor stated this is also in alignment with the recommendations from the Blue Wing Consolidation Assessment. He explained there is training, sit- a- longs, quality assurance programs etc. that are recommended in said report. He stated because of the staffing minimums, we do not have the flexibility to have dispatchers participate in the recommended programs.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion. He stated that this is a very important department and services, he will support this request.

Legislator Nacerino stated she also supports this request. She reiterated that the Dispatchers are critical and serve as a huge part to the health and welfare of each caller. She thanked the members of the Bureau of Emergency Services for their proactive approach in light that it takes 6 months to train the Dispatchers.

Legislator Sullivan stated he would like to have a little better understanding of the operations. He questioned how many Dispatchers work at one time.

Bureau of Emergency Services Deputy Commissioner Robert Lipton stated there are three (3) different shifts, that they label A, B & C Line shifts. He explained the A Line is the night shift, 12 midnight to 8:00am, the B Line is 8:00am to 4:00pm and the C Line is 4:00pm to midnight. He stated on A Line there are two (2) Dispatchers, the B & C Lines each have three (3) Dispatchers. He stated remember it is a 24/7 operation and work on a 21-day rotation.

Legislator Sullivan stated he too will support the request. He appreciated the information.

Legislator Sayegh requested clarification regarding the additional item that was submitted. She stated it is an organizational chart that is said will replace the organizational chart that was recommended in the Blue Wing Report on page 36.

Chairman Jonke requested clarification, that the additional item will not be spoken about in detail tonight.

Bureau of Emergency Services Director Office of Emergency Management John O'Connor stated is correct. He explained tonight's request is specifically focused on the dispatchers.

Chairman Jonke stated that revised organizational chart will be discussed at another time in the future.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Approve Budgetary Transfer (21T128)/ Funding for Two (2) Emergency Service Dispatcher Positions; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/ Updated - Putnam County Military Leave Policy/ Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated in 2002 Reso #50 was passed. He explained it was proposed as a result of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. He stated the County of Putnam wanted to support its employees who volunteered to protect the United States against threats to our Country and vital national interest. He provided information related to said resolution. He stated recently there have been employees called to duty for various missions, such as setting up the Javits Center for response to COVID-19 and response to the circumstances around the Capital in Washington in January and many other calls to duty. He stated he gave the old policy to Patricia Rau, Senior Personnel Specialist, to update the County's Military Leave Policy so it meets our current needs.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau started by stating she has submitted a formal policy. She explained there was no formal policy. She stated the policy provides clarification on the information from the resolution. She stated the hope is that it will make it easier on those on military leave and the department heads. She explained that the intermittent leaves can be very challenging in terms of the administrative side of them. She elaborated on the different scenarios. She stated she believes the policy and the proposed forms will all help streamline the process. She stated the policy is very much in line with the original resolution, it just has a couple of updated items.

Chairman Jonke thanked Senior Personnel Specialist Rau for her work. He stated he agrees that we should take care of the people who are serving our Country and us. He stated they should not have to worry about funds and losing money by doing the right thing.

Legislator Nacerino echoed Chairman Jonke's sentiments. She expressed her appreciation to Senior Personnel Specialist Rau for bringing the policy to fruition. She stated she is honored to be able to support this Resolution, the updated Putnam County Military Leave Policy and Forms. She stated it is important to give these people peace of mind while they are out serving our Country.

Legislator Sullivan expressed his appreciation for the work that has been done to update this very important resolution and to create a formal policy with the appropriate forms, to streamline the process for all. He requested a broad overview of the differences between the old and this newly revised document.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated on the last pages of the backup she included a handwritten edited version, to see the areas of the resolution that were revised. She stated the proposed resolution states clearly that the salary differential pay by the County will be for 260 days = 1 working year, and it would be in the five (5) year window. She explained the five (5) year job protection is from the Federal Law.

Legislator Sullivan questioned what happens if the leave goes past the 260 days.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated the employee would come off the payroll. She stated they would still have job protection and come back to their position or a close equivalent. She stated they would still receive their military pay, but after a year, stop receiving a paycheck from the County.

Legislator Sullivan questioned how many employees are currently affected.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated there are two (2).

Chairman Jonke made a motion to approve the Updated - Putnam County Military Leave Policy; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #7 - FYI/ 2021/ Accident Report– Duly Noted

Item #8 - FYI/2021/ Incident Report – Duly Noted

Item #9 - Other Business - None

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 6:51 PM Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.