

**RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET MEETING
HELD IN ROOM #318 OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairwoman Addonizio, Legislators Nacerino & Sayegh

**Tuesday October 11, 2022
(Immediately following the Audit Budget Mtg. beginning at 6:30pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:15pm by Chairwoman Addonizio who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Nacerino and Sayegh and Chairwoman Addonizio were present.

Item #3 – 2023 Budget Review

Legislature – Account 1010 (pages 1-2)

Legislator Montgomery questioned line 52140, Audio Visual Equipment which has \$0 budgeted in it for 2023.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated line 52140 is for Audio Visual Equipment under \$5,000. She stated line 52640, also titled Audio Visual Equipment is for expenditures over \$5,000.

Legislator Montgomery questioned what the plan is for the \$55,000 budgeted in line 52640, Audio Visual Equipment.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she is not sure what the plan is.

Legislator Montgomery stated she hopes it is for making Legislative meetings more accessible to the public.

Legislator Sayegh stated Chairman of the Legislature Neal Sullivan put that in the budget, but he is not here this evening to speak to it.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned Clerk of the Legislature Diane Schonfeld if she could speak to the plan for these funds.

Legislative Clerk Schonfeld stated she cannot speak to the plan, but the funds are being included in the budget because money cannot be moved during the year.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why there are two (2) budget lines for the same purpose, one under and one over \$5,000.

County Auditor Sharkey stated there are two (2) lines to account for depreciation.

Legislator Montgomery stated in reference to line 54640, Education & Training, she would like to suggest that Legislative Staff be given the opportunity to attend conferences, as she often sees staff from other counties at them and believes it would be useful for the staff to attend.

County Clerk – Account 1410 (pages 24-25)

County Clerk Michael Bartolotti stated this budget is flat as compared to last year. He stated there is currently one (1) vacancy, which they would like to hold on to for the 2023 budget to make sure they can handle the workload with the current staff. He stated they have been working on cross training employees now that the office has been made more cohesive and it is going very well.

Motor Vehicles – Account 1411 (pages 26-27)

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) revenues were reduced by \$250,000 for 2023. He stated 50% of the revenues collected at the Putnam County DMV are from work associated with car dealerships, which has decreased. He stated over the past year there have been four (4) retirements and only one (1) of those positions has been filled. He stated when the work and therefore the revenue begins to pick up, they will fill those positions. He stated those vacancies net about \$150,000 savings.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there are any plans in this budget to be able to bring DMV services to the west side of the County, at least once a week.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated there are no plans in this budget, however they are exploring the possibility of having a mobile unit so it can be moved around throughout the whole County. He stated the west side of the County is close to both the Beacon DMV and the Peekskill DMV. He stated now that the Putnam County DMV is utilizing an appointment system, they are seeing more costumers from Putnam Valley and Philipstown. He stated prior to the appointment system, those residents were not as willing to drive over half an hour to Brewster to then wait in line for over an hour. He stated he would love to have a mobile office for DMV as well as Clerk services.

Legislator Montgomery stated prior to a mobile office being implemented, there are some locations that could be used for bringing those services to the western side. She stated this was one of the selling points to getting Butterfield through. She stated keeping these services in the County generates more revenue that stays within Putnam.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated her father used a mobile DMV unit and he said it was very efficient.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the mobile unit is a very good option for Putnam County given its size.

Legislator Castellano stated Westchester County has a mobile office and it has been very successful. He stated they do not provide DMV services, but they offer Clerks services such as passports. He stated he knows someone from Mount Vernon who made an appointment at the Putnam DMV and was thrilled with the service they received.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the DMV is seeing the same amount of people coming in, however the biggest revenue generator is the work from the dealerships, which has been less.

Records Management – Account 1460 (pages 36-37)

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the only major increase is in line 54783, Licensing Software, which has doubled from \$5,000 to \$10,000. He stated this increase covers the licensing for the forward-facing portal, which will pay for itself with the functionality gained. He stated they are looking forward to launching the forward-facing portal within the next few weeks, which will allow members of the public to access records (the first available will be well and septic) for a particular tax map number. He stated this access replaces the need to submit a FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) request, cutting down on clerical work and making the process more efficient.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated that is a great tool for real estate agents.

County Clerk Bartolotti agreed and stated they receive dozens of requests per day, sometimes hundreds per week for these records. He stated having this information readily available on the website will be a great convenience. He stated moving forward, other records can be made available online as well.

Judgment & Claims – Account 1930 (page 46)

Chief Deputy Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis stated line 54933, Judgements and Claims, was left at \$100,000 to be conservative. He stated if there is a big settlement in 2023 more funding would have to be requested. He stated this line fluctuates each year.

Legislator Sayegh questioned where the funding is transferred from if more is needed for Judgements and Claims.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated it would either come out of Contingency or Fund Balance.

Board of Elections – Account (pages 34-35)

Commissioner of Board of Elections Kelly Primavera stated the increase in line 52130, Computer Equipment, is for new computers. She stated their current computers are older and they will be getting a new voter registration software that the computers will not be able to run. She stated they have had to replace some hard drives to extend the life of the computers.

Commissioner of Board of Elections Catherine Croft stated the computers should have been replaced last year.

Commissioner Primavera stated line 54560, Equipment Rental Lease, was increased as well. She stated they began renting the voting machines last year, which keeps the machines current without a large expense to the County to replace them. She stated this resulted in a decrease in line 54646, Contracts, where the machines used to be paid from.

Legislator Gouldman questioned line 54636, Internet Costs.

Commissioner Primavera stated the cost for internet may actually increase. She stated MiFi hotspots are used at the polling sites to have connectivity between the poll pads and the office.

Commissioner Croft stated prior to the COVID-19 pandemic they could turn the hot spots off for periods of time, but Verizon will no longer allow that.

Commissioner Primavera stated this will result in monthly costs.

Board of Ethics – Account 1430 (pages 31-32)

Legislator Montgomery questioned what the increase was for.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated the increase of about \$2,000 was due to personnel costs; a combination of the cost of living adjustment (COLA) and fringes.

Veterans Service Agency – Account 6510 (pages 172-173)

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned line 437985 10105 State Aid for Veterans Peer to Peer Program.

Veterans Service Agency Director Karl Rohde stated the State is increasing Peer to Peer program funding to all counties. He stated they now also have the contract with Guardian Revival.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated line 54455, Burials, is for burial of indigent Veterans.

Director Rohde stated this year they included funding in line 54783, Licensing Software for a new software to do claims. He stated currently, he and Veterans Service Agency Deputy Director Art Hanley are using different systems and this new software will allow them to use a unified system and make the process more efficient.

Deputy Director Hanley stated their State Aid increased this year as well.

Director Rohde stated they have also requested that the part time clerk position be made full time. He stated the employee in that position recently resigned and the position has been vacant; they are in the process of finding someone to fill the position. He stated he and Deputy Director Hanley often have obligations such as outreach events or trainings that they sometimes have to miss because there is no coverage in the office to assist Veterans and family member of Veterans who come in. He also stated the Veterans Residence is currently full.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated \$3,000 was added to line 54410, Supplies and Maintenance because the Veterans Service Agency will be taking over the purchasing of the flags, which had been handled by Highway.

Consumer Affairs – Account 6610 (pages 175-177)

Director of Consumer Affairs Michael Budzinski stated as compared to 2022, the 2023 budget increases revenues and decreases expenses. He stated they are on target to bring in over \$1 million in revenue this year, as they did in 2021.

Putnam Arts Council – Account 7560 (page 212)

Executive Director of the Putnam Arts Council Joyce Picone stated her appreciation of the 3.5% increase in County funding. She stated their plans for 2023 include:

- Hosting eight (8) or nine (9) gallery shows through the year
- Partnering with the Veterans Service Agency to provide free painting and pottery classes to Veterans
- Mahopac High School Show
- Work with CoveCare to host an anti-drug art night
- Ongoing classes
- One (1) day workshops

She stated the grant program will continue as well; they are currently in the application process for 2023 grants. She stated Putnam Arts Council has a multiyear contract with New York State, so that funding will continue in the amount of \$30,800. She stated these funds are combined with County funding for their regrant program. She stated they also put funding toward marketing, which supports their Social Media Director and Cultural Calendar Editor. She stated the Putnam Arts Council will also be upgrading their facility in 2023. She stated they received a grant to put in a new elevator, a new keyless entry in the front of the building, and to upgrade the HVAC in pottery. She stated they are seeing more and more people come in to the Putnam Arts Council. She thanked the Committee and Legislature for their support. She stated the arts are

integral to our lives as they provide enrichment, while allowing us to express ourselves through various mediums.

Legislator Montgomery stated the arts are integral to our lives and our economy.

Executive Director Picone stated that is correct; the minimum return is \$8 for every \$1 spent on the arts.

Legislator Sayegh stated another benefit of public art specifically that has been realized is traffic mitigation, as drivers slow down to look at the art.

Executive Director Picone agreed.

Putnam County REACT – Account 3990 (page 95)

Chairwoman Addonizio stated this is a new program being funded this year.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated Putnam County REACT (REACT) sent a letter to the County Executive on June 4, 2022 requesting \$55,000 to purchase a 2022 Chevrolet Tahoe to be used as a rapid response vehicle to tow their 2020 Polaris Ranger to incidents. He stated REACT assists the Bureau of Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Department. He stated this is a one-time request for funding.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned what was previously being used to tow the Polaris Ranger.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated they are currently using a 1992 vehicle.

Legislator Jonke stated the name of this organization is listed as Dutchess & Putnam County REACT. He questioned if Dutchess County contributes funding to them as well.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated he would look into that.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification of what type of vehicle they are towing.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated the vehicle is a 2020 Polaris Ranger; an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV).

Legislator Jonke stated the organization is located in Dutchess County.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated they are located in Holmes, New York.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like Putnam County REACT to come before the Legislature to explain what they do.

Legislator Jonke requested that the Sheriff's Department and Bureau of Emergency Services send a letter of support or opinion on this before it is moved forward.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why this item is not before the Protective Services Committee.

Legislative Counsel Robert Firriolo stated it is an outside agency, which falls under the Rules Committee.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if the intention is to use the vehicle in Putnam County only.

Legislator Gouldman suggested moving this funding into contingency until more information is received.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she would rather request the letters of support and other information to be received prior to the Budget & Finance Committee Meeting on October 19, 2022.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if this request was originally part of an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding request.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she does not know if it was originally an ARPA request.

Legislator Nacerino stated this request is vague and she would like to see a rationale before moving forward.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated REACT sent another letter which listed their activities. He stated they assist the Bureau of Emergency Services with COVID-19 vaccinations and testing, they assist the Sheriff's Department, Carmel Police Department, and Kent Police Department with special events and emergency situations. He stated they provide hundreds of personnel hours, saving the County and local government thousands in overtime costs.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to see the data to backup the explanation of events they respond to and assist with.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated he will request more specific information.

Legislator Sayegh stated as a non-profit organization, REACT would need to attest to whether they make over \$50,000; it seems as though they take in less. She stated this contribution of \$55,000 would be a huge impact for their organization.

Putnam Recreation Program – Account 6470 (page 170)

Chairwoman Addonizio stated this is another new program funding has been included in the 2023 budget for.

Legislator Jonke stated his support for this allocation. He stated Putnam Recreation Program does amazing work on a shoestring budget for the special needs population.

Legislator Sayegh stated she believed there was another budget line reviewed during the Health Budget Meeting with funding allocated to Putnam Recreation Program.

Legislator Jonke stated they do work with the Youth Bureau as well.

Legislator Nacerino stated Executive Director of the Youth Bureau Janeen Cunningham discussed this during the Health Budget Meeting.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if this was a request for ARPA funding that may have been denied at the time.

Legislator Jonke stated it was not a request for ARPA funding.

Legislator Montgomery requested that this organization be invited to a future Committee meeting to introduce themselves.

Careers Support Solutions – Account 6480 (page 171)

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated Careers for People with Disabilities is now called Careers Support Solutions.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would also like this organization to come before the Committee at some point in the future to provide an overview.

Libraries – Account 7410 (page 209)

Legislator Gouldman requested a breakdown of funding to each library within Putnam County.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated this can be requested.

Constitution Island Association – Account 7563 (page 214)

Legislator Montgomery stated this was funded for the first time in the 2022 budget. She stated there has not been an update on the educational opportunities available. She stated this was slated to open in April, however she has not received any information on that. She stated this came before the Legislature with no statistics or information supporting the budget request.

Legislator Sayegh stated information is required to be submitted to the Finance Department upon making a request for funding. She stated all of that information is available, she has gone to the Finance Department and looked through these files.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated he has all the necessary financial documents submitted with their request.

Legislator Nacerino stated none of the funding is relinquished until the organization is in compliance with the necessary information.

Legislator Montgomery stated some organizations request funding from the County and submit all the necessary information and are denied. She stated other times, there seems to be very little information and the funding is approved.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated all necessary information was submitted to Finance.

Legislator Montgomery stated there is no information on the actual programs being held. She stated her concern is that more tourism is being promoted on the west side of the County, but funding was taken away for the bathrooms and garbage removal.

Putnam County SPCA – Account 8513 (page 224)

Legislator Jonke questioned the additional funding included in the budget for the Putnam County SPCA (PCSPCA) over the 3.5% COLA that was given to all outside agencies.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated an additional \$10,000 over the 3.5% was budgeted for the PCSPCA at the discretion of the County Executive.

Legislator Jonke stated he does not have an objection to the PCSPCA or their mission. He stated he has an objection to the way it was established. He stated to the best of his knowledge, it was formed by a couple of family members who elected themselves as board members. He stated he has spoken with Chief Ken Ross about this and requested that he and his son remove themselves from the board because they vote on their own salaries. He stated he inquired as to how they vote on those items and he was told that they each recuse themselves from the vote on their own salary. He stated he does not believe this is an appropriate way to do business. He stated he does not believe they have removed themselves from the board of directors since he spoke with Chief Ross. He stated he has an objection to providing over \$100,000 to a relatively new agency. He stated according to their bylaws, the PCSPCA guarantees their salaries; if they do not generate enough revenue in a given year they book their salary and they can pay themselves with contributions and donations. He stated he is uneasy about the County providing this funding.

Legislator Nacerino stated she would like to know the justification for the additional \$10,000.

Chief Deputy Commissioner Lewis stated the inclusion of this funding in the 2023 tentative budget was at the directive of the County Executive's office.

Legislator Jonke stated he would like a request to be made for a copy of the PCSPCA's meeting minutes, members of their board of directors, the salaries for all employees, and the number of calls responded to in each of the last three (3) years.

Legislator Gouldman suggested placing this money into subcontingency until the information Legislator Jonke is requesting is received.

Legislator Jonke stated he would support that.

Legislator Nacerino suggested requesting the information and if there are still outstanding questions or concerns, the funding can then be moved into subcontingency.

Putnam County REACT – Account 3990 (page 95) – Continued

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the ATV being towed.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated he is familiar with Putnam County REACT because he worked with a non-profit that fundraised for them. He stated one of the things they do is search for missing persons and they will send people out into the woods to search utilizing the ATV.

Legislator Montgomery suggested taking inventory of how many first responder organizations in the County have ATVs to avoid any duplication of services.

Item #4 – Other Business – None

Item #5 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:29pm Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Robinson.