

**PHYSICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
BUDGET MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
Members: Chairman Gouldman Legislators Castellano & Montgomery**

Thursday

October 12, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM by Chairman Gouldman who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Castellano, Montgomery and Chairman Gouldman were present.

Item #3 - 2024 Budget Review

Veterans Home - 6511 (page 183)

Chairman Gouldman welcomed Putnam County Veterans Agency Deputy Director Art Hanley.

Putnam County Veterans Agency Deputy Director Art Hanley stated their budget is level. He explained there is one vacant room at this time, that is why there is a reduction in the Veterans Home Rental line – 412891 page 183.

Commissioner of Finance Mike Lewis stated this department is giving approximately \$18,000 return to the County budget.

Putnam County Veterans Agency Deputy Director Art Hanley recognized and expressed sincere appreciation for the several outside agencies that devote a great deal of time and effort to the beautification and running of the Veterans Home. He concluded by stating the County's Department of Public Works does a fantastic job. He stated they are always so responsive to their calls.

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Legislator Castellano stated the Putnam County Veterans Home is the only Veterans County owned facility in New York State and he is very proud of that.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if this Veterans Home is only for men.

Putnam County Veterans Agency Deputy Director Art Hanley stated there is one room that has its own bathroom, and it was constructed in the event there was ever a female veteran who qualified. He stated that has never been the case to date.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if home health care is permitted in the Veterans Home.

Putnam County Veterans Agency Deputy Director Art Hanley stated occasionally Veterans have come back from the hospital and have needed a Visiting Nurse for a period of time. He stated the rules are if a Veteran needs care on a regular basis, they need to find a new place. He stated if that does occur, even though a Veteran has a Lease, they are released from that Lease.

Highway Engineering – 1440 (page 37 - 38)

Chairman Gouldman welcomed Deputy Commissioner Department of Public Works (DPW) Joe Bellucci, DPW Accountant Kerriane Knapp and Associate Account Clerk Melissa Kishbaugh.

DPW Deputy Commissioner Joe Bellucci stated on page 37 – 54782 Software Accessories has increased to \$17,500. He explained it is as of a result of the pavement asset management contract with a consultant. He explained the increase on page 37- 54385 Uniforms is because of the rebranding of the department to Department of Public Works. He stated the uniforms and apparel had to be updated. He stated the Education and Training on page 37 - 5464 has increased due to the addition of staff members to the Engineering Department. He stated the increase in the Software Accessories line on page 37 – 54782 is because of the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) new mandates that require testing of new parameters, and the County has to pay the cost of the said samples. He clarified the funding for the Software Accessories was moved from the Miscellaneous line, page 37- 54989, where it originally was, to the Software Accessories line.

Highways & Facilities – 1490 (page 43 – 44)

Legislator Montgomery stated she is a proponent of continuing education. She explained she is happy to see that funding has increased here. She stated she was concerned to see that it was reduced in the Department of Social Service. She questioned if this is mandated education.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci stated that some of the training is mandated. He stated also much of the training, which it is beneficial also allows for networking opportunities which is valuable.

Legislator Crowley questioned if CDL training is included.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci stated that the County now has an employee who is qualified to handle a lot of the CDL training in-house.

Legislator Nacerino noted that the Education and Training has increased, yet the Travel line on page 43 – 54675 has been reduced, will that be sufficient.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci stated they do believe it will be. He explained with the combination of some of the training being done on-line and encouraging carpooling for off-site training they believe the \$200 will cover the travel costs.

Central Services – 1610 (page 45 – 46)

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated the big focus in the Central Services section of the tentative 2024 budget is the centralization of certain expenses such as: IT Department, the Computers and Security Monitoring. He stated electric, natural gas, copiers, and gasoline are all now in the Central Services Budget. He stated as you have reviewed the different Departments you have seen those expenses zeroed out for 2024, and that is because those costs were centralized to the Central Services Budget. He stated this was done because the Administration believes it will allow efficient management of the procurement of said expenses and provide the Legislature with much more information. He stated he had brought with him information related to the County's Gasoline budget line for 2024.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to Waive the Rules and Accept the Additional; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Director of Purchasing John Tully explained in the past when reviewing the gasoline purchase of the County the dollar amount is what was reviewed. He stated now there will be a focus on two (2) mechanisms for the purchase of gasoline: 1) is through the WEX program, and he spoke to that program and its advantages. 2) The County purchases gasoline in bulk. He stated that gasoline is primarily used by the Department of Public Works, and he spoke to that. He concluded that through the Administration review and research they derived that the bulk purchase will cost \$157,500 and the WEX program will cost \$544,000, hence the tentative 2024 Gasoline Budget of \$701,500. He continued to speak to the information that is gathered when an employee uses the WEX card to purchase gasoline is used at the gas station: the card number, which identifies the employee, the plate number of the vehicle, how many gallons were purchased, the net cost, the gas station it was purchased at. He stated there are about 36 different attributes that are recorded. He explained the value of the information gathered. He stated they have an estimate of the gasoline used by each Department. He stated this type of detail and granular type of information is available for all of the expense categories that are centralized in the Central Services Budget.

Chairman Gouldman stated this makes good senses and believes it is good planning.

Legislator Crowley questioned with the new leased vehicles, which are bigger than the vehicles the County used to have. She questioned what is the difference in gas costs from last year to this year.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated he will provide that information to Legislator Crowley and the Legislature. He spoke to the cost savings that have been resulted with the Enterprise Agreement the County has. He explained the revenues for certain leased properties such as CoveCare, Mental Health Facility, the sister facility to CoveCare and Camp Herrlich will be reviewed by the Asset Manager. He stated the Asset Manager will work as an intermediary and gather the respective information and make sure any lease that is in place has gone through the appropriate policies and procedures.

Legislator Nacerino inquired how the tracking and projection will be done moving forward.

Director of Purchasing John Tully spoke to the process.

Legislator Nacerino expressed her support for the consolidation of these items to the Central Services section of the budget.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated he believes it will be advantageous to the Account Clerks and Fiscal Managers and to the Legislature. He stated he looks forward to working with the Legislature and providing detailed information to requests related to these expenses/revenues.

Maintenance & Facilities- 5111 (page 138-140)

Commissioner of Finance Mike Lewis stated as Director Tully explained the Rent items that were in this section of the budget in the past have been moved to the Central Services section, that is why they have been zeroed out.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci stated there is an increase on page 138 – 52180 Other Equipment. He stated that is a reflection of the fact that the DPW is trying to handle more work in-house. He spoke and provided information on a few other items in that section of the budget.

MTA Subsidy – 5635 (page 141)

Commissioner of Finance Mike Lewis stated this is a mandatory cost. He stated he had not been notified that the amount was fluctuating in anyway, so the amount budgeted is the same \$380,276.

Railroad Station Maintenance – 5640 (page 142)

Commissioner of Finance Mike Lewis stated the County was able to secure two (2) years worth of Railroad Station Maintenance reimbursement through CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act which will result in a huge savings for the taxpayers.

Parks & Rec – 7110 (page 207 - 211)

Chairman Gouldman stated the next items overlap each other and will be addressed together.

Tilly Foster – 10084000 (page 207 – 209)

Legislator Montgomery requested on page 207 that Commissioner Lewis provide the Legislature a breakdown of the different rentals, page 207 – 412902 on the Tilly Foster Farm (Farm) Property and what is and is not included in their rent. She questioned if the County is planning to buy any more farm animals. She stated on page 207 – 54145 in 2023 \$2,500 was budgeted to date there has been \$200 spent.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci stated there are no plans to purchase new animals and the balance of funds in that account will be returned to the general fund.

Legislator Montgomery spoke to the matter of the horses the County purchased in 2018, who were removed from the Farm. She stated she did request information on that from the past Administration but did not receive it. She stated then two (2) new horses appeared on the Farm. She stated there was no funding approved to purchase the existing horses. She stated although the County does not own these existing horses, the County is still paying for the Feed, Vet Bills and Services and County Employees are caring for the horses.

Chairman Gouldman requested that Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci please research this matter and provide information related to Legislator Montgomery's points. He facilitated further discussion regarding the horses that were on the Farm and that are currently on the Farm.

Putnam Golf – 10085000 (page 209- 210)

Legislator Montgomery questioned on page 209 – 54646 Contracts, who the Contracts are with and when do they expire.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci stated there are (2) two Contracts: one (1) is for the golf side and it is with Troon Golf, who acquired Applied Golf and the second (2) is with Homestyle Catering who oversees the food side of the business.

Legislator Montgomery questioned when the contracts expire.

Director of Purchasing John Tully confirmed that Troon Golf took over the existing contract. He stated he will get back to the Legislature with the expiration information.

Legislator Ellner requested comment on page 209 – 54632 Wastewater Sewer Charges.

Deputy Commissioner DPW Joe Bellucci explained the County anticipates 75% reimbursement from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Planning & Dev. – 8020 (page 227 – 228)

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated because there was no appointed Commissioner in this department at the time that the compiling of the proposed 2024 budget needed to begin, he was requested to create the draft budget and he did. He stated both employees of the Department of Planning, Development and Public Transportation, Barbara Barosa and Vinny Tamagna assisted.

Legislator Montgomery questioned the increase in Furniture and Furnishing line on page 227 – 52110.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated the existing County Planning building and furniture were purchased 30 plus years ago. He stated the replacement of the furniture began last year and

they would like to continue that into 2024. He stated furniture is not covered by the State or Federal Grant funding.

Legislator Montgomery stated last night the Probation Department spoke to the fact that they put funding in their 2024 budget to replace aging and damaged furniture. She stated the Probation department interacts with people from the public. She stated that funding was cut by the Administration.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated from a procurement perspective, the Legislature will be contacted by the Administration to work together to address the issue of furniture before the end of 2023.

Legislator Montgomery made a motion to create a Climate Smart Coordinator Position with a stipend of \$15,000 in the Planning Department.

Interim Commissioner of the Department of Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barossa stated she and Transportation Manager Tamagna have been working on the Climate Smart Initiative. She stated also Ilona Campo in the Planning, Development and Public Transportation Department has been working on this. She explained the plan is to form a Climate Smart Committee within the next few weeks.

Legislator Montgomery stated she has a motion on the table.

Chair of the Legislature Paul Jonke stated the motion is out of order because what is being proposed is a Personnel Item that would need to be addressed at the Personnel Budget Meeting not at the Physical Services Budget Committee meeting.

Forestry, Fish & Game (Page 233 8720)

Chairman Gouldman requested that Commissioner of Finance Lewis speak to this.

Commissioner of Finance Mike Lewis stated this is an outside agency. He stated the budget is level funding, \$24,164.

Legislator Crowley questioned what they do.

Legislator Montgomery stated they stock ponds with fish and purchase pheasants for an annual pheasant hunt, and they have conservation initiatives.

Soil & Water - 8745 (Page 234- 235)

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated he worked with Interim Commissioner of the Department of Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa, Transportation Manager Vinny Tamagna and Neal Tolman the Soil & Water District Manager to prepare this budget. He stated that it is level other than the addition of \$10,000 on page 234 – 54554 Agricultural Board. He explained that is related to a potential change to the Farmland Protection

plan and a grant opportunity. He stated the grant would require a \$10,000 cash match and a \$40,000 in-kind match would be made up of personnel. He stated there will need to be some discussions between the Agricultural Board and the Legislature to determine that the County does want to update the plan next year. He stated the funding has been budgeted so the opportunity can be considered. He stated another item that had not been in this budget in prior years is \$3,000 on page 234 – 54783 Licensing Software. He explained that quote came for IT/GIS Director Lannon for GIS Software that is needed. He stated they have a temporary employee who manages all of the data that is collected through the many studies they conduct, and this software will be a valuable component to putting the data to use. He stated the GIS Software will also be used by DPW, IT/GIS and the Planning Department.

Interim Commissioner of the Department of Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa explained the Tree Program, page 234 – 54652 has a reduction in funding because in 2024 Cornell Cooperative Extension has agreed to do the program, which they have been running, for \$8,000.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why they agreed to do that.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated in prior years the County would receive the revenue and do a lot more of the coordination. He stated it has been agreed that Cornell Cooperative Extension will get all of the revenue from the Tree Program.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why on Page 234 -54715 Improvements there is no funding. She stated with the severe storms we have had she would think funding would be required.

Director of Purchasing John Tully explained that when there is a project identified, it is brought to the Administration and the decision is made whether to move forward and transfer the funds from the reserve, which Commissioner Lewis manages.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why on Page 234 -54182 the Consultants budget line has no funding.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated that works the same way as the Improvements. If the Soil and Water Board determines they need to bring a Consultant in, it is presented to the Administration to get the money from the reserve fund.

All 02 County Road Fund Accounts (page 248)- Duly Noted

Traffic Control - 3310 (page 249) - Duly Noted

Maintenance Roads & Bridges - 5110 (page 250-251) - Duly Noted

Snow Removal 5142 (page 252) - Duly Noted

Snow Removal Sate – 5144 (page 253) - Duly Noted

All 03 Fund Accts Road Machinery – (page 254) - Duly Noted

Road Machinery – 5130 (page 255-256) - Duly Noted

Planning & Dev. All 09 Funds Transportation Fund – (257) - Duly Noted

Part Bus System – 5630 (page 258-259)

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated County Executive Byrne is working on the plan to run a Patterson route, that will be piloted approximately June of 2024, it will be the PART 3 route. He stated the advancements and use of technology is resulting in a more efficient way of dispatching. He stated that is why there is an increase in the Leased Transportation budget line, page 258 – 54678. He stated they will be implementing an APC (Automatic Passenger Counter). He stated there will be infrared counters on each of the vehicles. He stated that will provide needed information for the National Transit Data Base Reports automatically, which will free up some of his time, which will be reallocated within the department.

Director of Purchasing John Tully explained they are working towards an initiative that will bring the customers payment method into the 21st century. He stated all of these advancements will help provide the required data for the Tri-Annual Review.

Legislator Montgomery questioned on page 258 – 54646 Contracts budgeted at \$100,000, what is that for.

Director of Purchasing John Tully explained that will cover the cost for the consultants that will work with the County related to implementing the cashless fare system, the demand response initiative and there is funding built in if there is an instance when matching funds are required for the grants that they seek.

Legislator Montgomery questioned related to page 259 – 54678 Leased Transportation, what is the name of the Company and when does the lease expire.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated the company is MV Transit.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated they have a five (5) year contract.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated they are beginning their 2nd year of the five (5) year contract. He stated added to the five (5) years, per confirmation of the County, the contract allows for three (3) one (1) year extensions.

Chairman Gouldman facilitated brief discussion about the future of a feasibility study and demand response.

Legislator Montgomery concluded the discussion by requesting the west side of the County be included.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated they still have a lot to learn about this work, through the RFP process and with the help of the consultant and they are confident they will narrow it down to the best plan for the residents of the County.

Legislator Ellner questioned the funding in the Temporary budget line on page 258 – 51094.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated the Department is going through a lot of personnel changes. Commissioner Burosa was appointed just a few weeks ago. He stated the Temporary funding will give her some flexibility.

Legislator Crowley stated she is aware that there has been difficulty in hiring MV Transport drivers, who meet their requirements. She questioned if that has been resolved, in light of the discussion had tonight about piloting additional routes.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated with the Demand Response, they permit the use of Taxis, Ubers, and Lyft. He stated the Demand Response follows the “closest vehicle” policy. He stated the County has a new Trolley that is a hybrid vehicle.

Legislator Nacerino questioned the Books & Supplements budget line on page 258 – 54313. She noted 2022 and 2023 had zero funding, this year the request is \$5,000.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated it will cover dues and subscriptions. He stated he is not sure what the past Commissioner use to do.

Capital Projects - Duly Noted

#4 Other Business - None

Item #4 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 9:08PM Chairman Gouldman made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk of the Legislature Diane Trabulsy.