

**PHYSICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512
(Chairman Albano, Legislators Gouldman & Nacerino)**

Tuesday

February 19, 2019

(Immediately Followed Rules Mtg. @ 6:30pm)

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 p.m. by Chairman Albano who requested that Legislator Nacerino lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator Nacerino and Chairman Albano were present. Legislator Gouldman was absent. Chairman Albano stated Legislator Sullivan would be sitting as a member of the Committee for the evening's meeting.

Item #3 – Approval/ Physical Services Meeting Minute/January 22, 2019

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (18A093)/ Closeout Completed Capital Project and Adjust for Ongoing Capital Projects to Reflect Actual Costs/ Commissioner of Finance Carlin

Commissioner Carlin explained this is the yearly entry that is done annually, to close out the Capital Projects. He stated the County did have a strong year, and that will be addressed at the State of the County Address on March 7th. He stated the Administration would like to increase the Capital Reserve, in order to bond less. He stated the plan is to do more repairs with funds. He stated the Capital Reserve budget line has been increased by \$1.5 million. He stated the Capital Reserve budget started with \$1.5 million, the Capital Projects (CP) have spent that down substantially. He stated so now the budget line is being infused with another \$1.5 million.

Chairman Albano stated the Capital Reserve funds came in very handy with different emergencies.

Commissioner Carlin stated using bonds for repairs can be a slippery slope. He stated the Administration would like to concentrate its bonding on roads, bridges etc. projects.

Legislator Sullivan stated he agrees having funding in the Capital Reserve budget line is important. He stated that are plenty of repairs and upgrades needed within the County facilities.

Commissioner Carlin stated the County has done very good with implementing the reduction of long term debt. He stated again that will be addressed in the presentation on March 7th.

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve and move to the Audit & Administration Meeting Budgetary Amendment (18A093)/ Closeout Completed Capital Project and Adjust for Ongoing Capital Projects to Reflect Actual Costs; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #5 - Approval/ Easement Agreement with Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company & Town of Southeast in connection with the Prospect Hill Road Bridge Project – Southeast TM #56.15-1-5/ First Deputy County Attorney Negro

Chairman Albano stated regrading needs to be done where there is already an easement in place.

Legislator Nacerino questioned, for clarification, that the County will not be incurring the cost of the grading.

Chairman Albano stated no the County will not be incurring the cost of the grading.

Legislator Castellano stated the Bridge is beautiful.

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve the Easement Agreement with Metro-North Commuter Railroad Company & Town of Southeast in connection with the Prospect Hill Road Bridge Project – Southeast TM #56.15-1-5; Seconded by legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/ Lease – Putnam County Veterans’ Resident Room #10/ First Deputy County Attorney Negro

Chairman Albano stated this lease is will go until the end of July 2019 when all of the other leases expire. He explained there is still some more paperwork that the resident needs to provide by the end of July.

Legislator Nacerino made a motion to approve Lease – Putnam County Veterans’ Resident Room #10; Seconded by Chairman Albano. All in favor.

Item #7 - Presentation/ Five (5) Year Farming Plan at Tilly Foster Farm/ Commissioner Pena

Chairman Albano invited Commissioner Pena to begin his presentation.

Commissioner Pena gave the “2019 Farmer Presentation” (copy attached with the minutes). He stated Sustainable Farming is a specialized talent. He stated at the November 2018 Physical Services Meeting it was stated that the County was looking to find someone with this talent. He

stated \$50,000 was set aside in sub-contingency, pending a presentation of the Tilly Foster Farm Five (5) Year Plan to the Legislature. He stated after his presentation he will introduce Donald Arrant, who will provide the County's Tilly Foster Farm Five (5) Year Plan Presentation (entitled: TF Farm Presentation) . He continued with his presentation. He stated Putnam County purchased the Tilly Foster Farm in 2002 with money from Water Quality Funds. He stated a requirement of that purchase was that the County execute a Deed of Conservation Easement Agreement (DCA) with the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC). He stated the DCA is specifically designed to require the use and preservation of farmland as part of the entire farm plan. He stated in 2003 the County set forth a policy to preserve Tilly Foster Farm. He stated the highlighted objectives of said 2003 policy were: Saving Agricultural Land From Development, Showcasing Agriculture as a Preferred Land Use, Water Quality Protection to Improve the Production of Pastures, Help Protect the NYC Water Supply, Protect our Open Space and the Historical Value of the Farm, While also providing Wildlife Habitat - Recreational and Educational opportunities. He stated in 2014 the current Administration recognized that the goals set for the farm had not been met and that the County facility was underutilized and dilapidated. He stated at that point there was a vision set forth. He stated that the following slides are from past presentations. He stated in 2014 there were Public Hearings held and the Pubic did show up and interact. He stated so there were goals set. He stated the Goals of Phase I presented on May 8, 2014 were: The Farm should be home to multiple uses (a diversified plan), Potential uses should not duplicate those already in existence, the view-scape of the farm should remain the same, the farm should be self-sufficient (financially stable/ sustainable). He stated with the support of the Legislature the restoration of the farm and its infrastructure. He stated and there have been animals brought back to the farm. He stated Tilly's Table is a restaurant that is open to the public and BOCES leases space where they hold educational classes. He continued with the review of his presentation. He stated the progress and effort going forward is a continuation from the original purchase agreement. He stated the linchpin in the relationship with WAC is for the County to demonstrate sustainable farming operations for the entire community to enjoy. He stated while creating a vibrant destination location. He stated that is the balance the County is working to achieve while meeting the obligations to WAC, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) while creating an attraction the community can enjoy. He stated that the farming at Tilly Foster Farm is designed to promote, not compete.

Legislator Sullivan questioned if the County employees cut the grass of the fields.

Commissioner Pena stated the County does mow and maintain the fields. He stated a positive is that there has not been any chemical fertilizer used on the fields, so the property would suitable for organic certification. He stated that Donald Arrant can speak to the farmer side of it.

Donald Arrant, Farmer, stated he has been farming for 13 years. He stated the first four (4) years of his experience he worked on diversified organic vegetable operations. He stated ranging on farms from eight (8) acres to 30 acres. He provided further detail on his background and techniques used with organic farming. He stated that he worked as the Livestock Manager at Glynwood. He elaborated on that part of his experience. He stated for the past year he has been working at the Tilly Foster Farm. He stated that he managed the 1/3 acre vegetable production there. He began discussing the “Farm Objectives” for Tilly Foster’s Farm (slide 2):

- AS A DESTINATION, PROVIDE AN ENJOYABLE AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS
- EXEMPLIFY BEST PRACTICES IN REGENERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
- PROVIDE TILLY’S TABLE, THE OFFICE OF SENIOR RESOURCES AND BOCES CULINARY PROGRAM WITH THE HIGHEST QUALITY PRODUCT AT A FARM MARKET VALUE
- ABSTAIN FROM COMPETING DIRECTLY WITH FOR PROFIT FARMS WITHIN PUTNAM COUNTY WHILE ATTRACTING CUSTOMERS TO PUTNAM FARMING AND TOURISM

Farmer Donald Arrant stated in 2018 over 35 varieties of vegetables and flowers were grown on a 1/3 of an acre. He stated they have begun prepping the land where they will be planting the crops this year. He stated in the Fall of 2018 there was a meeting with the chefs from Tilly’s Table, Office for Senior Resources (OSR), and BOCES to ask what they would like to see grown and that meeting dictated his crop plan for 2019. He stated that a greenhouse is currently being installed at the Farm, which will provide them the opportunity to get a jump start.

Commissioner Pena stated that the funding for the greenhouse came from the Soil and Water organization.

Legislator Sullivan questioned what the cost was of the greenhouse.

Lauri Taylor from Soil and Water stated that the cost of the greenhouse was approximately \$7,000.

Farmer Donald Arrant stated that they have begun putting the greenhouse up, but the weather has been delaying further progress. He stated that this year the vegetables will be doubled and be opened to “U-Pick”. He stated that they will be planting on $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre this year. He stated the process of organic certification is beginning. He stated that this usually takes about three (3) years, but he believes it should be closer to two (2) years since there have not been any chemicals applied to the soil at the farm.

Farmer Donald Arrant stated in 2020 the vegetable crops will be rotated, this prevents depletion of the land. He provided an explanation and benefits of the practice of “Cover Crops”. He stated

there will be an introduction of 200 Pastured laying Hens, which provide micro and macro nutrients to the soil, and they will be forged on the Cover Crops providing the nitrogen and phosphorous to those areas. He stated also the hens will produce delicious eggs that will be sold to OSR and Tilly's Table. He stated possibly they will have the public gather the eggs. He explained the mobile coups that will be moved daily, have laying boxes that can be accessed from the outside. He stated also the construction of the first hoop house will be done. He stated the hope is to have it up and ready for use by March 2020. He stated the difference between a greenhouse and a hoop house is that a greenhouse is heated. He explained that the Greenhouse at the County Farm will be heated by propane, and a hoop house is heated by the sun. He stated that the hoop house will also serve as winter housing for the chickens. He stated that the Application Organic Certification through NOFA (National Organic Farmers Association). Further discussion ensued.

Farmer Donald Arrant stated goals for 2021 are: Construction of Second Hoop, Vegetable Production, Pastured Egg Production, Second Season of "U-Pick" Strawberries and Raspberries. He stated goals for 2022 are: Continue Vegetable Production, Continued "U-Pick" Berries, Additional 4,200 Strawberry Plants be Transplanted, 200 New Laying Hens Will Be Purchased

Farmer Donald Arrant then showed an Expenses/Revenue slide, he stated he believes the expense projections are accurate, he stated that he believes the revenue projections are quite conservative.

Commissioner Pena pointed out that this slide does not include the cost of labor. He stated some of the Employees in the Highway & Facilities Department, since the Tilly Foster Farm project began, whose skills can be utilized at the farm, do get assigned there when appropriate.

Farmer Donald Arrant stated in closing, he believes there is a great deal of potential for Tilly Foster Farm. He stated he sees first-hand the volume of cars that drive by the Farm everyday. He stated the County needs to attract those people onto the Farm.

Commissioner Pena stated that he and the Administration have discussed the need to have the expertise to create sustainable farming. He stated there has been careful consideration given to the demands of farming and the workload and it is extensive. He stated it will bring the Farm to life again, after it sitting dormant for decades. He stated the sustainable farming will allow for the educational programs and to attract people to the farm through the U-pick events. He stated all of those activities will generate an interest in the farm.

Legislator Castellano questioned how the "U-pick" program will work.

Farmer Donald Arrant stated the details still need to be decided.

Legislator Sayegh questioned how the “U-pick” program would not be competing with other farms in the County.

Farmer Donald Arrant stated it is his understanding that there are not any other U-Pick berry operations in Putnam County. He explained the closest one is Fishkill Farms. He stated also when it comes to competing with other farms it is all about economy of scale. He stated in the grand scheme, the U-Pick program at the Tilly Foster Farm is small.

Commissioner Pena stated there are some challenges in relation to getting water to some of the fields that would be good for planting, as an example pumpkins. He stated that they are currently looking at possibly utilizing the windmill to generate some pumping power that may pump the water up to a storage tank.

Legislator Sullivan stated that there has been discussion that one of the barns will be renovated to be used as a wedding venue.

Commissioner Pena stated that he has heard that there is a potential booking of a wedding for August, so they are carefully looking at that. He stated that there would need to be a lot of cleaning done and a second form of an egress and possibly an ADA accessibility. He stated the event would not be allowed to have an open fire, candles or canned heat (Sterno). He stated that would all be agreed to with the people who want to host the event there. He stated that there will be a need for additional wiring. He stated that is some electrical wiring there, it will need to be checked, it is not bird or bat proofed at this time. He stated the structure looks dry on the inside. He stated the outside needs work . He stated the roof is in good shape.

Legislator Sullivan stated barns are in high demand for weddings these days and there are two (2) of them on Tilly Foster Farm. He stated that he believes the revenue generated by renting the Barn would clearly cover the expenses to renovate it.

Commissioner Pena stated they are looking into that. He stated the entire Barn System in general needs to be evaluated. He explained one half of the Barn is dedicated to the animals. He explained the hay is stored upstairs and the stalls downstairs are active, the other side has the Tractor Museum and the upper level is available. He stated again it is not insulated, so consideration needs to be given to how hot it gets on the upper level. He stated they are thinking about some fan ventilation, which the plan is to speak with people in that business. He stated restrooms will not be ready for approximately a year or two (2).

Legislator Nacerino questioned if Commissioner Pena believes the work can be done by his County Staff at the Farm.

Commissioner Pena stated that he believes the Farmer position completes the array of staffing. He stated at this point the necessary staffing has been dedicated to carry out all of the Farming operations that have been presented this evening.

Legislator Sayegh expressed concern regarding Tilly Foster Farm competing with local Farms as she reviewed slide #10 that listed projected revenue from the farming.

Donald Arrant stated having been a member of a surrounding farm business he is very aware of that point. He stated the crops will be sold primarily to Tilly's Table and the Office for Senior Resources.

Item #8 - Approval/ Computer Upgrade For the Highway Department (19CP01) - Not to exceed \$30,000/ Deputy Commissioner Tully

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated he has met with the Director of IT/GIS Tom Lannon who confirmed the current computers have met their useful life in the Highway Department. He stated this funding will allow all of the Administrative computers to be replaced and some key computers in the parts division.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if there is a strategy to implement that would avoid needing to replace 26 (total referenced in the backup) computers at one time.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated when they began preparing their first draft 2019 Budget the computers were included, but as they began scaling back the thought was that they would get one (1) more year out of the computers. He stated it was a risk they thought would work out, but unfortunately that was not the case.

Legislator Sullivan questioned if the purchase of the computers went through the Purchasing Department via State Bids.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated yes. He stated the Director Lannon was informed of the needs of the Highway Department and he handled the process from there.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she totally understands the need.

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve Computer Upgrade For the Highway Department (19CP01) - Not to exceed \$30,000; Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Item #9 – Update/ Capital Projects Report

Chairman Albano made the motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Chairman Albano stated per the request made at last month's meeting by Legislator Sayegh the Capital Projects Report now includes projected costs for each project on the list.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated that he would like to point out that the amounts included are a range/projection.

Commissioner Pena stated this is a very demanding area there is approximately \$75 million in the five (5) year capital plan. He explained a lot of them are Federal Projects, which are extremely complex in the processing of the job. He stated that he believes there should be a discussion in the future regarding this report. He stated that each of the jobs on the list are needed. He stated they include our culverts, road systems, bridges; all of our basic infrastructure.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated that they are working with Director Lannon to see if there are better software packages to manage this report.

Chairman Albano stated he believes it was 2016 that \$50,000 was moved to address the issues with the building at 40 Gleneida Avenue.

Commissioner Pena stated there have been discussions with the Laberge Group that have a great deal of experience with masonry reconstruction. He stated they will take a close look and bring the project to the next level. He stated he is not sure of what the cost will be at time.

Chairman Albano stated he believes the priority with this building would be to encapsulate the roof.

Commissioner Pena stated the Purchase Order for the Laberge Group to do the overview is in the amount of \$25,000. He stated that they will begin their review very soon.

Legislator Montgomery stated that when she met with Commissioner Pena and Deputy Commissioner Tully she sat in on a meeting where the Capital Projects were being discussed. She stated she was impressed by the amount of funding they have secured for these projects. She stated that she has a concern. She stated during her traveling throughout the County Offices meeting the Department Heads she noticed the condition of the County Buildings. She stated that as this discussion regarding funding for Tilly Foster, which she is aware she has a lot to learn in terms of where that funding comes from and hopes to meet with Commissioner Pena to

further discuss that for her understanding. She stated she could not leave this meeting without speaking to condition of the buildings, it is astounding. She stated that she is concerned about the employees.

Commissioner Pena stated there is an ADA project going on addressing the restrooms. He explained there is a periodic and systematic review of the buildings.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated he would like to point out that the first effort by the County is always to try to secure State and Federal Funding for the Capital Projects so, of the \$75 million, the County's contribution will be significantly less. He stated it is a team effort involving the County Executive, the Legislature, the Purchasing Department and the Finance Department.

Commissioner Pena stated that Commissioner Fusco from the Planning Department is always actively working with the agencies that provide the funding.

Chairman Albano questioned the progress on the Fair Street Project.

Commissioner Pena stated the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding is a major part of that project. He stated \$2.5 million comes from CMAQ. He stated there was a discrepancy in that amount. He stated after further meeting and discussion with CMAQ. He stated the High School at the Intersection of Fair Street and Vink Drive at times has a great deal of congestion, which is a matter of concern that will be discussed with the Schools.

Legislator Sullivan stated that many of his constituents are very concerned with the "Blue House" which is on the Putnam Golf Property in Mahopac. He stated the structure is vacant and run down. He questioned if there is a plan for that house, or should it be knocked down.

Chairman Albano concluded the discussion by stating that he, as Chair of this committee will contact the Law Department to request if it is feasible to take the house down, and if yes what would be the process and procedure to carry that out.

Item #10 –Other Business- None

Item #12 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 9:57 PM Chairman Albano made a motion to adjourn;
Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.