

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

**Members: Chairman Birmingham and Legislators Ellner & Gouldman**

**Thursday May 15, 2025  
(Immediately following Economic Development Mtg. beginning at 6:00pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chairman Birmingham who requested Legislator Gouldman lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Ellner and Gouldman and Chairman Birmingham were present.

**Item #3 – Chairman’s Verbal Report**

Chairman Birmingham stated his intention to attend town board meetings. He stated he is interested in how towns are making their meetings accessible to the public online. He stated a moratorium was put on some new rules added to the Legislative Manual through June 2025, which is coming up. He stated he would like to revert back to the 2024 Legislative Manual, while keeping the section passed last month on livestreaming Legislative meetings.

**Item #4 – Acceptance of Minutes – November 19, 2024, December 17, 2024 & January 27, 2025**

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

**Item #5 – Approval – Weights & Measures – Fee Schedule – Schedules of Maximum Fees Permitted for Inspection**

Director of Consumer Affairs Michael Budzinski stated per new State regulation, they have to update their fee schedule to reflect the fee of \$20.00 for scales. He stated it used to be a \$20.00 charge for the first scale, and \$10.00 for each additional scale but they are now all \$20.00 regardless of how many.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Conrad Pasquale stated there was one other addition made, having to do with electric vehicle charging meters.

Director Budzinski stated yes, that is in there as well. He stated the County does not yet have the equipment to test those meters.

Chairman Birmingham questioned if the inspection of the electric vehicle charging meters would be similar to gas pumps where a sticker would be placed signifying they have been checked by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Director Budzinski stated yes, he believes so.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the County can potentially be penalized for not having the equipment to monitor the electric vehicle charging meters.

Director Budzinski stated this is a new requirement, he will look into that.

Legislator Ellner clarified that the checks would only pertain to charging stations where the customer is being charged, not those that are free.

Director Budzinski stated that is correct.

Legislator Gouldman made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

**Item #6 – Approval – Consumer Affairs – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 363**

Chairman Birmingham stated this would allow for licensing reciprocity between the County and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 363. He questioned if the Electrical Board has weighed in on this yet.

Director Budzinski stated Local 363 approached the Electrical Board and there have been several meetings. He stated the Electrical Board confirmed that the testing and training done by Local 363 is equivalent to what the County does, therefore the reciprocal agreement is appropriate. He stated this will streamline the process.

Chairman Birmingham questioned if the Electrical Board approved this.

Director Budzinski stated yes, they voted to approve it.

Legislator Ellner questioned if other unions could have this reciprocal agreement as well if they are working in the County.

Director Budzinski stated part of the agreement was that anytime a union journeyman left a union, they would have to notify the County and go through the normal procedure to get a journeyman license. He stated this MOU only applies to union jobs within the County. He stated if another union was interested in a reciprocal agreement, they could come to the County and request an MOU.

Legislator Gouldman made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

**Item #7 – Discussion – Amendment of Legislative Manual – Public Comment during Legislative Sessions and Committee Meetings Prior to Taking a Vote**

Chairman Birmingham provided a review of the amendments to this rule throughout this year. He stated he believes honest and honorable people can disagree on this issue. He stated it is important to have our Legislative Committee meetings be a full and open dialogue. He stated the Committee process is where topics are hashed out and it is helpful to hear the insight of fellow Legislators and members of the public. He stated he needs the time between a Committee meeting and Full Legislative Meeting to understand and digest the information and opinions provided during Committee. He stated this is why there are no meetings held between the last Committee meeting, Audit, which is typically the last Monday of the month and the Full Legislative Meeting, which is the first Tuesday of the month. He stated having the videos of the meetings has also been very helpful to review during that time before the Full Legislative Meeting. He read the proposed resolution into the record. He stated paragraph A in the new rule to be added to the Legislative Manual speaks to Committee Meetings and its process. He stated paragraph B speaks to Full Legislative Meetings. He stated there are only two (2) ways to get an item that has not gone through Committee onto a Full Legislative Meeting for consideration; through a pre-filed resolution or brought forward as other business. He stated there is another instance where items are put on a Full Legislative Meeting agenda without going through Committee and that is at the Organizational Meeting. He stated since this is the first Legislative Meeting of the year, there is no chance for something to go through Committee. He stated admittedly, the Legislative Manual has some controversy this year and to remedy that he is suggesting that the Legislative Manual be considered at the Full Legislative Meeting in February. He stated that would allow any proposed changes to the Legislative Manual to go Committee before being considered by the Full Legislature.

Legislator Gouldman stated the Committee process is the best place to ask questions and have discussions. He stated this year, there have been multiple instances where items have gone right to the Full Legislative Meeting without going through Committee, which has limited the ability to fully discuss the item or have public input. He agreed with Chairman Birmingham that time between a committee meeting and the Full Legislative Meeting is important to digest all of the information and encouraged his colleagues to send all requests to Committee first. He agreed with Chairman Birmingham's suggestion to adopt the Legislative Manual in February rather than at the Organizational meeting. He stated it is vital to have public comments on all new items and he thanked Chairwoman Sayegh for accommodating that at the last Special Full Legislative Meeting.

Legislator Ellner stated public comment is necessary. He stated in paragraph B of the proposed rule it mentions a time limit on public comment and he questioned what would happen if there are 50 members of the public wishing to speak. He stated he would like to add wording "with a time limit set by the Chair of each meeting" to clarify. He stated paragraph C states that the Chair of each meeting shall notify the public in advance; he questioned what this means because the Legislative Office notifies the public of each meeting five (5) days prior. He suggested replacing the word "Chair" with "Legislature" so the onus is on the office rather than the individual Chair.

Legislator Crowley suggested including a general time limit, for example three (3) minutes per person, so it does not fall on any one Chair as was included in her original proposal.

Legislator Montgomery stated she believes it would be easier to let the Chair read the room in the beginning of the meeting and set a time limit if necessary.

Chairman Birmingham stated there are currently three (3) members of the public present, they could be given a longer time frame to speak if they wished than if the room was filled. He stated having flexibility would be beneficial.

Legislator Crowley stated she finds it offensive that almost everything in her original proposal has been amended. She stated she would have liked the opportunity to discuss her original proposal in Committee.

Chairman Birmingham stated the redlined copy is included in the backup material.

Legislator Montgomery suggested adding a line on top of proposed resolutions stating which Legislator introduced it. She stated this is common on resolutions by other municipalities.

Chairman Birmingham stated the introducing legislator is listed on the resolutions in their final form. He stated this proposal codifies the public comment process that is already in practice. He stated Legislator Gouldman raised a good point in that the Full Legislative Meetings do not currently allow for back-and-forth comment.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if "Special Full" should be specifically referenced in the resolution.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Pasquale stated it could be added to make it clear.

Legislator Crowley stated some of the wording in the original resolution she submitted pertained to public speaking at all Legislative meetings. She stated she is happy to see any form of this resolution pass at this time because it is so important for the public to have the opportunity to weigh in.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is happy that this is being added to the Legislative Manual. She stated she would like to see public comment at all meetings prior to a vote, but this is a good compromise. She stated the time limit is vague, she would like to add wording about the Chair setting the time limit.

Legislator Sayegh suggested addressing the number of times the same individual can speak to one topic.

Legislator Montgomery stated that can be done by the Chair as well.

Cassandra Roth, resident of Pawling, stated she is happy this is being included in the Legislative Manual as it will ensure the ability for public comment into the future. She suggested implementing a minimum time to be allotted to each person rather than limiting their time. She stated this would be at the discretion of the Chair depending on the crowd.

Brett Yarris, resident of Carmel, stated he is happy to see that this is being codified as it protects the public. He stated he appreciates the work of all the Legislators. He questioned if other business would be listed on an agenda for a Full or Special Full Meeting so the public has the opportunity to attend the meeting prepared.

Chairman Birmingham stated if the other business is pre-filed prior to the agenda being published, it would be included on the agenda. He stated if it is brought forward after the agenda is published, it could be put on our website. He stated it is important to have that flexibility as there are sometimes time-sensitive matters needing to be addressed.

Legislator Gouldman agreed that there needs to be flexibility to allow for time sensitive requests, however recently there have items provided moments before the meeting, not leaving enough time for review prior to the meeting.

Legislator Ellner stated a letter of necessity would need to accompany a time sensitive request and should be published along with the item,

Chairman Birmingham agreed and stated the practice of including the letter is already in place.

Legislator Montgomery stated her understanding of other business is that anyone on a committee can introduce other business at any time. She stated if the Legislative Manual is to be adopted at the February meetings moving forward, it should be reflected in the Legislative Manual in Section II(B)(f) where it states it "shall remain in force and effect at the first meeting of each year."

Tommy Regan, resident of Brewster, stated in his experience, setting parameters is beneficial to stop individuals from filibustering. He suggested also including wording about decorum to allow everyone a chance to speak and a chance for the meeting to move along.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Pasquale stated that is covered by Robert's Rules.

Chairman Birmingham stated that is a great point, the Legislative Manual is the exception to Robert's Rules so there is no need to be redundant.

Legislator Crowley stated she would like to be cautious of the Constitution when implementing parameters on members of the public.

Chairman Birmingham stated he would like to have this on for approval in June to be considered by the Full Legislature at its July meeting.

**Item #8 – FYI – Litigation Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #9 – Other Business – None**

**Item #10 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 7:58pm, Legislator Ellner made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Chairman Birmingham. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.