

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
CALLED BY THE CLERK AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIRWOMAN
FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE 2026 BUDGET
HELD IN ROOM #318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Wednesday October 29, 2025 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested Legislator Gouldman to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance and Legislator Addonizio lead in the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Addonizio, Russo, Ellner, Jonke, Birmingham, Crowley and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #4 – Pre-filed Resolutions:

**BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE
(All Members)**

Item #4a – Office Senior Resources (OSR) – Chargeback Copier Lease was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #270

Office of Senior Resources

(Move Copier Chargebacks to Correct Budget Line)

	FROM:	TO:
Senior Services		
Chargeback Copier Lease		
10677200 55561 10116	1,500	0
OSR Putnam Senior Corps		
Chargeback Copier Lease		
10677300 55561	1,000	0
OSR Personal Care Services		
Chargeback Copier Lease		
10677500 55561	1,000	0
Expanded In Home Services		
Chargeback Copier Lease		
10677600 55561	1,000	0
OSR Adult Day Services		
Chargeback Copier Lease		
10677700 55561	1,000	0
WIN Program		
Chargeback Copier Lease		

10677800 55561	1,000	0
OSR General Chargeback Copier Lease 10677900 55561	1,000	0
Senior Services Chargeback Copier Lease 10677200 55561	2,502	10,002

A DIFFERENCE OF: 0

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4b – Putnam Arts Council – Contribution to the Arts – Increase Advertising and County Contribution – From \$70,957 to \$75,000 was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #271

Contribution to the Arts

	FROM:	TO:
Advertising 25091000 54664	4,435	5,000
County Contribution 25091000 54950	14,413	15,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 1,152

Putnam Arts Council

County Contribution 25756000 54950	52,109	55,000
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 2,891

A TOTAL DIFFERENCE OF: 4,043

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4c – Putnam Recreation Program (PRP) – Increase County Contribution was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #272

Putnam Recreation Programs (PRP)

	FROM:	TO:
County Contribution		
25647000 54950	15,450	25,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 9,550

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4d – Second Chance Foods – Increase County Contribution was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #273

Second Chance Foods

	FROM:	TO:
County Contribution		
25876000 54950	10,300	20,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 9,700

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4e – Career Support Solutions – Increase County Contribution to \$30,000 – Proposed by Legislator Birmingham was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #274

Career Support Solutions

	FROM:	TO:
County Contribution		
25648000 54950	15,340	30,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 14,660

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4f – Hudson Valley Shakespeare – County Contribution – Proposed by Legislator Montgomery was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #275

Hudson Valley Shakespeare

	FROM:	TO:
County Contribution		
25879000 54950	0	10,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 10,000

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4g – Garrison Arts Center – County Contribution – Proposed by Legislator Montgomery was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #276

Garrison Arts Center

	FROM:	TO:
County Contribution		
25877000 54950	0	10,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 10,000

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4h – Boscobel – County Contribution – Proposed by Legislator Montgomery was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #277

Boscobel

	FROM:	TO:
County Contribution		

25878000 54950	0	10,000
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 10,000

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4i – Office for Disabilities & Mental Health LGU Administration – Coordinator Office for Individuals with Disabilities – Restore Salary to Requested Amount was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she attended a forum on mental health where it was discussed how needed resources for individuals with developmental disabilities is needed in Putnam County. She stated she is very much in favor of this.

RESOLUTION #278

Office For Disabilities

	FROM:	TO:
Coordinator Office for Individuals with Disabilities 10198900 51000 (102) (Restore to requested amount)	38,001	41,897

FICA 10198900 58002	0	298
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 4,194

Mental Health LGU Administration

Coordinator Office for Individuals with Disabilities 10431000 51000 (102)	56,999	62,844
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FICA 10431000 58002	0	447
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 6,292

A TOTAL DIFFERENCE OF: 10,486

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4j – Mental Health SPOA – SPOA Coordinator (Adults) – Restore Salary to Requested Amount was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #279

Mental Health – SPOA

	FROM:	TO:
SPOA Coordinator (Adults)		
10033000 51000 (102)	99,928	104,928
(Restore to requested amount)		
FICA		
10033000 58002	0	383

A DIFFERENCE OF: 5,383

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4k – Mental Health OASAS Abatement – Dual Recovery Coordinator – Restore Salary to Requested Amount was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #280

Mental Health - OASAS Abatement

	FROM:	TO:
Dual Recovery Coordinator		
10431000 51000 10206 (103)	92,338	97,338
(Restore to requested amount)		
FICA		
10431000 58002 10206	0	383

A DIFFERENCE OF: 5,383

Revenue		
OASAS Abatement Funds		
Adjust with Dual Recovery Coordinator		
10431000 434983 10206	(0)	(5,383)

A DIFFERENCE OF: (5,383)

A TOTAL DIFFERENCE OF: 0

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4l – Mental Health – Co-Response Team Grant – Crisis Intervention Specialist (Law Enforcement) – Restore Salary to Requested Amount was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #281

Mental Health – Co-Response Team Grant

**Crisis Intervention Specialist
(Law Enforcement)
10431000 51000 10211 (102)
(Restore to requested amount)**

FROM:

TO:

92,338

97,338

**FICA
10431000 58002 10211**

0

383

A DIFFERENCE OF: 5,383

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4m – DSS – Services– Director of Child/Family Services – Restore Salary to Requested Amount was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #282

DSS – Services

**Director of Child/Family Services
10102000 51000 (101)
(Restore to requested amount)**

FROM:

TO:

128,779

133,779

**FICA
10102000 58002**

0

383

A DIFFERENCE OF: 5,383

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4n – Youth Bureau – Deputy Youth Director – Restore Salary to Requested Amount was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #283

Youth Bureau

	FROM:	TO:
Deputy Youth Director		
10731000 51000 (112)	87,000	97,200
(Restore to requested amount)		
FICA		
10731000 58002	0	780

A DIFFERENCE OF: 10,980

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4o – County Auditor – Increase Salary – Subcontingency – Per Catapult Survey was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #284

County Auditor

	FROM:	TO:
County Auditor		
10132000 51000 (101)	137,905	150,000
(Increase per Catapult Survey)		
FICA		
10132000 58002	0	925
Subcontingency		
10199000 54981	10,089	0

A DIFFERENCE OF: 2,931

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4p – County Auditor – Audit Manager – Increase Salary Per Catapult Survey was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #285

County Auditor

	FROM:	TO:
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Audit Manager 10132000 51000 (102) (Increase per Catapult Survey)	76,305	87,000
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FICA 10132000 58002	0	818
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 11,513

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4q – County Auditor – Deputy County Auditor – Increase Salary Per Catapult Survey was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #286

County Auditor

	FROM:	TO:
Deputy County Auditor 10132000 51000 (103) (Increase per Catapult Survey)	113,368	127,000

FICA 10132000 58002	0	1,043
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 14,675

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4r – Legislature – Reclass Administrative Assistant to Deputy Clerk – Increase Salary Per Catapult Survey was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #287

Legislature

	FROM:	TO:
Deputy Clerk 10101001 51000 (114) (Reclass from Administrative Assistant & Increase per Catapult Survey)	76,761	87,000

FICA 10101001 58002	0	783
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 11,022

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4s – Office for Senior Resources (OSR) – Caseworker Assistant (OSR) Part Time 25 Hours Per Week – Should be Calculated as a Step 2 was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #288

Office of Senior Resources

	FROM:	TO:
Caseworker Assistant (OSR) (PT – 25 HPW) 10677200 51000 (159)	39,535	43,934
FICA 10677200 58002	0	337

A DIFFERENCE OF: 4,736

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4t – Historian – County Historian – Increase to Full– Time was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #289

Historian

	FROM:	TO:
County Historian 10751000 51000 (101) (Increase to full-time)	56,077	80,000
FICA 10751000 58002	0	1,830

A DIFFERENCE OF: 25,753

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4u – Department of General Services (DGS) – Commissioner – Increase Salary Per Catapult Survey was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #290

Department of General Services (DGS)

	FROM:	TO:
Commissioner 10134500 51000 (101) (Increase per Catapult Survey)	153,458	156,437
FICA 10134500 58002	0	228

A DIFFERENCE OF: 3,207

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4v – Adjustments – Chargeback Revenue & Expenses was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #291

ADJUSTMENTS – CHARGEBACK REVENUE

Sheriff Security Services - DSS

	FROM:	TO:
Central Services Internal Chgbks 19005060 412941	(68,789)	(82,076)

Road Machinery Fund

Central Services Internal Chgbks 10513000 412941	(344,450)	(363,980)
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Transit PART Bus System

Central Services Internal Chgbks 95630000 412941	(100,000)	0
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Insurance Expense

Central Services Internal Chgbks (Insurance) 10191500 412941	0	(4,200)
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 62,983

ADJUSTMENTS – CHARGEBACK EXPENSES

County Clerk

Chargeback Travel 10141000 55675	400	0
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Personnel

Chargeback Travel 10143000 55675	400	0
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Historian

Chargeback Travel 10751000 55675	200	0
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Planning

Chargeback Printing Forms 10802000 55311	100	0
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Health Administration

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 10401000 55870	200	0
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Health Early Intervention

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 10405900 55870	200	0
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Health Nursing

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 11401000 55870	400	0
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Health EHS Drinking H2O Supply

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 12022000 55870	400	0
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Health EHS ATUPA

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 12023000 55870	600	0
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Health EHS

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 12401000 55870	1,400	0
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Health EHS State – NYC DEP Envir Project

Chargeback Auto All County Vehicle 12401002 55870 10050	200	0
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A DIFFERENCE OF: (4,500)

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4w – Sheriff – Buckle Up Grant – Adjustment was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

RESOLUTION #292

Sheriff's Office

FROM:	TO:
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Buckle Up Grant

Buckle Up CFDA20.604 Revenue 17311002 443899 10024	(4,400)	0
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Overtime 17311002 51093 10024	4,400	0
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State Retirement 17311002 58001 10024	1,157	0
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FICA 17311002 58002 10024	337	0
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Workers Compensation 17311002 58004 10024	60	0
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A TOTAL DIFFERENCE OF: (1,554)

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4x – Legislature – Agricultural Board – Remove from County Planning and Place under Legislature – Increase from \$1,000 to \$2,500 – Proposed by Legislator Ellner was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

Legislator Birmingham stated this amendment was proposed in the Budget & Finance Committee. He stated after speaking with members of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB), he would like to increase the \$2,500 to \$10,000. He stated members of the AFPB are volunteers and they need funds to attend conferences and trainings. He stated in addition, it would be helpful to bring people in to speak with the AFPB and other County officials, including Legislators. He stated he believes having this resource would help this happen.

Legislator Birmingham made a motion to amend the proposal to increase \$2,500 to \$10,000; Seconded by Legislator Ellner.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for discussion on the amendment.

Legislator Jonke stated he would be in favor of the amendment but would like the funds to go into subcontingency so the Legislature would approve the expenditure.

Legislator Birmingham stated per the Putnam County Charter, in order to move money out of subcontingency the request would have to come from the Administration. He stated having the funds under the Legislature's budget keeps it within the Legislature's purview.

Legislator Jonke withdrew his statement.

Legislator Montgomery stated the AFPB is a robust group that are really interested in the work they are doing. She stated she believes training is a vital tool for the members of the AFPB.

Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi questioned what type of training is being discussed; governmental trainings are typically free.

Legislator Birmingham stated although there may not be an entry fee, the funds could cover the cost of travel, meals, and potential hotel stays if the training is far away.

Legislator Crowley stated a discussion was had this morning at the AFPB meeting about education and bringing people into Putnam, the NSYAC Conference, and Soil and Water getting involved at some point. She stated she believes education is a positive resource and wants to support an invested AFPB. She stated bringing the AFPB and Soil & Water Conservation District Board together for training would be beneficial as well.

Legislator Montgomery stated training is provided through New York State Agriculture and Markets and Cornell Cooperative Extension for a minimal fee. She suggested allocating \$5,000 rather than \$10,000.

Legislator Russo agreed to allocate \$5,000 for 2026. She stated if it turns out more funding is in fact needed it can be revisited.

Legislator Birmingham withdrew his amendment to increase the amount from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

Legislator Birmingham made a motion to amend the proposal to increase \$2,500 to \$5,000; Seconded by Legislator Ellner.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she is more comfortable with \$5,000 since there are free trainings available. She questioned if travel for the AFPB members would come out of the Legislature's travel line.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated it would come from the AFPB's budget.

Legislator Crowley questioned if mileage could be charged for site visits when the AFPB reviews the Agricultural District applications. She stated she would like this to be fiscally conservatively. She stated she is more comfortable with \$2,500 or \$5,000.

By roll call vote on the amendment: All Ayes. Motion carries.

RESOLUTION #293

County Planning:

**Agricultural Board
10802000 54554**

FROM:

1,000

TO:

0

A DIFFERENCE OF: (1,000)

Legislature:

**Agricultural Board
10101001 54554**

0

5,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 5,000

A TOTAL DIFFERENCE OF: 4,000

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4y – Tourism – Re–Title Tourism Advertising to Tourism Promotion & Development was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she had an extensive discussion with the Tourism Department and County Auditor Sharkey about the title and “Advertising” encompasses promotion, therefore it is more appropriate.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to amend the title from “Promotion & Development” to “Advertising”; Seconded by Legislator Ellner.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for discussion on the amendment.

Legislator Montgomery stated New York State keeps promoting tourism without providing resources to support it. She stated she agrees with leaving the title of the “Advertising” budget line.

Chairwoman Sayegh called the vote on the amendment. By poll vote: All in favor. Motion carries.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move \$7,500 from the Advertising line to Miscellaneous; Seconded by Legislator Crowley.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the intention of moving these funds is to have some money available to support tourism. She stated she discussed this with Director of Tourism Keegan and the recommendation of \$7,500 for this purpose was made by the Tourism Department.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if there is an appetite to increase that \$7,500 allocation. He stated the County also receives I Love New York funding which is restricted funding to be used for advertising. He questioned if the Miscellaneous line is the most appropriate budget line to place this funding in.

Legislator Montgomery stated there is currently \$7,000 in the Miscellaneous budget line. She agreed with Legislator Birmingham's inquiry that Miscellaneous may not be the best line to put the funding into. She stated she would like to see a more specific purpose applied to the funds.

Legislator Crowley stated she spoke with Director Keegan and historically, the Miscellaneous line has been used for transportation to support the municipalities.

County Auditor Sharkey stated it can be put into subcontingency.

Legislator Ellner made a motion to increase the \$7,500 to \$20,000 and move it to Subcontingency rather than Miscellaneous; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for discussion on the amendment.

Legislator Birmingham stated Legislator Ellner's motion made an amendment to the amendment proposed by Chairwoman Sayegh. He stated this needs to be voted on to become the new amendment. He stated if the amendment passes, a vote will be needed for the resolution as amended.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated \$20,000 is a high number and she is not in favor of this. She stated she would not want to leave the advertising line too short, especially with Rev 250 coming up.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to see information about the costs of advertising, so she has an understanding of the amount of money being requested. She stated she trusts the departments to request what they need and she would like to understand the requests better.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for a vote on Legislator Ellner's amendment to her earlier amendment. By Roll Call Vote: Three Nays - Legislators Crowley, Russo, and Chairwoman Sayegh. Motion carries.

Legislator Crowley stated she believes this is hamstringing Tourism; the Legislature is not requiring other departments to come before them to discuss what they are spending and why. She stated Tourism does a lot without asking for a lot.

Legislator Addonizio stated the Legislature's role is to have oversight.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for a vote on the resolution as amended.

RESOLUTION #294

Tourism

Advertising

10641000 54664

(Approved original "Advertising" title)*

FROM:

TO:

60,000

40,000

Subcontingency

10199000 54991

0

20,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 0

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE TO LEAVE TITLE OF "ADVERTISING" BUDGET LINE AS IS: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE TO TRANSFER FUNDS: SEVEN AYES. TWO NAYS - LEGISLATORS CROWLEY AND RUSSO. MOTION CARRIES.

Item #4z – Soil & Water – Remove \$60,000 Revenue Line – Per Decentralized Budget Process Section E (19) was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

Legislator Montgomery thanked Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi and the Soil & Water Conservation District Board members for their hard work.

RESOLUTION #295

Soil & Water

State Aid Soil and Water

10874500 439101

FROM:

TO:

(60,000)

0

A DIFFERENCE OF: 60,000

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #4aa – Use of Fund Balance – Homeowner Tax Relief Program – Proposed by Legislator Jonke was next. On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee, Chairwoman Sayegh moved the following:

Legislator Crowley stated she will be voting in favor of this. She stated she believes Putnam County should be more affordable and has therefore always supported immediate reforms that put taxpayers first. She stated it has been advised by Legislative Counsel that this program, as

written, is not lawful and further guidance from the State Legislature and the Comptroller is required. She stated it is important to research this fully and clarified her previous “no” vote was because she did not have enough information. She stated in concept, this is wonderful and she would love to see it be implemented. She stated a \$200 rebate could go a long way for many people. She thanked Legislator Jonke for bringing this forward.

Legislator Jonke clarified that this is not a “rebate”; it is a Homeowner Tax Relief Program. He stated this is intended to provide meaningful tax relief to single family homeowners. He stated the tax levy was lowered in 2024 and 2025 and there was virtually no impact on the County property tax bills for residents; it has the greatest impact on New York City, NYSEG and Central Hudson. He stated in the County Executive’s Budget Address he talked about the tax rate going to 2.39%. He stated even with putting this money into subcontingency will not have any impact on the tax rate. He stated the Legislature’s work on this budget will show a 2.15% property tax rate in January 2026, showing significant relief from the Legislature. He stated the Tax Relief Program is not going to benefit the municipalities or large corporations; it is going to benefit homeowners. He agreed that research is needed and stated how great it would be for Putnam County to be the first in the State to implement such a program.

Legislator Addonizio stated her support for this program. She stated the residents who built this community deserve a tax relief program. She clarified that the recipients of the tax relief would be homeowners in owner-occupied single-family residences. She stated this is a tangible way to thank our taxpayers for their trust and ensure they benefit from the County’s sound financial stewardship.

Legislator Birmingham stated his support for this as well. He spoke to the County’s fund balance per the draft audit for the year ending December 31, 2024, which can certainly be used to provide this relief.

Legislator Ellner stated this relief program would provide taxpayers with more meaningful savings than a tax reduction. He stated approving this resolution is a critical first step in order to be able to look into the mechanism to make it come to fruition.

Legislator Montgomery stated she was skeptical of this when it was first discussed earlier this month, however she is in support of returning some money to the taxpayers. She stated her concern that there is not yet a program in place. She stated there are many ways to offer relief to Putnam County residents, and not just homeowners.

Legislator Montgomery made a motion to amend the proposal to “Tax Relief Program for Putnam County Residents”; Seconded by Legislator Crowley.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for discussion on Legislator Montgomery’s amendment.

Legislator Jonke stated he is opposed to that because it is intended for homeowners. He stated when Legislature had the opportunity to lower the sales tax, which would provide relief to all residents and it was not approved.

Legislator Russo stated she is in favor of tax relief to all taxpayers, whether they are homeowners or not. She stated she does not believe the proper mechanism is in place yet but will be supporting it at this point.

Legislator Crowley stated this does not provide structural or lasting tax reform.

Legislator Gouldman stated his support for tax relief in Putnam County. He stated there are issues with this the way it is.

Legislator Montgomery stated there are Federal programs shutting down, impacting many residents. She stated this money could go toward helping them in a meaningful way.

Legislator Ellner stated the intent of this is to provide property tax relief. He stated the other areas where relief is needed are valid points to bring forward and he would support providing such relief under a different program.

Legislator Birmingham stated he agreed with Legislator Montgomery that all residents should see tax relief. He stated he is not in favor of the proposed amendment, but perhaps a companion bill offering relief to all residents would be worth considering in the future.

Legislator Montgomery stated her concern was having this money is subcontingency, locked in for this specific purpose when there is no program in place.

Legislator Ellner questioned if Legislator Montgomery had an idea of an additional program. He suggested making a motion to include another program and to set aside money for that now.

Legislator Montgomery stated she does not have a specific figure at this time.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for a roll call vote on the motion to amend the name of the program.

By roll call vote: Four Ayes. Five Nays: Legislator Addonizio, Legislator Birmingham, Legislator Ellner, Legislator Jonke, and Chairwoman Sayegh. Motion fails.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated any further discussion should now be on the original proposal.

Legislator Gouldman stated property taxes in Putnam County are very high compared to the national average, which puts a strain on homeowners. He stated it is important to focus on sound tax policy solutions. He reviewed tax relief efforts that have been approved in the past few years. He stated this specific item only puts the money aside in the budget, giving the Legislature more time to establish the program. He stated more research needs to be done on this before it can be implemented. He stated he is in favor of putting this money into subcontingency.

Legislator Birmingham stated without exploring new options things will never change. He stated if this is approved and the program fails to materialize, the funding goes right back into the general fund or could be reallocated to where it is needed. He thanked Legislator Jonke for thinking out of the box.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated her support for this and recognized there is work to be done on it. She stated it is time to put the homeowners first.

RESOLUTION #296

Finance Department

**Subcontingency
Homeowner Tax Relief Program**

FROM:

TO:

10199000 54990	0	6,500,000
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**Department of Finance
Use of Fund Balance**

10131000 427161	(6,575,011)	(13,075,011)
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A DIFFERENCE OF: 0

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #5 – Other Business:

Legislator Birmingham made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Item #5a – Extension Service (Cornell Cooperative Extension) – Tilly Foster Agriculture Program (Ag Navigator) Transfer \$25,000 from that line into Subcontingency – Proposed by Legislator Ellner was next.

Legislator Ellner stated he would like to reduce the Tilly Foster Agriculture Program (Ag Navigator) line by \$25,000. He stated he believes this can be funded through the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB).

Legislator Ellner made a motion to consider Extension Service – Tilly Foster Agriculture Program (Ag Navigator) – Reduce \$25,000; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio.

Legislator Crowley stated she believes the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) would be a great funding source for this necessary program. She stated the person filling the role of Ag Navigator has been instrumental in securing funding and has utilized it for successful programs.

Legislator Addonizio stated she believes a member of the AFPB can be the Ag Navigator, therefore it does not make sense to have funded this through Cornell Cooperative Extension. She stated a Board Member acting as liaison would maintain continuity and accountability.

Legislator Montgomery stated she has spoken with the AFPB as well as Cornell Cooperative Extension and she believes the common goal is to strengthen agriculture in Putnam County. She stated Cornell Cooperative Extension has been an outstanding partner for Putnam County. She stated the question here is how this position is structured and where it was created. She stated she learned that this person would report to the Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension but was created with a contract the Legislature has not seen. She stated under NYS law the AFPB is created by the Legislature and operates under our authority. She stated funding this through Cornell Cooperative Extension via a contract with the Administration and without the property Legislative framework, it shifts the balance of authority and could weaken the role of the Legislature on the AFPB. She stated she believes the funding can remain in the budget for Cornell Cooperative Extension and suggested changing the title to “Ag Grants Navigator” instead of an Ag Navigator that influences and supports the AFPB, it is a Grants Navigator that can seek out funding.

Chairwoman Sayegh agreed with Legislator Montgomery. She stated in speaking with the AFPB, they were adamant that they did not need an Ag Navigator and they did not want to use taxpayer money to fund the position. She stated AFPB also discussed partnering with SWCD to provide the grant services. She stated she is in favor of Legislator Ellner's proposal.

Legislator Crowley stated the AFPB must remain neutral so they can advise the Legislature. She stated the Ag Navigator could help the public with applications.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to amend Legislator Ellner's proposal by putting \$25,000 into subcontingency until the agreement between the Administration and Cornell Cooperative Extension is provided to the Legislature.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the funds would still be earmarked for the Ag Navigator position if they were put into subcontingency.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated it would be earmarked for the purpose of the Ag Navigator.

Legislator Montgomery made a motion to amend the Legislator Ellner's proposal to put \$25,000 into subcontingency; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if a contingency can be put on a line item in the budget, for instance, leave the \$25,000 in the line but add a contingency related to a title change.

County Auditor Sharkey stated perhaps it could be done via resolution.

Legislator Birmingham stated Cornell Cooperative Extension is a separate entity from the County therefore the County interacts with them through a contract. He stated it is the County Executive's role to negotiate and sign contracts. He stated he seconded Legislator Montgomery's motion because it is a compromise to keep the funding in the budget under subcontingency.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated the AFPB is an advisory body to the Legislature and is required to evaluate matters before it in a neutral manner. She stated the proposed Navigator position was intended to be a public-facing role that could assist applicants with agricultural programs and grants without placing the AFPB in the position of both assisting and later evaluating an applicant. She stated the navigator could also assist SWCD with grants.

Legislator Gouldman stated his support for the Ag Navigator, which could help with some of the difficulties faced last year. He stated this separate position will be beneficial.

Legislator Birmingham stated an option is to move this funding out of Cornell Cooperative Extension's budget and into the Legislature's budget, similarly to the motion made under agenda item #4x this evening. He stated this would provide the opportunity for the Legislature to be presented with a plan.

Legislator Addonizio requested clarification about where the \$25,000 would be held in subcontingency. She questioned whether \$25,000 was a significant amount solely for this position.

Legislator Montgomery stated the title and responsibilities could be refined before the Legislature considered releasing the funding. She stated the individual is currently performing related work

and is knowledgeable, but reiterated that her primary concern is ensuring that the structure of the position respects the Legislature's role in the governance of the AFPB. She stated the details of the position can be clarified before the funding is released.

Legislator Ellner stated he would be more comfortable if the funding were placed in a subcontingency budget line controlled by the Legislature. He stated the proposed position arose from a contract initiated by the County Executive with Cornell Cooperative Extension that the Legislature had not reviewed. He expressed concern that leaving the funding within the Cornell Cooperative Extension structure could continue to subject the position to an agreement over which the Legislature had insufficient control.

Legislator Montgomery stated the AFPB could be incorporated into the process, including consultation regarding the position.

Legislator Birmingham stated placing the money in subcontingency would provide the Legislature with a measure of control because releasing the funding during the year would require further legislative action. He stated the Legislature could request to review the proposed contract before releasing the funds and could decline to move the money if a majority of the Legislature was not satisfied with the proposed arrangement.

Legislator Crowley stated the Legislature had already approved additional funding for AFPB education and the overall goal was to provide the AFPB and agricultural community with additional resources and knowledge. She stated she did not see a conflict between providing educational resources to the AFPB and providing an Agricultural Navigator as an additional resource. She stated she was comfortable placing the funding in subcontingency so the Legislature could later determine whether to authorize the position.

Legislator Ellner stated several members of the AFPB had contacted him as Chairman of the Physical Services Committee and clearly stated they did not want the proposed Agricultural Navigator position. He believes their wishes should be respected and that this was the basis for his original motion to remove the \$25,000.

Legislator Montgomery reiterated that her subcontingency proposal was intended as a compromise and was not intended to take resources away from Cornell Cooperative Extension. She stated the County should continue strengthening agriculture, but any position created should support rather than supplant the AFPB and should maintain appropriate Legislative oversight.

Legislator Addonizio stated it was her understanding that the AFPB had not been consulted regarding the creation of the proposed position. She questioned why an existing member or resource associated with the AFPB could not perform the navigator function.

Legislator Montgomery stated the AFPB, by nature, does what an Ag Navigator would do. She stated similarly to other counties throughout the State, Putnam has found that more support is needed. She reviewed similar functions implemented by other counties. She stated she would like the AFPB, Legislature, County Executive and Cornell Cooperative Extension to work together to determine which structure works best locally. She stated she does not want to see this funding taken out of Cornell Cooperative Extension's budget.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated the possibility of reimbursement through SWCD had also been discussed through Part C funds. She stated funding the position in the current budget would not necessarily mean it would remain an ongoing taxpayer expense. She stated placing the funding

in subcontingency would allow the parties to continue discussing those options without immediately removing the funding.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Cornell Cooperative Extension did not request the \$25,000. She stated the AFPB had indicated it did not want the position and SWCD had stated it could fund agricultural navigation assistance without County taxpayer funding. She stated those were strong reasons for her to support Legislator Ellner's original proposal to remove the funding rather than place it in subcontingency.

Chairwoman Sayegh called for a roll call vote on Legislator Montgomery's amendment to put \$25,000 into subcontingency.

By roll call vote: Five ayes. Four Nays: Legislator Addonizio, Legislator Ellner, Legislator Jonke, Chairwoman Sayegh. Motion carries.

Legislator Birmingham clarified that the amended motion removed \$25,000 from the County Executive's proposed Cornell Cooperative Extension/Tilly Foster budget line and placed the funding in subcontingency. He stated the funding would remain within the County budget but would require additional action before it could be used.

Legislator Ellner questioned whether the subcontingency funding would remain specifically tied to Cornell Cooperative Extension or whether it could later be moved to a legislatively controlled account.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey explained the distinction between funds designated for a specific subcontingency purpose and general contingency and discussed the budgetary process necessary to subsequently transfer or release the funding.

Legislator Birmingham questioned whether the Legislature could direct the use of the funds when considering their release from subcontingency.

County Auditor Sharkey stated funds placed in a designated subcontingency line are reserved for that purpose and require further budgetary action before they can be used.

Legislator Crowley questioned whether release of funds from subcontingency would also require action by the County Executive.

County Auditor Sharkey explained that the Finance Department would have to prepare the necessary budgetary amendment or transfer, which would go through the Administration.

Legislator Addonizio questioned whether a future action releasing the funds could be vetoed by the County Executive.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated such Legislative action could be subject to veto, after which the Legislature could consider a veto override.

Chairwoman Sayegh called the question on the resolution. She clarified that a "yes" vote on the amended motion would place the \$25,000 in subcontingency, while a "no" vote would leave the County Executive's proposed budget line unchanged.

RESOLUTION #297

Extension Service (Cornell Cooperative Extension)

	FROM:	TO:
Tilly Foster Agriculture Program (Ag Navigator)		
25875000 54555	36,811	11,811
Subcontingency		
10199000 54992	0	25,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 0

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE: SIX AYES. THREE NAYS – LEGISLATORS CROWLEY, GOULDMAN & RUSSO. MOTION CARRIES.

Item #5b – Use of Fund Balance – \$150,000 – Food Insecurity Program – Proposed by Legislator Birmingham was next.

Legislator Birmingham stated food insecurity remains an issue in Putnam County despite the County's overall wealth. He referenced the work of Second Chance Foods, local food pantries and other community organizations and stated the coming year could be particularly difficult for residents in need.

Legislator Birmingham made a motion to consider Use of Fund Balance – Food Insecurity Program - \$150,000; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery.

Legislator Birmingham clarified that this funding would not be designated for any one organization but could support food pantries and other organizations addressing food insecurity throughout the County.

Legislator Crowley stated she supports the proposal and noted there are numerous organizations throughout the County providing food assistance. She stated creating a funding source that could respond to needs in different communities would be beneficial.

Legislator Addonizio stated she strongly supports the proposal and referenced her work with Second Chance Foods. She stated the number of residents seeking assistance has increased, including families with young children, and the County should do what it can to help residents in need. She stated this ongoing need will only be exacerbated by the Federal budget cuts coming down the pike.

Legislator Russo stated she supports the proposal and referenced her volunteer work with Second Chance Foods and a community kitchen in Patterson. She stated food insecurity can also be accompanied by other hardships; residents regularly seek assistance from local food pantries.

Legislator Ellner stated this is a necessary proposal and complemented other efforts by the Legislature to provide relief to residents.

Legislator Montgomery stated there are several established food pantries in Putnam County in addition to other organizations providing assistance. She stated it is important to remain in contact with County employees, first responders and social service professionals who work directly with residents experiencing hardship.

Legislator Gouldman stated he supports the proposal and has seen increasing demand through his experience volunteering at the Putnam Valley food pantry. He stated some residents rely on multiple food pantries and senior programs to meet their basic food needs.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she supports the proposal and has heard directly from local food pantries that supplies are low while demand is increasing. She stated a clearly defined County initiative addressing food insecurity is consistent with the type of targeted outside agency support she believes the County should provide.

Legislator Crowley stated she spoke with Director of the Office for Senior Resources Marlene Barrett who is working closely with other County agencies to meet the needs of the residents.

RESOLUTION #298

Finance Department

Subcontingency

Food Insecurity Program

10199000 54995

FROM:

TO:

0

150,000

A DIFFERENCE OF: 150,000

Adjust fringes and revenue accordingly.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #5c – Other Business – Statement by Legislator Crowley

Legislator Crowley stated she has chosen not to accept the annual cost-of-living increase for Legislators. She stated she believes taxpayer dollars should be used responsibly and that public service should focus on representing residents rather than personal gain. She stated she would notify the Commissioner of Finance in writing of her decision.

Item #6 – Offset Changes to Budget

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the following; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if the tax levy would be increased.

Legislator Jonke stated he would rather utilize fund balance than increase the tax levy.

Chairwoman Sayegh clarified there is no change to the tax levy; fund balance is being used.

Legislator Jonke stated the budget review has been a long process. He stated based on the changes made by the Legislature the tax rate will be \$2.15. He stated it has been many decades since it has been that low.

RESOLUTION #299

Offset Changes

	FROM:	TO:
Use of:		
Fund Balance		
10131000 427161	(6,575,011)	(7,025,345)

Such adjusted amount as required to offset changes to the Tentative Budget by the County Legislature, including County Executive's Vetoes not overridden by the County Legislature and including final adjustment for Health Insurance rates, in compliance with the Tax Cap requirements of the State of New York. It being the intent of the Legislature to comply with Real Property Tax Law and Levy of \$45,212,312.

APPROXIMATE DIFFERENCE OF: (450,334)

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #7 – Budget Adoption:

Item #7a – Approval of the 2026 Budget Resolutions was next.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the following; Seconded by Legislator Crowley and Legislator Ellner.

RESOLUTION #300

APPROVAL OF THE 2026 BUDGET RESOLUTIONS

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature hereby approves the 2026 budget resolutions as pre-filed by the Budget & Finance Committee and amended by the Legislature on October 20, 2025; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the individual votes on each budget resolution be made a part of this resolution.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #7b – Resolution Adopting the Budget for the Fiscal Year 2026 Commencing January 1, 2026 making Appropriations for the Operation of the County Government and Establishing Rates of Compensation for Officers and Employees for the Fiscal Year 2026 was next.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the following; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham.

Legislator Birmingham explained that there are two schedules broken out, A and B. He stated he would vote in favor of Item #7b but would abstain from the subsequent vote on Schedule A because certain municipalities affected by those budget lines are represented by his law firm.

Legislator Crowley stated she would abstain from the subsequent vote involving Schedule B because of a potential conflict related to her husband's employment.

Chairwoman Sayegh clarified that this vote includes everything except schedule A and B.

RESOLUTION #301

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2026 MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND ESTABLISHING RATES OF COMPENSATION FOR OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026

WHEREAS, the Putnam County Legislature has met and considered the Tentative Budget as submitted by the County Executive and has held a Public Hearing thereon pursuant to both Article 7.04(b)(4) of the Putnam County Charter and Section 359 of the County Law of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, this Legislature has made certain adjustments to the Tentative Budget as submitted by the County Executive which are included as part of this budget adoption; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature hereby adopts the Tentative Budget, as amended by this Legislature, except for the line items in attached "Schedules A and B", which sets forth the appropriations for the objects and purposes as specified, and further establishes the rates of compensation to be paid provided that said tentative budget as amended does not exceed the tax cap as provided for by state law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this act takes effect on January 1, 2026.

BY POLL VOTE: ALL AYES. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Item #7c – Approval – Additional Resolution Adopting Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 Commencing January 1, 2026 Making Appropriations for the Operation of the County Government and Establishing Rates of Compensation for Officers and Employees for the Fiscal Year 2026 – ("Schedule A" lines Incl.)

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the following; Seconded by Legislator Ellner.

RESOLUTION #302

AN ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2026 MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND ESTABLISHING RATES OF COMPENSATION FOR OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature hereby adopts the budget line items in attached "Schedule A" as shown in the Tentative Budget and as amended by the Legislature as an addition to the Budget adopted by Resolution #301 of 2025 provided that

said tentative budget as amended does not exceed the tax cap as provided for in state law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this act takes effect January 1, 2026.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE: EIGHT AYES. ONE ABSTENTION – LEGISLATOR BIRMINGHAM. MOTION CARRIES.

Item #7d – Approval – Additional Resolution Adopting Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 Commencing January 1, 2026 Making Appropriations for the Operation of the County Government and Establishing Rates of Compensation for Officers and Employees for the Fiscal Year 2026 – (“Schedule B” lines Incl.)

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the following; Seconded by Legislator Ellner.

RESOLUTION #303

AN ADDITIONAL RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2026 MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND ESTABLISHING RATES OF COMPENSATION FOR OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature hereby adopts the budget line items in attached “Schedule B” as shown in the Tentative Budget and as amended by the Legislature as an addition to the Budget adopted by Resolution #301 of 2025 provided that said tentative budget as amended does not exceed the tax cap as provided for in state law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this act takes effect January 1, 2026.

BY ROLL CALL VOTE: EIGHT AYES. ONE ABSTENTION – LEGISLATOR CROWLEY. MOTION CARRIES.

Item #8 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:42 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Beth Robinson.