

RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
BUDGET MEETING
Held In Room 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512

Members: Chairman Othmer, Legislators Albano & Gross

Thursday **October 11, 2012** **6:30 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman Othmer who requested that Legislator Gross lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Albano, Gross, and Chairman Othmer were present.

3) 2013 Budget Review

Cornell Cooperative Extension – Account 8750

Chairman Richard Othmer invited Cornell Cooperative Extension representative, Margie Keith, forward to discuss her budget.

Chairman Othmer stated that Cornell Cooperative Extension and 4-H bring in \$1.3 million dollars worth of benefits in working with Cornell University and with various others aspects of their organization. He further stated that Cornell Cooperative Extension made cuts where the County Executive asked them to and he stated he was happy with their budget.

Ms. Keith thanked the County Legislature and the County Executive for supporting the Cornell Cooperative Extension. The County funding is the core funding to their program and without that they would not receive the State and Federal dollars that support the program. The volunteer support is greatly appreciated, as well.

Legislature – Account 1010

Chairman Othmer stated that he has been asked about the benefits for the Legislative Department. He stated that he does not take the benefits offered.

Chair of the Legislature Mary Conklin stated that she does not take the benefits either. She further stated that the Legislature cut 7%+ from our budget when the County Executive asked that of everyone.

Chairman Othmer stated that Chair of the Legislature is entitled to a stipend, to which this year, Chairwoman Conklin did not take that stipend. He stated that she held true to her philosophy of voting against stipends for other County employees.

County Executive – Account 1230

Chairman Othmer stated he went through all of the pages and is fine with the numbers.

Audit – Account 1320

Chairman Othmer stated that every department made a tight budget as they were asked to do.

County Clerk – Account 1410

County Clerk Dennis Sant and Deputy County Clerk Michael Bartolotti came forward to speak in regards to their department's budget.

Chairman Othmer stated that the County Clerk's department raises phenomenal revenues for the County. He further stated that New York State is encouraging people to renew Department of Motor Vehicle items online on their State DMV website and/or mail to the State DMV in Albany. By doing so, if people renew this way the County does not receive any portion of those mailed payments or receives a skewed 4% of those online payments. If people make a mistake online and come into the Putnam DMV to fix it, the County makes nothing on fixing the mistake because the transaction originated online on the State DMV website. Chairman Othmer stated that the Putnam DMV is recruiting dealerships to register new vehicles with the Putnam DMV and it is a great idea.

Chairwoman of the Legislature Conklin asked what the contract was that was funded by line 10141000 54646 on Page 27.

Deputy County Clerk Bartolotti stated that the major contract there is the computer contract with ACS and hardware and software programs. He stated it is a records management software, not a financial management software.

Chairman Othmer asked about the Records Management department.

County Clerk Sant stated that the new facility is great and they are now in compliance.

Legislator Gross commended the County Clerk and his staff on their new initiative for the television screens for those individuals waiting in-line in the Putnam DMV. He also commended the County Clerk and his staff on being so proactive with this initiative.

Chairman Othmer agreed.

County Clerk Sant stated that they will be able to promote many departments on those screens, including tourism and the District Attorney's Anti-Bullying Campaign. He stated they have a captive audience for at least 15-20 minutes and they wanted to utilize it.

Law Department – Account 1420

Chairman Othmer invited County Attorney Jennifer Bumgarner forward to speak regarding the Law Department budget.

Chairman Othmer commended County Attorney Bumgarner on a well done budget and a timely turnaround of requests of the Law Department.

Legislator Gross asked what caused the Personnel Services number change.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated that number includes a change in fringes, the proposed additional position, and a salary adjustment.

Legislator Gross stated that was up for debate whether it would stay in the budget.

Chairman Othmer stated that it was and that it would be adjusted accordingly if it were voted to be removed from the budget.

Board of Elections – Account 1450

Chairman Othmer asked County Auditor Michele Alfano-Sharkey if the incremental raises the Commissioners received last year, which was intended for them to receive each year for the next four years, was included in this year's proposed budget.

County Auditor Alfano-Sharkey stated that they are not in this year's budget.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that this issue was discussed at this year's Personnel Committee Budget Meeting and it will be up for discussion again at the Budget & Finance Committee Meeting but no, it is not currently in the proposed budget.

Association of Counties – Account 1921

Chairman Othmer stated that he fully supports the New York Association of Counties membership because we learn a great deal from their conferences and correspondence.

Legislator Albano agreed.

Putnam Historic Preservation – Account 6430

Chairman Othmer asked if there was anyone in the public representing Putnam Historic Preservation.

There was not.

County Auditor Alfano-Sharkey stated that there is no money in those lines.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated that Putnam Historic Preservation does not currently exist.

Legislator LoBue stated that they sent a letter to the Legislature asking for a renewal and appointment and it was never brought up to the appropriate Committee. A letter was sent to a specific Legislator, who is no longer on the Legislature, asking to be placed on the Committee agenda for appointments and it never went through.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated that the County Executive did not appoint anyone. The County Executive holds that power according to the County Code.

Legislator LoBue stated that there was a misunderstanding because the rest of the Legislators were not made aware that communication had been sent to the Legislature.

Veterans Service Agency – Account 6510

Chairman Othmer stated that Veterans Affairs Director Karl Rohde is reorganizing the Department. The amounts did go up a little bit but, along with the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans, etc., he personally believes that the amount of soldiers coming back from the Middle East is unprecedented.

Legislator Gross stated the Veterans Service Agency has really updated its entire program including the Veterans Residence.

Chairman Othmer stated that Director Rohde works very hard.

Consumer Affairs – Account 6610

Chairman Othmer invited Director of Consumer Affairs Jean Marie Noel forward to discuss her department's budget.

Chairman Othmer asked Director Noel to confirm that her budget came in \$200,000 under budget.

Director Noel stated that was correct.

Chairman Othmer stated that is great news and he understands that her department is bringing in cash flow through fines and fees.

Director Noel stated that she would like full disclosure on her budget. When the tentative budget was presented by County Executive Odell, Legislator Birmingham asked about the increased revenue from Item Pricing. The increased revenue that is suggested in the tentative budget is linked to revisions and enforcement of the Item Pricing Law. She stated she met individually with Legislator Birmingham and Legislator Gross regarding her department's budget and regarding revisions to the law. She stated that nearby counties have updated their Item Pricing Law as recently as two years ago. If the law is removed, the County loses the revenue. If the law is amended, the County obtains the revenue. Either way, it is the Legislature's decision. The amendment is not in any way going to increase any of the fees or responsibilities of the "mom and pop" stores. This will affect the larger chain stores.

Legislator LoBue asked if Dutchess County implements this law.

Director Noel stated that it does but, it falls under their Weights and Measures office since they did away with their Consumer Affairs office last year. A Weights and Measures office is State mandated. In most nearby counties the Item Pricing Law falls under the Weights and Measures office.

Legislator DiCarlo asked Director Noel if her recommendation would be once the budget cycle is finished to move forward with this as soon as possible?

Director Noel agreed. She stated absolutely as soon as possible.

Chairman Othmer stated that Deputy County Attorney Danielle Harris has been working on the continuity in the Contractor's Laws. He stated we are hoping to have that done early next year.

Director Noel stated that under full disclosure she wanted to state that her department has had two resignations and she would like to reorganize the way the enforcement model is used. She has been in touch with the Personnel Department who advised her to request the money for those positions in the Temporary line, rather than saying they will do it this way and get locked into it. She stated that it has been moved into the Temporary line and will adjust as they need it and next year they will tighten up what those positions will be.

Legislator Gross thanked Director Noel for her cracking down on overtime within her department.

Director Noel stated her department has zero overtime but when people use their time she is making sure it is done legitimately.

Legislator Gross thanked her for these efforts.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the revenue is in the budget for the new Item Pricing Law. You either have to remove the revenue or change the law. The Law Department and Consumer Affairs Department will have an amendment to the Legislature before the Legislature adopts the budget so the Legislature can decide.

Outside Agencies

Chairman Othmer stated that the Outside Agencies were funded to the 2012 levels, except the Libraries which were given a 3% increase.

Libraries – Account 7410

Chairman Othmer stated that he fully supports this 3% increase for the Libraries because many people are flocking to the Libraries due to the state of the economy to save money and learn new skills. He asked Legislator LoBue if she would like to clarify a statement she made the previous night at the Physical Services Budget meeting where she stated she would like to cut Outside Agencies from the budget.

Legislator LoBue stated that she did not make that comment. She stated she supported the Libraries the previous night.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that there were conversations that we were talking about generically. There were discussions about what some of the areas we could cut were.

Legislator LoBue stated that she would reiterate what she did say about the Libraries. She stated that there were comments made because the Administration cut \$650,000 from the transit system and some of the people that were here the previous night thought that cut to be unfair and that they were being singled out and they went after some of the libraries and outside agencies. She stated that she pointed out that outside agencies including libraries were valuable especially with the economy and the unemployment being what it is, that the libraries were taking on more and more people. People are foregoing their internet services because they cannot afford it and coming into the libraries to use the internet instead.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that is where it was heard from. One of the constituents said, what about the outside agencies? And that is where this topic came from.

Legislator Othmer stated he did not know the County was giving \$50,000 for the football field.

Legislator DiCarlo stated the constituent who made that statement was referring to the Carmel football field. The constituent lives in Carmel and the Carmel Central School District is having a vote to pay for a \$50,000 turf football field.

Chairman Othmer stated that he said we do not pay for that and someone else said that we do.

Legislator DiCarlo stated that someone else who said that we do pay for it was not referring to the \$50,000 football field, they were referring to the recreation budget, which is over \$1 million. He stated that the conversation that took place was piggy backing on what was said about the libraries someone got up and talked about why doesn't the Legislature talk about cutting the outside agencies and then the discussion lead to several things, outside agencies, recreation, and that is where everyone started to put their comments in and that is where this gentleman said, by the way when I grew up years ago, we played on dirt fields and now they are asking for us to vote on hundreds and thousands of dollars for a turf field.

Chairman Othmer asked for confirmation that the County has no money going to any school from the County budget.

Legislator Oliverio stated not to any school, no.

Mrs. Regina Morini, President of the Mahopac Public Library and Board Member of the Mid-Hudson Library System, stated that the Libraries would like to thank the County for their funding and their increase in funding for 2013. The County used to do many of the things that the Libraries are now doing to help people to get back into the workforce. Libraries are the place to be in each town.

6:59PM

Chairman Othmer made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter in the Consumer Affairs Department, seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

7:09PM

Legislator Gross made a motion to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

No action was taken.

There being no further business, at 7:10 P.M., Legislator Gross made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Krista M. Butler, Administrative Assistant.