

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
CALLED BY THE CLERK AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIR
HELD AT
PUTNAM GOLF, INC.
187 HILL STREET
MAHOPAC, NEW YORK 10541**

Thursday March 15, 2018 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 P.M. by Chairman Castellano. The Putnam County Sheriff's Department and Civil Air Patrol presented the flag. Chairman Castellano requested Acting Commissioner of Emergency Services Ken Clair to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Castellano requested Legislator Scuccimarra lead in the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Scuccimarra, Gouldman, Addonizio, Nacerino, Albano, Jonke, Castellano, Sayegh, Sullivan and Chairman Castellano.

Chairman Castellano introduced Deputy Commissioner of Social Services, Joseph DeMarzo.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo introduced the elected officials and representatives in attendance, individuals running for office, Putnam County Justices, party chairs and Election Commissioners. Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo then introduced the County Executive, MaryEllen Odell.

County Executive Odell began her 7th State of the County Address with a moment of silence in memory of those, she considers members of our Putnam County family, we recently lost: Karen Yates, Elizabeth Duffy-Rau, Jeanne Hinchey, Richard Farrell and Richard Tomlins.

County Executive Odell detailed her previous State of the County Address' and what they focused on: 2014-the Year of the Senior, 2015-the Year of the Family, 2016-the Year of Business Development and 2017-the Year of the Millennial.

County Executive Odell stated that 2018 would be focused on the Year of the Volunteer. She cited many of the volunteers and organizations starting back as early as 1960. She thanked everyone for nominating her as Grand Marshal of the 2018 Northern Westchester-Putnam St. Patrick's Day Parade. She thanked County employee, Pauline Marston for her volunteerism and the amount of time she dedicates to many different organizations. She thanked the many organizations who are committed to serving our community such as; the Sheriff's Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Legislators and libraries. She detailed many of the projects they supported. County Executive Odell encouraged individuals to volunteer in their community. She explained that www.volunteernewyork.org was a website that could help individuals find their passion about how they can give back to the community.

County Executive Odell explained that, in the last two (2) weeks, Putnam County encountered two (2) severe Nor'easter storms; Winter Storms Riley and Quinn. She praised the fierce dedication of our volunteers, first responders and public servants who responded to ensure that our residents were protected. She continued and detailed the

timeline, from day 1 to day 8, of the two (2) storms and explained how the Incident Command Structure team monitored these storms and how the County responded.

County Executive Odell continued and stated one of the most important programs that is implemented by the Sheriff's Department is the School Resource Officer (SRO) program; protecting our children when they are in school. It has been 20+ years since the program was first implemented and there are currently 9 SRO's. She stated that it is a \$1.35 million partnership shared cost with the school districts and Putnam County remains committed to partnering with our schools to keep our children safe. She also detailed the Sheriff Department's K9 Unit and thanked the Putnam County Fire & EMS volunteers for their commitment and dedication to Putnam County. She spoke about the need to overhaul our radio communication system. She explained how the New York State public safety surcharge to residents, 9-1-1 funds, continues to be diverted to the State's general fund. She stated, as the President of the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC), she will advocate for the full funding of the 9-1-1 surcharge to go back to the counties where it came from to be utilized where it belongs, such as; for Interoperable radio equipment, tower rental & maintenance and 9-1-1 phone equipment consoles.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that Putnam County stands for responsibility. She stated that since she has been County Executive, Putnam County has maintained an excellent credit rating, a healthy general fund balance, a budget delivered on time, has met the tax cap and has the lowest county tax portion in New York State. She explained that the County has continued to maintain a superior bond rating six (6) years in a row with a Moody's credit rating of Aa2. She explained that from the years 2011 to 2017 the following reductions were made: Long Term Debt has been reduced by \$13.2 million, a 15% reduction; Short Term Debt has been reduced from \$17 million to \$0, equating to a savings of \$240 thousand in interest payments; Pension Debt has been reduced for \$8.5 million to \$0, a savings of \$715 thousand in interest costs. The total debt reduction from 2011 to 2017 was \$30.4 million, a decrease of 29%.

County Executive Odell continued and provided a breakdown of percentages of revenue generated from the 2017 Budget: Sales Tax 40%, Property Taxes 32%, State & Federal Aid 18% and Department Revenue 10%. She believed that the Internet Fairness Act would create a level playing field for the local economy. She explained that it would enable state governments to collect sales taxes and use taxes from on-line retailers with no physical presence in their state. She stated that, as President of NYSAC, she would support Governor Cuomo to tell our State Legislators to keep the Internet Fairness Act in the final State Budget.

County Executive Odell continued and provided a breakdown of percentages of expenses from the 2017 Budget: General Government, Roads, Debt Service, Transportation and Culture & Recreation 36%; Sheriff, Jail, Bureau of Emergency Services and Probation 25%; Social Services, Senior Resources, Veterans and Consumer Affairs 23%; Health and Mental Health 9% and Community Colleges, Pre-K and Early Intervention 7%. She explained how the Administration has, for the 6th year in a row, delivered a budget that stayed within the NYS Property Tax Cap Law. She provided the following breakdown of the property tax dollar: \$.71 for School Districts, \$.18 for Towns, \$.09 for County, \$.01 for Fire Districts and \$.01 for Villages. She stated that Putnam County's portion of a County homeowner's tax bill is only 9.1%, holding steady through her entire Administration. She stated that Putnam County is the lowest county portion of a tax bill of all 62 New York counties.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that Governor Cuomo has asked the County Executive's to convene a meeting with local municipalities to discuss shared services. She stated that there are already many shared services and partnerships with the other municipalities. She explained that the Commission on Fiscal Vision and Accountability, which is Co-Chaired by Legislator Nacerino and Legislator Sullivan, is leading the discussion on shared services. She stated that we must hear from the Towns on where they believe we can work together in order to save the taxpayer dollars. She stated that we are a home rule state and we respect the towns and villages. We would like to hear from them on the services that they would like to partner with us. She stated that in the spirit of partnership, Putnam County subsidizes our towns \$5.1 million in two (2) areas: Board of Elections HAVA \$1.9 million and Community Colleges \$3.2 million.

County Executive Odell continued with a breakdown of many of the services provided to our seniors through the Office for Senior Resources. She stated that we will also soon have a remodeled Carmel Senior Center and a new facility in the Town of Philipstown (the Butterfield Senior Center). She also detailed the breakdown of services provided through the Veteran's Service Agency such as; transportation, the PFC Joseph Dwyer Vet2Vet Program and Veterans Residence. She stated that both Veteran's Service Agency Director Karl Rohde and Deputy Director Art Hanley are certified Veterans Service Officers. She stated that, thanks to a bill introduced by State Senator Terrence Murphy, Putnam County is honored to host the first New York State Inaugural Medal of Honor Parade on July 21, 2018. She stated that the Veteran's Traveling Wall will be coming back to the County on October 3 -7, 2018 at Veteran's Memorial Park.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that Putnam County also stands for opportunity. She explained that to have responsible commercial growth, having sewer and water is an important factor. She explained the environmental impact due to septic issues in certain areas and explained the need for wastewater treatment projects to allow for responsible commercial development and protect our residential areas. She detailed the potential for development along Danbury Road from Brewster to Danbury. She explained that she is working with Danbury Mayor Mark D. Boughton, and they have an agreement to expand the sewer line from Danbury into Putnam County along Danbury Road. She stated that this will make commercial development of the Brewster to Danbury corridor a reality and the \$1.2 million grant in the consolidated funding application definitely made this project have traction. She stated that the County has also allocated \$10,000 to study the Lake Carmel area for a proposed wastewater plant in the Town of Kent which would allow for potential commercial growth along the Route 311 & Route 52 corridors. She detailed another area along Route 6 in Mahopac. She stated that by extending the sewer line two (2) miles north from Somers into Mahopac would encourage new commercial development as well as the expansion of existing commercial properties.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that Putnam County also stands for community. She stated that the Putnam Invests in Leaders of Tomorrow (PILOT) program is an intern program which focuses on our young adults. She stated the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) is back in business and was proud to have assisted the Ace Endico Company with the expansion of their headquarters/distribution center in the Town of Southeast which ensured that 324 jobs were retained in Putnam County.

County Executive Odell provided an overview of some of the County's financial investments such as; the Golf Course and Tilly Foster Farm. She detailed the improvements made at the Golf Course and the many events that are offered to the public. She stated that at Tilly Foster Farm & Educational Institute, Tilly's Table is up and running and we have the partnership with the BOCES program which we hope to integrate into the restaurant. She also provided information about the many events that are held or will be held at Tilly Foster Farm. She also stated that she looked forward to continuing the educational component of Tilly Foster Farm with the Putnam Arts Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Child Advocacy Center.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that Putnam County stands for compassion and the ongoing epidemic of substance abuse and addiction. She provided information about the Drug Treatment Court program and the many organizations that provide assistance with the "One Army in the War on Addiction" in Putnam County. She stated that the Putnam County Legislature has formed a Task Force on the "One Army in the War on Addiction" which will be Chaired by Legislator Scuccimarra. County Executive Odell stated that she offered three (3) options to the Legislature about what to do with the 34 Gleneida Avenue property. She asked them to consider this site to be a Prevention/Recovery Coalition with a single source of specialized care management for individuals seeking behavioral health and substance abuse services. She reminded people to keep unused/needed medications out of our environment and out of harm's way by utilizing our Medication Drop Boxes. She also encouraged everyone to please consider being an organ donor; you can save someone's life!

County Executive Odell closed by stating that Putnam County stands for Compassion, for our Seniors, for our Veterans, for Dedication with our first responders, for our Community, for Responsibility; fiscal and social, for Opportunity and this year we stand for the Volunteer; but always Putnam County stands up for America!

There being no further business, at 8:40 P.M., Chairman Castellano made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.