

**AUDIT & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
To Be Held via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders**

Members: Chairman Castellano, Legislators Gouldman & Sayegh

**Monday April 27, 2020
(Immediately following Economic Development Meeting beginning at 6:00pm)**

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:37pm by Chairman Castellano who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Gouldman, Sayegh & Chairman Castellano were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – February 24, 2020 & March 30, 2020

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 - Correspondence/County Auditor (Attached for Information Only)

- a. **Sales Tax Report** – Duly Noted
- b. **Board In Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- c. **Transfer/Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- d. **2020 Contingency/Sub-Contingency Report** – Duly Noted

Legislator Montgomery questioned how spending related to the COVID-19 pandemic is being tracked. She stated there are many resources available for creating platforms for tracking the spending.

Commissioner of Finance William Carlin stated a series of accounts have been set up within the general ledger where costs related to COVID-19 are being tracked. He stated the Health Department also has a separate project within their budget.

Legislator Montgomery stated hopefully the plan is to analyze this after so the next crisis can be prepared for. She stated this can be a good lesson for how to prepare in the future.

Commissioner Carlin stated it will be analyzed, which will allow the County to maximize reimbursements. He stated they intend to go for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) reimbursement for costs not reimbursed through the State PHEP (Public Health Emergency Preparedness) Grant.

Legislator Montgomery stated both NYSAC (New York State Association of Counties) and FEMA have a tool kit available on their website for municipalities to use to compile all the information. She stated she could provide this information. She stated it is comprehensive and allows the County to really examine the information to prepare for the future. She stated there is a lot to learn.

Chairman Castellano stated this pandemic will certainly be studied for years to come.

Item #5 - Correspondence/Commissioner of Finance

a. Overtime/Temporary Report (Attached for Information Only)

Legislator Sullivan questioned if “Attached for Information Only” means the item will not be discussed.

Chairman Castellano stated questions can be asked pertaining to the item.

Legislator Sullivan requested that Commissioner Carlin expand on any points he would like to raise. He stated some percentages seem to be high. He stated of course, Emergency Services has required overtime throughout this pandemic, but he is curious about other departments with high percentages.

Commissioner Carlin stated he is not in his office right now, therefore he is unable to go through each one. He stated there are none that are way out of line at this point.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Chairwoman Addonizio for the request she sent asking that all departments send overtime requests to the Legislature. She questioned if the overtime policy passed in February (resolution #34 of 2020) has been shared with all departments. She stated the resolution states that it shall be distributed to each elected official and appointed department head. She stated discussions at previous meetings indicated that some department heads were unaware of the policy. She questioned who is responsible for distributing it to the department heads. She stated she also sought input from department heads via a memorandum sent to County Executive MaryEllen Odell prior to voting on the policy.

Legislative Clerk Schonfeld stated she does not have the resolution in front of her, however if the resolution stated that it shall be sent to all department heads then the Legislative Office would have sent it to them once signed by the County Executive.

b. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 20A018/ Sheriff’s Dept./ Repair Sheriff’s Vehicle Involved in January 2020 Accident

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 20A018; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

c. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 20A019/ Veterans Service Agency/ Veterans Peer to Peer Program

Chairman Castellano stated he is proud to have the Veterans Peer to Peer Program in Putnam County.

Legislator Albano stated this is a great program and he fully supports this funding.

Legislator Addonizio stated she is glad to see this funding reinstated by the State. She stated any Veteran can utilize this program and be helped by their peers for any issue they are facing.

Legislator Jonke stated the Peer to Peer program is so important to the Veterans in Putnam County. He thanked Director of the Veterans Service Agency Karl Rohde, Deputy Director of the Veterans Service Agency Art Hanley, and Program Coordinator John Bourges for their hard work and he is glad to see this funding restored.

Legislator Nacerino concurred with her colleagues. She stated this is a great program and service to our Veterans. She stated it is a shame to have to wait for this funding each year, but she is thankful that it has been reinstated. She stated she hopes that moving forward, Albany sees this program as the essential need that it is.

Legislator Gouldman also agreed with his colleagues. He stated this is a wonderful program for the Veterans.

Legislator Sayegh stated she attended the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference where she sat in on a Veterans meeting with Veteran Service Agencies from counties across the United States. She stated the New York State Joseph P. Dwyer Vet to Vet Program was used as an example for all other counties to model their programs after because it is one of the best and has had the best outcomes. She stated she is proud to be a leader in Veterans mental health. She stated this is a vital program and she hopes this funding continues to be included in the future.

Legislator Sullivan stated this program in Putnam County has been recognized as a model program in New York State. He thanked Director Rohde, Deputy Director Hanley, and Program Coordinator Bourges for their hard work.

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

d. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 20A020/ Finance/ Vacancy Control Factor/ January-March 2020

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the vacancy control. She questioned when funds are moved into the vacancy control line, if they remain there until the Legislature decides how it should be allocated thereafter. She stated for example, if a position is open from January through March, the funding for those three months would be placed in contingency until the Legislature determines it should be released. She questioned if this is correct.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is almost correct. He stated each year the Legislature adopts a Vacancy Control Factor, which is a revenue, knowing that there will be vacancies throughout the year. He stated at that time it is unknown where those vacancies will be, therefore the revenue is adopted and as the vacancies occur the

appropriation is decreased and the vacancy control is decreased until it comes down to zero. He stated in the first three (3) quarters, the vacancy control has been exceeded, therefore the balance that exceeds it is transferred into contingency, which cannot be spent unless the Legislature approves a resolution taking the funds from contingency.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Commissioner Carlin.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 20T077/ Finance/ Provide Funding for 2020 Salary & Benefit Costs Pursuant to Ratified Contract Settlement Between Putnam County & CSEA Regarding Dispatchers Positions Formerly Part of the PCSEA Bargaining Unit (Also Reviewed in Personnel)

Legislator Sayegh stated the fiscal impact for 2020 is \$78,696 and for 2021 it is \$80,468. She questioned if that is the difference in the increased personnel services for the next year.

Chairman Castellano stated yes, the raise for 2021 is included which will be in the budget next year and not coming from contingency. He stated it is coming out of contingency this year.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if it is coming from contingency because it was not budgeted for this year.

Commissioner Carlin stated it was budgeted for 2020, but was budgeted in contingency because when the 2020 budget was being formed, the negotiations had not progressed far enough. He stated now that negotiations are done, the money is being transferred into the appropriate lines.

Legislator Nacerino thanked Commissioner Carlin for being able to forecast this expenditure by including the funds in the 2020 budget in anticipation of the agreement being ratified.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to echo Legislator Nacerino. She thanked Commissioner Carlin and stated it was very easy to follow this. She stated it is very informative to have him at the meetings to answer questions. She stated she is pleased that the unions finally have contracts to feel good about and she thanks them for their service to Putnam County.

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

Item #7 - Approval/ Sale of County Property Pursuant to Chapter 31 of the Putnam County Code/ Town of Carmel, 30 Shore Drive - Tax Map # 86.47-1-20

Chairman Castellano stated this was not done last month due to some discrepancies, but an agreement has since been reached. He stated this is a great process where properties acquired by the County can be sold. He stated it is a benefit to the taxpayers of Putnam County to get these properties back on the tax rolls.

Legislator Albano thanked Chairman Castellano for including this on the Audit & Administration Committee agenda. He stated it is great to see these properties be revitalized and put back on the tax rolls.

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

Item #8 - Approval/ Revise Resolution #96 of 2019 to Expand Use of Capital Facility Reserve 19CP05 – To Include Necessary Safety Repairs to Putnam County Golf Course Retaining Wall & Steps

Chairman Castellano stated this item is being addressed in the Audit & Administration Committee because a Physical Services Committee Meeting was not held this month and it is a safety issue. He stated an email was sent this afternoon with photos of the retaining wall and steps that are in need of repair, which was helpful. He stated this revision will take about \$25,000 of the original allocation of \$111,000 for the repairs of the structural damage.

Legislator Albano stated Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena and Deputy Commission of Highways & Facilities John Tully brought this to his attention. He stated minor safety issues can turn into costly litigation if they are not addressed. He stated this is a good time to address these issues because the Putnam County Golf Course (Golf Course) has very little activity right now. He stated he is glad that the Golf Course was able to make their equipment last a little longer, which allowed them to prioritize this.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if Legislator Albano is aware how long the repair will take.

Legislator Albano stated he is not sure how long it will take but would guess a couple weeks.

Legislator Nacerino stated Deputy Commissioner Tully sent a comprehensive memorandum with photos and based on the information provided she is comfortable moving forward with this.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Deputy Commissioner Tully for sending some of the information she requested. She also thanked those who met with her to provide a site visit. She stated she hopes going forward to have a similar level of information provided

and included in the agenda. She stated she is noticing that the terms “urgent” and “emergency” are being applied frequently to requests, especially for projects at the Golf Course or Tilly Foster Farm. She stated the discussions around these requests consist of a lack of questions on the part of the Legislature. She stated she agrees that the condition of the retaining wall and steps at the Golf Course is dangerous and should be corrected, however it is definitely a condition that has evolved over time. She stated the ground has shifted and the walls have heaved as a result of the freeze/thaw cycle over a number of years. She stated this is not a new issue and she does not believe it is appropriate to categorize the repair as urgent. She stated this issue existed at budget time and should have been included in a Capital Projects plan for the Golf Course. She questioned why this was not included in a line item or a Capital Repair project in the budget. She stated she keeps asking for longer term, better planning so smarter choices can be made when taxpayer dollars are being spent and not spend reactively. She stated planning is a key component to good government and good management. She stated when planning for projects it is important to examine why it may have failed and how to prevent it in the future. She stated the fund being drawn from for this repair was originally characterized as an urgent need for new equipment. She stated she reviewed the audio minutes from when the original funding was approved and it was stated that the fairway mower and spreader were on their last legs and needed to be replaced, and yet the Golf Course got another season out of them. She questioned how urgent that need could have been if they made it through another year. She stated when so many needs are presented as urgent, it begs the question of why the Golf Course is sitting on this funding. She stated she would like to see better short term and long term planning, one (1) year, five (5) years, and 10 years, particularly for Tilly Foster Farm and the Golf Course. She stated if these plans do not exist, she would like them to be developed. She stated it is very important right now in the post COVID-19 budgetary environment that we are heading into, to understand that income is going to be greatly restricted, State funding will be reduced, spending related to COVID-19 will be astronomical, and taxpayers will be stressed on all levels. She stated this means each penny spent needs to be planned very carefully for. She stated these emergency expenditures that frequently come at the end of the month need to be met with tough questions asked before any funding is released.

Legislator Jonke stated he is taken aback by Legislator Montgomery’s comments. He stated last year when over \$100,000 was pulled from over 40 budget lines to fund overtime in the Sheriff’s Department, Legislator Montgomery was in favor. He stated however, now comments are being made about looking into the future to predict similar retaining wall or step repair projects at the Golf Course. He stated there is no way to forecast these kinds of expenditures. He stated these issues happen and they need to be addressed as they occur.

Legislator Sullivan stated the Golf Course is in his Legislative District and is an important asset for the County. He stated the Capital Projects Committee does extensive planning for all of the projects that will be worked on throughout the year. He stated after a winter, heaving of walls and shifting of walkways cannot be predicted. He stated safety is first priority ahead of cost. He stated nothing is set in stone and this is one of those cases where it was determined after the winter that the walkway at the Golf Course caused a

hazard to people and a liability to the County. He stated as far as short term or long term planning, he wishes he would be able to know how to plan for 10 years from now. He stated the Golf Course is a revenue generator for the County and it is a source of recreational activity that many residents enjoy. He stated when something like this happens there, it has to be fixed. He stated this is not an overly expensive project. He stated it is important to get the Golf Course up and running now so it is safe by the time the busy season begins.

Legislator Albano stated he believes the County plans adequately. He stated it is important to be able to use common sense to shift gears when issues arise. He stated he is thankful that the equipment was able to run longer than expected and funds were able to be pulled to address an issue that was on the radar and has now gotten worse. He stated the fact that it will be repaired while activity at the Golf Course is low makes sense. He stated he believes this is being overcomplicated.

Legislator Addonizio thanked Deputy Commissioner Tully for the comprehensive memorandum he sent. She questioned how an urgent project is determined. She stated as much as planning is important, things do come up. She stated she believes it is important to prioritize safety repairs before an incident occurs.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated he would like to respond to the question of urgency as it relates to the pieces of equipment originally being funded through account 19CP05. He stated the urgent nature of the fairway mower and spreader was not something they took lightly. He stated when it was brought to the Capital Projects Committee, the Highway Department advised the members of the importance of maintaining the fairway and greens; in the golf industry, that is your reputation. He stated when the Highways & Facilities Department learned that this equipment was beginning to fail, the alternative was a lease payment that would have been a significant hit on the operating budget. He stated that is when the Capital Projects Committee thought it would be best to seek funding from the Legislature. He stated on a parallel track, General Manager Mike McCall, Applied Golf, and the grounds crew did their best to make the equipment last, but having the funding in place was very important to the maintenance of the fairways. He stated with respect to the safety issue brought on by the winter, many comments have been made that are right on point. He stated this issue did not happen overnight, but what did happen quickly was the settling of the steps, which then brought everything else to light. He stated when the contractor walked through to provide an estimate, their reaction was that the repair is necessary. He stated if not addressed, the problem would grow and be much more significant. He stated in dealing with a \$75 million Capital Project budget, there are urgent issues that span the dollar values. He stated they try their best to do what they can in-house. He stated things that may not appear to be urgent in the grand scheme of things, from a facilities management and roads management prospective, these are the top priorities.

Legislator Montgomery agreed that the condition of the retaining wall and steps is dangerous and should be corrected. She stated just as the parking lot between the County Office Building and the Sheriff's Department needs to be fixed where an employee

broke their nose. She stated this is about planning and prioritizing. She thanked Deputy Commissioner Tully for recognizing that this did not just happen as was indicated earlier in the meeting. She stated this did not just happen, especially with the warm winter we had. She stated \$10,000 - \$25,000 is a lot to the taxpayers that she represents and many of them do not frequent the Golf Course. She stated she is an aggressive advocate for her constituents. She stated she is sorry that Legislator Albano believes these questions are a waste of time, she does not agree and these are the questions she needs to ask in order to answer to her constituents and she will continue to do so. She stated she appreciates the time spent today and the information provided, that she requested, for this agenda item. She stated at these are the hard questions that need to be asked, especially during these tough economic times.

Legislator Jonke questioned what evidence Legislator Montgomery has that her constituents do not use the Golf Course.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to compare the revenue collected to what has been put into the Golf Course. She stated she did not say none of her constituents use the Golf Course, and does not have evidence that they do not.

Legislator Sullivan stated he would like to mention Butterfield, which was an expensive project that residents of the east side of the County do not frequent.

Chairman Castellano stated he would like to go back to what the Committee has in front of them. He stated this is a repair at a County property that needs to be done.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #9 - Other Business

Legislator Sullivan stated since Audit & Administration is the "catch-all" Committee for items that have not come up in other committees, he would like to bring an item up. He stated he has a small business and the "Whack-A-Mole" approach Albany has taken to help small businesses has been an unfair process. He stated the picking of "winners" and "losers" is done by one (1) person, Governor Andrew Cuomo, in a non-transparent manner. He stated he is doing everything he can such as social distancing and not allowing customers to come into the office. He stated he cares about his employees and customers because without either of them he does not have a business. He stated the guidelines in place are to keep everyone safe, but it is an embarrassment to the integrity of government. He stated the Governor does not understand the impact on small businesses, as he is not directly experiencing it.

Chairman Castellano stated he appreciates the comments but this is not the appropriate time.

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:27pm, Chairman Castellano made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Green.