

PHYSICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
40 Gleneida Avenue Room #318
Carmel, NY 10512

Committee Members: Chairman Castellano, Legislators Gouldman & Montgomery)

Wednesday

March 22, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 7:30p.m. by Chairman Gouldman and he led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Castellano, Montgomery and Chairman Gouldman were present.

Item #3 - Acceptance/ Physical Services Meeting Minutes/ December 19, 2022

Chairman Gouldman stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/ Tilly Foster Farm - BOCES Lease Renewal/ Director of Purchasing John Tully

Director of Purchasing John Tully explained this lease agreement is a renewal. He stated the negotiations with BOCES started approximately August of 2022. He stated he was part of the discussions in 2022, in his position at the time of Deputy Commissioner of Highways & Facilities. He stated Sr. Deputy County Attorney Conor McKiernan worked on the legal piece of this and he facilitated some of the communications between BOCES and the County in trying to restructure the base lease amount charged to BOCES and the amount that is charged to cover the utility component. He stated a provision was added at the request of BOCES, that they would not be charged penalties unless they are five (5) months behind in payments. He stated the reason the County agreed to that is strictly because of the function of the County's budget process and BOCES budget process are not completely aligned. He stated the school's fiscal year is different from the County's fiscal year, which can cause budgetary considerations that need to be made. He stated he believes it is a favorable lease for the County, it covers the County's costs. He stated it is a 3% increase over the prior period each year thereafter, it adds another 3% to the base rent and the utility component goes up quite a bit. He stated for the first year of this term it works out to be approximately a 10% increase over 2022.

Legislator Montgomery stated the difference is the utilities and snow removal costs have been added.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated everything in this lease renewal is essentially the same. He provided a brief overview of the negotiations.

Legislator Montgomery stated she supports having BOCES there.

Legislator Ellner questioned how many square feet is at the location, he would like to know what is being charged per square foot.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated he will have to provide that information after the meeting, he did not have it with him.

Legislator Montgomery questioned the amounts on page 4, are they additional utility amounts to the lease or are they included in the lease.

Director of Purchasing John Tully explained there are two (2) components to their monthly payment: base rent amount and the monthly installment amount. He stated for the record BOCES has made payment retroactively, knowing this was coming before the Legislature for approval, so they are current as of today, consistent with the amounts in front of the committee tonight.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to Approve/ Tilly Foster Farm - BOCES Lease Renewal; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery. All in favor.

Item #5 – Other Business

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business, a request from Chairman Jonke on behalf of Congressman Michael Lawler regarding a Letter of Support/ Southeast Sewer Diversion Project; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Approval/ Letter of Support/ Southeast Sewer Diversion Project/ Chairman Paul Jonke

Chairman Jonke stated Congressman Lawler's office has contacted him and stated there is funding available for Southeast Sewer Diversion Project. He stated they must submit their paperwork by this Friday, March 24, 2023. He stated he is requesting the Legislature agree to send a letter of support or give him the authority to send it on behalf of the Legislature. He stated this affects a project that is in his district. He stated that is a project that has been in the works for approximately six (6) years.

Legislator Castellano stated said project also is within his district. He stated there finally has been some businesses brought to that corridor. He stated Restaurant Depot recently opened and Brewster Subaru will be opening soon. He stated he believes it is the perfect place to put additional businesses. He stated if a sewer line can be put in, it will be a great opportunity for Putnam County. He stated the location is near Interstate 84. He supports this option to secure federal funding.

Legislator Montgomery stated this came in very late today. She offered an apology for not giving notification to Legislators Jonke and Castellano that she was going to reach out to Town of Southeast Supervisor Tony Hay, time was of the essence. She explained as a member of this Committee she wanted to speak to the representative of the town. She stated Supervisor Hay stated he received the same request and did submit a letter to Congressman Lawler. She stated it is not clear to her how all of the proposed projects for this area will all work, such as plans for a rail line and a trolley it is not clear, and she does wonder how this will all work in one place. She stated her first concern is always the residents. She stated Supervisor Hay supports it and Legislators Jonke and Castellano support this, which is in their legislative districts. She stated she will support sending a letter.

Legislator Jonke stated the area being discussed is a commercially zoned area that is underutilized. He stated it would be an advantage to the town to have the corridor blossom. He clarified the rail line project proposal is to get commuters from Danbury to the Southeast Train Station without having to drive. He stated in addition to the current commuter traffic the City of Danbury has a large project, of which would benefit from having a rail line that would provide the transportation. He stated the hope is the proposed rail line would help alleviate the Danbury commuter traffic. He stated what is proposed in relation to the rail line is not a tourist project.

Legislator Castellano stated there is a beautiful rail trail which is a walking trail, in the similar area. He stated back to the proposed Sewer Project. He stated there are failing septic systems located right along the reservoir in the Town of Southeast. He stated the Sewer Project would really help the environment.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she is very much in support of the sewer project. She stated that area is what many refer to as a “platinum mile”. She stated also the train rail line would help with the issue of Connecticut commuters coming and taking parking spaces at the Southeast corridor.

Legislator Ellner stated he 100% supports development of the Southeast Corridor. He stated he vehemently opposes this solution. He stated he believes the proper solution would be to work with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and allow private developers or the County to build their own sewage treatment plants. He projected Danbury has under forecasted. He stated the City of Danbury plans to build 1,000 condominiums. He stated he projects there would be future litigation if Putnam County moves forward with this. He spoke to areas he sees potential problems. He stated if this federal money can be diverted, then he would support the letter of support. He stated he believes there are some unseen ramifications that could potentially be big problems.

Bill Nulk of the IDA stated the hotel that was built along that corridor did so with anticipation that they would be able to expand on the 11-acre parcel, but it would require a sewer system. He stated additionally the “Brewster Crossing” project is relying on the proposed sewer line.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated he was in the discussions negotiating the sewer project. He stated the grant funding being requested is to get the County to 30% of design. He stated that is as far as County Executive Byrne allowed. He explained there are benefits of getting to 30% design which he briefly listed.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how much of the planning and design would overlap with the rail feasibility study.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated possibly there may be environmental studies that would overlap. He explained currently they are two (2) separate projects. He stated the two (2) projects are not officially connected; however, the City of Danbury is very interested in the commuter piece of it and Putnam County is very interested in the sewer piece of it.

Legislator Ellner stated the \$2.2 million will be a design exercise. He stated you can almost build a sewer plant for that amount of money. He stated if we move in the direction proposed, being in the industry as his profession, he explained there will be a need for pump stations and maintenance of the pump stations which will be additional expense.

Director of Purchasing John Tully stated he would be happy to have the County’s Consultant come to a Physical Services Meeting to provide the details of the project.

Legislator Jonke stated the past County Executive stopped including him in the meetings on this topic. He stated up until that point he learned there is approximately 4 miles worth of pipe that needs to be installed and the projected cost of the project, two (2) years ago was approximately \$30 million. He stated the DEP is involved and if we can build our own plant, he would support that. He stated tonight he is requesting that the County pursue funding.

Legislator Sayegh stated she is in support of this request. She stated this is a project that has been being discussed for a long time. She stated the commercial businesses would benefit Putnam County. She stated for the record similarly she supports a sewer project to be put in her district, Mahopac. She spoke to the benefits of the current businesses as well as how it would provide for responsible commercial growth.

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes we would be remiss if we passed up this opportunity.

Legislator Ellner stated he understands this has been requested three (3) times before, and it was never granted.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to Approve/ Letter of Support/ Southeast Sewer Diversion Project; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #6 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:56 PM Chairman Gouldman made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.