

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

Thursday March 13, 2014 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Albano. The Putnam County Sheriff's Department and Civil Air Patrol presented the flag. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Putnam County Clerk Dennis Sant. Upon roll call, Legislators Scuccimarra, Oliverio, Tartaro, Nacerino, Gross, Castellano, LoBue, Wright and Chairman Albano were present. Also present was Legislative Counsel Van Ross.

Deputy County Executive Walker introduced the County Officials, the Coroner, Chairs and former Congresswoman. He then introduced Putnam County Executive, MaryEllen Odell.

County Executive Odell acknowledged her team and former Putnam County Executive (1978-1986) David Bruen who passed away on February 1, 2014 and Robert McMahon for his service in the Bureau of Emergency Services, who passed away on October 12, 2013. Additionally she recognized those who have worked in Putnam County that recently departed.

County Executive Odell continued in stating this year's County Address is titled "Our Pathway to the Future". She stated Putnam County is cognizant of our history. You cannot travel far throughout Putnam County without seeing a historical marker or other reminders. She stated history is really our future as we use what we have learned to create our legacy. She then stated we are even celebrating the Historic Courthouse's 200th anniversary on June 12, 2014.

County Executive Odell highlighted the County's Fiscal Responsibility. She provided a breakdown of the County's spending in 2013 by stating; \$32.2 million (21%) went towards Economic Assistance and Opportunity, \$31.5 million (20%) went towards Public Safety, \$11.6 million (7%) went towards Health, and \$26.7 million (17%) went towards Debt Service. She then broke down where the funding came from. She stated that \$54.3 (34%) came from Sales Tax, \$44.1 million (28%) came from Real Property Taxes, \$36.1 million (22%) came from Department Revenues and \$24.6 million (16%) came from State and Federal Aid. She stated that 70% of tax payer's monies go to support Federal and State mandated programs. She stated that in 2012 and 2013 the County underspent its

budget, which provided room to pay down the debt owed to the New York State Retirement System.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that there were many Federal and State mandated programs that Putnam County is required to fund such as; Medicaid. She stated that the goal of the Administration is to crackdown on Medicaid fraud. To achieve this, the County contracted with the Bonadio Group to help us manage Medicaid applications. She also stated Pre-School and Early Intervention mandated programs costs the County taxpayers close to \$10 million dollars. She stated this program provides services to 422 special needs children. She further stated there is no local control on how the mandated programs are administered and she proclaimed that the NYS mandates are not efficient. She stated that her administration is anticipating on saving \$5 million dollars as a result in re-negotiating or issuing new contracts for major services with three (3) of the largest service contracts, the first being Trans Care. She stated that the Administrative Team was able to negotiate a contract with a license life-support provider which resulted in saving taxpayers almost \$100,000.00. She stated that the Administration was even able to save \$250,000.00 in the Jail Medical Contract with the help of Sheriff Smith. She stated that the Transportation Contract negotiation will potentially save \$4 million dollars while also enhancing the program. She stated the importance of the Transportation Contract was to keep the current employees working, advance the services and improve the technology. She stated with such an emphasis on transportation the Administration even redesigned a new logo. The new logo was selected through a contest composed of children within the Putnam County School Districts and she identified the winner, Chloe Herman.

County Executive Odell continued and discussed how Chapter 31 worked. She stated that by working with our Realty partners the County has listed 19 properties and have entered in a sale with seven (7) of them to date. She further stated that by placing the properties back on the tax roll we are able to increase the overall property values.

County Executive Odell continued and discussed the Environmental and Infrastructure Stewardship. She began by stating one (1) of her main projects was the Putnam County Golf Course (Club). She stated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued for all the operational phases of the Club. The County hired Mike McCall as the General Manager, and contracted with Appliedgolf for the general operations and Homestyle Catering to provide food services. She stated having the Club host events creates a positive impact on our bottom line. She stated she wanted to make the Club “The golf-entertainment-event destination for the Hudson Valley Region”. The renovations to the building gave it a modern look. She stated the County also partnered with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to create a filtration system that improves water quality and facilitated in a paved parking lot. She then stated the Administrative Team also welcomed our

new Golf Pro, Jim Woods and renovated the Golf Shop. She stated the Club has a Golf Club Repair and Fitting Center with the help of Golf Pro Woods.

County Executive Odell continued with the topic of Environmental and Infrastructure Stewardship by discussing the recent purchase of snow removal equipment for our Highway employees. She stated since infrastructure is a top priority we will be conducting upgrades with drainage mitigation and resurfacing the roads. She then highlighted the ongoing and completed County projects within each of the six towns. She stated to complete our goals we are working with Cornell University to develop a strategy that will increase the life-span of the roads up to fifteen (15) years to prevent unnecessary bonding and expenses. She stated with working with NYS DOT we were able to begin working on three (3) large infrastructure improvement projects in Carmel; Route 6 & Route 118, Route 6 & Miller Road, Route 6 & Union Valley Road. County Executive Odell discussed the importance of providing clean water to New York City. She stated that we work with the East of Hudson Corporation, in which we have a partnership with 18 other municipalities in the New York City watershed. She stated our aspiration is to continue in maintaining the DEC requirements to reduce the amount of phosphorus in the water.

County Executive Odell stated the enhancement of our functions and facilities is encompassed with our goals with the environment and infrastructure stewardship. She stated the Coroner's Office saw many dramatic changes. She thanked to Dr. Nesheiwat. Under his direction the Coroner's Office has modernized. They have a physical office, a confidential secretary and have consolidated documents and reports for easier use. Through this modernization the Coroner's Office now generates reports regarding vital statistics that will enable us to secure future grants and study trends. She stated the County must also now develop a plan to use the beauty of the Tilly Foster Farm to benefit the County's residents. She stated that the Tilly Foster Task Force has been created to help generate ideas. Our first Public Meeting took place in February and we were able to create a schedule, a website and future public workshops.

County Executive Odell continued and stated the County's tourism is now being spread through a new commercial. She stated by spreading the word we now have a Television and Film Commission in the process. She stated Putnam County will present the Cycling Classic in the Village of Brewster May 10th. She stated this event will aid in sustaining economic growth. She stated the EDC was also able to make a deal to re-purpose the former Sciortino's Restaurant into Putnam County's first craft brewery, the "Bull & Barrel Brew Pub". She stated this new development has created 80 new jobs and \$1,000,000.00 in capital investment. . She stated by working with our government partners we are able to secure \$2 million dollars to rehabilitate the Morningthorpe Bridge. County Executive Odell stated as a County Executive she actively participates in the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC). She stated actively participating in the group was beneficial in receiving the Morningthorpe Avenue

Bridge Grant. She stated being active in the Group has allowed her to secure the 2014 Co-Chair position for this region NYMTC Council. She stated receiving the grant for Morningthrope Avenue Bridge is just the beginning. She then stated in 2014 we have taken an aggressive approach to acquire grants to alleviate the burden to taxpayers. She stated we currently have more than \$30 million in grant applications filed with state and federal agencies. The grant applications filed range from funding opportunities for Fire Training Center to Storm Water Sewer improvements.

County Executive Odell proceeded to acknowledge the topic of Public Health and Safety. She stated she is very committed in protecting the people's privacy and safety. She stated her goal in doing so was challenged in a lawsuit brought against the County in late 2013. She stated the Supreme Court ruled against the County's stand to protect privacy and safety in Putnam. She stated she plans on filing for an Appeal. She stated it is time for Albany to recognize that the NY SAFE Act is deeply flawed and asked lawmakers to take our taxpayer's privacy rights seriously. She stated Putnam County is deemed the safest in New York State. She stated in terms of Putnam County safety, DWI Avoidance Initiative is also a goal of hers to keep the County safe. She stated with the help of the Sheriff, local community organizations and businesses we will distribute Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) testers to aid people in identifying their inability to drive. She stated on the back of the BAC testers there will also be taxi service numbers to call. She stated to show her commitment she will donate the first \$1,000.00.

County Executive Odell addressed the issue of Social Responsibility. She stated recent statements expressed through social media are not a reflection of the values in Putnam County. She stated our County's principles are comprised of tolerance, respect, freedom and values. She stated with the assistance of the County's Youth Bureau we will provide education and information on a wide variety of social issues. She then stated the County has created an application called "Putnam County Cares" to provide information to the Public fast. The App provides suicide prevention advice and ways to contact information for our local police, fire and EMS. The App also assists the People to get around Putnam. She stated there are numerous issues that impact each of us. She stated we sometimes struggle on how to handle these issues. She stated some make the sad choice and try to end their life. She stated the Putnam County Cares S.P.E.A.K button on the App provides various information such as, suicide warning signs. She stated the App also provides information on creating an Emergency Go Kit and will allow you to search contact information for Police, Fire or EMS providers.

County Executive Odell transitioned to discuss the ongoing Heroin Crisis. She stated Putnam County District Attorney Levy continues to take a strong stand against drugs. She also stated that Public Officials are working together to offer solutions and services to reduce drug offender recidivism. She stated the County's Drug Court also offers non-violent offenders the opportunity of

treatment to stay sober instead of jail time. She stated the number of cases heard in Drug Court have increased from an average of twenty (20) per week in 2008 to over 120 in 2014. She stated we have an average of 75 individuals who avoid going to jail through this program. She stated it provides drug users the tools they need to change and also saves taxpayers money. She stated another tool to aid in the Heroin Crisis is Narcan; an anti-opiate can help save lives of individuals who have overdosed. She stated Narcan has made a positive impact. She stated the Sheriff's Department is being trained to administer Narcan. She stated many cases of drug addiction begin in the medicine cabinet. She stated Medication Take Back Day is a collaboration to take back unwanted medication safely and destroy them to keep them off our streets.

County Executive Odell continued to speak of the County's social responsibility by addressing the Putnam Invests in Leaders Of Tomorrow (PILOT). She stated this program began in 2013 with twenty (20) college students and nine (9) high school students. She stated in 2014 the program will be open to high school juniors, high school seniors, undergraduate students and graduate students. She then stated that Putnam County has a Mentoring Day occurring on October 17, 2014, which provides an opportunity for people with disabilities to work throughout our government facilities. She also stated transportation in the County remains a big priority. She stated with the assistance of the Transportation Task Force there are regular meetings to evaluate the system and provide suggestions. She stated there is even a transportation van dedicated to our veterans.

County Executive Odell stated we named 2014 the "Year of the Senior" to show them how honored we are to have them reside in Putnam County. She stated Putnam County has the fastest growing 60+ population in New York State. She stated the Butterfield Project is important to our seniors because it will be a "state of the art senior center". She stated it will be a satellite location for some County Services such as Sheriff's Department and Personnel. She stated this will impact the County by saving taxpayers money and generate revenue. She stated to jump start the Center, Roger and Beth Alies graciously donated \$500,000.00 to go to the cost of building. She stated there are future plans to redesign and expand The Donald B Smith Senior Center. She stated this will increase about 2,800 square feet solely for our Seniors. She stated this year we have funded three (3) new home health aide positions. She stated by taking mobility and transportation initiatives we were able to increase to five (5) vehicles for senior medical transportation, shopping districts, and other requested locations. She stated the Administrative team has created new menus that are more appetizing and nutritional. She stated to finalize the updates there is a plan to rename the Senior Activity Center to a more vibrant name such as "Living for the Future".

County Executive Odell stated she would like to recognize Putnam County's Heroes. She stated individuals such as our Veterans, Police Officers, Firefighters, EMS Workers, and those serving in the Armed Forces are our Heroes. She stated

our Veteran's Service Agency provides focused care for all of our Veterans regardless of their age. She stated the Veterans Home in Carmel is now at 100% capacity. She stated Private First Class Joseph Dwyer, Peer to Peer Program worker has the goal of getting Veterans back on their feet. She stated to honor our Veterans we will have a Row of Honor Flag on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day. She stated in addition, our Putnam County Veterans are being honored in becoming New York's First Purple Heart County in New York. She stated she also wanted to recognize all of the Volunteers in Putnam County.

County Executive Odell stated as she closed she wanted to assert with collaboration we can accomplish a lot. She stated though we have a lot of work to do, we are on a pathway of success. She concluded and stated that at the end of the day all we need is respect and integrity to succeed in the government.

Chairman Albano thanked County Executive Odell for her presentation and recognized any Legislators who wanted to comment.

Legislator Gross stated that he wanted to highlight the under spending and the importance of the budget controls which have been done the last few years. He commended the departments for expanding productivity and doing more with less.

Chairman Albano stated that the Legislature and the Administration have found ways to save in certain areas and we will continue to do so. He stated that a lot has been accomplished as a team.

Legislator Scuccimarra believed that this Administration was on the right path. She stated that she was proud to be part of the County Executive's vision. She stated that she was excited to move forward with the Butterfield Project to bring County services to the Western side of the County which are very much needed.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she looks forward to working with the County Executive in the year ahead to support the initiatives and programs set forth.

There being no further business; at 8:33 P.M., Legislator Oliverio made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.