

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairwoman Nacerino, Legislators Castellano and Wright

Tuesday

March 15, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:30p.m. by Chairwoman Nacerino who requested Legislator Wright lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Chairwoman Nacerino and Legislators Castellano and Wright were present.

Item #3) Approval/Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes/February 16, 2016

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4) Approval/Fund Transfer (16T022)/Transfer to OT Due to Open Personnel Line/Sheriff's Department (also addressed at the March Protective Services Meeting)

Legislator Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (16T022); Seconded by Legislator Wright. All in favor.

Item #5) Approval/Fund Transfer (16T023)/Transfer To Temp Line Due to Open Personnel Line/Sheriff's Department (also addressed at the March Protective Services Meeting)

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (16T023); Seconded by Legislator Wright. All in favor.

Item #6) Approval/Fund Transfer (16T037)/Replenish Funds to Temp Line Due to Vacant Receptionist Position/Probation Department

Chairwoman Nacerino stated there will be no action taken on agenda item #6 Fund Transfer (16T037), as it was reported to her that this request is no longer needed.

Item #7) Approval/Fund Transfer (16T038)/Transfer to OT Due to Open Personnel Line/Sheriff's Department (also addressed at the March Protective Services Meeting)

Chairwoman Nacerino stated this item, again is as the result of the open personnel lines in the Corrections Department.

Legislator Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (16T038); Seconded by Legislator Wright. All in favor.

Item #8) Approval/Fund Transfer (16T039)/Transfer From Open Personnel Line To Temp Personnel Line/Sheriff's Department (also addressed at the March Protective Services Meeting)

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (16T039); Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #9) Update/Corres: Chair Nacerino Request for -Update/Vacancy Director, Consumer Affairs Position

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that she requested this matter be addressed. She stated that the Legislature would like to know the plan and action being taken in order to move forward in the Consumer Affairs Department with the recent vacancy. She questioned if there is a new direction for the Department as a result of the assessment.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated an evaluation of the options are taking place. He stated over the past two (2) weeks he and Deputy County Attorney Daniel Harvey have been meeting with representatives from the Agriculture and Markets Department. He stated that is the State Office that oversees “Weights & Measures”. He stated that there is a requirement that the Director of Weights & Measures is a competitive tested position. He stated that there may be an opportunity to combine this position with another position that would be compatible. He stated that has been discussed and is being explored with the State agency. He stated that they have been exploring it with other Counties to see how they are handling their affairs regarding Weights & Measures. He stated that there is still more evaluation to be done. He stated at this time there is not yet a recommendation.

Chairwoman Nacerino questioned who is overseeing the Consumer Affairs Department currently.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated the Inspector of Weights & Measures. He stated that the individual does meet the qualifications for the higher level. He stated the Mechanical Trade Boards (Electrical Board, Plumbing Board and Home Improvement) each has a secretary and the Chair for the Electrical and Plumbing Boards each has the authority to sign off on any documents needed. He stated the Inspector of Weights & Measures has been designated to sign for the Home Improvement Board.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that the department is a well-oiled machine for the most part.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that he has gone to the department a number of times to make sure everything is ok. He stated that they are holding up.

Chairwoman Nacerino thanked Director Eldridge and requested that he keep the Legislature updated on this matter.

Legislator Castellano requested clarification that the position is a tested position, therefore, one (1) of the top three (3) candidates on the list would need to be selected.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that is correct.

Item #10) Update/Corres: Chair Nacerino – Retiree Health Insurance

a. Email from: Legislators Wright and Gross Dated February 24, 2016 Re: Health Insurance Contributions

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that a memo was sent from her to County Executive Odell dated February 18, 2016 requesting a review of the information that was presented at the February Personnel Committee Meeting by Labor Specialist Glenn Blackman and members of the CSEA Union. She stated that Commissioner Carlin has requested that the item be tabled this month.

She stated that Commissioner Carlin told her he would have the requested information ready for the April Personnel Meeting.

Legislator Castellano made a motion to table to the March Personnel Meeting the Update – Retiree Health Insurance; Seconded by Chair Nacerino. No vote was taken.

Legislator Wright stated he would like to provide an opportunity for the folks who came to tonight to speak to this matter, in case they cannot make to the April committee meeting.

Chairwoman Nacerino agreed. She stated that at the February Personnel Meeting Labor Specialist Blackman presented a Retiree Health Insurance Chart. She stated there was concern that Mr. Blackman's proposal did not indicate the number of employees in each category. She stated that is the reason that the charts were sent to the attention of Commissioner of Finance William Carlin and requested he review and verify the information on and calculate the costs to the County and calculate what savings would be incurred, if any, to both the employees and the County.

CSEA Putnam County Unit 8150 President Janet Canaday questioned if the current resolution (*R#227/2015*), approved during the budget process, will go into effect April 2016.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that the resolution stands as it is. She stated we are not going to rescind that resolution. She stated that we will still discuss this matter moving forward.

Putnam County CSEA President Jane Meunier-Gorman requested if there can be a hold put on that effective date of April 1, 2016 until after the discussion has taken place at the April Personnel meeting.

Legislator Castellano stated that he believes there was confusion with the April 1st date. He stated during the Budget the proposal of a reduction of 75% was made for the first year. He stated it was the Legislature's belief that it would not take effect until April 1st. He stated apparently, and he requested to be corrected if he was wrong, it took effect on January 1, 2016. He stated that is what was reported by the CSEA representative's at the February 16, 2016 Personnel Meeting.

CSEA Putnam County Unit 8150 President Janet Canaday stated the Retirees received letters that there payments were required by January 31, 2016.

County Retiree Alice Brandon stated that she was an employee of the County for 35 years. She stated she had the position of Deputy Commissioner of Finance. She stated that she worked 11 years in the Finance Department. She stated she became a Lawyer. She stated she held the position of Chief Legal Counsel for Putnam County Social Services for 25 years. She stated she was integral in the development of the budget process based upon the County's Charter. She stated during her time in Management she was always given the benefit of a discussion prior to any changes being made. She stated in 2008 she retired from the County. She stated at that time she was told that she would have full health insurance benefits. She stated that she received a letter in January 2016 notifying her that the cost of her benefits which were, \$1,085.00 in 2015

were now \$5,500.00 for 2016. She stated that she was contacted at the end of December 2015 by another Putnam County Retiree regarding the Retiree Health Insurance matter. She said however, until the January letter was received, she had no notification from the County regarding this matter. She stated in her opinion she believes that is very disrespectful. She stated after working for Putnam County and giving her best for all of those years, to have this happen without proper notice, explanation or being given an opportunity to be heard is awful. She stated that she did watch the meeting that was on line, where this matter was address. She stated that it appeared that it was a fait accompli.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that she knows Ms. Brandon and can speak to her dedication and hard work, but she respectfully disagreed with some of the statements made. She stated that there was a Public Hearing on this proposal, which is where the Public can come and speak to the topic at hand. She stated the Public Hearing date was advertised in the three (3) designated Putnam County Newspapers (The Press, The Putnam News and Recorder & the Courier). She stated that this topic was discussed many times. She stated the County Executive spoke to this matter in the State of the County on March 10, 2016. She stated the rationale behind the decision and the statistics supporting the decision were all part of the 2016 State of the County presentation. She stated that Ms. Brandon was promised health insurance, that has not changed.

County Retiree Alice Brandon stated she is disappointed. She stated the County had the names of all of the Retirees, they sent the bills. However the County did not send the notice that this matter was being discussed. She stated she believes the Retirees should have received a notice, providing them the information to attend the meetings and be a part of the discussion and be a part of the vetting process regarding this matter.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that it was not the responsibility of the Legislature to notify the Retirees so she cannot speak to that component.

Legislator Wright stated the resolution that was passed by the Legislature required the Personnel Director to do that. He stated it was said that the Retirees will be notified of the increase. He stated that he specifically requested that before the letter was sent regarding the expense send the Retirees a letter notifying them of what is being proposed.

County Retiree Alice Brandon stated that would have been the courteous thing to do. She stated that she requests the Legislature to do the right thing, and rescind the resolution. She stated the last time a change was made to the Health Insurance for the County, the matter went to a task force first. She stated that she believes that is the procedure that should be followed again.

CSEA Putnam County Unit 8150 President Janet Canaday stated for clarification, the first committee meeting that this matter was discussed at she found out about on the same day. She stated no notice was given. She stated then in October 2015 there was the Public Hearing, then the Budget was adopted. She stated in her opinion that is not a process. She stated tonight Ms. Brandon reported that her premium went from \$1,085 to \$5,500; that is a disgraceful increase for a person on a fixed income, a Retiree. She stated that she disagrees with the statement made tonight that people had sufficient notice, they did not.

Legislator Gross stated that he would like to state that there are some Legislators who did not support the way this was rammed down people's throats. He stated it was not done in a negotiating manner. He stated that also the Budget included some new positions that could have not been approved. He stated that would have allowed that funding to be used to help offset the health insurance change, and made it more manageable. He stated he believes modifications could be made that would not be "kicking the can down the road", but would result in positive modifications that are respectful of people's needs and circumstances.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that she appreciates Legislator Gross's comments. She stated that there were lengthy discussions and there were no layoffs.

Legislator Gross & LoBue stated that is not correct. There was a County Employee laid off from the Bureau of Emergency Services.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that there was one (1) person, through attrition, the position was eliminated.

Legislator LoBue stated that is not true, she does not agree with that statement.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated it is true, the position being referred to, was found to no longer be needed. She stated that the comments tonight are very much appreciated. She stated that Ms. Brandon has been in touch with Commissioner Carlin, as was her husband. She stated that they have been provided the full rationale behind the change and what/why it was done.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to table this matter at the April Personnel Meeting; there was no Seconded. Motion Failed.

Legislator LoBue apologized for arriving late to the meeting. She stated she wants to go on record that she supports what was said by Legislators Wright & Gross. She stated she believes the resolution needs to be rescinded. She stated that she does not believe the way this matter was brought forward to the Legislature was fair, open, or transparent. She stated that she believes the priority of County spending should be on people and not facilities. She stated tonight another \$1million. is being requested for Tilly Foster Farm. She stated that she will not be supporting that. She stated this is not an issue of the County not having the funding to support the Retiree Health Insurance, it is an issue of the Administration choosing not to fund the Retiree's Health Insurance. She stated that she sees this as a very sad situation.

Legislator Gross stated this entire matter could have been handled in a much better way. He stated there were two (2) new positions created in the Bureau of Emergency Services that total approximately \$180,000 with benefits. He stated that he believes this could have been worked out better. He stated that he is disappointed. He stated also he believes this type of action sends a message to the other Putnam County Employees. He stated that they may look to work elsewhere.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated that would be the employee's personal choice that would need to be made.

Legislator Wright stated in addition to all of the problems with this action that have been, in his opinion, properly stated there is the disproportionate visiting of these costs upon the oldest and longest serving County Employees. He stated structurally he views this as being problematic.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated the formula is based on a means basis and it coincides with the longevity of the employees and the \$65,000 and above pensions. She stated that is how the financial table was structured.

County Retiree Alice Brandon discussed a scenario of someone that she knows who had taken the “Pop-Up” option and how it plays out with this new proposal.

Legislator Addonizio stated for the record that she agrees with Legislator Gross. She stated she was not in favor of the increase and did not vote for it.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated there was a five (5) four (4) vote for the resolution. She stated at this time she will not make a motion to rescind Resolution 227 of 2015.

Legislator Wright made the motion to rescind Resolution 227 of 2015; No Second, motion failed.

Legislator Castellano made a motion to table the Retiree Health Insurance agenda item to the April Personnel Meeting upon receipt of the requested information from Commissioner Carlin; Seconded by Chairwoman Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #11) FYI/2015 & 2016 Accident Report – Duly Noted

Item #12) Other Business - None

Item #13) Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:04P.M. Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Trabulsy, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature