

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the additional fees the tradespeople are required to pay are passed on to the consumer.

Chairman Sullivan clarified that the Plumbing & Mechanical Trades Board is in favor of this agreement.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated yes, they are.

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

Item #5 - Discussion/ Documents Required to be Submitted to Putnam County by Non-Profit Corporations Seeking Funding

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated Deputy County Attorney Anna Diaz is present at the meeting and she prepares the funding agreements after the budget is adopted each year. She stated this discussion was sent to the Rules Committee at the request of County Executive MaryEllen Odell. She stated the County Executive wanted to make sure the Legislature was aware of the process that was put in place in 2016 when there was an investigation by the Attorney General's office into the Visitor's Bureau. She stated the documents that are required to be submitted by not-for-profit organizations along with their budget request stems from the Attorney General's investigation and the documents they were looking for. She stated the reason behind the requirement of these documents is to ensure that the organization is in compliance with all the laws applicable to not-for-profit organizations and maintaining that status. She stated it can be very difficult to obtain the required documents from some of the not-for-profit organizations requesting funding. She stated they believe it is important that the organization be in compliance with the law before taxpayer money is distributed, therefore funding agreements will be drafted. She stated the agreement would require the organization to provide the necessary documentation as a precondition to obtaining their funding. She stated if an organization fails to comply, they will not receive funding. She stated so far, most corporations have provided a full package of documents during their budget hearings however there are a few that have not. She stated many times, at the beginning of the year the organization will contact the County wondering where their funding is, meanwhile the contract has not been executed because the required documentation had not been received. She stated before sending out funding agreements, they wanted to make sure there was no strong opposition.

Legislator Nacerino stated these requirements were put in place in 2016 to protect the County and taxpayer dollars. She stated the objective remains the same as it did two (2) years ago. She stated in order to release taxpayer funding the organization must be in compliance, which would safeguard the County should something happen, as it did with the Visitor's Bureau. She stated she believes the County would be remiss to not require these documents.

Legislator Albano stated it is important that all organizations are made aware of these requirements.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the organizations are notified during the budget process, providing at least six (6) months for them to comply.

Legislator Nacerino stated the non-for-profit organizations submitting for funding are not new to this process.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she was contacted by Steven Tomann, the attorney for the Visitor's Bureau who expressed their concerns regarding not hearing back from the County Law Department about the decision made by Executive Director of the NYS Committee on Open Government Robert Friedman. She requested a meeting be scheduled including the Visitor's Bureau, Chairman Sullivan, and County Attorney Bumgarner where the concerns of the Visitor's Bureau could be discussed before making any decisions.

Chairman Sullivan stated he would be willing to meet with them within the next month. He stated he believes each organization must abide by the same rules.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the Visitor's Bureau provided correspondence with Freeman and the County Attorney's Office. She stated they would like the Legislature to see it.

Chairman Sullivan stated with the input of County Attorney Bumgarner and Legislative Counsel Firriolo, a decision could be made. He stated the Visitor's Bureau should have nothing to hide.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated they do not have anything to hide and they have complied with everything else the County has requested. She stated they have done a remarkable job putting the organization back into compliance with the Attorney General, who has signed off on everything. She stated they have a strong board, Executive Director Bruce Conklin has done a wonderful job, and they have a great website. She stated she would like to see the Visitor's Bureau to continue to move forward.

Legislator Jonke questioned what the Visitor's Bureau did not want to disclose.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated they did not want to disclose the minutes of their meetings.

Legislator Sayegh stated that should be public information.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated according to Mr. Friedman, it is not public information.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated she takes issue with that opinion by Mr. Friedman. She stated she was on a conference call with Mr. Friedman, Deputy County Attorney

Diaz, and First Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro to go over this issue and he verbally provided the opposite opinion. She stated she believes the reason for this is that Mr. Friedman was not given all the information by Mr. Tomann. She stated these documents are requested each year in order for the organization to be provided funding. She stated whether the meeting minutes are subject to FOIL (Freedom of Information Law) is irrelevant.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she believes a meeting would allow this to be worked out.

Legislator Nacerino stated there cannot be a double standard for one organization.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated it would need to be reconsidered if the meeting minutes from all other not-for-profits would be required.

Legislator Albano stated it is important to approach this correctly and work with the organization.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated she is happy to meet with them. She stated the reason a lot of the documents are required is to ensure the organization is complying with certain provisions in the law. She stated if it is explained to the Visitor's Bureau what the minutes will show the County and they feel as if there are other ways to supply the information, perhaps there is room for negotiation.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she feels as though she is stuck in the middle. She stated she would like to see the Visitor's Bureau move forward and keep doing the great job they have been doing. She stated the board is made up of volunteers.

Chairman Sullivan stated he understands.

Legislator Jonke stated although the Visitor's Bureau board consists of volunteers, a lot of taxpayer money is provided to them. He stated in his experience with Executive Director of the Visitor's Bureau Bruce Conklin, he has found that there are many events he is not aware of. He stated last year the Legislature was invited to an event at the Village of Brewster Train Station to welcome the Special Olympics as they passed through Putnam. He stated by the time the invitation was received, the event had been cancelled due to lack of response. He stated he reached out directly to the woman responsible for the event and had it rescheduled. He stated he attended the event and that Executive Director Conklin took photos, although he has not seen them anywhere. He stated he questioned Executive Director Conklin as to why the event was not more advertised or announced and he responded that is not what he does. He stated a lot of money is going to the Visitor's Bureau and it is important to ensure it is well spent.

Chairman Sullivan stated a meeting will be held with himself, County Attorney Bumgarner, and Executive Director Conklin.

Legislator Albano suggested inviting Executive Director Conklin to a Rules meeting as well.

Legislator Nacerino agreed and stated a discussion should be had in an open forum.

Item #6 - Discussion/ Feedback & Suggestions by August 31st/ 2018 County-wide Shared Services Initiative Plan

Legislator Jonke stated he has been a proponent of shared services with respect to the assessment function for many years. He stated there was a study done in 2007 that showed no fiscal gain by merging assessment services; therefore he was originally against it. However, the study was flawed and assumed an office with over 20 employees, which is not the case in Putnam County. He stated if all supporting staff was left in place and the five (5) full-time and one (1) part-time assessors were combined into one (1) job, there would be a saving of 4.5 fairly substantial salaries. He stated the supervisors he has spoken with about this are hesitant due to the 2007 study.

Chairman Sullivan stated many residents like to have the local service where they are able to go to the office in their town and see the assessor. He stated this is an expensive accommodation.

Legislator Jonke stated he has been in this field for 30 years and most people meet their assessor maybe once, often when they are applying for an exemption such as the STAR (School Tax Assessment Relief). He stated the STAR exemption is not being taken over by the State; therefore this would no longer be a reason to go to your local office. He stated he spoke to some supervisors in the County and they expressed concern about the senior citizens in their area. He stated the average town has about 120 senior citizens that are catered to in a three (3) week period in February. He stated it could be scheduled to have an assessor at each town hall on certain days during that period of time. He stated Putnam County has 43,000 parcels, which does not require 5.5 assessors. He stated the town of Brookhaven on Long Island has 175,000 parcels; Islip has 98,000 parcels; Huntington has over 80,000 parcels and each has one (1) assessor.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the assessment piece is a long-term project under the Shared Services plan.

Chairman Sullivan stated it is also listed under short-term.

Legislator Jonke stated the term of every assessor in New York State will end on September 30, 2019. He stated now is the time to make changes so that by October 1, 2019 when the new term begins the shared service plan could be in place.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated assuming the law stays the same, once the plan is sent to the State Office of Budget, the next panel meeting for next year would be scheduled right away.

Legislator Jonke stated the town boards that sit today have the ability to appoint the current sitting assessors to their next term. He stated once the assessor is appointed, this plan could be on hold for another six (6) years.

Chairman Sullivan stated he would like to have a discussion with the Laberge Group about this. He stated a positive aspect is that the Town of Carmel is included in this plan, which is important because it is much bigger than the other towns in the County.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the Town of Kent, the Town of Carmel, and the County have all indicated they would be interested in consolidating this service.

Legislator Jonke stated the County Real Property Director could not be eliminated.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the County Real Property Director would be the individual to stay.

Legislator Jonke stated he does not believe the Real Property Director has the qualifications to perform the duties required.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated because the Real Property Director is not an assessor it may require an additional position in that office.

Legislator Jonke stated an alternative could be to split the county in two (2) CAPs (Consolidated Assessing Program) rather than bringing it to the County level.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated she likes the idea of splitting into two (2) CAPs.

Chairman Sullivan stated the plan states that the municipalities are interested in exploring methods to share tax assessment services; however it does not say elimination.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the plan does say a shared assessor would "minimize personnel costs," which means less personnel would be needed. She stated generally speaking, everyone wants to save money but no one wants to get rid of any employees. She stated the towns do not want to eliminate the secretaries in their assessor's office, because it would mean that people would lose their jobs. She stated consolidating purchasing services is another part of the project, which the towns are in favor of. She stated the towns do not have a designated purchasing director or someone who handles the RFPs (request for proposals). She stated the consolidation of this service would require the County to hire an additional full time employee in order to take on the work of all the towns. She stated the towns are in favor of the County taking on more employees and work, but are hesitant about eliminating their own personnel.

Legislator Nacerino stated she and Chairman Sullivan have been working closely with the Shared Services Panel. She complimented the diligence of the Laberge Group in putting this plan together. She stated the potential projects outlined in the plan

demonstrate efficiency. She stated a concern that was raised was seniors having to go to the County rather than their town if services were to be combined. She stated parking can be difficult at the County and sometimes it is a far walk to the office. She stated seniors from Putnam Lake or Cold Spring would need to drive a far distance to go to an office in person. She stated the chart on page 25 of the draft plan shows which towns and villages are willing to participate in each potential shared service. She stated she is surprised that the Town of Carmel has not showed interested in many areas since they are the largest. She stated it was mentioned that the Town of Carmel was willing to participate in sharing assessor services with the County and the Town of Kent, however the chart does not represent their interest in tax assessment or tax collection.

Legislator Jonke stated tax collection should be easier than the assessment function because it is a seasonal office. He stated there are more efficient ways to pay a tax bill than to go to the office and pay in person. He stated many people are used to going into an office and speaking directly with the tax collector or assessor. He stated residents are accustomed to the “soft touch” but this may not be the most efficient way to run government.

Chairman Sullivan stated the “soft touch” is expensive. He stated residents would like to see their taxes decrease and it is our job to look for ways to cut expenses.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated she went in to pay her taxes and she wanted to use her credit card in order to get the points, however she was told that credit cards are not accepted. She stated credit cards should be an acceptable form of payment.

Legislator Jonke stated he believes a credit card can be used in Southeast, however there is a surcharge.

Chairman Sullivan stated residents should be able to make payments online using a credit card.

Legislator Castellano stated the surcharge is about 1.5%, which increases the total payment of the taxes by 1.5%.

Chairman Sullivan stated consolidating tax collection services seems like a no-brainer.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the office would have to be abolished by referendum. She stated getting public comment on these possible shared services is important. She stated there are three (3) public hearings scheduled:

1. Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at 2:00pm at the Town of Southeast Town Offices
2. Thursday, August 30, 2018 at 10:00am at the Putnam County TOPS Building
3. Tuesday, September 4, 2018 at 7:00pm at Philipstown Town Hall

She stated each public hearing has been scheduled in a two (2) hour time slot.

Chairman Sullivan stated although there is a tight schedule to follow, he stated he is concerned that these dates fall when many people are on vacation.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated September 15th is the deadline to send the plan to the Division of Budget. She stated before it can be sent feedback must be collected, modifications must be made, and a panel vote must be held.

Legislator Jonke questioned how the public hearings will be advertised to the public.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated it will be published in the newspapers and posted on the County website and towns' websites.

Chairman Sullivan stated he believes holding the public hearings the following week after Labor Day would allow more people to attend.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated holding the public hearings after Labor Day will not leave much time. She stated after the public hearings are held and the feedback is collected, the towns and County can then opt out of any individual proposal, however they must provide a written explanation to the Panel. She stated the Panel must then convene a meeting and vote on the plan. She stated the plan will then be sent to the State.

Legislator Nacerino suggested having the Supervisors announce the dates of the public hearings at their town board meetings.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated that is a good idea.

Legislator Nacerino stated there are many good initiatives to put in place through this plan.

Chairman Sullivan stated the plan is really comprehensive and lays out a plan for coming years. He states this plan will allow the projects to keep moving forward with the involvement of the town supervisors and village mayors. He stated the Commission on Fiscal Vision and Accountability was not able to grasp participation from all local municipalities. He stated this formalized process provides a better avenue to work on the collaborative efforts.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the meetings have been very productive and there has been very good attendance. She stated although the Town of Carmel was hesitant to be involved with shared services, she believes they have become more open through what has been discussed at the meetings. She stated those involved are open-minded and have been productive.

Chairman Sullivan stated there is a definite benefit through shared services, although the towns may all have different priorities.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the superintendents of the schools districts are not mandatory members of the Panel, however they have been invited and informed about many of the projects. She stated next year, more involvement from the superintendents

may increase productivity because there are a lot of services that could be consolidated with the school districts.

Chairman Sullivan stated he would like to contact the Laberge Group to discuss the assessment aspect of the plan.

Legislator Castellano questioned how assessment is structured in counties north of Putnam.

Legislator Jonke stated there are many CAPs north of Putnam. He stated the city of Beacon and the town of East Fishkill share an assessor; the town of Wappingers and the town of Fishkill share an assessor; and the town of Pawling and the town of Patterson share an assessor, which crosses county lines.

Legislator Castellano questioned if any county in New York has a county-wide assessor.

Legislator Jonke stated there are two (2) counties in New York with a county-wide assessor. He stated Tompkins County has a county-wide assessor and is about the same parcel count as Putnam. He stated Nassau County also has a county-wide assessor.

Legislator Nacerino stated throughout the draft shared services plan, the Department of Public Works is referred to, however Putnam County does not have a Department of Public Works.

Legislator Castellano questioned if the courtroom video conferencing is included in the shared services plan.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated video conferencing has become more complicated. She stated the laws need to change, but they are not going to change based upon the constitutional rights of defendants. She stated defendants must opt-in to video conferencing and can refuse.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated the video conferencing is a great idea, however there has been trouble since the beginning.

Chairman Sullivan suggested having a discussion with Sheriff Langley in regards to the process and how the defendants are asked if they would like to video conference.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated in order to utilize the video conferencing option, a representative from the State would need to inspect the facility and the room where it will take place. She stated they also must inspect and certify all the equipment to be used. She stated the equipment the County currently has is now 10+ years old and would most likely have to be replaced. She stated there is also a law that will allow for consolidated arraignment parts, but this has to be negotiated with the justice court system and all local justice court judges would need to agree. She stated there have been meetings held on this and some are willing to do it however they must be available

to odd times and there must be a location. She stated there is a lot of discussion still being had about it but there are a lot of legal impediments to it.

Chairman Sullivan stated feedback would be provided from the Legislature in regards to the assessing concerns and the references to the Department of Public Works.

Item #7 - Update/ Veteran's Service Medal Advisory Panel

Chairman Castellano stated the next meeting of the Veteran's Service Medal Advisory Panel will be held later this evening. He stated the mold is completed for the medal and hopefully they will receive the medals in the next month or so. He stated they are also planning another fundraiser.

Item #8 - FYI/ Litigation Report

County Attorney Bumgarner stated next month, the full pending litigation report will be submitted. She stated this report shows all active cases.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if there are any significant changes.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated there is a mediation taking place tomorrow and she does not expect that it will settle. She stated NYMIR believes this case has some value and have evaluated it at about \$30,000-\$40,000. She stated there is a permanent injury in the case, which is why it has the value. She stated this case is in mandatory mediation; however it is not far along in the litigation process. She stated basically all other cases are in the thick of discovery right now. She stated there are no cases nearing trial and she does not anticipate settling any cases for the remainder of the year. She stated there are many big pieces of litigation that involve a lot of records. She stated discovery on these cases will take about two (2) years. She stated she does not foresee a settlement until possibly the end of 2019.

Legislator Castellano questioned a specific case on the report.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the plaintiff is able to file an appeal, which she expects to receive.

Item #9 - Other Business – None

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 6:52pm Chairman Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Green.