

RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Held In Room 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512

Members: Chairman Sullivan and Legislators Addonizio & Albano

Tuesday

6:30pm

February 19, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm by Chairman Sullivan who requested that Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Addonizio & Albano and Chairman Sullivan were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – December 17, 2018

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #8 - Approval/ Veteran's Service Medal Advisory Panel Findings & Recommendations

Chairman Sullivan stated he received a request that this item be addressed first.

Legislator Castellano thanked the Committee for placing this item on the agenda this evening. He stated there are seven (7) members on the Veteran's Service Medal Advisory Panel (Panel) and recognized those present. He stated the Panel has made a decision on the final design of the medal, which is similar to the original medal, but features a Native American who better represents how Native Americans appeared in this region. He stated the Panel fundraised about \$10,000 to cover the first 400 medals, which are ready to go to production. He stated there are about 5,000 veterans in Putnam County that are eligible to receive this medal. He stated 100 applications have already been received. He outlined the cost of the medal: \$1,000 for the design, \$1,500 for the set up and ownership of medal, and the medals are \$18.00 each. He stated many people within Putnam County generously donated to this endeavor and he thanked all who did. He wanted to especially thank the Joint Veteran's Council, the New York Riders, the Ladies Auxiliary of the Our Lady of the Lakes Council 6318, the Knights of Columbus, Mothers of Caprini Assembly 1572, the Enoch Crosby Chapter, and Kent Rod & Gun Club. He stated there was also an anonymous donation of \$2,000. He stated another individual donated \$2,500. He stated there are many generous people and organizations in Putnam County that have contributed to this great cause. He stated the application is available at the County Clerk's office and the Veterans Service Agency. He stated any resident of Putnam County for at least one (1) year who was honorably discharged as a Veteran is eligible to receive a medal. He stated 100 years ago after World War I ended the first medal was given out on November 11, 1919. He stated the Panel is happy to be following the same initiative 100 years later.

Chairman Sullivan stated the design of the medal looks terrific with the Native American on the front and the Historic Courthouse featured on the back. He stated his appreciation for the work the Panel put into this.

Legislator Castellano stated the Panel's Facebook page has a photo of the original medal and a lot of information about this endeavor. He stated he would like to recognize the recipients of the medal on the Facebook page as well.

Legislator Nacerino stated she is proud to be part of the Panel and to give recognition to the Veterans in Putnam County.

Legislator Castellano stated the Panel is very thankful for all of the supporters who leant their help.

Legislator Addonizio stated in 1919 the original medal was handed out at the Historic Courthouse and it would be phenomenal if this medal could be distributed to recipients at the Historic Courthouse as well.

Legislator Castellano stated that would be great.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to approve the following: the design of the Putnam County Veterans Service Medal, authorization for the Panel to order production of the Service Medal, the form of application, and authorization for the Panel to issue the medal to eligible individuals; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Legislator Castellano stated they are hoping to get the medals out within a few months.

Director Rohde stated the individual who donated the \$2,500 to the Panel actually donated a total of \$5,000 to go to Veterans within Putnam County. He stated upon receipt of this donation the Joint Veterans Council made a decision of how to utilize the donation. He stated some of the money went to the Vet2Vet program, some went to the traveling Vietnam Wall, and the majority went to the Veterans Service Medal. He stated there are some very generous people in our community.

Item #4 - Introduction/ Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension Executive Director/ Stefanie Hubert

Chairman Sullivan congratulated the new Executive Director of Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension (Cooperative Extension), Stefanie Hubert and thanked her for attending tonight's meeting.

Executive Director Hubert thanked the Committee for having her on the agenda. She stated she provided the Legislators with Cooperative Extension's 2018 annual report, which is also published on their website. She stated she has worked in the Cornell Cooperative Extension system for 15 years. She stated she began in Orange County where she provided oversight for a nutrition program; her background is health and

specifically nutrition. She stated from there she moved onto a regional program for the seven (7) counties in the Hudson Valley where she managed a \$1.1 million federal grant for nutrition and education and obesity prevention. She stated Cornell University is the land grant university for Cooperative Extension. She stated Cooperative Extension is not a private, independent not-for-profit; they are a subordinate governmental agency. She stated the mission of Cooperative Extension is education and putting knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social wellbeing. She stated basically, Cooperative Extension brings the research from Cornell University into the County. She stated Cooperative Extension is very fortunate that the County has provided funding each year. She stated current programs in Cooperative Extension are focusing on strengthening community and economic vitality, enhancing the environment, and strengthening individuals and families. She stated these initiatives are put forth by the Federal Government through the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). She stated in addition to these initiatives, she is looking to begin others such as nutrition, food safety and security, and obesity prevention which is an epidemic that continues to target our children. She stated children are being diagnosed with chronic diseases younger and younger and society plays a role in educating both the youth and their families. She stated another initiative she is interested in is a new educational project that is being injected into the Cooperative Extension program on a national level is the opioid epidemic. She stated knowing that this is a topic on the top of the County Executive's initiative list, she has been attending trainings held by Cornell University and attending Treatment Court with Putnam County Court Judge James Reitz. She stated collectively, the best role for Cooperative Extension to play in this initiative will be discovered, may it be helping to reduce the amount of opioid drug overdoses or individuals who continue to use in Putnam County. She stated Cooperative Extension has about 340 volunteers who are supervised by the three (3) members of the professional staff. She stated with these volunteers along with the almost 480 4-H Fair volunteers, Cooperative Extension is able to provide educational programs and services valued at about \$600,000 in Putnam County and they are very fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers. She stated Cooperative Extension is able to leverage their core funding of \$325,185 provided by Putnam County with additional funding from the State and Federal Governments as well as other sources. She stated the County provides about 30% of Cooperative Extension's budget, and in return the residents of Putnam County receive 100% of the services provided. She thanked the Committee and County as a whole for their continued support.

Legislator Nacerino welcomed Executive Director Hubert and stated she looks forward to the new initiatives being brought forth. She stated her appreciation for the research Executive Director Hubert has done as far as the status quo and other areas.

Executive Director Hubert stated Putnam County is changing demographically and in order to be responsive, the true demographics need to be researched.

Chairman Sullivan stated he is very supportive of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Director Rohde stated he has been speaking with Executive Director Hubert about gardening programs through Cooperative Extension for Veterans. He stated this is being done in other areas of the State and he believes it would be a great benefit to Veterans here in Putnam County.

Legislator Albano welcomed Executive Director Hubert and stated the initiatives brought forward such as the obesity and opioid epidemics are so important and he is happy to have these at the forefront.

Executive Director Hubert stated she is always open to suggestions and encouraged the Legislators to contact her with any ideas they may have.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional materials for items #4, #5, #6, and #9; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #5 - Discussion/ Forms of Payment Accepted by the Putnam County Health Department

Legislator Albano stated in his own experience and through speaking with engineers and contractors who often submit permit applications through the Health Department, he has received feedback about the forms of payment accepted. He stated currently, the fees are required to be paid by a certified check, bank check, or money order. He stated other departments do not require this form of payment and he believes the application process could be made more efficient if more forms of payment were accepted.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the permit is only granted once the check clears.

Legislator Albano stated Fiscal Manager in the Health Department William Orr sent a memorandum stating when personal checks were accepted, the Health Department would receive 10-20 bounced checks per year. He stated he believes most permits are being applied for by professional engineers.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what the reasoning is for only accepting certified checks, bank checks, or money orders.

Legislator Albano stated it was changed so bounced checks would no longer be an issue. He stated the application process can be lengthy and anything that can be done to make it more efficient would be ideal.

Chairman Sullivan agreed with Legislator Albano. He stated today, accepting personal checks is common practice. He stated he spoke with Commissioner of Health Dr. Nesheiwat, who was in favor of moving in this direction. He stated in his memorandum, Mr. Orr stated that they would be conducting a pilot program of accepting credit cards for payment. He stated he does not believe the cost, time, and trouble of getting a certified check is prudent in today's world.

Legislator Nacerino stated hopefully the pilot program of accepting credit card payments goes smoothly and it will become normal practice in the Health Department.

Legislator Jonke stated Mr. Orr mentioned the Health Department was receiving 10-20 bounced checks per year, which seems like a lot. He questioned how that number compares to the total number of personal checks processed throughout the year. He questioned if the permit is issued and the check then bounces, if the permit could be frozen.

Legislator Albano stated it could probably be done, but he believes there is a more efficient way to do it. He stated the credit card pilot program is certainly a step in the right direction.

Legislator Montgomery stated there will be a time when checks are obsolete and she believes it would be beneficial to look into electronic or automatic payments as well.

Legislator Albano stated changing acceptable forms of payments will need to be approved by the State as well.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if online payments are accepted anywhere in the County.

County Attorney Jennifer Bumgarner stated no, the County does not accept payments online.

Chairman Sullivan stated even the Putnam County Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which deals with many transactions, does not allow for online payment.

Legislator Montgomery stated it is her understanding that DMV accepts online payment.

County Attorney Bumgarner clarified that online transactions for the DMV goes only to New York State; no revenue is kept by the County.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if credit cards are accepted at the DMV.

Legislator Castellano stated credit cards are accepted, but a fee of about 1.5% is charged.

Legislator Montgomery stated she believes online payments are the way to go.

Chairman Sullivan stated he would like to send a memorandum to Commissioner of Health Dr. Nesheiwat expressing the consensus of the discussion.

Legislator Albano stated while we are on the topic, some items in the application process are duplicated and he would like to review the Putnam County Code to eliminate duplication. He stated for example, the Building Department may review the number of

bedrooms in a residence, which can take four (4) to eight (8) weeks and the Health Department will review the same information, taking another four (4) to eight (8) weeks.

Legislator Castellano questioned if the requirement of the bedroom count is determined by the State. He stated it would make more sense to go by square footage rather than the amount of bedrooms.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated it is determined by the State.

Legislator Albano stated the bedroom count provides a basic indication of the number of people living in the home, although it is not always the best indicator.

Item #6 - Approval/ Proclamation Request/ Zachary Kuttruf/ Assisting in Rescuing Man from Lake Oscawana

Chairman Sullivan stated this proclamation was requested by Legislator Gouldman, who unfortunately was unable to attend the meeting tonight. He stated Zachary Kuttruf is a 14 year old Boy Scout and Sheriff's Cadet who assisted in the rescue of a man who had fallen through the ice on his ATV on Lake Oscawana in Putnam Valley. He stated Legislator Gouldman requested that Zachary be honored at the April 2, 2019 Full Legislative Meeting. He stated the actions taken by Zachary are outstanding and certainly deserving of recognition.

Legislator Addonizio stated she attended the Sheriff's Department Award Ceremony last week and Zachary was recognized there as well. She stated she is proud of this young resident.

Legislator Albano stated he attended the Award Ceremony as well and Zachary responded to this situation in a way to really make everyone proud.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to approve the proclamation to be presented at the April Full Legislative Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Item #7 - Approval/ 2019 Putnam Arts Council Grants

Executive Director of the Putnam Arts Council Joyce Picone stated with her this evening is Grant Coordinator Joanna Ross. She stated Putnam Arts Council has been an organization for 56 years and is chartered by the New York State Department of Education. She stated some topics touched upon earlier this evening such as the opioid crisis are things the Putnam Arts Council could assist with and partner with Cooperative Extension on by building self-esteem in children and providing them with positive coping mechanisms before they begin using drugs. She stated she sent a proposal to the County Executive about an afterschool program at the Arts Council for children in 7th-10th grade. She stated she is looking into grants that would make this program free of charge or very little cost for the students.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if the children could take the bus from school to the Arts Council.

Executive Director Picone stated students in the Mahopac School District can take the bus right to the Arts Council. She stated making programs available where children can explore their creativity through various art forms such as dance, pottery, drawing, painting, singing, etc. is something she has found to be extremely helpful. She stated the arts are often referred to as “enrichment” activities, while she views them to be more integral to overall wellbeing. She stated she would also like to develop programs involving Veterans.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if art therapy is offered through the Putnam Arts Council.

Executive Director Picone stated the Arts Council works with independent contractors, some being art therapists. She stated in terms of the re-grant program on the agenda tonight, the Putnam Arts Council is giving out 11 grants. She stated an independent panel of seven (7) individuals reviews and rates the grant applications. She stated the panel considers the following when reviewing applications: artistic merit, spreading the award money throughout the County, and types of discipline. She stated the Arts Council received grant requests totaling over \$88,000 and had only \$40,000 to re-grant. She stated \$12,000 came from Putnam County and \$28,000 was leveraged from the State based on the County’s contribution. She stated these art organizations create tourism as well, for example Hudson Valley Shakespeare brings thousands of people to Garrison each summer. She stated Arts on the Lake does an outdoor concert series and they have determined that if they request for people to pay what they wish they tend to be very generous. She stated Brewster Theater Company has a very full year of theater with sell-out crowds. She stated Collaborative Concepts does a sculpture show on Saunders Farm in Garrison, which brings in many people from New York City and they usually get a review in the New York Times. She stated other organizations receiving funding are the Brewster, Patterson, and Mahopac Libraries, the Tompkins Corners Cultural Center, and Garrison Landing Association. She stated the panel works very hard to ensure the grant funding is spread in the best and broadest way to quality programs that enrich the lives of our residents and support artists throughout the County while promoting tourism. She stated 27 grants totaling \$40,000 are being given out. She stated for every \$1 spent on the arts, \$8 is raised. She stated she is grateful that this program has had continuous support from the County.

Chairman Sullivan stated these are great programs for the residents of the County and a great way to bring tourism into Putnam.

Executive Director Picone stated more money is raised indirectly as well by people coming into the County for an art program and then getting things such as gas or something to eat. She stated Joanna Ross, Grant Coordinator is new to the Putnam Arts Council.

Ms. Ross stated the panel's review was very interesting and it was very difficult not to give everyone what they asked for. She stated everyone that was awarded grant funding was ecstatic when they found out, which was a great feeling. She stated many of the organizations are waiting to hear if they will be receiving funding to be able to do a planned project and it is really wonderful to be able to provide them with the needed funding.

Executive Director Picone stated all awardees are also required to provide a funding recognition in writing so the residents know which programs have been funded with their tax dollars. She stated a ceremony will be held in the summer.

Chairman Sullivan stated he is glad to hear that programs for Veterans and to help combat the opioid crisis are being thought about and looked into.

Executive Director Picone stated arts serve many different purposes and can have a real impact on an individual in a significant way.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the funding amounts and grant requests. She stated the total grant requests were for \$88,000 and the grant funding being distributed was \$40,000. She stated Putnam County's contribution was \$12,000.

Executive Director Picone stated that is correct. She stated New York State provides \$28,000 to be re-granted, making the total funds available for the re-grant program \$40,000.

Legislator Montgomery stated the \$88,000 in requests speaks to how many programs are available in the County to enhance the lives of the residents. She stated she served on the board of the Depot Theater for many years and the children's programs are a great way to keep kids busy. She stated it speaks a lot to the role Legislators can play in seeking more funding for the arts within our community.

Executive Director Picone stated it is difficult for the organizations to raise money within the community as there are not many corporate alternatives; therefore the public dollars they receive are truly essential for these programs to exist.

Legislator Montgomery stated in her experience with the Depot Theater, she saw firsthand how difficult fund raising can be. She stated many small businesses would donate food or other services to assist in the program. She stated there is a lot to be said for how it brings the community together.

Executive Director Picone stated it is certainly difficult. She stated the Arts Council does not request donations or funding from small businesses in the area because they believe it would be competing with those who are being served.

Legislator Montgomery stated Creative Arts in Cold Spring is working on addressing the opioid epidemic. She stated they have also reached out to the Putnam County Office for Senior Resources to bring a type of art therapy to our community.

Executive Director Picone stated they may be a good partner for the Arts Council and she would reach out to them.

Chairman Sullivan made a motion to approve the 2019 Putnam Arts Council Grants; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #8 - Approval/ Veteran's Service Medal Advisory Panel Findings & Recommendations

This item was addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

Item #9 - Discussion/ Policies and Procedures of Legislative Meetings

Legislator Nacerino stated she believes the policies and procedures of Legislative Meetings are discussed each year. She stated it is important to reiterate the structure that is in place and provide rationale as to how Legislative Meetings are conducted. She stated a common inquiry received is about there being no cross talk at a Full Legislative Meeting. She stated there is a reason and it is important to discuss those reasons in this venue. She stated the Legislative Committee Meetings are the proper place to have a discussion. She stated at a Committee Meeting, the expert or department head is usually present and is able to provide information, answer questions, and respond to statements from both the Committee and members of the public in the audience. She stated the backup information is always posted on the Legislature's webpage for anyone to view. She stated cross talk and fact finding occurs at Committee Meetings. She stated the Full Legislative Meeting is where all items that were passed out of the Committee Meetings are considered and voted on by the Full Legislature. She stated it is important to understand that this structure is very different than that of a Town Board structure. She stated at Full Legislative Meetings, only items on the agenda are discussed, whereas at a town board meeting, members of the public are welcome to bring forward any issue. She stated the process followed at the County level works well. She stated the Chair of each Committee has the opportunity to invite individuals to the meetings to give presentations or to be present to participate in the discussion and to answer questions. She stated a lot of work is done at Committee Meetings and plenty of time is provided for anyone who would like to speak.

Chairman Sullivan stated it is important to have control over the meeting to stay on topic, which keeps the discussion moving forward. He stated the Legislature follows Robert's Rules of Order (Robert's Rules), which are very specific about things such as how meetings should be run, who controls the meetings, and what is discussed at the meetings. He stated for each Committee, these things are decided by the Chair of that specific Committee. He stated one of the main driving forces behind Robert's Rules is to keep the meeting moving so there is no wasted time. He then reviewed some points

listed in Robert's Rules. He stated it is important to understand and reinforce why this procedure is followed. He stated the Legislature is always open to anyone contacting the Legislature, or a specific Committee Chair, to have a topic added to an agenda.

Legislator Nacerino stated all Legislative meetings are open to the public and are transparent. She stated information can be brought forward, questions can be asked, and the Legislature will respond accordingly.

Legislator Castellano stated in the time he has been on the Legislature, everyone has had a chance to speak at Committee and no one has been rushed. He stated financial items always go through at least two (2) committees, sometimes three (3). He stated the Legislators are available at all times to take phone calls or to answer emails. He stated he believes all topics have been handled in a proper, transparent way through the committee process before getting to the Full Legislative Meeting where the final decision is made.

Legislator Albano stated because people go to the Legislature's website to find information on each meeting, he suggested putting a paragraph describing the process on the website so the public can have a clear understanding.

Legislator Montgomery stated this is a big topic that has been discussed in the past. She stated Robert's Rules is a great resource and it is available to conduct meetings that encourage public participation in open meetings. She stated she believes the public is being disenfranchised by having public comment at the end of an agenda, when the votes have already taken place. She stated she understands there is an opportunity at the Committee Meetings to dissect any issue thoroughly, but the public needs every opportunity to do that, including at a Full Legislative Meeting. She stated public comment is controlled by the Chairman, who can allow or not allow an individual to speak. She stated the Legislative Meeting is the same across all types of government, and Robert's Rules apply to all. She stated she has received many phone calls from constituents expressing their concern regarding the rules and procedures of the County Legislature. She stated she does not believe having an explanation on the website will appease the public who is already dissatisfied. She stated the Legislature is a public body and every government body should encourage citizen participation for a variety of reasons. She stated the public can offer fresh ideas and constructive criticism which can result in more efficient government. She stated this is especially important when there is one (1) party rule. She stated she is one (1) democrat on a board with eight (8) other Legislators who belong to another party. She stated she does not want to appear as though the Legislature is cowering from the public; she would like to address questions as they come in and if it happens to be at a Full Legislative Meeting, so be it. She stated in the Legislative Manual under section IV. Rules of Order and Procedure, Rule #13 states that persons who are not members of the Legislature shall be permitted to speak by the Chair. She stated if an explanation is to be put on the website, perhaps this rule should be listed as well. She stated to build a stronger, better Putnam we need the participation, comments, and concerns of the citizens. She stated the public should not be limited to just the committee meetings; the Full Legislative Meeting is filmed and where the final

votes take place. She stated the Legislature should show appreciation for the time each resident has taken to come to a meeting. She stated allowing for comment at the end of the agenda leaves no opportunity for the Legislature to consider and respond to valid issues.

Legislator Albano stated he respectfully disagrees. He stated each topic is vetted in committee for a great deal of time. He stated his concern about the efficiency of having public comment at the beginning of a Full Legislative Meeting agenda.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Chair would have the ability to limit the length of time each person may speak.

Legislator Albano stated a lot of time and consideration is given to each topic before they are approved out of committee. He stated having the ability to re-vet the topic at the Full Legislative Meeting would make the process less efficient. He stated procedurally, it makes sense to give each topic the proper amount of time whether it be reviewed at one (1) or multiple Committee Meetings. He stated once the topic goes through the committee process, the public has had the opportunity to discuss it. He stated allowing discussion again on the same topics at a Full Legislative Meeting could throw the system out of whack.

Legislator Nacerino agreed with Legislator Albano. She stated she has not received any negative feedback from her constituents in regard to the Legislative process. She stated the current procedure is in place for a reason, which Legislator Albano touched upon. She stated those who have voiced their displeasure with the process are usually at the committee meetings and know that is where most of the work is done. She stated this provides the opportunity to completely vet any matter on the table. She stated some matters have been held over for further consideration. She stated the procedure is not in place to circumvent or discourage public input; it is simply a better process for order. She requested that Legislative Counsel Robert Firriolo comment on the rationale of the current Legislative process. She stated this discussion is had annually to be open and transparent about the process and procedures.

Legislator Sayegh stated she believes all Legislators are on the same page with regard to wanting to hear feedback from constituents and having open dialogue. She stated Legislative Committee and Full Meetings are all for the benefit of the public. She stated allowing public comment on agenda items at a Full Legislative Meeting is not as effective, because the necessary representative, such as Department Heads or the County Attorney, may not be present. She stated the back and forth dialogue takes place at Committee Meetings and a lot of consideration goes into that dialogue. She stated the consideration of public opinion on these topics goes beyond the Committee Meetings, because residents are always welcome to contact the Legislative Office by calling or emailing to provide their opinion. She stated an audio recording of each meeting is posted to the Legislative website for anyone to listen who may not have been able to attend a meeting. She stated these resources allow for consideration of public input up until the day of the Full Legislative Meeting where the vote of the Full Legislature is taken.

Legislator Jonke stated in his time on the Legislature he has not received any negative feedback in regard to the Legislative process. He stated there has been some spirited debate that has taken place at the Committee level. He stated in Committee, the Department Heads are often present to provide further information on a topic. He stated if the necessary information is not available, an item can be held over until the next meeting to be discussed again. He stated he believes the process runs smoothly.

Legislator Montgomery stated she has heard from many constituents that they are unhappy with the process. She stated she has been to Legislative meetings where residents have made a complaint to the entire Legislature about the process.

Chairman Sullivan stated he believes educating residents so they can fully understand the process would be beneficial. He stated during his time on the Legislature he has gained a deeper understanding of the process himself.

Legislator Montgomery questioned what the purpose is of having public comment on agenda items at the end of a Full Legislative Meeting agenda.

Legislator Nacerino stated the public can express their opinion about a certain vote. She stated usually those who speak at a Full Legislative Meeting are at the Committee Meetings as well.

Chairman Sullivan stated one of the biggest points in Robert's Rules is to keep the meeting in order and control. He reiterated the importance of educating the public about the process. He stated participation is encouraged at Committee meetings and residents can always contact the Legislative Office via telephone or email with any additional questions or concerns. He stated once an item gets to the Full Legislative Meeting agenda, it has been vetted and reviewed and Legislators typically know how they are going to vote. He stated the discussion and work is done in Committee and having more discussion at a Full Legislative Meeting could drag the meetings out.

Legislator Montgomery stated Robert's Rules is the tool for the Chair of the meeting to use to guide public participation.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated Robert's Rules is a framework for conducting meetings, however the Legislative Manual trumps Robert's Rules. He stated the Legislative Manual sets forth the policy of the Legislature in how business is to be conducted. He stated it has been a policy decision of the Legislature to conduct the working sessions in Committee and have public feedback before votes at that time and to have public comment after all the business is done at a Full Legislative Meeting, but to still reserve Legislative comment after public comment. He stated although some may believe it is unusual that the Putnam County Legislature does not have public comment before agenda items at their Full Legislative Meetings, the United States House of Representatives, United States Senate, New York State Assembly, and New York State Senate do not allow for public comment during their voting sessions. He stated the

process followed by the Putnam County Legislature is consistent with these other deliberative bodies that have their work sessions prior to voting sessions. He stated as mentioned earlier, the public has the opportunity to submit comment via email and telephone up until the Full Legislative Meeting begins.

Legislator Albano stated an item can always be tabled at a Full Legislative Meeting if concerns or more information are received and the Legislators require more time to review it.

Legislator Castellano agreed with Legislator Albano. He stated last year, the Tobacco 21 (T21) local law was a divided vote among the Legislature and it was tabled from a Full Legislative Meeting to go back to Committee for further consideration. He stated T21 was on the Health, Social, Educational, & Environmental Committee agenda at six (6) meetings and was tabled from the Full Legislative Meeting once. He stated if this discussion was opened to public comment at the Full Legislative Meeting, it could have lasted hours. He stated although the Chair can place a time limit on each speaker, it can still go on for a great deal of time. He stated having reviewed this item in Committee multiple times and having it on the Full Legislative Meeting agenda twice is a good example of this system working correctly.

Legislator Jonke stated there is virtually unlimited time for public comment at Committee Meetings where all the work takes place.

Legislator Montgomery stated she does not disagree with what has been stated. She stated she is relaying the message that she has received from her constituents that they feel disenfranchised. She stated the Legislature can always refer to Rule #13 that she mentioned earlier.

Legislator Castellano stated Rule #13 was utilized in the past, and public comment at a Full Legislative Meeting went on for about two (2) hours.

Item #10 - Discussion/ Requiring Board Meeting Minutes of Outside Agencies upon Request

Legislator Jonke stated currently, the funding agreements between Putnam County and outside agencies that receive County funding do not require the outside agency to provide their board meeting minutes upon request. He stated recently, two (2) issues have come to the attention of the Legislature and he believes adding this requirement will be beneficial. He stated this does not need to be done by resolution, a letter can be sent to the Law Department from Chairman Sullivan requesting that this be included.

Chairman Sullivan stated this is a reasonable request.

Legislator Jonke stated when the meeting minutes are requested from an agency, it is sometimes met with resistance. He stated he recently requested minutes from an agency and he reminded them that the funding they receive from the County is taxpayer money.

He stated when a taxpayer contacts the Legislature with a concern, the Legislature should be able to collect the necessary information to make sure everything is running as it should be.

Chairman Sullivan stated he would assume that the board meetings held by the outside agencies are open to the public and therefore the minutes would not include any confidential material.

Legislator Jonke stated another benefit to obtaining the minutes is to prove that the board meetings are in fact being held.

Legislator Addonizio agreed and stated the Legislature should expect that all outside agencies will provide their board meeting minutes. She stated as the Legislative body, we have a fiscal responsibility to check how these agencies are operating.

Legislator Nacerino stated since these agencies are receiving taxpayer funding, they should be open and transparent. She questions why there is reluctance in the first place.

Chairman Sullivan requested input from County Attorney Bumgarner on this matter.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the Legislature can add any type of requirement in the contract. She stated the format of the funding agreements is being revamped and therefore the 2019 agreements have not yet been completed. She stated with these additional requirements being requested by the Legislature, it will provide a stronger response to the outside agencies if they push back. She stated the requirement of board meeting minutes upon request will be included in the 2019 agreements.

Legislator Sayegh stated the State of New York requires non-profit organization to hold at least one (1) board meeting each year to maintain their status. She stated it behooves the Legislature to ensure the outside agencies are conducting their business in a way that is within the State of New York guidelines.

Legislator Montgomery agreed and suggested alerting the outside agencies of the amendment before providing them with the contract.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the County currently requires board meeting minutes to be submitted along with their budget submissions.

Legislator Montgomery stated these minutes can be a helpful tool and a Legislator should be able to request them.

County Attorney Bumgarner agreed that this information should be able to be requested when it is needed as opposed to looking at the previous year's forms that were filed.

Legislator Sayegh stated during the budget process in 2018 she went to Finance to review the required information submitted by each outside agency and some had

submitted board meeting minutes while other had not yet done so. She stated it is important to have this information before providing funding.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated no funding was released until the submission of all required documents was received.

Bill Nulk, Chairman of the Putnam County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) stated as a semi-State agency, the IDA is required to not only produce board meeting minutes, but to also publish them on their website. He stated these documents should be part of the normal business when dealing with a governmental agency.

Legislator Sayegh commended Mr. Nulk and the IDA on their efforts to be more organized.

Item #11 - FYI/ County Clerk Annual Report

Legislator Albano stated the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) does a great job and is very efficient. He reminded everyone that a portion of the money from transactions done in the Putnam County DMV office stays within the County.

Chairman Sullivan stated the Putnam County DMV is utilized by people inside and outside of the County, which speaks to their efficiency.

Item #12 - FYI/ Board of Elections Annual Report

Chairman Sullivan stated with the changes in the election law, the Board of Elections is going to have a busy year. He stated the State mandates in relation to early voting and pre-registration will cost the County about \$300,000. He stated there is no funding from the State for these mandates.

Item #13 - FYI/ Litigation Report

Chairman Sullivan questioned if there are any significant changes in the litigation report.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated the report is pretty straightforward this month. She stated she could provide an update on two (2) cases either tonight or at next month's meeting.

Chairman Sullivan requested that the updates be provided tonight at the end of the meeting.

Item #14 - Update/ Peer to Peer Program/ Cut in State Funding/ Director Rohde

Director Rohde stated he wrote a letter to the editor regarding the decrease in the State's funding for the Joseph P. Dwyer Vet 2 Vet Program (Vet 2 Vet), which he read into the record. (*Letter attached – from Veteran's 3/4/19 Newsletter*) He stated at the 2019

State of the State Address the Governor announced that funding for the Vet 2 Vet Program would be expanded from 16 counties to all 62 counties in New York State. He stated a few days after that the program funding was pulled from the Executive Budget. He stated this is a great program that has a positive impact on the community. He stated they do raise some of their own funds as all.

Executive Director of the Mental Health Association (MHA) Meghan Castellano stated MHA is very proud to have Vet 2 Vet as one of their programs. She stated she is also the Co-Chair of the Suicide Prevention Task Force in Putnam County and there have been six (6) Veterans who received help through this program, which essentially saved their lives. She stated one case happened this past weekend and that Veteran received help and is beginning their recovery journey. She stated John Bourges, the Vet 2 Vet Program Coordinator unfortunately had to leave tonight to attend another meeting where he will be speaking about the peer to peer model and how it may help first responders to help with post-traumatic stress and suicide prevention. She stated the mantra for the program is "Making it matter one Veteran at a time." She stated many personal connections have been made through the program, and it would be a shame to see this important work be lost without the funding.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if this lack of funding happened last year as well.

Director Rohde stated just before the Executive Budget came out, it eliminated the funding for the Vet 2 Vet Program for the 16 counties. He stated our State Senators lobbied individually for Vet 2 Vet to be authorized in Putnam County. He stated fighting for funding each year is a real burden as it takes away from their daily duties, the time spent helping Veterans. He stated part of the Vet 2 Vet funding goes to the Social Work program at the University of Albany. He stated the students come to Putnam to conduct interviews and the Veterans Service Agency staff has attended training sessions they have held. He stated in the nine (9) years since he has been the Director of the Veterans Service Agency the State has slowly been decreasing what they do for Veterans. He stated they used to have a Veterans Service Officer from the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs come twice a week and they would see about 16 Veterans per day. He stated they now have one (1) Veterans Service Officer who comes once a week for about four (4) hours and they see about three (3) Veterans. He stated the State is providing less and less services.

Ms. Castellano read the following post from New York State Senator Sue Serino's Facebook page regarding this issue:

"Cannot thank my Veterans Advisory Board enough for working with our team to make sure our local vets always have a strong voice! Together, we have accomplished some incredible things for local veterans, including securing State funding to launch the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project in Dutchess County (MHA Dutchess Vet2Vet) and preserving it in Putnam (Dwyer Putnam). This year, we were encouraged when the Governor referenced this profoundly impactful program in his State of the State Address and signaled his

support for expanding it across NY. However, despite that rhetoric, the Governor failed to include funding to support the program in his Executive Budget Proposal. The Senate has always worked to ensure that funding is included in the budget for this important program which helps our servicemen and women struggling with PTSD, TBI, and other mental health challenges. While leadership in Albany has changed, I will continue to be a vocal advocate for this critically important program. LIKE and SHARE to support our vets! #VetsPeer2Peer #JosephPDwyerProgram”

Director Rohde stated he and Ms. Castellano have a meeting scheduled with Senator Pete Harckham to discuss this issue as well.

Ms. Castellano stated the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer to Peer Programs within New York State are organizing a Legislative Day in Albany on February 26, 2019 to make a statement and show the great work being done throughout the State by each individual program.

Chairman Sullivan questioned how much funding was eliminated from the New York State budget.

Ms. Castellano stated by eliminating funding for these programs, the State saved \$3.4 million from the total budget amount of around \$178 billion. She stated as mentioned earlier, to have Veterans mental health not mentioned in the report until page 264 was disappointing, and then to have this funding cut is disgraceful.

Legislator Nacerino stated it is very disheartening and the Peer to Peer program is wonderful. She stated the high suicide rate among Veterans is concerning and it is paramount to do anything possible to assist Veterans or alleviate some of things they are experiencing. She stated to sideswipe this is an insult.

Director Rohde re-stated that 22 Veterans each day take their own lives, which is a very large number.

Legislator Nacerino stated it is very disheartening to have the funds diminished for a program that is already in place to help these Veterans.

Director Rohde stated it is important to bring in active-duty military personnel as well. He stated more active-duty military die each year from suicide than are killed in combat. He stated the Veterans Service Agency is holding suicide awareness training sessions where the signs of a suicidal individual will be discussed. He stated these trainings are offered throughout the community, tomorrow a session will be held at the Kent Police Department.

Ms. Castellano stated this training is offered in partnership with Putnam Hospital Center and will be offered again in June and October. She stated they also have local trainers that can teach the three (3) hour course.

Director Rohde stated he and Deputy Director of the Veterans Service Agency Art Hanley are both trainers.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what happened after the funding was cut last year.

Director Rohde stated the State Senate overrode the Governor's decision, therefore there could still be a change for the funding to be reinstated this year.

Ms. Castellano stated since this past election, this is the first time in history that there are no Veterans in the Senate. She stated their current funding goes through June 30, 2019.

Director Rohde stated at that time, they may be able to move forward with smaller programs, but the bigger programs would stop due to lack of funding.

Legislator Sayegh stated it is important to note that the needs of a Veteran are unique as compared to the general population. She stated she attended an event where a Veteran spoke about his experience upon returning home from war and how he felt disconnected from the general public. She stated these programs are so important because the needs of Veterans are so specific. She stated we owe these programs to those who are fighting for our freedoms every day.

Legislator Castellano suggested writing a letter to our State Representatives and the Governor urging that this funding be reinstated.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated a resolution can be passed and sent to the State rather than sending a letter.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how much funding Putnam County received from the State for this program.

Ms. Castellano stated \$185,000 in funding comes to Putnam County from the State.

Director Rohde stated the funding must be spent within the year, if it is not spent it is taken back.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if this funding is used toward salaries of staff and social workers.

Ms. Castellano stated because this is a peer model, there are no social workers on the staff. She stated there is a full time Program Coordinator and there are part time Veterans who run various groups to connect with all era Veterans. She stated families are the main support system for a Veteran, therefore it is important that funding goes towards events that include the whole family, such as going to the movies or to a Renegades game. She stated many suicidal Veterans that have received help through

this program have been brought to the program by family members. She stated they recently held an equestrian program for Veterans with post-traumatic stress, which can be very therapeutic.

Director Rohde stated having these programs in place provide the Veteran with positive ways to deal with what they are going through rather than them turning to drugs or alcohol. He stated the Peer to Peer Program is non-clinical and if a Veteran is in need of assistance from a mental health professional, they can go to the VA Hospital in Montrose. He stated Program Coordinator Bourges returned to the meeting. He stated a warm line is in place for Veterans who need someone to speak with. He stated at the Renegades games, the Veterans spend more time speaking with one another than watching baseball, which is truly the purpose of these events. He stated it is impactful for both the Veteran and their family members who are at the game with them.

Program Coordinator Bourges stated the current statistic for Veterans' suicide is 22 per day, however it is probably higher than that because there are individuals, for example, who purposely get into car accidents to kill themselves, which would not be reported as suicide. He stated many times when this statistic is discussed the blame gets put on the VA. He stated they realized that this is not the VA's problem; it is the community's problem and therefore it is up to the members of that community to come up with a solution. He stated the warm line is available 24/7 and in the past year 75 calls have come in. He stated the person who has helped over the weekend called the warm line for assistance. He mentioned that they are working to provide information on how this peer oriented program can be useful for agencies such as police and first responders as well. He stated when someone is facing an issue they want to speak with someone who will understand them and who will keep their information confidential. He stated if an individual says they are having suicidal thoughts, they do call 911 and get the person help immediately, but most times the person is just looking for someone to speak to. He stated the events such as the Renegades games and movie days encourage the Veteran and their family to spend time together. He stated the tenants of the Veterans residence are Veterans who were homeless and by providing this place to live, their lives are far improved. He stated suicide is a difficult thing to gauge, you never know if the assistance you provided someone would save their life. He stated suicide is 100% preventable in hindsight, which is why the program is so important.

Director Rohde stated a Veteran was brought in to the residence on January 8, 2019 and was there for five (5) days when another Veteran fell and hit his head. He stated while this Veteran was at the emergency room, the Veteran who was new to the residence cleaned all the blood in the house and made sure his fellow Veterans' beloved jacket was cleaned as well. He stated this is a great example of the loyalty Veterans have to one another. He requested that the Committee please help keep this program funding.

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

Item #13 - FYI/ Litigation Report – Continued

At 8:23pm Chairman Sullivan made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss confidential litigation; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

At 8:34pm Chairman Sullivan made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

No action was taken.

Item #15 - Other Business - None

Item #16 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 8:35pm, Chairman Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Green.