

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD IN ROOM 318 OF THE  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Montgomery**

**Thursday**

**May 16, 2019**

**(Immediately following the Protective Services Meeting beginning at 6PM)**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator Addonizio, Legislator Montgomery, and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

**Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – March 18, 2019 & April 25, 2019**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 - Discussion/Hudson Valley Regional Council/Executive Director Patricia Pomeroy & Deputy Executive Director Carla Castillo**

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery. All in favor.

Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) Deputy Executive Director Carla Castillo gave the attached PowerPoint presentation. She stated she would speak about the Climate Smart program first as the Committee will be considering it for approval later in the meeting. She stated over 200 communities throughout New York State have joined the Climate Smart program. She stated the program is a very in depth program that has over 130 actions that can be undertaken. She stated these actions can provide cost savings, in addition to helping the environment and providing clean energy. She reviewed the model resolution and explained how some municipalities are changing the pledge to their preferences. She stated the 10 pledges at the bottom remain the same. She stated Dutchess County developed a task force with volunteers to oversee the work involved. She noted that Putnam County is already moving forward with many initiatives. She stated the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) deadline is July 26, 2019. She stated the HVRC is partnering with WESTCOP (Westchester Community Opportunity Program Inc.) and Bright Energy Services through the Putnam Clean Heating and Cooling Campaign.

HVRC Executive Director Patricia Pomeroy stated the HVRC encompasses the seven (7) counties in the Hudson Valley: Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Ulster, Sullivan, Orange, and Rockland. She stated there are nine (9) total regional councils in the State and 640 nationwide. She stated one (1) reason they were created was to be recipients of funding that the Federal Government wanted to pass along to municipalities. She stated the two (2) oldest funding sources are the United States Department of Commerce and the United States Economic

Development Administration (EDA). She stated a big focus is the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which is a regional plan that is done every five (5) years and gives a snapshot of strengths and weaknesses, along with where opportunities are. She stated the HVRC will be meeting with the County Planning Department on June 7<sup>th</sup>. She stated Putnam County has not participated in the HVRC Board in many years and there is no current board member from Putnam County. She stated the CEDS is currently in progress and the hope is that it will be done by July. She stated there are many opportunities for federal funding, especially for water or sewer infrastructure. She stated the EDA does not lend money to for-profit businesses, it is all for the public sector and there are no application deadlines. She stated the “match” portion of the grant can be done as staff or volunteer hours, instead of with money. She stated there is a new emphasis on clean water infrastructure and the HVRC has worked with Putnam County Soil & Water regarding this matter.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated there is no fiscal impact on the County from taking the Climate Smart Pledge.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if there would be any time limit on following through with the initiatives, after the Climate Smart Pledge is adopted. She noted that Dutchess County stated it would take 12-18 months.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated there is no time limit. She stated the County can take as much time as necessary to move forward.

Legislator Addonizio requested clarification on the point system for the Climate Smart Program

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated 120 points to become certified, but to become just a registered Climate Smart Community only adopting the Pledge is necessary. She noted that some actions have timeframes associated with them, such as a greenhouse gas inventory being good for five (5) years.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if this would preclude the County from other New York State grants.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated any community can apply for any grants. She stated the match for the grants cannot be from other State or Federal funding.

Legislator Sayegh questioned how volunteer hours would be used as part of the match.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated that it depends on the project. She stated for example, volunteers can do preliminary research for certain projects.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if part of the match could be from work that has already been done.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated yes absolutely.

Legislator Montgomery stated for the Climate Smart Program in the Town of Philipstown, they have used some of the early planning as part of the match.

Executive Director Pomeroy noted that Sullivan County is smaller than Putnam County as is a Climate Smart community with the help of the HVRC.

Legislator Montgomery stated the biggest challenge would be forming the task force but she believes there is enough public interest in the program. She stated she would be happy to lead the task force and try to recruit people to join it.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo noted that assistance from the HVRC is tailored to each community's needs.

Legislator Nacerino questioned who traditionally sits on the task force.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated they are typically made up of community members, municipal representatives, staff, and/or elected officials. She added that sometimes there are liaisons from local boards and businesses. She stated the County would be able to build a task force suited for its needs.

Legislator Nacerino clarified that the task force is not necessary to take the Climate Smart Pledge.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated it is not. She stated the Pledge is just saying that Putnam County is interested in pursuing Climate Smart initiatives.

Legislator Nacerino stated she is concerned with burdening county employees with more work, especially if it is redundant, as the County is already committed to many initiatives that would fall under the Climate Smart Program.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated they have found that there are always people willing to volunteer.

Legislator Montgomery stated there needs to be a clear picture of what the County is already in the process of doing that pertains to Climate Smart.

Legislator Nacerino reiterated that she does not want redundant work for the county employees. She stated she would like for Planning Commissioner Sandra Fusco to give her input on the County taking on this initiative and all the steps the County is already taking.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Commissioner Fusco has spoken to the Legislature in the past about Climate Smart.

Legislator Albano questioned how many communities have reached the 120 point threshold.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated over 240 have taken the pledge and approximately 30 have reached 120 points.

Legislator Albano noted that the County's Capital Projects Committee has made energy a high priority with projects such as LED Lighting. He echoed Legislator Nacerino's sentiments about this potentially creating redundant work for county employees.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo suggested adopting the Pledge because it is a non-binding resolution and then the County can consider which ways it can move forward. She stated with just the passing of the Pledge will give the County five (5) additional points on Climate Smart grants.

Legislator Nacerino stated she supports taking the Pledge.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if there are any restrictions after taking the pledge.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated there are none.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Deputy Executive Director Castillo and Executive Director Pomeroy for the information they provided.

Malachy Cleary, Cold Spring resident, thanked the Legislature for considering the Climate Smart Pledge. He stated he supports taking the Pledge due to the effects of climate change.

Paul Morini, Southeast resident, stated he believes the appetite within the County to volunteer for the Climate Smart Task Force would be very high. He stated he would be happy to volunteer.

Joe Montori, Mahopac resident, stated he is excited that the County is considering Climate Smart. He stated the Town of Bedford achieved a 70% decrease in their carbon emissions in 10 years and every Climate Smart initiative the town has saved them money.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Legislature received many letters supporting moving forward with the Climate Smart Pledge.

Legislator Nacerino noted that she is sure there would be many people willing to volunteer for this initiative.

#### **Item #5 - Discussion/Update/Putnam County Economic Development Corporation/Chairman Richard Weiss**

Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Chairman Richard Weiss stated in December the EDC President resigned and the Board has been trying to find an appropriate replacement. He stated there was talk of the County hiring a Project Coordinator to work with the Planning Department and Commissioner Sandra Fusco. He stated in the future, the EDC needs to have a closer relationship with the County Executive and the Planning Department. He stated he met with County Executive Odell to talk about bringing in someone on a part time basis to be the

face of the EDC. He stated this person has enormous qualifications and has been involved and is familiar with the County. He stated they will be part time until the County decides how it plans to move forward. He stated the EDC has taken the initiative to minimize costs and are looking into collaborating with surrounding EDC's.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if there was a severance package for the former EDC President.

EDC Chairman Weiss stated there was an arrangement in which she was paid through January.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned when the part time position will be filled.

EDC Chairman Weiss stated hopefully in June.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the funding from the County could be minimized during the period where there has been no EDC President.

EDC Chairman Weiss stated he spoke with Finance Commissioner William Carlin about this and the EDC will be resubmitting a revised budget.

Legislator Addonizio stated this would save the County approximately four (4) months' worth of payments.

EDC Chairman Weiss stated it could potentially be even more, depending on how the County decides to move forward. He stated the EDC is hoping to move their office to the Planning Department, so that it will be easier to collaborate.

Legislator Sullivan stated the EDC is an important aspect of the County.

Legislator Jonke questioned if the EDC was involved in the County's interviews for a Project Coordinator.

EDC Chairman Weiss stated they were not involved, but they were briefed on the process. He stated when the County is ready to go to the next step, the EDC will be brought into the interview process. He stated it is his understanding that there are two (2) candidates, but one (1) dropped out.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the funding agreement can be amended to reflect the part time position.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Anna Diaz stated after the EDC makes a final decision, the agreement can be amended.

Legislator Montgomery noted the importance of the EDC President and referenced the Accelerator project that did not come to fruition.

EDC Chairman Weiss stated the Accelerator did not move forward due to the uncertainty of the funding and what would happen after the first year. He stated the EDC has no grant writer or fundraiser. He stated fundraising efforts have not gone well but the visibility of the EDC has increased.

Legislator Montgomery stated the past EDC President did a great job of raising awareness for municipalities. She stated the EDC needs to be more focused on the actual projects.

#### **Item #6 - Discussion/Putnam County Business Council's 2019 Legislative Priorities**

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Putnam County Business Council (PCBC) Chairwoman Jennifer Maher stated she supports the County moving forward with Climate Smart and working with the HVRC. She stated the PCBC would be happy to help with the Climate Smart task force. She stated the PCBC was created out of a necessity for business advocacy. She stated economic development is vital to the business climate of Putnam County. She stated the PCBC will be hosting quarterly educational and networking breakfasts throughout the County. She stated the first breakfast had members from the New York City Mayor's office and the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council were in attendance. She stated the PCBC will be reaching out to the municipalities to encourage them to take part in the CFA grant process. She stated the PCBC is fully volunteer operated.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she knows the PCBC has a lot on their plate. She stated it is important to get all the stakeholders at the table to discuss any questions or problems and find solutions.

PCBC Jennifer Maher stated they have helped many local businesses with issues that arise from State and/or Federal Legislation. She stated it is very hard to attract businesses to New York State, and especially Putnam County.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Putnam County had a lot to offer.

PCBC Chairwoman Jennifer Maher agreed but stated it is very expensive and there are a lot of restrictions.

Legislator Montgomery stated there need to be statistics to show businesses that prove what the County has to offer. She stated she has had outside businesses come to her with questions regarding statistics that she is unsure if the County is able to provide.

PCBC Chairwoman Maher stated low traffic counts are a hindrance for the County. She stated it is because of the lack of major roadways. She stated there is a misconception that the

municipalities do not want franchises in the County, but it is really that the franchises do not want to come to the County without the supporting statistics. She stated the PCBC works with the EDC, the Putnam County Industrial Development Corporation, and the Putnam County Visitors Bureau.

Legislator Sullivan thanked PCBC Chairwoman Maher for her efforts. He stated it is important to bring people together to communicate and share ideas.

Legislator Jonke stated it is very difficult to do business in Putnam County because of the effective tax rates.

Lynne Eckardt, Town of Southeast Councilwoman, stated there is a perception that it is very difficult to open a business in the County. She stated there is a problem with applicants not following their approved plan and then blame the municipality for not being able to open. She stated if businesses followed the approved plan, they could open much faster.

PCBC Chairwoman Maher stated she has a weekly article where she tries to shed light on issues such as the one Councilwoman Eckardt mentioned.

#### **Item #7 - Approval/Climate Smart Community Pledge**

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Climate Smart was talked about a lot during the discussion of agenda item #4. She stated she wanted to get a better idea of what initiatives the County was already undertaking, so she attended the April Capital Projects Committee meeting. She stated many departments attend these meetings, as well as County Executive Odell and Legislator Albano. She read part of an email from Alexis Hawley, who coordinates the Capital Projects meetings. The letter stated that the County has a record of implementing energy efficient fixtures. She detailed some current projects that the County is undertaking. She stated Legislator Gouldman submitted examples of the surrounding Counties' Climate Smart Pledges. She stated that she also provided examples of the Pledges from other counties, including Delaware and Albany Counties.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to see this move forward.

Legislator Nacerino stated she supports moving forward. She stated taking the Pledge is the right thing to do. She suggested using one of the provided resolutions from the other counties as a template.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she prefers the resolution from Delaware County. She read an excerpt from this resolution which states that the response to climate change provides an unprecedented opportunity to save money. She stated this resolution makes great points and also mentions schools getting involved.

Legislator Nacerino stated Putnam County will have to reach out to its schools in hopes that they will also participate.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if Deputy Executive Director Castillo had any thoughts on the Delaware County resolution.

Deputy Executive Director Castillo stated she is not familiar with it, but the pieces that Chairwoman Sayegh read encompass what Climate Smart is about.

Chairwoman Sayegh read another piece of the Delaware County resolution.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would support moving forward using Delaware County's resolution as a template, since that is what Chairwoman Sayegh prefers.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move the Climate Smart Community Pledge, based on Delaware County's Pledge, to the Full Legislative Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery. All in favor.

**Item #8 - FYI/Unemployment Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #9 - Other Business - None**

**Item #10 – Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 8:28 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.