

Minutes

Public Hearing

July 24, 2019

@ 3:30pm

The Public hearing was called to order at 3:40 in Room 318 by Terry Oliver.
Terry Oliver, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jennifer Bumgarner, County Attorney read the public notice for the following proposed Local Laws:

- A Local Law to amend the Putnam County Code entitled Ethics, Code of, and financial disclosure to prohibit the disclosure of confidential material. R#154.

Public Comments from the 3:30 hearing. (Summary)

Steve Clorofilla, Resident of Mahopac and Retired Police Officer, He is for open government but also for privacy. He is concerned from when the paper wanted to print the names address etc. on an interactive map of people that had certain licenses. He doesn't not want his private info out there for everyone to see. In the interest of protecting the privacy of the people of Putnam County this is a good law and he does support.

Eileen Reilly, Resident of Putnam Valley and President of PC League of Women voters. Read from a statement from the League of women voters. attached.

Susan Elan, Putnam County Resident and a member of the League of Women voters, the Putnam progressive and the New York Civil Liberty Union. She came because she opposes this law that states that any employee can designate anything as confidential although

there is a reference in the Law that says the Ethics board can intervene. She is worried that people would over classify items of confidential, which would keep them from the public. She feels this law is contrary to transparency in government and suggest a willingness to permit elected officials to cloak their operations, and what they don't want known might not be a matter of confidentiality. She opposes this Law.

Jean Nelson, Resident of Mahopac, Putnam County. In her opinion there is already laws in place that protect documents from being released. She understands the need to protect private information but again thinks there are laws in place that would do that. She thinks that the proposed law is perplexing and unnecessary in adding a layer to the confidentiality and in her view gives the appearance of the intention to protect individuals in government instead of the people. She believes that it is imperative that those that are elected, appointed or hired that operate as openly as possible. Voters and tax payers need to know how the decisions are made, how taxes are spent. So they know who to vote for. She opposes this law and hopes the County Executive will agree.

Arlene Popkin, Private Citizen. She agrees with Steve Clorofilla about the publishing of names of people who have firearms. She believes if you agree then the appropriate remedy for that would be to make a law that says you can't publish the names of people with firearms, not a law that says the deputy superintendent of filing pot holes can write Confidential on a memo that says he is not filing potholes and thereby delaying the public and the press from finding out about it. She feels this law is over broad and that Putnam County is overstepping authority that belongs to the State of New York. The state of New York already has a Freedom of information Law and a lengthy list of matters that are not automatically to be disclosed under the Freedom of information Law. She believes that the Legislatures have added to the list of things you have to do to see something of public record and to add to the list of exceptions to the Law is beyond the competence of a county government. Passing this Law would render county government less efficient and would cost the county a great deal of money. She believes that Ms. Bumgarner and only Ms. Bumgarner has to approve turning over to the Public those documents that belong to the public. She believes this will cost the county a lot of money because every time you write Confidential on something and it has to go through the process it will be difficult to meet the time deadlines and potentially get sued. She believes that the document the Legislature put out seem to agree with her. She believes this Law is unnecessary and will make government less efficient.

Marsha Waldman, Resident of Mahopac. She believes that this Law is unnecessary there are already enough Law's for privacy issues. She believes that the purpose of this law is to silence people who do not agree with the majority of the Legislatures or the County Executive. She believes that there has been a serious effort on the part of the Legislature to exclude the one Democrat member of the Leg preventing her from having the information that she needs to preform her duties. She discusses a few years ago the situation with Butterfield hospital and the back room deal that was being made with Mrs. Odell with Roger Ailes that would have been an embarrassment to every woman in this County to have

a County facility names for a sexual predator and it is only because someone got the word out to the press that made people come out and object to it. She believes this law prevents people from knowing what is going on in our government.

Robert Firriolo, Legislative Council. Read a statement from the Legislature, attached.

Baila Lemonk, Resident of Mahopac. Believes that everything Mr. Firriolo just read is covered by the State Law and why do we need to have a law. She believes it's an attempt to silence some. She believes Putnam County is going down the tubes every year, the Legislature should be ashamed of itself. She don't know where you get your law from but it is not what she knows. She is reading a statement that was sent to Mrs. Odell from Common Cause. (Statement attached) Common cause opposes the amendment of Chapter 55 of the county Ethics code to grant agents of the county authority to mark items confidential. She believes that the legislatures are over stepping their bounds and should reassess what they are doing to us the tax payers and the citizens.

Lynn Eckart from the town of Southeast but is speaking on her own behalf. She could not find a copy of the law on line. Speaking on Foiling in this County. The Administration and people in the County are always so polite, but the County always exceeded that allowable time limit. She thinks this law will just add to the time it already takes and will add an extra burden for the public. She is also worried about the future, this legislature might be very open, what about future legislatures.

Dwight Arthur: Statement attached. He is asking the County Executive return it to the Legislature and have a full and open meeting about the defects in the resolution and drafting. If anyone thinks this resolution is not very confusing then why are so many people confused.

Carla Lucchino Resident of Brewster. She is a 31 year retired defense department senior executive and holds a top secret clearance. She has great respect for government protecting information. And thinks it is required at every level of government. She fully supports this law and we should trust out government officials the make the right decision on what should and should not be protected.

Nancy Montgomery Legislature Dist. 1. She is glad to see all the people out at the 3:30 public hearing in the room that is not marked as the room the public hearing on the website as the room which we are holding the public hearing. Also she is a little surprised that so many people showed up because it was not noted on the Website until yesterday morning. She wants to speak about the process in which this law was made. It was not transparent. It was proposed at one committee meeting for approval it is common practice to have open discussions before it goes on for approval. There was a lot speculations why this was proposed some think it is in response to my request to give an 11 page memo to the press that out atty had written. Because the memo was marked confidential she asked

permission. She believes because it was an 11 page memo in response to public comment it should not have been marked confidential. She feels that we are not responsive to the public. She gives an example of exactly what some of the comments were made today. (with that she holds up her laptop computer where there is a memo clearly marked in big red letter Confidential) she points out that it is marked in Red Confidential and explains that it is in response to a July 6th memo she sent to the County Executive. She explains that she has to send a memo to the county executive in order to speak to any department head. So on July 16th she receives this very detailed memo regarding what the code says, Very well written. She goes on to say it says please be advised my memo dated July 6th. I can read it extensively but I don't think you want to hear that. I can assure you that there is nothing confidential in this memo. She is noting what I do with it. she can't forward it or it will be a crime. She is saying this process is a burden on her and her constituents.

David Krebs: Resident of Mahopac for the last 20 years. He has listened to everyone that came up tonight. He says everyone that is against this, is against it because of what they heard in the news. He is for small government and transparency. He don't see where this law is going to, after the explanation from the legislatures is going to effect it in any way. We are just being frenzied by fake news that we listen to day in and day out because they have a point they are trying to put across. David is for the bill.

Terry Oliver closed the Meeting @ 4:39.