

**RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
BUDGET MEETING  
HELD IN ROOM #318 OF THE  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairman Sullivan, Legislators Addonizio & Albano**

**Thursday**

**6:00pm**

**October 10, 2019**

The meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Chairman Sullivan who requested Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Addonizio and Chairman Sullivan were present. Legislator Albano was absent. Chairman Sullivan stated Legislator Castellano would sit on the Committee in Legislator Albano's absence.

**Item #3 - 2020 Budget Review**

**Board of Ethics – Account 1430 (10200000) (pages 30-31)**

Director of Personnel Paul Eldridge stated the allocation for the Board of Ethics is a portion of the salary of his confidential secretary, who also handles the secretarial work for the Board of Ethics. He stated approximately 4.2% of her salary is allocated under the budget for the Board of Ethics. He stated occasionally, the Board of Ethics holds public hearings and for that reason there is a budget line for Advertising, 54664, although it does not happen that often and there is no money allocated there for 2020.

**County Clerk – Account 1410 (pages 23-24)**

County Clerk Michael Bartolotti stated the budget was kept tight with a few requests. He stated one of the most significant changes is the Contracts, line 54646, which decreased by \$90,000 from \$215,000 in 2019 to \$125,000 for 2020. He stated an RFP (request for proposal) was put out earlier this year and they got a new IT vendor for software content management in the Clerk's Office which resulted in a significant savings. He stated this vendor is providing better service at a better price. He stated the other budget lines have stayed relatively consistent.

Chairman Sullivan stated the decrease in the Contract line is a great savings and requested more information on the new vendor.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the software is used for the digitization of the records of the County Clerk's Office, making them searchable. He stated transactions are also done through the software. He stated it also provides online access for land records and court records. He stated for a long time the prior vendor was the only option and they are very fortunate to have found another vendor that offered the functionality they

needed at a better price. He stated they have been e-filing court records since the end of 2016 which has resulted in a fantastic savings in terms of efficiency. He stated they currently have 80% of the records e-filed which has cut down of office supplies and time. He stated one of the major driving issues to switch vendors was to have the e-recording of land records, which the former vendor was unable to provide. He stated they began e-recording land documents in July and they have over 50% completed. He stated he is very happy to have a reliable and user friendly product that works.

Legislator Gouldman questioned the decrease in revenue for line 412551, Clerks Fees.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated in recent years, it has been more and more difficult to reach the budgeted revenues. He stated the majority of revenues generated through the Clerk's Office come from land records. He stated they believed it would be responsible to budget less revenue for 2020 based on the past years' revenues.

Legislator Jonke commended County Clerk Bartolotti for running a great department and for the substantial savings in the Contract line.

Legislator Castellano requested information on foreclosures within the County.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated in 2019 judgements were high, but new actions were low. He stated this is a better sign, but he would not say it is a good sign. He stated he believes the increase in judgements is because these cases are now coming to fruition. He stated he hopes the numbers continue to decline.

Legislator Castellano stated commencements are down, which is good and the banks are beginning to get rid of the properties which will decrease the amount of zombie properties.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated with new actions declining, it is a light at the end of the tunnel.

### **Motor Vehicles – Account 1411 (pages 25-26)**

County Clerk Bartolotti stated there are minimal changes in this budget. He stated he anticipates 2020 to be a busy year with the implementation of Real ID. He stated line 51093, Overtime, was increased this year in preparation for the busy year. He stated the overtime helps to be able to process the work that comes in from car dealerships in off-hours. He stated customers in the DMV office are taken care of first and then sometimes they ask the staff to stay late to get the dealership work complete. He stated Putnam County keeps 12.7% of the revenue generated through the DMV therefore it is important to address the work in a timely manner.

Chairman Sullivan stated line 412552, Motor Vehicle Fees, shows revenue of \$1.7 million for 2018. He questioned why only \$1.5 million of revenue is being budgeted for 2020 since a busy year is anticipated.

Deputy County Clerk James McConnell stated that budget line has been increased over the past few years and from a budgeting perspective, planning for a revenue \$1.5 million is conservative. He stated he believes they will easily reach the \$1.5 million, but is it better not to overinflate that figure, especially when it is a busy time because it may have to then be reduced in the following budget cycle.

County Clerk Bartolotti agreed with Deputy County Clerk McConnell. He stated Real ID will begin on October 1, 2020 and the impact of it on the office is unknown at this point. He stated if they see more of a long term trend they would analyze it and increase that revenue, but he does not believe it would be responsible to the budget process to increase it for one (1) year and then have to decrease it the next year.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if County Clerk Bartolotti believes the implementation of Real ID will have a negative impact on revenue in 2020.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated he believes the DMV will reach an apex at some point in 2020 and once the majority of people have their Real ID the volume will decrease.

Chairman Sullivan stated it will be interesting to see the actual amount for 2019 at the end of this year.

Legislator Castellano questioned how many people are currently getting a Real ID when they renew their driver's license.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the statewide numbers are low but in Putnam County, two-thirds of customers that come in to the DMV for a license renewal request either a Real ID or an enhanced driver's license. He stated this contributes to how busy the DMV has been because it is a very involved transaction, there are numerous documents to review and scan and the process relies heavily on technology. He stated DMV's IT infrastructure is less than admirable and can go down several times per day.

Legislator Castellano stated he got his Real ID through the Putnam County DMV and it took a little longer but it went smoothly. He questioned what the price difference is compared to a regular renewal of a driver's license.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the Real ID has no additional cost, but the enhanced driver's license is \$30.00 more. He stated an enhanced driver's license is a Real ID document and only United States citizens can get one because it is a western hemisphere document that allows travel to Canada, Mexico, and Western Caribbean by land or sea. He stated New York is one of the few states that offer an enhanced driver's license because of the proximity to the border.

Legislator Sayegh requested further information on the increase in Overtime, line 51093.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the increased overtime is to accommodate the work from the car dealerships which comes from all over the tristate area. He stated this work is received by mail and sent back by mail and the staff is usually willing to stay a little longer to process the work. He stated during regular hours the focus is on the customers in the office. He stated the positive is that for doing the work from the dealerships, the County retains 12.7% of the revenue.

Legislator Castellano questioned how the Putnam County DMV reaches out to dealerships in Connecticut.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated dealerships in Connecticut utilize the Putnam County DMV because of proximity. He stated New York State has a Dealer Service Bureau, but they are not as efficient and it takes weeks to get the paperwork back. He stated State-run DMVs, such as the ones in Westchester and Rockland Counties, do not accept a lot of outside dealer work. He stated the Putnam County DMV has solicited dealer work; however most of the dealership business is from word of mouth. He stated the Putnam County DMV has a good reputation of providing fast and accurate service.

Legislator Montgomery questioned the increase in line 54989, Miscellaneous.

Deputy County Clerk McConnell stated that is used for the sale of EZ Pass tags and has a matching revenue line, Minor Sales Other, line 426551.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the EZ Pass Tags are sold for \$25 and some revenue is made through the sale.

Legislator Nacerino applauded the conservative budget that was put forward.

### **Records Management – Account 1460 (pages 34-35)**

County Clerk Bartolotti stated Records Management has been moving towards digitizing files and decreasing the amount of paper files in boxes. He stated they have utilized grant funding to begin the digitization program on a shared services basis.

Deputy County Clerk McConnell stated they are currently waiting for their fourth grant award.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the County partnered with the Town of Southeast for this grant. He stated once the official notification of award is received the Town of Philipstown, Village of Cold Spring, Village of Nelsonville, Town of Putnam Valley, Town of Carmel, and Town of Southeast will all fall under the umbrella. He stated there are still many records in boxes on the shelves. He stated they have been successful in identifying which records have long-term or permanent retention periods. He stated these records are being digitized and properly indexed, which will save time when

looking for an archived document. He stated perhaps someday a records center will not be necessary.

Chairman Sullivan questioned where the digitized data is stored and how to prevent losing it.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the data is stored on the County network on County servers and overseen by the IT Department. He stated part of the initial grant award they received went to purchasing equipment to store the data. He stated this data is backed up several times in several locations; there is a great deal of redundancy. He stated these records are treated like any other digital record housed by the County. He stated this is a great project to see grow and it has made access to these records much easier.

### **Law Department – Account 1420 (pages 27-28)**

County Attorney Jennifer Bumgarner stated the budget has remained static with some minor changes. She stated there are some line items that the Law Department does not have control over, such as line 54313, Books and Supplements, which is dictated by the contract price.

Chairman Sullivan requested clarification on line 54125, Legal Services.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated all outside counsel expenses and any action not covered by the insurance are paid through the Legal Services line. She stated the line has remained consistent at \$250,000 for the past few years, which is down from a high of about \$650,000 around 2006-2007. She stated with some staffing changes and the addition of attorneys with particular specialties, a lot of work has been able to be brought in-house, which has helped keep that budget line where it is. She stated she anticipates a similar year in 2020.

### **Judgment & Claims – Account 1930 (page 44)**

County Attorney Bumgarner stated Judgements and Claims, line 54933, was increased by \$50,000 for 2020. She stated she did not originally think this was necessary, but she spoke with Commissioner of Finance William Carlin as they got closer to the submission of the budget. She stated she has been taking a much closer look at all of the pending cases and getting analysis from outside counsel. She stated there are about five (5) or six (6) cases that will be nearing the end of the litigation process in 2020 and will result in either a settlement or a judgement. She stated the additional \$50,000 provides more room to try to settle cases at a more reasonable amount before they go to trial.

Chairman Sullivan stated it is unfortunate that funding must be allocated for things such as lawsuits and settlements, it is a real bugaboo, but nonetheless must be done.

Legislator Jonke stated line 54960, Certiorari Funds, was decreased from \$150,000 in 2019 to \$100,000 for 2020. He stated basically, the \$50,000 increase for the Judgements and Claims, line 54933, was taken from this budget line. He questioned if the County has ever gotten close to \$100,000 or \$150,000 in refunds.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated she believes \$100,000 is a reasonable number; however it is not usually reached.

Commissioner Carlin stated there are some cases that could affect that, but he is unaware when they might come to fruition.

### **Board of Elections – Account 1450 (pages 32-33)**

Board of Elections Commissioner Catherine Croft stated 2020 is a Presidential Election year, which increases the Board of Elections budget. She stated one of the biggest increases is in line 51094, Temporary, which funds all the poll workers. She stated another increase for 2020 is line 54311, Printing and Forms, which is used for the printing of ballots. She stated during a Presidential Election year, they order extra ballots. She stated early voting begins this year with the General Election and it will be available for every election in 2020. She stated there could be up to three (3) elections next year; the Presidential Primary, the Primary, and the General Election. She stated there was no Primary Election needed in 2019, which resulted in a cost savings.

Chairman Sullivan stated the total budget increased about \$300,000 and questioned if early voting will cost the County \$300,000.

Commissioner Croft stated the increase is not only because of early voting and the budget is comparable to the last Presidential Election year in 2016. She stated Putnam County Board of Elections received grants of about \$117,000 for the electronic poll books, which will be used for early voting and at the poll sites on Election Day.

Board of Elections Commissioner Anthony Scannapieco stated when Deputy Commissioner Kelly Primavera was working with the electronic poll book company, because the County was waiting for the money and approval, the vendor provided the County with 10 electronic poll books free of charge. He stated this allowed training to begin earlier.

Chairman Sullivan questioned how much early voting will cost the County.

Commissioner Croft stated the electronic poll books will be used for all elections and only three (3) will be used during early voting. She stated because early voting will take place at the Board of Elections, there is no rental fee to pay and therefore the only cost of early voting will be for the temporary workers. She stated on Election Day this year, less polling inspectors will be needed; they are going from about 450 temporary employees to about 377 on Election Day. She stated that is only for 2019 since early voting will be required for all elections in 2020.

Legislator Castellano questioned when the Presidential Primary is scheduled for 2020 and how early voting will be scheduled.

Commissioner Croft stated it is scheduled for April 28, 2020. She stated early voting begins 10 days prior to the day of the Election and there are nine (9) days of voting.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if the grants received were outlined in the budget.

Commissioner Carlin stated the grant was awarded in 2019, therefore it is shown in the 2019 revised budget. He stated line 52130, Computer Equipment, decreased for 2020 because of this award.

Legislator Addonizio clarified that it was a one-time grant.

Commissioner Croft stated yes, it was two (2) grants.

Chairman Sullivan stated the total budget is increasing \$330,000 in 2020.

Commissioner Croft stated in 2016, the last Presidential Election year, the total budget was about \$1.9 million as well. She stated the Board of Elections usually has funding left over that rolls back to the general fund, but it is important to prepare for the year ahead.

Commissioner Scannapieco stated since he has been Commissioner he believes there was only one (1) instance where they had to request additional funding. He stated in 2019 there was no primary election, which resulted in a cost savings.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the increases in line 54314, Postage and line 54386, Meals are due to the multiple elections and early voting.

Commissioner Scannapieco stated since it is a Presidential Election year there will be an increase in mailings.

Commissioner Croft stated the funding in the Meals line is for when night classes are held to train the poll workers. She stated the postage is used for absentee ballots and for notification of updated polling sites.

### **Community Action Program (CAP) – Account 6450 (page 165)**

Judy Callahan, Director of Putnam County Community Action Program (CAP) stated CAP works with low income families, many of whom have a level of income that is just above what would qualify them for cash assistance through the Department of Social Services. She stated CAP has requested level funding for 2020 and the County Contribution is used for direct client assistance. She stated when clients request assistance they first meet with a social worker, they must show what their deficit is,

explain how it happened, and prove their ability to maintain their budget moving forward. She stated they also must agree to a full 12 months of case management where they work with a social worker, review their budget, and work to get on track to managing their money independently into the future.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if clients are those who have an illness and have been out of work.

Director Callahan stated yes, sometimes the clients have had a health issue; there are all different situations.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if CAP provides food.

Director Callahan stated the County Contribution does not go to food but they do have two (2) food programs; the food pantry and the soup kitchen. She stated some State funding goes to those programs and other funding is collected through fundraising and donations.

Legislator Montgomery questioned where CAP receives the bulk of their funding.

Director Callahan stated the single largest amount of funding CAP receives is a Federal Community Services Block Grant that is about \$162,000 per year, which goes toward the salaries of the six (6) employees. She stated they try to stretch their funding as much as they can.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how long \$162,000 has been the amount of the grant award.

Director Callahan stated she has been with CAP for over 10 years and that funding has been consistently \$162,000 since before she was there.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how long the County has been providing \$12,000.

Director Callahan stated she believes the County began providing funding about six (6) years ago and CAP has requested the same amount each year.

### **Veterans Service Agency – Account 6510 (pages 167-168)**

Director of the Veterans Service Agency Karl Rohde stated he would like to first address the budget for the Veterans Residence, Account 6511 on page 169. He stated the Veterans Residence can hold 12 Veterans and there are currently 11 living there. He stated this residence provides a home for Veterans who may otherwise be homeless. He stated this Veterans Residence is the only one in the State and is a model facility; other Counties who are interested in having a similar facility come to tour the home. He stated the budget is about the same for 2020. He stated they are currently working on grants to do some improvements within the house.

Legislator Sayegh stated she toured the Veterans Residence today while Orange County was there to model their program after Putnam County. She stated she was very impressed with the home; it was very clean and neat. She stated the Veterans were all very appreciative and this is a wonderful resource that Putnam County offers.

Director Rohde stated it is desperately needed. He stated he recently had a meeting with a couple who purchased a house in Mahopac with the intention of turning it into transitional housing for Veterans.

Legislator Castellano questioned the age range of the residents of the Veterans Home.

Deputy Director of the Veterans Service Agency Art Hanley stated the residents range from 60 years old to 83 years old.

Director Rohde stated there have been younger Veterans living there, but they usually move on. He stated some younger Veterans have recently submitted applications and are going through that process.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if there are any openings at this time.

Director Rohde stated there is technically one (1) opening; there is a Veteran who has been in a nursing home for over a year. He stated in that time, they have not needed his room so it was kept available for him. He stated there are now two (2) applications and they may need to utilize that room.

Legislator Nacerino stated this is a great resource for our Veterans. She stated the house is immaculate and the Veterans really take pride in their rooms and the home as a whole.

Director Rohde stated inspections are done several times per year. He stated the Veterans are responsible for keeping their own room clean and room inspections are conducted once a year.

Legislator Gouldman questioned line 54455, Burials.

Chairman Sullivan stated the Committee would now review the Veterans Service Agency budget. He stated the overall budget is pretty consistent from year to year.

Director Rohde stated he has been Director for the past 10 years and the biggest changes in that time have been making both the Director and Deputy Director full time positions. He stated New York State has required that the Directors of the Veterans Service Agencies within the State be Service Officers. He stated Service Officers must see Veterans on a regular basis and therefore becoming full time was prudent. He stated this year the compensation that Veterans have received through coming to the Putnam County Veterans Service Agency is in excess of \$600,000. He stated if he and

Deputy Director Hanley were not full time, many of the Veterans they see would not have the opportunity to see a Service Officer locally. He stated although they do see Veterans from other Counties, the majority are from Putnam.

Deputy Director Hanley stated the Veterans Service Agency is accredited by the Federal Government Veterans Affairs (VA), which means they are required to see any Veteran no matter where they are from. He stated they meet with Veterans via telephone as well. He stated he recently spoke to a Veteran who lives in Arizona and he was able to connect him with an agency closer to where he is located.

Director Rohde stated they help widows of Veterans as well; they are entitled to some compensation and the Veterans Service Agency assists them in that process. He stated the question of burials came up earlier and they can help with the cost of burials in certain circumstances. He stated \$1,000 is allocated in line 54455, Burials and has been for a few years. He stated when he began there was about \$3,000 in that line; however it was since reduced because the money was not being spent. He stated \$3,000 has been spent in 2019 for funerals for indigent Veterans with no family members. He stated before the County provides financial assistance, proof is required that the individual is a Veteran.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there is Federal funding available for burials.

Director Rohde stated the only Federal money they receive is for transportation to the VA cemetery in Saratoga. He stated there is no cost for the interment. He stated there are some circumstances in which the County can get money back from the funeral expense such as if a Veteran is 100% disabled and that disability lead to the Veteran's death or if the Veteran passes away in a VA facility.

Commissioner Carlin stated the County pays for the transportation and the funeral homes give a discount.

Director Rohde stated he would also like to mention the budget for the Putnam County Joseph P. Dwyer Vet2Vet Program. He stated the funding comes from the Office of Mental Health, then goes to the Department of Social Services, then goes to the Veterans Service Agency, and then they contract with the Mental Health Association to run the Program. He stated on October 27, 2019 the Program will be hosting a Veterans Chow Down at the Putnam County Golf Course.

Legislator Addonizio stated the Vet2Vet Program is wonderful and she thanked Director Rohde for his work. She stated the program has a warm line as well.

Director Rohde stated the warm line is for when Veterans need to speak to someone; it is not an emergency line. He stated Westchester County, Dutchess County, and Orange County are all interested in setting up warm lines as well. He stated they are going to look into sharing the warm line with the same phone number among all the Counties and split the cost. He stated the Veterans Service Agencies in the nearby

counties are trying to hold more events together as well. He stated the program can be tailored to the specific needs of the Veterans in this area.

Legislator Sayegh questioned the \$7,100 budgeted in line 55371, Chargeback Gasoline. She stated in 2018, under \$2,000 was spent and not much was used so far in 2019.

Director Rohde stated that line is used for Veterans transportation. He stated in the past, it has been much higher and it is an unpredictable expense as it is based on the needs of the Veterans.

Commissioner Carlin stated the Chargeback Gasoline is a net zero; there is matching revenue.

### **Consumer Affairs/ Weights & Measures – Account 6610 (pages 170-172)**

Director of Consumer Affairs/Weights & Measures Michael Budzinski stated in terms of revenue, the 2020 budget has remained similar to 2019. He stated there was a revision to the Home Improvement Law which increased some fees and penalties, which was not accounted for when preparing the budget. He estimated the increases could provide another \$50,000 in revenue.

Chairman Sullivan questioned line 52650, Motor Vehicles.

Director Budzinski stated the funding allocated in the 2020 budget for a vehicle was removed because of the program being put in place under the Purchasing Department. *(This was discussed at the October 7, 2019 Audit Budget Meeting.)*

Legislator Castellano questioned the status of item pricing.

John Lee, Inspector of Weights & Measures stated most stores renewed in 2019 with only two (2) needing to renew in 2020.

Legislator Castellano questioned if all eligible stores participate in item pricing.

Mr. Lee stated the main corporation that decided not to participate is Rite Aid because their items come pre-priced from the warehouse. He stated inspections are still conducted at Rite Aid stores.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if DeCicco's participates.

Mr. Lee stated yes, they joined in Westchester County last year and Putnam County this year.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the revision to the fees and penalties that fall under Home Improvement law will affect the revenue collected by the local municipalities.

Director Budzinski stated no, the County has always collected the fees and penalties within that law.

### **Libraries – Account 7410 (page 197)**

Gillian Thorpe, Director of the Butterfield Library in Cold Spring and President of the Putnam County Library Association stated she is joined by other Putnam County Library Directors; Director of the Kent Library Carol Donnick, Director of the Brewster Library Gina Loprinzo, and Director of the Desmond Fish Library Jen McCreery. She thanked the Legislature for their past support. She stated this year a 2% increase was requested, which was included in the 2020 Tentative Budget.

Legislator Gouldman questioned what the breakdown is for the County Contribution among the Libraries.

President Thorpe stated they use a convoluted formula and it is partly based on population.

Legislator Gouldman stated the 414 proposition vote for the Putnam Valley Library funding will appear on the ballot this November. He questioned if this would affect the County Contribution.

President Thorpe stated no, it will not affect it. She stated all Libraries receive funding from their local municipalities as well.

Legislator Nacerino commended the Libraries within Putnam County for providing such excellent service. She stated they go above and beyond; it is no longer just checking out books and more people are utilizing their services each year.

Legislator Addonizio echoed Legislator Nacerino's comments.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if the Libraries keep track of how many people they serve.

President Thorpe stated yes, for example last year there were over 6,300 programs that served over 84,000 people.

Legislator Nacerino stated each library provides various services.

President Thorpe stated the libraries work together to coordinate programs, events, or late night hours to diminish overlap to provide a balance to the residents.

Director McCreery stated the libraries within Putnam County have a great partnership with one another.

Legislator Sayegh stated the libraries have resources such as e-books and an app for audio books.

President Thorpe stated each library is different, but some offer streaming services as well, such as Netflix. She stated Butterfield Library has recently become a passport acceptance facility and are able to process passport applications. She stated they are happy to provide this service in a different setting and so far it has brought in about \$5,000 in revenue for the Library. She stated many libraries also have hot spots, which provide wireless internet service, available to be checked out and taken home. She stated many families use this for children to do their homework.

Legislator Montgomery stated the libraries hold such great events. She stated the Desmond Fish Library recently had an event to recognize and honor first responders within the community and she thanked them for hosting such a wonderful event. She stated the libraries' gratitude toward the community is appreciated.

### **Putnam Arts Council – Account 7560 (page 200)**

Joyce Picone, Director of the Putnam Arts Council, thanked the Legislature and Putnam County for recognizing the importance of the programs and services provided through the Putnam Arts Council. She stated for 2020 she requested a slight increase for the grant program. She stated in 2019, 27 grants were given out totaling \$40,000; \$12,000 from Putnam County and \$28,000 from New York State Council on the Arts. She provided a list of which organizations or programs received a grant, including some libraries and Arts on the Lake. She stated the grant requests totaled over \$88,000. She stated the funding is essential to the art programs throughout the County, which is why she requested a small increase.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what types of art programs are funded through the grant at the libraries.

Director Picone stated some programs held by the libraries include books, art, music, concerts, teen programs, and architectural workshops. She stated the Arts Council performs audits to make sure the funding is being used as it was presented to be. She stated all grant recipients are required to show on their printed materials and e-blasts that they have received grant funding through either the County or State, whichever was used for their specific grant. She stated what distinguished the Putnam Arts Council from other art organizations is that they are a council, meaning they provide services for the development of the County cultural life. She stated they assist programs with things such as space to showcase their art, providing a sponsor, providing technical support, mailings, or audits. She stated they are also a very active art center having nine (9) or 10 shows per year, hosting various classes, providing the opportunity for scouts to earn their art badge, and hosting birthday parties. She stated they are very responsive to all inquiries, as it brings more people to the center to learn what they do. She stated she has been working with Director Rohde to host a show of artwork by Veterans. She stated she has gotten requests from municipalities and locations throughout the

community to showcase pieces of art. She stated art is more than an enrichment or recreational activity; it is something to help individuals learn and become more tolerant.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how many applications were submitted for the 2019 grants.

Director Picone stated 29 applications were received and 27 grants were awarded.

Legislator Montgomery questioned about how much funding was requested on each application.

Director Picone stated the average grant award was about \$1,300. She stated the maximum amount that can be applied for is \$5,000; although most apply for between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Putnam Arts Council does great work within the community. She stated she believes art is the remedy for mental health. She stated she worked at a theatre and saw firsthand where the grant money went and it made such a big difference. She stated this is essential to our community. She stated other counties such as Westchester provide a much higher amount of funding and she would advocate that Putnam follow suit.

Director Picone thanked the Legislature.

### **Putnam History Museum – Account 7562 (page 201)**

Cassie Ward, Director of the Putnam History Museum thanked the Legislature for their past support. She stated the funding from the County helps in several ways including assistance with local history and genealogical research, the preservation and digitization of their over 100 year archival collections and placing them on their website, the creation of education and public programs, and exhibitions. She stated in 2020 they will hold two (2) exhibitions; one (1) in the spring celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment and one (1) in the fall on the history of recreation and leisure in Putnam County. She stated they utilize grants to fund the exhibitions, while the County contribution helps fund the educational elements, community programming, and marketing of the programs.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if residents are able to do their own genealogy research at the Putnam History Museum.

Director Ward stated yes, they utilize Ancestry.com to research genealogy, but they also have a collection of information on local families that dates back to 1906. She stated some of the research librarians have been area residents for over 50 years and are a great resource as well.

Legislator Montgomery stated the collection of maps at the Putnam History Museum is a great resource for local municipalities as well.

Director Ward stated they have an extensive collection of historic maps and they have recently begun a new program called “Mappy Hour”, which is Friday night happy hour to learn about historic maps. She stated it has been extremely well attended; the last one had about 85 people.

### **Southeast Museum – Account 7564 (page 202)**

Amy Campanaro, Director of the Southeast Museum stated the Southeast Museum was founded in 1963 and has since collected historical artifacts from the Town of Southeast, the Village of Brewster, and Putnam County. She stated they have about 8,000 artifacts in their collection that date back to 1700. She stated they began holding events such as an open mic night for writers and poets, monthly history nights where a group meets to discuss history, and a monthly history book club. She stated over the past few years they have been working to digitize their collection. She stated when an item comes in it gets processed, which includes being numbered and researched and then it gets archived until it is needed for research at which point it is taken out. She stated scanning and digitizing these items allows them to be searchable and readily available for research. She stated the archived artifacts are then kept in a safe, climate controlled room without needing to be handled. She stated this year they are working with an Eagle Scout who will be placing historic signs where one room school houses once were throughout the Town of Southeast.

Chairman Sullivan questioned where the Southeast Museum receives its funding.

Director Campanaro stated they receive funding from the Town of Southeast, through competitive grants, memberships, and donations. She stated their memberships are reasonably priced and all programs are free. She stated they also get revenue from the schools when she is invited to speak to students.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if they are open every day.

Director Campanaro stated the Museum is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday from 10am-3pm; however staff is there longer hours.

Legislator Castellano thanked Director Campanaro for her work within the Town of Southeast. He stated he follows the Southeast Museum’s Facebook page and they post a lot of historical photos.

Director Campanaro stated they received about 4,000-5,000 views on each photo they post. She stated there is a great online community of current residents and past residents who have moved out of the area.

## **Humane Society – Account 8512 (page 208)**

President of the Putnam Humane Society Michele Dugan stated the Humane Society is an adoption facility and they offer community service opportunities. She stated their population is the lowest it has ever been right now; there are 23 dogs and 52 cats. She stated those numbers are not stagnant, there are constantly animals coming into the shelter and being adopted out. She stated when a dog is being released to the Humane Society, the trainer meets with the owner and dog for an assessment so they can place the dog in a proper home. She stated cats must have a rabies shot and a wellness exam before being brought in to the shelter. She stated there is ongoing training for the dogs with two (2) trainers that work with the dogs all week. She stated the kennel staff does enrichment activities as well. She stated their Facebook page features photos of the dogs dressed up for Halloween and they post wish lists of donation items. She stated the Humane Society is a friendly place to come visit; dogs can be walked from 10:30am-12:30pm or 1:30pm-2:30pm during the week and beginning at 11:00am on weekends. She stated five (5) dogs are let out at once and there are dog walking guidelines that each volunteer needs to sign. She stated there are many volunteers that come in to walk dogs or help with other things around the shelter. She stated a volunteer recently came in and helped create a video of a cat, Elliot, who was left tied to the Humane Society gate. She stated Elliot had a breakaway collar on, therefore was able to escape and the staff found him behind one of the dog pens and he turned out to be a very friendly cat. She supplied the Committee with a copy of their 2018 report that is submitted to the County each February.

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

Legislator Nacerino questioned what the adoption process guidelines are.

President Dugan stated an application must be filled out and if the person has or has had pets a veterinarian reference is required. She stated they contact the veterinarian to make sure their animals have been taken care of and if their records are up to date. She stated they try to match the animal with the home they will be going to and their return rate is very low because of this. She stated the potential adopter is given information on the animal so they are aware of their history and behavior. She stated the trainer also tests both dogs and cats.

Courtney Aponte, member of the Putnam Humane Society Board of Directors stated the animals are always taken back if their new home does not work out.

President Dugan stated that is correct, they do not want the animal to end up in a kill shelter.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the adoption process is difficult.

President Dugan stated no, it is not and questioned if Legislator Nacerino had heard differently.

Legislator Nacerino stated she has heard second hand information but would not want to say she has heard differently.

President Dugan stated they have received some complaints in the past. She stated there is a prospective adopter who they would love to adopt a specific dog, Sammy, to however the individual's home is not well suited for the dog. She stated this person understands and comes to visit the dog and will be approved to adopt him once her home situation changes.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if home inspections are conducted.

President Dugan stated home inspections are sometimes done.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what a disqualifier would be.

President Dugan stated it would depend on the dog.

Shelter Manager Amour Du Plessis provided an example of someone who submitted an application for one of the dogs and upon review of the application she learned the individual had a cat at home and since the specific dog did not get along with cats, the application was denied. She stated the individual's response to the denial was that they would let the cat out. She stated the application was still denied because they cannot approve an adoption of an animal that would negatively affect another animal. She stated some of the animals are owner surrenders and may have a history of not getting along with other cats or dogs. She stated in this situation the animal is assessed by the trainer to learn how to best place them.

Legislator Montgomery suggested having a presentation from the Humane Society at a Committee Meeting to learn more about the shelter. She stated it would be great to have an item on an agenda committed to the Humane Society so the public and Legislators can ask questions.

Legislator Nacerino stated it is encouraged that the outside agencies that receive County funding come to Committee Meetings to provide updates and highlights on what the agency is doing.

President Dugan invited the Legislators to the Humane Society as well.

Legislator Jonke questioned what the percentage of approved applications is.

President Dugan stated she does not have the exact number, but not many applications get denied.

Shelter Manager Du Plessis stated about 5% of applications for dogs are denied.

President Dugan stated in terms of cats, if the person planned to declaw the cat their application was denied. She stated declawing is now illegal in New York State, but this was an issue they dealt with for a long time. She stated most people are approved; their goal is to place the animals in permanent homes.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if any adoption events were held this year.

President Dugan stated yes, they held two (2) adoption events at vet clinics.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the event was for cats or dogs.

President Dugan stated those events were for cats. She stated she believes this inquiry is stemming from a constituent complaint regarding adoption events. She stated the Humane Society is an adoption facility and adoptions are done daily at the shelter.

Legislator Addonizio stated she is referring to what is included in the County contract.

Ms. Aponte stated every day is an adoption day at the shelter.

President Dugan stated she took a dog, Max to the Jeep Fest where there were also puppies. She stated she had two (2) puppies at the Somers Community Day as well. She stated there was an event last weekend as well.

Legislator Addonizio stated she would like to see a list of the adoption events held during the year.

Chairman Sullivan questioned what the contract states.

President Dugan stated this is a new addition to the contract this year.

Legislator Addonizio stated the contract reads that the Humane Society should “make every effort to hold several events throughout the term of the agreement promoting adoption of animals living at shelter.” She stated the contract also states that they “will raise funds privately enabling it to augment funding received pursuant to contracts of the town of Carmel, Patterson, Philipstown, and Southeast.” She questioned if they have the financial reports.

President Dugan stated they are included in the budget packet submitted to the County. She stated in regards to the adoption events, the dogs that are able to go into busy situations where there are lots of people and children usually get adopted quickly. She stated taking dogs to an adoption event takes them away from the shelter, where someone coming to see the dog might miss them.

Legislator Addonizio stated she would like to see a list of the dogs at the shelter and how long they have been there. She questioned how many dogs are from out of State.

President Dugan stated they currently have two (2) hounds from out of state. She stated she believes these inquiries are stemming from the complaint she mentioned earlier from a disgruntled resident from Kent. She stated this is a legal issue and the Humane Society has an attorney working on this. She stated she apologizes that the Legislators believe they are doing an inadequate job and respectfully invited them to come to the shelter for a tour. She stated it is unfair that one (1) person has driven this.

Chairman Sullivan stated as Legislators, letters from constituents are received and it is part of the job to collect further information to understand the situation. He stated a letter would be sent to the Humane Society with all the requests that were made this evening.

President Dugan stated she would provide the requested information; they have nothing to hide. She stated the Humane Society is run through volunteers and she believes they are doing a great job. She stated looking at the financials through the years and the improvements to the facility will show that.

Ms. Aponte stated the Humane Society has been volunteer run for over 20 years and they have seen it come a very long way. She stated of course the requested information will be provided and it is helpful for them to understand why the questions are raised.

Chairman Sullivan stated the County is providing a substantial amount of funding and the Legislators must be prepared to answer questions that constituents may have.

Ms. Aponte stated constituent complaints or inquiries can help the Humane Society improve as well.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would welcome this overview at a committee meeting. She questioned as this is a budget meeting, if the Committee is considering a change in the allocation in the 2020 budget.

Legislator Addonizio stated no, the Committee is requesting information.

Legislator Nacerino stated she had not spoken to anyone and her question was genuinely inquisitive about the adoption process. She stated it is the Legislators' prerogative to ask questions when taxpayer dollars are being provided to a not for profit. She stated she agrees with Legislator Montgomery that the conversation got a bit off task tonight and she would also like the Humane Society to attend a Committee Meeting to highlight all they do. She thanked the Humane Society for the work they do for animals.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if the Humane Society is on the Amazon Smile Charity list.

Shelter Manager Du Plessis stated the Humane Society is on the list and they receive a percentage from each sale as well.

Chairman Sullivan stated a letter will be sent to the Humane Society inviting them to come to a Committee Meeting within the next few months.

President Dugan stated the things added to the contract this year were already being done.

Legislator Castellano stated he adopted his cat, Luke, from the Humane Society a few years ago and they do a great job.

President Dugan stated they are holding a free microchip event on October 27, 2019. He stated all animals adopted from the Humane Society are microchipped before they leave the shelter and their account is in both the Humane Society's and the adopter's name so they have a backup.

#### **Putnam County SPCA – Account 8513 (page 209)**

Chief of the Putnam County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCSPCA) Ken Ross stated the PCSPCA has encountered something new over the past year with wandering farm animals becoming an issue. He stated the current laws, neither town nor county, do not address farm animals.

Chairman Sullivan stated he and Chief Ross have had discussions over the past few years to try to update the County laws related to animals because they are currently geared toward dogs and cats. He stated they have worked with the law department and they have a law drafted which will be brought to the Rules Committee in the coming months.

Chief Ross stated that is correct. He stated last year, the PCSPCA provided humane education to over 200 students from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade throughout the County. He stated each year they review the State bills and how they apply and he recently went to Albany to meet with Senator Harckham and Assemblyman Byrne.

Chairman Sullivan questioned if the purpose of the meeting was to obtain State funding.

Chief Ross stated part of the problem is that the PCSPCA is an anomaly in that they are not part of a municipality such as a town or county. He stated because of this, there are not many funding opportunities they can take advantage of. He stated if they had a shelter, they would be able to get shelter grants. He stated in New York State, the ability to run background checks to use e-justice is determined on your budget, over 50% of which must be used toward law enforcement. He stated SPCAs were originally

founded as police agencies; it was not until after the founder's death that they opened their first shelter, the ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). He stated because the PCSPCA is not associated with a governmental entity they are not eligible for police grants. He stated they have increased their fundraisers, which were better attended in 2019 as compared to 2018. He stated a problem they encountered this year was that the building their office space was in was sold. He stated that office space was donated and did not cost the PCSPCA anything. He stated when they first sat down with the County, they reviewed the law which states seized animals can be turned over to the County Sheriff, and they become the responsibility of the County to house and care for them. He stated as a charity that the PCSPCA has been doing over the years, they have been finding ways to use the charity status to find other housing and care for the animals so it does not bounce back to the County. He cited examples of seized animals including dogs and horses that required serious veterinarian care, resulting in bills for tens of thousands of dollars.

Chairman Sullivan questioned who is responsible for paying those bills.

Chief Ross stated because of the charity status they have and relationships they built in Westchester and Putnam, they have been able to care for the animals through the kindness of those veterinarians. He stated when he met with the Administration to work on the budget, he discussed the need for a partnership moving forward in terms of obtaining a facility. He stated all police agencies within the County turn over animal cruelty cases to the PCSPCA, which keeps Sheriff's Deputies, Town Police Officers, and State Police Officers free to address other situations.

Chairman Sullivan stated a budget line 54383, Building Rental, for \$36,000 was included in the 2020 tentative budget for the PCSPCA. He stated the County Contribution for the PCSPCA in 2019 was \$50,000 and this is additional funding, bringing their total funding to \$86,000.

Legislator Addonizio stated she has been working with the PCSPCA to find office space and they have one (1) promising space.

Chairman Sullivan stated the PCSPCA does hard work and the County is doing what they can to support them.

Chief Ross stated his appreciation for the County's support. He stated this is lightyears from where they first started.

Chairman Sullivan stated the PCSPCA does a great job, especially since their work relieves the police agencies from handling those cases.

Chief Ross stated the PCSPCA has recently added a former New York State Court Officer, a former Detective, and a former Sergeant to their staff.

Legislator Nacerino commended the PCSPCA for all they do.

Legislator Jonke stated he previously spoke with Chief Ross regarding the PCSPCA Board of Directors and he expressed his concern with the makeup of the Board since employees are serving as members. He questioned if any steps have been taken to change this.

Chief Ross stated he spoke with their attorney to make sure they were operating legally, which they are. He stated he believes the PCSPCA would not exist if it was not set up the way it currently is.

Legislator Jonke stated reading the minutes it makes him uncomfortable that Chief Ross must recuse himself on a vote to set salaries.

Chief Ross stated additional non-voting members will be placed on the Board. He stated he made sure everything was being done correctly.

Chairman Sullivan stated he would like the PCSPCA to come to a future Committee Meeting to provide an overview of what they do and how to work together.

Legislator Nacerino stated all not for profit agencies that receive County funding should come in throughout the course of the year to provide an overview rather than saving it for the budget process.

### **Cooperative Extension – Account 8750 (page 213)**

Executive Director of Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension Stefanie Hubert thanked the Legislature for their past support. She stated she would like to highlight one (1) major initiative that has begun this year which is bringing Columbia University's Department of Engineering to Tilly Foster Farm (the Farm) in conjunction with Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension and Putnam County. She stated baseline data is being collected to use in a proposal that will hopefully allow them to be a recipient of a large grant to put a geothermal greenhouse on the Farm. She stated this will allow for studies to be conducted on the differences between geothermal greenhouses and traditional greenhouses in regards to costs and productivity of the plantings. She stated there are also other projects on the docket for the Farm.

Chairman Sullivan requested more information on the projects to be done at the Farm.

Executive Director Hubert stated the County has requested more programming and initiatives at the Farm. She stated a portion of Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension's junior vet programming will be held there. She stated they hope to hold their Master Gardener plant sale in the barn at the Farm as well. She stated this will draw people to the Farm while generating revenue for Cornell Cooperative Extension. She stated they plan to hold some program meetings at the Farm as well. She stated they would really like to use a commercial kitchen at the Farm so they can hold canning classes after the "u-pick" berries program. She stated there are multitudes of

collaborations than can continue to happen between Putnam County and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Legislator Sayegh stated the commercial kitchen has been a topic of discussion at the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board meetings. She stated BOCES currently uses the commercial kitchen at the Farm.

Executive Director Hubert stated the commercial kitchen could be a revenue generator for the County as well.

Chairman Sullivan suggested using the kitchen at Putnam County Golf Course, which may not be as booked as the Farm.

Executive Director Hubert stated they could use any Department of Health certified commercial kitchen to be able to hold a canning or cooking class. She stated she is interested in exploring various options, including using the Farm when BOCES is not there. She stated her background is in nutrition and she is very interested in bringing her expertise to Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Chairman Sullivan suggested that Executive Director Hubert tour the kitchen at Putnam County Golf Course and the County would work with her to schedule some dates.

Executive Director Hubert stated that would be a great avenue for Cornell Cooperative Extension to offer additional services and generate revenue.

Legislator Montgomery stated there is a brand new state of the art commercial kitchen in the Philipstown Friendship Center that is not used. She stated there is also a commercial kitchen in their Recreation Department, which has established cooking programs that are very popular.

Executive Director Hubert stated that would be wonderful, they are always looking to explore options to strengthen their relationship with the western side of the County.

Legislator Nacerino stated a great way to foster diversity is through food. She stated the statistics will show that Putnam County is diverse, and she would like to see a program or event that nurtures this relationship.

Executive Director Hubert stated she would like to target some under recognized populations that are currently in and continuing to come into Putnam County.

Chairman Sullivan there is a lack of nutrition programs right now and he is glad that Executive Director Hubert is working toward bringing that forward.

Executive Director Hubert stated a small increase was requested for the 2020 budget. She stated Putnam County Cornell Cooperative extension provides approximately \$475,000 worth of programs and services through their volunteers. She stated they

receive about \$175,000 of resources through Cornell University. She stated as a sub-governmental agency, Cooperative Extension receives funding. She stated without continued County funding, they are unable to leverage additional State and Federal funds, which were about 41% of their total budget in 2019. She stated 100% of the County appropriation goes to programs and services; none is used toward salary and benefits.

Legislator Nacerino stated Cornell Cooperative Extension does a great job.

Chairman Sullivan agreed and stated they do outstanding work and Putnam County is lucky to have Cornell Cooperative Extension.

**Item #4 – Other Business – None**

**Item #5 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 8:38pm, Chairman Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Green.