

**PHYSICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512
(Chairman Albano, Legislators Gouldman & Nacerino)**

Tuesday

August 20, 2019

(Immediately Followed the 5:30PM Health Comm. Mtg.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:50p.m. by Chairman Albano who requested that Legislator Castellano lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Chairman Albano was present. Legislators Gouldman and Nacerino were absent. Chairman Albano stated that Legislators Castellano and Sullivan would be filling in as members of the committee.

Item #3 – Approval/ Physical Services Meeting Minutes/ July 23, 2019

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/ Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Eight (8) Year Review and Modification Report/ Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) Recommends 157 parcels be Included into the Agricultural District #1/ AFPB Liaison Lauri Taylor

Lynne Eckardt, Town of Southeast Councilwoman representing herself as a resident, questioned how much attention is given to the feedback that the Towns provide on the parcels that are requesting inclusion into the Putnam County Agricultural District.

Chairman Albano stated that the feedback from the Towns are reviewed and given serious consideration. He stated that the members of the AFPB conduct their site visits to make sure that a newly requested parcel meets the criteria, set by New York State, to be included in the Agricultural District, he stated then if there are violations reported from the Town officials, the AFPB conducts the appropriate investigation into the claim.

Lynne Eckardt, Town of Southeast Councilwoman representing herself as a resident, questioned how many parcels were visited.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated the 157 parcels include the new parcels that were approved at the July Full Legislature meeting. He stated the backup to that agenda item demonstrates the information in regards to what parcels were visited. He stated the “District” speaks to the entire County of Putnam. He stated so there is no change to the size of the District, which is a key function to the eight (8) year review process. He stated that the AFPB did look at all parcels that there were concerns with and consulted with the New York State Officials.

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Eight (8) Year Review and Modification Report/ Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) Recommends 157 parcels be Included into the Agricultural District #1; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Item #5 - Update/ Metro North Services & Facilities Capital Plan 2020 -2024/ Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board - Managing Director and Senior Partner Global Co-Leader – Media Sector Neal Zuckerman

Chairman Albano welcomed Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated this evening he has two (2) goals in mind: 1 – Request a letter of support from this Legislature to the MTA Chairman & CEO expressing support of the Capital Plan he will presenting this evening. 2 – Devise a regular schedule of coming to the Putnam County Legislature to provide updates. He stated he will begin with providing his background and then he would move forward with his presentation. He stated he is a resident of Garrison, New York. He stated he is a near daily commuter from the Garrison Station and he has two (2) daughters who also commute from the Garrison Station. He stated that he was the 2010 Metro North Railroad Commuter Council Representative, appointed by past County Executive Bob Bondi. He stated he served in that role until approximately 2016. He stated in 2016 he took on his current role as Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board. He continued to list his involvement in his community organizations. He stated professionally he works in New York City as a Senior Partner in a Consulting Firm in the Media Business. He stated that is background. He stated that he does not receive a salary for being the Putnam County MTA Board Representative. He stated that he does receive a free metro card and metro rail pass. He stated he will now begin to speak to the topic he is present to address, the MTA. He stated that he believes the MTA has four (4) major issues to focus on: 1.) Safety 2.) Price 3.) Service and 4.) Overall Sustainability of the MTA – in terms of not being in bankruptcy.

1. Safety: He stated the MTA's lack of attention to safety is no secret. He stated if the Positive Train Control (PTC) had been in place the tragic December 2013 over speeding crash on the Hudson Line would never have happened. He stated he accepted his current role on the MTA Board 6 months after that accident, and he has been bringing this topic forward ever since. He respectfully recognized a member of the Putnam County Legislature, Legislator Nancy Montgomery, whose husband lost his life in the tragic crash. He continued by stating the MTA has not met their 2015 or 2018 deadline of implementing the PTC. He stated that he is confident that they will meet the December 31, 2020 deadline. He provided further details to the action that has been taking place to assure the 2020 deadline is met. He stated there is an area of improvement with safety in the category of people slipping, tripping and falling.
2. Price: He stated the residents from Putnam, Dutchess and Suffolk County pay the highest fares across the MTA. He stated we pay approximately \$6,000 -\$7,000 a year and we pay for parking. He stated 40% of our commuters also purchase Metro Cards. He stated we receive the least service and have the most dilapidated stations. He stated that we pay the most and receive the least. He stated that he has been successful on putting a cap on any future price increases from the MTA. He stated that the fares are raised on the MTA about every other year. He stated in 2017 he was successful with the

implementation of a cap of \$15.00 on the increase of a monthly ticket. Additionally he was successful in setting a monthly rate cap at \$475 for a month, which Patterson is already at, so they did not see a fare increase in 2019. He stated the other four (4) stations in Putnam County pay \$437. He stated the MTA's 2019 increase was 4%. However due to his success in setting the caps, he repeated that Patterson did not see an increase and continued by explaining the other four (4) stations received approximately a 3% increase, thanks to the \$15 cap. He stated since 1904 a Flat System Rate that is used for the Subway System, which is what he would like to see be applied to the train rates. He stated on the Subway you pay \$2.75 regardless of the distance you travel. He stated the MTA increase of 4% every two years compounded becomes a very scary number. He stated when he first began to commute from Garrison in 2004 he paid \$250/ per month, the current monthly fee is \$437. He stated the caps have helped, but he and the Suffolk County Representative continue to work toward implementing the Flat Fares System, which would mean if you live in Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess you pay the same Fare. He stated he will keep the Legislature updated on those efforts.

3. Overall sustainability of the MTA: the MTA has a \$17 Billion operating budget (OB). He reviewed graphs in his presentation that displayed approximately 50% of the revenue comes from fares and tolls, they increase approximately 2% per year. He stated in the expense category 2/3 is labor related costs which increase approximately 3.5% per year. He stated that he has calculated there is approximately a \$180 million deficit between the labor costs that are increasing for the MTA and the Revenue that is generated from fares. He stated in the year 2022 the MTA's projection, if there are not changes made, that they will be in a \$800 million deficit. He provided further details on the financials and the projected action that needs to be taken. He stated he believes at some point the State Legislature and or the Governor are going to get involved.
4. Service and Related Capital Needs: He displayed photos of the Train Stations in Putnam County that are in dire need of renovation and capital improvements. He stated that we are in the cusp of the 2020 – 2024 Capital Plan Process. He stated the MTA Board will vote on a Capital Plan, send it to the Governor, who will comment and make adjustments then it goes to a Capital Plan Review Board, which has representatives from the Offices of the Governor, NYS Legislature and the Mayor of the City on the Board. The Capital Plan Review Board Members conduct the final review and vote, then it will be adopted. He stated he will see the proposed plan at the MTA Boards September meeting. He explained he has seen a draft prior, and it has no action items addressing the Putnam County Train Stations, despite his presentation at the June MTA Board meeting. He stated in his evaluation from the constituents' perspective there are seven (7) needs that should be addressed in the 2020 – 2024 Capital Plan Process. He provided the photos of the stations and the different issues he believes needs to be addressed. The following is a summary of his presentation of the seven (7) needs:

Four (4) of our five (5) Putnam County stations are in need of work or assessment:

- 1) **Southeast** station is a regional hub, where Connecticut license plates are as prevalent as New York ones. Despite this, the station is in poor shape, and the layout creates particular difficulty in accessing the platforms. One must walk up

to a half-mile from the parking area to arrive at the station's singular overpass at the western end of the platforms. Access to the eastern end of the platforms should be created through the addition of a second overpass.

The station's overall state is one of general neglect, and a thorough clean-up is greatly needed, as are improvements to the traffic flow around the station. We have been informed that there is a project under consideration by the MTA to take over some of the southern parking area to make way for railyards, and replace the taken area with a parking facility to the east of the tracks. If this occurs it should not diminish the service to those who park to the north.

An additional consideration should be to create access to the station from the Prospect Hill Bridge (finally completed after ten years), even if just a pedestrian staircase.

- 2) **Brewster** station is unsafe because it does not separate car, pedestrian, and train traffic. This station, which has a significant Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) project, will see a material increase in traffic over the coming years. As such, safety will be at greater risk and needs attention. Related to the TOD, the Brewster station should be integrated into the development process, with an eye to addressing the massive parking shortfall that exists at the station. There is currently a parking permit waitlist of 221 commuters long.
- 3) **Garrison** station has crumbling steps, a leaky roof, and broken concrete everywhere. As such, it has become an actual safety hazard both in winter and summer. Mr. Zuckerman stated that he presented a slideshow at the last Metro-North committee meeting identifying these defects, and brought along with him a piece of rebar that had detached from the exposed concrete and was found on the side of the station. We need to ask for a detailed assessment and overhaul of the Garrison station, addressing the perception (and likely reality) that the station is literally falling apart.
- 4) **Cold Spring** station has an underpass with serious water infiltration issues that must be addressed for structural and other issues. We appreciate that Metro-North addressed other Cold Spring station issues in the last two years, namely the dilapidated bridge above the tracks. But more work needs to be done here.

Similar to Brewster, there is a long parking waitlist at Cold Spring. The MTA should explore land acquisition and/or a redesign of the station to address this parking shortage.

Hudson Line Improvements

While popularity of the Hudson Line has surged—with growth exceeding both the Harlem and New Haven lines— it has long been ignored and needs two major upgrades:

- 5) **Electrification of the line between Croton Harmon and Poughkeepsie.** The current requirement of diesel locomotives north of Croton Harmon serves as an unwanted limitation on service. Electrification would improve service in the populous, northern reaches of the Hudson Line while also making a positive, needed change for the environment. Moreover, electrification will provide a redundant capability given the unreliability of our locomotive fleet.
- 6) **Access to Penn Station straight down the Hudson River.** Riders already travelling along the Hudson River should have the option to continue directly down into the West Side of Manhattan. This option seems all the more compelling given the growth of the new Hudson Yards area. If \$11 billion could be spent on East Side Access to give LIRR commuters the convenience of accessing Grand Central Terminal, the MTA should seriously consider making a comparatively small investment to modify the existing tracks to allow Metro-North commuters access to Penn Station. Smarter and better service for our region is essential as our population grows.

Increased Throughput Into Grand Central

- 7) The 125th Street/Harlem Viaduct is a Metro-North problem that is a century in the making. The viaduct is not only old and in need of repair; it serves as a bottleneck for all of Metro-North. This is not simply about fixing something broken. We must do something at this location (as well as north and south of the viaduct) to increase train volume or we will never be able to increase the number of trains going into Grand Central.

That fix may require new thinking, as Governor Cuomo did with the L train, seeking input from experts beyond our usual consultants. This viaduct project is actually the only one of these seven (7) that the MTA staff has identified. However, their focus is solely on the viaduct itself. Mr. Zuckerman has suggested an expansion of the project to ensure that MTA looks at throughput acceleration to make already-long commutes a bit faster. With commuting times of an hour and 20 minutes or more, Putnam County has become a difficult place from which to commute on a daily basis.

Legislator Castellano questioned if creating access from the Prospect Bridge into the Southeast Train station parking has been researched.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he will work with Legislator Castellano on this. He stated that he is not sure why that has not been done, because it would make sense.

Legislator Castellano stated there is also talk about crossing the County's bike path near the Prospect Bridge.

Legislator Jonke stated that he was very thankful for the information and energy that Mr. Zuckerman has brought forward this evening. He stated that there are a great deal of commuters that come from Connecticut to ride our trains. He questioned if there is any way in the future, as the focus on the pay schedule proceeds, to make an adjustment to the rate that the Connecticut riders pay. He stated the Putnam County residents are paying the New York State property taxes and payroll taxes. He stated additionally is there a way to create a preferential list of first Putnam County Residents, second New York State Residents and third Connecticut Residents in terms of being issued parking spots.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated that is a very good point. He stated that there may be some options he will have to think about this. He stated that he would need to look into what would be allowed legally. He stated he is not sure the fares could be adjusted. He explained that would get into Interstate Commerce issues. He stated there may be something that could be done with the New Haven Line Agreement to address the Southeast problem. He stated he will take it under advisement.

Lynne Eckardt Town of Southeast Councilwoman thanked Mr. Zuckerman for his presentation and for always including her on his Train Station Tours. She questioned if follow up has been done on what was requested after the last "walk through". She stated the cleanliness, smell in the elevator etc.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he was at the Southeast station approximately six (6) months ago. He stated there was some clean up that had been done, the graffiti was gone, the urine smell in the elevator he did not check. He suggested that each Legislator and the Town elected officials be the eyes and ears and provide constructed feedback. He stated that MTA is a massive organization and many of their employees are Putnam County residents. He stated that they are doing their best to keep the trains running on time. He stated he agrees that the small things matter and the perception of the Putnam Train stations based on the lack of attention is not good.

Legislator Sullivan stated he is thankful for the information that Mr. Zuckerman has brought forward this evening. He stated that it is very concerning the conditions of our stations, especially considering the amount of money that is received from the Putnam County riders. He stated it is just not fair.

Legislator Castellano stated he is aware that the Croton Falls Station is to have a parking garage. He questioned if that will be a reason to take the parking garage that was discussed for the Brewster Station off the table.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he does not believe that is the case. He stated that the MTA Board wants to help with the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) that is happening in the Village of Brewster. He stated that he believes that should be added to Putnam County's requests for action list.

Legislator Sullivan stated he agrees the project that is earmarked for the Village of Brewster is super huge and would be a win for the County and for the people that live in that area. He stated he would appreciate Mr. Zuckerman doing all he can to support and move forward a parking garage for the Brewster Train Station.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he believes Putnam County should invite representatives from the MTA to the Village of Brewster and share the plans for the Village with them. He stated that he does not believe that they are aware of the renovation.

Legislator Montgomery stated she wanted to thank Mr. Zuckerman for all of the work he does with the MTA. She stated that his representation of Putnam County on the MTA Board gives her confidence. She stated that Mr. Zuckerman has invited her many times to meet the different people that he works with, and it has helped changed her perspective of the MTA. She stated there are still many things that are wrong, but she knows that Mr. Zuckerman is working so hard to get them corrected and she is very grateful for that. She questioned what she and the Legislature can do to help.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he would like this Committee or preferably the entire Legislature send a letter to the MTA documenting these seven (7) priorities along with the items that came up.

Lynne Eckardt Town of Southeast Councilwoman stated she would like to build on Legislator Jonke's comment regarding the Connecticut riders. She stated there is a I-684 consortium that is being worked on with the New York State Department of Transportation, Town of Southeast, North Salem and Bedford. She stated that she wanted to state that the MTA is represented.

Legislator Sullivan stated seeing that the personnel costs are such a high percentage of total cost, he questioned who is responsible for overseeing how much people are being paid to prevent the abuse of overtime that has recently been exposed in the news with the MTA employees.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated there have been two (2) special Board Meetings to discuss the overtime matter. He stated the contract the MTA signed with the TWU (Transit Workers Union) includes a requirement for the employees to do overtime. He clarified, that overtime is not a choice, the employees are required to work overtime and the wage increases are in the contract. He stated that there has been a lot discussion about biometric scanners, and how the employees punch in and punch out. He stated based on the tracking data there is a lot of questionable behavior. He stated that there is work being done to evaluate all of this.

Chairman Albano stated he also was thankful for the information Mr. Zuckerman brought forward this evening. He stated that he is in favor of the writing a letter of support of the items discussed this evening in the presentation and during this discussion.

Legislator Sullivan stated he also is in support of the letter, and would like to have the request for the parking garage to be built to accommodate the Brewster station included in the letter.

Legislator Castellano stated he would like Mr. Zuckerman to come to the Legislature twice a year to provide an update on the MTA.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he would be happy to do that.

Legislator Castellano requested that Mr. Zuckerman request that the MTA only send one (1) packet of schedules to the Legislative Office. He stated it is a huge waste of money, to pay approximately \$8.00 to mail a packet of schedules to each Legislator.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he will take care of that.

Legislator Castellano stated in light of technology and cell phones it seems silly to waste the money on mailing. He questioned if that volume of mailing is sent to other offices. He stated if that is the case, they may review and modify that practice. He stated that would save money.

Putnam County's Representative on the MTA Board Neal Zuckerman stated he will take care of that.

Legislator Albano thanked Mr. Zuckerman for his time and the information that he brought forward.

Item #6 - Approval/ Renewals Putnam County Veterans' Residence/ First Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro

First Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro explained this is the annual renewal of the leases for the Tenants in the Putnam County Veterans' Residence. He stated that Veterans Director Karl Rhode has confirmed that the renewals should move forward.

Chairman Albano made a motion to Approve Renewals Putnam County Veterans' Residence; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #7 - Approval/ Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal Methodology for Three (3) Year Period: 2020, 2021, 2022/ Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Department Sandra Fusco

Chairman Albano stated that Transportation Manager Vinny Tamagna is present to speak to this.

Transportation Manager Tamagna stated this needs to be done in order for the County to be in compliance of the Federal Law.

Chair Albano made a motion to approve the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal Methodology for Three (3) Year Period: 2020, 2021, 2022; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #8 - Approval/ 2019 Consolidated Funding Applications (CFA) for Grant Funding/ Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Department Sandra Fusco

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve the 2019 Consolidated Funding Applications (CFA) for Grant Funding; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #9- Approval/ 2019 Federal Transit Administration Funding Opportunity: Sec. 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Program/ Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Department Sandra Fusco

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve the 2019 Federal Transit Administration Funding Opportunity: Sec. 5339(b) Bus and Bus Facilities Program ; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #10 - Approval/ 19CP02 Jail Lighting Amend Reso #68 of 2019/ Deputy Commissioner of Highways & Facilities John Tully

Chairman Albano stated this is a request for additional funding in the amount of \$896 to the Capital Project – Jail Lighting at the Sheriff's Department. He stated it was explained in the memo from Deputy Commissioner of Highways and Facilities that it was determined that

additional work had to be done to provide 14 multi-volt ballasts to integrate existing light fixtures with the generator voltage.

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve the 19CP02 Jail Lighting Amend Reso #68 of 2019; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

**Item #11- Update/ Capital Projects Report/ Assistant Supervisor of Planning & Design
Alexis Hawley**

Legislator Castellano stated that the Morningthorpe Avenue Pedestrian Bridge Project is moving forward. He stated the old bridge has been removed.

Chairman Albano stated at a future meeting he would like the maintenance of the County's Bike Path to be discussed.

Legislator Sullivan stated he would like a letter sent by Chairman Albano to the Administration requesting that there be someone present at the Physical Services meetings to answer questions related to the Capital Projects report. He stated he believe there should be someone present at these meetings.

Item #12 - Approval/ Donation Offer Southeast TM# 45.-1-6.1; 45.-1-6.2; 45.-1-7. 1; 45.-1-7.2 & 45.-1-59/ First Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro

First Deputy County Attorney Andrew Negro stated this will be the final resolution related to this donation of land to the County. He stated the SEQR process has been completed. He stated tonight's resolution memorializes the Legislature's approval to accept the donation and authorize the County Executive to sign the Transfer Documents and permit the County Attorney's Office to order title and take all of the necessary steps to effectuate the transfer. He stated in summary this is the final resolution to allow the County to accept the donation.

Chairman Albano made a motion to approve the resolution Donation Offer Southeast TM# 45.-1-6.1; 45.-1-6.2; 45.-1-7. 1; 45.-1-7.2 & 45.-1-59; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Item #13 - Other Business - None

Item #14 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 8:00PM Chairman Albano made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabuhsy.