

**RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
BUDGET MEETING**

**Held via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders**

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

**Tuesday October 13, 2020  
(Immediately following Economic Development Budget Mtg beginning at 6:00pm)**

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:30pm by Chairman Sullivan who requested that Legislator Albano lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Albano, Castellano, & Chairman Sullivan were present.

**Item #3 – 2021 Budget Review**

**Legislature – Account 1010 (pages 1-2)**

Legislator Montgomery stated the Legislature has a \$75,000 contract for Legislative Counsel and questioned what line 54125, Legal Services, is used for.

Chairman Sullivan stated that line is funded for outside assistance that may be required for specialty items.

Legislator Montgomery requested an example of when the Legal Services line would be used.

Legislator Nacerino stated it could be used if Legislative Counsel has a conflict of interest or must recuse themselves from a matter or it could be used to gain expertise in a specific field.

**County Executive – Account 1230 (12-13)**

Legislator Montgomery stated there is a \$38,774 increase in Personnel Services, line 51000. She questioned line 51095, P.I.L.O.T. Program.

Commissioner of Finance William Carlin clarified that P.I.L.O.T. stands for “Putnam Invests in Leaders of Tomorrow” and is the intern program in Putnam County.

Legislator Nacerino questioned line 54210, Vehicle Leasing/Rental. She questioned if the County Executive has a vehicle.

Commissioner Carlin stated there are vehicles in the County Executive’s budget, however they are not take-home vehicles.

Legislator Nacerino questioned who drives the vehicles.

Commissioner Carlin stated the County Executive and Deputy County Executive.

Legislator Sayegh questioned the increase in line 54640, Education & Training. She also requested clarification on line 54646, Contracts.

Commissioner Carlin stated line 54646, Contracts is for a contract with West, LLC (*actual name is East Branch, LLC*).

Legislator Sayegh requested further clarification.

Commissioner Carlin stated this individual works for both the Legislature and County Executive in terms of developing information. He stated in terms of line 54640, Education & Training, we are fortunate that County Executive Odell has leadership positions in NYSAC (New York State Association of Counties) and NACo (National Association of Counties). He stated the funding in that line will allow her to attend the leadership meetings. He stated it is very important to be a member of these organizations, especially now as municipalities across the country advocate for their portion of Federal and State Aid.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if a fee is paid for Putnam County to be part of NYSAC and NACo.

Chairman Sullivan stated yes, the County pays a fee.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the \$13,000 budgeted in this line is for the County Executive to attend the conferences held by NYSAC and NACo.

Commissioner Carlin stated yes, however it is more than the typical annual conferences, there are monthly leadership meetings.

Legislator Montgomery suggested moving this funding into the contingency budget because it is unknown how long restrictions on gathering will be in place due to COVID-19.

Chairman Sullivan stated they are meeting in small groups and planning to continue meeting in the future.

Legislator Montgomery stated she hopes the meetings are taking place safely as the County Executive is coming back into Putnam County and meeting with staff. She provided an example of a Police Policy Review Panel meeting where masks were not being worn. She stated she is not comfortable utilizing money to send the County Executive away.

Chairman Sullivan stated if people are six (6) feet apart, wearing a mask is recommended but not required. He stated he attended the Police Policy Review Panel

meeting and attendees were wearing masks when they were not six (6) feet away from others.

Legislator Montgomery stated she saw a photo to the contrary.

Legislator Albano stated NYSAC and NACo are important organizations to be part of; a lot of information is gained through them. He stated hopefully restrictions begin to loosen as we move into next year and we should anticipate being able to attend meetings. He stated any unused funds will go back into the general fund.

Legislator Montgomery questioned further clarification on line 54646, Contracts, which was described as a shared position that offers information to the Legislature and County Executive. She questioned if this would be shown in the personnel budget.

Commissioner Carlin stated he would provide a copy of the contract. He stated this would not be shown in the personnel budget as it is not a County employee.

Legislator Montgomery questioned what the funds in line 54950, County Contribution, are used for.

Commissioner Carlin stated he will provide a more accurate description of what that line is used for, but in the past it has been used for items for events.

Legislator Montgomery stated per the County Executive's budget address, we know that retirement and fringe costs have increased. She stated the increase in the County Executive's budget due to the Deputy County Executive position has also increased the State Retirement line, 58001.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is a function of two (2) things. He stated the adopted 2020 budget did not include retirement costs for a Deputy County Executive. He stated retirement costs are increased throughout the budget due to the increase in rates by at least 16%.

Legislator Montgomery stated the health care and retirement costs are increasing in the County Executive's budget and questioned if these are decreasing in the Highway Department's budget due to the switch of the employee from Highway to the County Executive's office.

Commissioner Carlin stated yes, the costs are allocated to the position therefore these costs would not be included in the Highway Department's budget. He stated this switch resulted in no net change.

### **Board of Ethics – Account 1430 (10200000) (pages 32-33)**

Legislator Montgomery questioned if line 51000, Personnel Services, is for the staff member who is paid to be the secretary for the Board of Ethics.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is correct, it is a split from a position in the Personnel Department that handles those duties.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if State law requires the County to have an Ethics Board. She stated there have been a number of referrals and she has not seen a report from the Ethics Board this year.

Commissioner Carlin recommended posing those inquiries to Director of Personnel Paul Eldridge.

### **County Clerk – Account 1410 (pages 25-26)**

County Clerk Michael Bartolotti stated overall, the budget is kept solid year to year.

Legislator Montgomery stated she believes the County Executive made a statement that overtime would be denied or kept flat across the board. She stated despite this, overtime has been allocated in all the departments' budgets.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated there are times when overtime needs to be incurred. He stated sometimes when the County is closed the County Clerk's office remains open, for example the day after Thanksgiving and the Saturdays when they are open for passport applications. He stated those who are willing to work on those days are paid from the overtime line. He stated those days are also very busy and the revenue generated offsets the cost of the overtime.

Legislator Montgomery stated she understands the need for overtime, and it is important to budget for that need. She stated she recalled the statement about the overtime in the budget address and wanted to bring it up.

Chairman Sullivan stated he does not recall the County Executive making a statement that overtime would be denied. He stated last year, a rule was established that required a department to come to the Legislature before the budgeted overtime amount was exceeded to explain why more is necessary. He stated there are hundreds of thousands of dollars in this budget for overtime. He stated it is impossible to run a government with no overtime.

Legislator Montgomery stated she believes the statement made was that there will be no increases to overtime.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if the postponed deadline for REAL ID was reflected in the 2021 budget.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the REAL ID deadline was extended by one (1) year, and is now October 1, 2021. He stated there are no specific accommodations in the budget

for that extension. He stated with the new appointment system implemented at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), things are moving very well.

Legislator Montgomery questioned line 54646, Contracts.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated that is for the content management vendor. He stated in 2019 the County Clerk's Office began utilizing a new vendor, IQS, which resulted in a costs savings as compared to their 2018 budget and streamlined records searches and things of that nature.

### **Motor Vehicles – Account 1411 (pages 27-28)**

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the DMV budget is very tight; the expenditures do not change much from year to year. He stated they have kept their revenues flat as compared to the 2020 budget.

Legislator Montgomery stated per her previous comment regarding the statement made in the budget address pertaining to keeping overtime flat, she recognized the increase in Overtime, line 51093, from \$12,000 to \$20,000.

Commissioner Carlin stated that specific line was raised because it is tied to revenue. He stated since the DMV generates revenue, this increase for overtime was one of the few granted in the budget.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated he is very frugal with the budgets in his departments. He stated the increase of overtime was necessary to accommodate the volume of work from not only customers coming in, but car dealership work as well. He stated in the past few years, they have had to transfer funds to compensate for overtime, therefore this year they analyzed the overtime usage and submitted a request for the increase.

Legislator Montgomery thanked County Clerk Bartolotti and stated she is not criticizing the overtime. She stated a statement was made that no increases to overtime would be made and she would like the public to be made aware of the truth. She stated she is fully in support of this overtime.

### **Records Management – Account 1460 (pages 36-37)**

Legislator Montgomery questioned line 51094, Temporary.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated that line is for a part time driver who assists the staff in the warehouse with the records and does daily runs to County departments and other partnering municipalities throughout Putnam County to retrieve and deliver records.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if line 54210, Vehicle Leasing/Rental was for that purpose.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the van that was being used was beginning to show its age and they began discussing options with the Purchasing Department about what to do. He stated the Purchasing Director believed the best thing to do would be to include a van for the Records Center in the vehicle leasing. He stated they have reduced their chargebacks for vehicle maintenance and increased line 54210 to lease the vehicle.

Legislator Montgomery thanked County Clerk Bartolotti.

### **Law Department – Account 1420 (pages 29-30)**

Legislator Montgomery questioned the increase in line 51000, Personnel Services, from 2019 to 2020 and the increase budgeted for 2021.

County Attorney Jennifer Bumgarner stated prior to this year, there have not been any major increases in salary other than negotiated or approved standard raises through the budget process. She stated the additional amount of \$15,414 will bring the current part-time confidential secretary to full-time. She stated since her full-time confidential secretary retired three (3) years ago, the line had not been filled on a full-time basis. She stated she has managed with that until now and it has been difficult. She stated this year she believes it is necessary to bring this position back to full-time given how busy the office is and has been. She stated there is currently only one (1) full-time administrative assistant in the Law Department, and one (1) full-time administrative assistant in Risk Management. She stated she does not believe it is out of line for the Law Department to have two full-time administrative assistants, one being the full-time confidential secretary.

Legislator Montgomery questioned what line 54125, Legal Services, is used for.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated that line is used for outside counsel. She provided the following examples: bankruptcy counsel, who provide regular counsel and assistance whenever the County is a potential creditor in the various bankruptcies that are filed with respect to Putnam County; tax certiorari counsel, who supervises and manages all of the cases and determines why it is necessary for the County to become engaged in tax certiorari cases when the County may in fact have significant benefit from those cases; counsel required for labor, personnel, and disciplinary matters. She stated they have outside counsel who in the last year and a half have spent a lot of time on negotiations, and she should not have that expense next year since three (3) of the four (4) contracts recently settled. She stated there are a significant amount of personnel and discipline matters that are handled in-house up to a certain point; when they get to a point that litigation is necessary, she will bring in outside counsel to litigate those cases. She stated outside counsel would be utilized because the Law Department does not have the administrative staff to provide support for litigation. She stated any type of claims that are not covered by insurance and need to be litigated by outside counsel are paid for through this line. She stated the tax foreclosure counsel is paid for from that line as well.

Legislator Montgomery thanked County Attorney Bumgarner. She stated she would like to point out that line 51000, Personnel Services, is close to \$1 million and another \$245,000 is budgeted in line 54125, Legal Services.

### **Judgement & Claims – Account 1930 (page 46)**

Legislator Montgomery stated in 2019, about \$554,000 was paid through line 54933, Judgements and Claims and in 2020 \$150,000 was budgeted. She questioned if the budgeted amount of \$100,000 for 2021 was going to be enough in looking at what is coming down the pike.

County Attorney Bumgarner stated in order to budget this line it is important to take a careful look at all the pending litigation and what they predict may get to the point of settlement next year. She stated there is really only one (1) case scheduled for trial next year that could result in a decent amount of liability for the County. She stated 2019 was a very unusual and unique year; it is not representative how much is paid of in settlements on a regular basis. She stated there were a significant amount of cases in 2019 that were at the point of trial or settlement and they managed to settle four (4) or five (5) separate cases that year in addition to the customary things. She stated generally speaking they try to stay within anywhere from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Legislator Montgomery thanked County Attorney Bumgarner.

### **Board of Elections – Account 1450 (pages 34-35)**

Legislator Montgomery questioned the almost \$30,000 decrease in line 51093, Overtime.

Board of Elections Commissioner Catherine Croft stated the most overtime is traditionally used during a Presidential Election year, which is this year. She stated since 2021 will be a local election year they do not anticipate the same level of overtime needed in 2020.

Legislator Montgomery questioned line 51094, Temporary.

Commissioner Croft stated he poll workers are paid out of that line. She stated normally, there are 382 poll workers scheduled to work the General Election. She stated there are also poll workers that will be working during the nine (9) days available for early voting. She stated prior to the use of electronic poll books, they would have 462 poll workers working the General Election. She stated when there is a primary, there are fewer workers required.

Board of Elections Commissioner Anthony Scannapieco stated this year they used a lot of overtime because Governor Cuomo required absentee ballot applications to be sent to all registered voters in the Democratic party.

Legislator Albano questioned the increase in line 54646, Contracts.

Commissioner Croft stated the contracts line represents funding for companies the Board of Elections have contracts with such as Clear Ballot, Dominion, and the voter database software. She stated she believes the increase is a result of the contract with Dominion increasing, which is for the voting machines.

Legislator Nacerino questioned line 52680, Other Equipment. She stated the requested amount is much higher than the amount in the tentative 2021 budget. She questioned if the lower amount in this line is sufficient.

Commissioner Croft stated the voting machines, specifically the ballot marking devices are over 10 years old and are in need of replacement, either through leasing or purchasing. She stated when they submitted their budget, they included funding to begin replacing the machines next year however they were strongly encouraged not to.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the machines are being leased as an alternative.

Commissioner Croft stated no, they will make do with what they have.

Commissioner Carlin stated in review of the Board of Elections budget, the Administration requested that the replacement of machines be done over two (2) years, therefore the funding was essentially cut in half.

Commissioner Croft stated the Board of Elections is using a lot of overtime as they have been receiving many absentee ballots and registrations. She stated to date they have issued 11,088 absentee ballots and they have received just shy of 3,000 back. She stated the Board of Elections has also been awarded three (3) grants this year totaling \$272,000.

Chairman Sullivan stated that is terrific. He stated as mentioned earlier, it is important to keep track of the overtime used because if it is going to be exceeded, the Board of Elections will need to come before the Legislature.

### **Outside Agencies**

**(Community Action Program, Libraries, Putnam Arts Council, Contribution to the Arts, Putnam History Museum, Southeast Museum, Putnam Humane Society, Putnam County SPCA, & Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension)**

Chairman Sullivan stated all budgets for the outside agencies have been kept flat from 2020 to 2021. He requested that if Legislators have any specific questions on any of the outside agencies, they send them in writing prior to the Budget & Finance Committee Meeting on October 20, 2020.

### **Veterans Service Agency – Account 6510 (pages 170-171)**

Veterans Service Agency Director Karl Rohde stated in terms of line 437895, State Aid for Veterans Peer to Peer Program, almost \$189,000 was received in 2020 however they have not yet gotten word from the State on whether this program will be able to continue. He stated the peer to peer model works best for Veterans and if the State funding is not available, they will make the effort to fundraise to keep the program going.

Chairman Sullivan stated it would be a terrible shame if the State were to cut the funding to the Veterans Peer to Peer program, which is a tremendous benefit to the Veterans.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if this issue is faced each year with the Veterans Peer to Peer Program.

Director Rohde stated yes, however the State notifies the local Veterans Service Agencies that the funding is included in the budget and then upon final review, the Governor usually cuts it out and the State Senators and Assembly put it back in. He stated this year they have not gotten word that it is being included at all.

### **Consumer Affairs/Weights & Measures – Account 6610 (pages 173-175)**

Director of Consumer Affairs/Weights & Measures Michael Budzinski stated this is a tight budget. He stated in 2019 over \$1 million in revenue was collected and he believes 2020 will yield a similar result.

Chairman Sullivan stated that is terrific, especially given the shutdown due to the pandemic.

Legislator Sayegh stated line 52650, Motor Vehicles was zeroed out to make room for the new Vehicle Leasing/Rental line 54210.

Director Budzinski stated there were two (2) vehicles put in the budget for a lease.

Legislator Sayegh questioned how many vehicles Consumer Affairs has and how many are leased.

Inspector of Weights & Measures John Lee stated they have five (5) vehicles, three (3) are owned and two (2) will be leased.

**Outside Agencies - Continued  
(Community Action Program, Libraries, Putnam Arts Council, Contribution to the Arts, Putnam History Museum, Southeast Museum, Putnam Humane Society, Putnam County SPCA, & Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension)**

Chairman Sullivan stated as previously mentioned, the budgets for the outside agencies have remained flat for 2021. He questioned if any Legislators had any questions or comments on any specific agency.

Legislator Nacerino stated there were no cuts made to the budgets of the outside agencies for 2021. She stated each one plays a vital role in the community to improve the quality of life in Putnam County. She stated the libraries specifically have been a lifeline for many people. She stated she believes the outside agencies will be pleased that no cuts have been made.

Chairman Sullivan agreed with Legislator Nacerino.

Legislator Montgomery stated she appreciates Legislator Nacerino's comments, however she does not feel the same way. She stated she is surprised that the outside agencies were told their budget would remain flat because it is these outside agencies that are providing support to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated for example, an organization like CAP (Community Action Program) provides relief for those with food insecurity which has been a vital resource throughout the pandemic. She stated if the County can afford to give raises across departments, support should be increased for agencies supporting the community. She stated many of these outside agencies are really hurting and it was insisted that they come in with a flat budget. She stated they are doing the bulk of the community service work. She stated the County is not giving these organizations what they give the County in return. She stated she is disheartened that they are not getting more. She stated the CAP website has a quote: "When you can't change the direction of the wind, you can adjust your sails." She believes the County should adjust their sails to give more to the community rather than ourselves.

Chairman Sullivan stated when possible, the County makes an effort to help the outside agencies. He stated there were no additional requests from the outside agencies for 2021. He stated although it would be great to be able to provide more resources, this is a conservative budget. He believes the County did a good job keeping the level funding for the outside agencies so they can continue to provide the great services they have for our residents.

Legislator Nacerino stated she does not believe the outside agencies were demanded to remain level. She believes their expectations are that remaining level would be satisfactory this year due to the pandemic. She stated in the eight (8) years she has been a Legislator, she has strived to increase these agencies when possible because they are valuable to the community. She stated an effort is being made to stay level across the board for the entire budget during these difficult economic times.

Legislator Addonizio stated last year the Putnam County SPCA (Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was in need of an office space, and the County increased their contribution to pay an additional \$36,000 for the rental.

Chairman Sullivan stated that is correct, when an agency is in need the County is willing to help.

**Item #4 – Other Business – None**

**Item #5 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 7:41pm, Chairman Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Robinson.