

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

Members: Chairwoman Addonizio, Legislators Ellner & Gouldman

**Wednesday October 11, 2023
(Immediately following the Protective Budget Mtg. beginning at 6:30pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 8:14pm by Chairwoman Addonizio who requested Legislator Ellner lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Ellner, Gouldman and Chairwoman Addonizio were present.

Item #3 – 2024 Budget Review

County Executive – Account 1230 (pages 13-14)

Legislator Nacerino questioned line 52610, Furniture & Furnishings, which had not been funded in the past but includes \$11,000 for 2024. She stated at the Protective Services Budget Meeting held prior to this meeting, it was discussed how a furniture line in another department had been decreased from their requested amount.

Deputy County Executive James Burpoe stated this budget line is to purchase two (2) plaques and will not be used for furniture.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the plaques being purchased are the County Executive plaques that hang in the Historic Courthouse.

Deputy County Executive Burpoe stated that is correct.

Legislator Montgomery questioned line 54210, Vehicle Leasing/ Rental which was budgeted in 2023 for \$6,264 and in 2024 there is \$10,958. She questioned if a new vehicle was being leased.

Deputy County Executive Burpoe stated the budgeted amount is to cover the cost of the vehicle currently in use. He stated the original 2023 budgeted amount was for the old vehicle, which went back to the Department of Public Works.

Legislator Sayegh stated in relation to Legislator Nacerino's question earlier, there is another budget line, 52110 also titled Furniture & Furnishings where \$4,000 is budgeted for 2024. She questioned what this budget line was for.

Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis stated budget line 52110 is for fixed assets under \$5,000. He stated the \$4,000 allocated in this line is for furniture.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what furniture is needed.

Deputy County Executive Burpoe stated they intend to replace a few desks that are in bad shape; some have drawers that are not functional.

Legislator Crowley questioned in reference to line 52610, Furniture & Furnishings, if the price for the plaques was set or if a more affordable price would be looked into.

Deputy County Executive Burpoe stated the number in the budget is an estimate; they will definitely look around. He stated it is important to have similar plaques to those already hanging in the Historic Courthouse.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why line 51095, P.I.L.O.T. Program, was zeroed out for 2024.

Commissioner Lewis stated that budget line was moved into the Personnel Department's budget.

Legislator Sayegh questioned what line 54950, County Contribution is used for.

Deputy County Executive Burpoe stated it is used for the Veterans wreaths.

Legislator Ellner stated he would like to thank Commissioner Lewis and the County Executive staff for reducing overall expenditures in their department by about \$45,000 as compared to 2023.

Legislator Sayegh stated the overall budget is showing a lesser amount for 2024 because the P.I.L.O.T. Program was moved into the Personnel budget and the gasoline budget lines are being moved to Central Services. She stated she is looking at the total budget differently; the 2024 total budget has increased over the 2022 actual budget by over \$300,000, which is staggering.

Commissioner Lewis stated the original budget for 2023 was about \$857,000 which was changed via budgetary amendments in 2023 which brought it to \$977,000. He stated in 2024 the requested budget was about \$899,000, which is about a \$40,000 increase over the 2023 original budget. He stated there were further changes made such as the P.I.L.O.T. Program being moved, the plaques, and a position that was kept as part-time with the remainder of the salary being put into Temporary, line 51094. He stated that will be discussed at the Personnel Budget Meeting.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if the temporary line is to cover another position.

Deputy County Executive Burpoe stated those funds will go toward temporary clerical support.

County Executive Kevin Byrne stated the revised 2023 budget is the result of the restructure that was done earlier this year. He stated those savings are still realized in this budget through other departments. He stated the comparison should really be between the revised 2023 budget and the 2024 tentative budget, where there is a reduction. He stated part of that savings is because the full-time position was underfilled with a part-time position as it was difficult to fill the position as full-time. He stated part of the savings from that went toward their temporary line to support that part-time position.

Audit – Account 1320 (page 22)

Legislator Nacerino requested clarification on line 54560, Equipment Rental Lease, which was zeroed out.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated the budget line was moved to Central Services.

County Clerk – Account 1410 (pages 29-30)

Legislator Castellano questioned how the document shredding has been going.

County Clerk Michael Bartolotti stated their two (2) biggest budget items are shredders for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Records Center. He stated especially in the Records Center, they have digitized so many documents and they are ready to get rid of the paper copies. He stated one of their shredders is on its last legs.

Legislator Castellano stated in Westchester County they have a shredding truck come in once a month and perhaps Putnam County could do something similar.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated it is certainly worth looking into because there will be a great deal of shredding coming up in the next couple of years.

Legislator Castellano questioned why the same amount of revenue was budgeted for 2024 as was budgeted in 2023 in line 412553, Mortgage Tax Fees.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated the budgeted amount is based on a formula the County receives back from the State and is based upon the percentage of time each employee spends processing mortgage tax that comes through.

Legislator Castellano questioned if the budgeted amount would be reached this year, as the actual number to date is less.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated yes, they will reach it.

Motor Vehicles – Account 1411 (pages 31-32)

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned if the Miscellaneous line, 54989, was for EZ Pass.

Deputy County Clerk James McConnell stated that is correct; each year there is a matching revenue (Minor Sales Other, 426551) and expenditure line for EZ Pass.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned fingerprinting.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated any new employee who will be processing Real ID or Enhanced drivers licenses must be fingerprinted and are subject to a background check.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if line 412552, Motor Vehicle Fees, was revenue from transactions within the DMV office.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated that is correct, those are the day-to-day DMV revenues as well as the revenue share received from the State DMV.

Legislator Sayegh questioned how many employees are in the DMV.

County Clerk Bartolotti stated there are currently 10 employees and there are two (2) vacancies that he hopes to fill in the near future.

Records Management – Account 1460 (pages 41-42)

County Clerk Bartolotti stated as mentioned earlier in the meeting, the biggest change in this budget is for the new shredder which is budgeted for in line 52620, Office Equipment.

Law Department – Account 1420 (page 33)

County Attorney Compton Spain stated money was saved by not filing a position, however that savings will go toward outside counsel expenses coming up.

Legislator Sayegh questioned line 54682, Special Services.

County Attorney Spain stated as he understands it, that line is for appraisals. He explained when property is transferred it needs to be appraised.

Legislator Jonke questioned which budget line outside counsel is paid from.

Commissioner Lewis stated outside counsel is paid out of line 54125, Legal Services.

Legislator Jonke questioned if the \$300,000 budgeted in that line is enough.

County Attorney Spain stated ordinarily it would be plenty, but there are a few cases in the pipeline that will require the use of that line.

Commissioner Lewis stated \$300,000 has been used as level funding in prior years and if additional funding becomes necessary, the Law Department will make a request and come before the Committee.

Board of Ethics – Account 1430 (10200000) (pages 35 – 36)

Commissioner Lewis stated this budget is for a stipend for the Secretary of the Board of Ethics.

Board of Elections – Account 1450 (pages 39-40)

Legislator Gouldman questioned the increase in line 51093, Overtime.

Board of Elections Commissioner Kelly Primavera stated the overtime line was increased because there are three (3) elections next year, including the presidential election.

Board of Elections Commissioner Cathy Croft stated there might be four (4) elections; there may be a congressional election in August.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the increase in line 51094, Temporary is for the same reason.

Commissioner Primavera stated yes. She stated line 54311, Printing and Forms is currently budgeted at \$100,000 for 2024 however it should be increased to \$150,000. She stated this line is used to print ballots and absentee ballots. She stated for the presidential election, they need at least 110% ballots.

Commissioner Croft stated that comes out to about 80,000 ballots.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the increase in line 54313, Postage, is also related to the elections.

Commissioner Croft stated that is correct. She stated in past years they have gotten grants from the State Board of Elections for postage and absentee ballots. She stated they hope to receive those grants again this year, but they will not know until next year.

Legislator Nacerino questioned why \$150,000 was not requested for line 54311, Printing and Forms.

Commissioner Primavera stated they originally planned to have printers at each poll site that would do on demand printing, but it cannot be done.

Legislator Crowley questioned if line 54386, Meals is used for the poll workers.

Commissioner Primavera stated that budget line is for the office staff during elections.

Legislator Crowley questioned if there is a budget line for the food vouchers provided to the poll workers.

Legislator Nacerino stated the party committees usually provide the vouchers.

Legislator Ellner questioned the increase in line 54636, Internet Costs.

Commissioner Primavera stated it is for the hotspots they use at the polling sites for each election. She stated the only thing connected to the hotspots are the poll pads, not the machines.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the \$500 budgeted in line 54710, Building Maintenance and Repairs is sufficient. He stated the building seems to need some work.

Commissioner Primavera stated funding for the repairs on the building are in the Capital Projects budget.

County Auditor Sharkey stated if a request is being made to increase line 54311 Printing and Forms a motion will need to be made.

Legislator Gouldman made a motion to increase line 54311, Printing and Forms from \$100,000 to \$150,000; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Putnam Recreation Program – Account 6470 (page 179)

Legislator Jonke stated this is a great organization that does great work for our special needs community. He stated he is glad to see them receive the same funding as last year.

Careers People Disability – Account 6480 (page 180)

Legislator Crowley stated at the Economic Development & Energy Budget Meeting last evening, the Committee voted to put the budget for the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) into subcontingency because no one was in attendance at the meeting to speak to their budget. She stated these programs being reviewed now are also outside organizations and many of them do not have anyone in attendance this evening. She stated she believes all outside agencies should be held to the same standard.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated these organizations are receiving level funding.

Legislator Jonke stated it was the decision of the Chairman of the Economic Development & Energy Committee to make a motion to put the budget for the Putnam County EDC into subcontingency. He stated he believes following suit for all outside agencies is a bad policy.

Legislator Nacerino clarified the budget for the Putnam County EDC included a change, which could not be advocated for during the meeting.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated the proper name of this organization is Careers Support Solutions and suggested having the budget reflect the new name.

Commissioner Lewis stated he will make that change.

Veterans Service Agency – Account 6510 (pages 181-182)

Legislator Gouldman noted he was glad to see the County has not had to utilize the Burials budget, line 54455, this year.

Deputy Director of the Veterans Service Agency Art Hanley agreed.

Consumer Affairs/Weights & Measures – Account 6610 (pages 184-185)

Legislator Ellner questioned the decrease in revenue in line 419623, Item Pricing.

Inspector of Weights and Measures John Lee stated they work on a two (2) year item pricing waiver and next year is an off year with only three (3) stores renewing next year.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned the increase in line 54640, Education and Training.

Inspector Lee stated there are weights and measures conferences and trainings that he attends and the County Code Enforcement Officer attends trainings as well.

Legislator Sayegh questioned what Advertising, line 54664, entails.

Inspector Lee stated vacancies on any of the trades boards (Plumbing & Mechanical Trades, Electrical Examiners, & Home Improvement) are advertised in local papers.

Director of Consumer Affairs Michael Budzinski stated there were several vacancies this year.

Legislator Sayegh questioned what line 54682, Special Services, is used for.

Inspector Lee stated the testing equipment used for inspections needs to be recertified every five (5) years by New York State and the cost of that recertification comes from that line.

Libraries – Account 7410 (page 218)

Legislator Gouldman requested a breakdown of the amount being provided to each library in Putnam County.

Commissioner Lewis stated he will send the breakdown.

Putnam Arts Council – Account 4560 (page 221)

Executive Director of the Putnam Arts Council Joyce Picone stated her appreciation for County funding each year.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated arts are so invaluable in the community for residents of all ages.

Executive Director Picone stated as both an Arts Council and Arts Center, they provide services and support other arts organizations throughout the community. She stated they are currently working with local Veterans agencies to provide rehearsal space for them at no cost. She stated they have worked with the Youth Bureau to create an exhibition by children with neurodivergent issues. She stated they are working with CoveCare Center on an event they are holding this fall to encourage children to find healthy outlets. She stated they are also working with Putnam County Tourism. She stated they are a great resource within the community for other art centers and organizations.

Legislator Nacerino thanked Executive Director Picone for the great work done in the community.

Legislator Montgomery stated the impact all of the outside organizations, especially the Putnam Arts Council has on the community is immeasurable. She stated in 2021 the arts made up 4.4% of the Nation's gross domestic product. She stated between 2020 and 2021 the value of the arts grew by 13.7%.

Executive Director Picone stated the County Contribution of \$13,993 is re-grant money that goes right back out to art organizations. She stated there is certainly a need for public money to support these programs.

Legislator Montgomery stated she understands the impact on the community and would like to see more funding provided.

Executive Director Picone stated they are appreciative of the funding they receive and are very happy with their allocation. She stated she is proud to be in the company of the other outside organizations receiving funding; they are not in competition with them.

Legislator Sayegh thanked Executive Director Picone for her work. She stated the Putnam Arts Council is in her Legislative District and she has brought her kids there throughout their childhood. She stated the work done through the Putnam Arts Council impacts Putnam County as a whole. She suggested increasing their budget to \$20,000. She stated the grant applications they receive total about \$80,000 and this would be just a quarter of that amount.

Legislator Nacerino agreed that these outside agencies could use more funding, however she does not agree with Legislator Sayegh's request. She stated her concern would be a domino effect with the other outside agencies that receive County funding. She stated she believes if the funding is to be increased it should be done across the board, which can possibly be considered next year.

Executive Director Picone thanked the Legislature.

Constitution Island Association – Account 7563 (page 223)

Chairwoman Addonizio stated Transportation Manager Vincent Tamagna could not be here this evening to speak to this budget.

Legislator Ellner questioned why a request was made for \$50,000 for 2024, which is a large increase over the \$10,350 received in 2023.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she spoke with Mr. Tamagna and the intention for the funding was to be put toward education and tourism. She stated the request was not granted by the Administration and the amount in the 2024 tentative budget remained flat at \$10,350.

Putnam County SPCA – Account 8513 (page 232)

Chairwoman Addonizio stated the Putnam County SPCA (PCSPCA) requested a higher amount of funding for 2024, but level funding was included in the tentative budget.

Legislator Jonke stated the PCSPCA performs a valuable function in Putnam County. He stated the way they are organized has bothered him since his first day in office. He stated they were formed by a family and since that time there have been multiple members of that family serving on the board, some of whom are compensated through the PCSPCA. He stated this is taxpayer funding going to this organization. He stated he was told the individuals do not vote on their salaries; they instead recuse themselves. He stated when it was first explained to him he was told when the salary for the Chief is voted on, the Chief recuses himself and all other board members, including his family members, vote on the salary. He stated the Chief's son is also compensated and when his salary is to be voted on, he recuses himself. He stated he spoke to the Chief a few years ago and requested that the family members not serve on the board of directors. He stated the board remains unchanged since that time. He stated they claim to respond to 10 calls per day, although he does not know how that is possible. He stated the County provides funding for them and pays their rent. He stated he would like to see this funding put into subcontingency until answers are provided or the board of directors is changed.

Legislator Nacerino stated the PCSPCA are a valuable resource in Putnam County. She stated we do not know how much money they raise outside of the funding provided by the County.

Legislator Jonke stated we have that information.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what their salaries are.

Legislator Jonke stated the Chief is set at \$100,000 annually and the Detective Sergeant is set at \$80,000 annually. He stated the records show that it was agreed upon that the actual compensation would be whatever the agency could pay up to these salaries and the remainder would be held as a book entry and paid whenever possible at a time agreed upon in the future.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if there are any other sources of revenue. She stated we need to see the whole picture.

Legislator Jonke agreed and he began by saying the PCSPCA performs a valuable function. He stated the issue is that there are taxpayer dollars going to funding these salaries voted upon by family members. He stated these individuals can serve in their roles without being board members.

Legislator Nacerino suggested inviting the PCSPCA to the Rules Committee Meeting next month so these questions can be asked at that time. She stated any conflict of interest may be for the Ethics Board to review.

Legislator Jonke stated he is not making an accusation or suggested there is a conflict, but it looks bad.

Legislator Ellner agreed with both Legislator Jonke and Legislator Nacerino. He stated because County funding is going to this agency, we are entitled to all of this paperwork. He stated he believes putting the County Contribution into subcontingency until all information is collected is the proper procedure.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated she does not agree with putting the funding into subcontingency. She stated perhaps they can come in for a special meeting. She spoke to the value of the PCSPCA and how sometimes when there is a case of animal abuse, there is other domestic abuse going on as well.

Legislator Jonke stated they claim to respond to 3,900+ calls per year, which comes out to over 10 a day. He stated he would like to understand what the calls are about.

Legislator Ellner made a motion to put these funds into subcontingency.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated the motion needs to be clarified if both the building rental and county contribution was being moved into subcontingency or just the county contribution.

Legislator Montgomery stated their 990 form can be found online.

Commissioner Lewis stated he could provide the most current 990 form for the PCSPCA.

Legislator Ellner made a motion to put line 54950, County Contribution into subcontingency. There was no second. Motion fails.

Item #4 – Other Business – None

Item #5 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 9:19pm, Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.