

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING  
40 Gleneida Avenue Room #318  
Carmel, NY 10512**

**Committee Members: Chairman Jonke, Legislators Castellano & Nacerino**

**Tuesday**

**June 13, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM by Chairman Jonke who requested Legislator Castellano lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Castellano, Nacerino and Chairman Jonke were present.

**Item #3 – Acceptance/ Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – May 3, 2023**

Chairman Jonke stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

**Item #4 – Approval/ Confirmation Appointment of Michael J. Lewis - Commissioner of Finance/ County Executive Kevin Byrne**

Chairman Jonke invited Candidate for Commissioner of Finance Michael J. Lewis to introduce himself.

Candidate for Commissioner of Finance Michael J. Lewis stated he had over 20 years of experience in finance, including 10 years of experience with PKF O'Connor Davies LLP, the current auditors of Putnam County, as well as 10 years as the Deputy Commissioner of Finance of New Rochelle, which had a comparable budget to Putnam County of almost \$200 million. He stated he has also worked under the former Commissioner of Finance William Carlin, for the past two years. He stated he was supported for this position by County Executive Kevin Byrne, former Commissioner of Finance William Carlin, and Chairman of the Audit & Administration Committee Joseph Castellano.

Chairman Jonke welcomed and invited County Executive Kevin Byrne and Deputy County Executive James Burpoe to speak to the merit of Mr. Lewis.

County Executive Kevin Byrne stated Mr. Lewis went through a thorough vetting process through the Selection Committee, similar to other top management positions in County government, including Commissioner of Emergency Services. He stated Mr. Lewis was the best candidate for the position, and exceeded the qualifications of the Selection Committee. He stated Chairman of the Audit and & Administration Committee Castellano was a member of the Selection Committee. He stated Chairman of the Audit & Administration Committee Castellano

chose Mr. Lewis as the top candidate. He stated Mr. Lewis was a native of Putnam County, as he graduated from Mahopac High School, and has a wealth of knowledge in the field of finance due to his work in both the private sector and the public sector. He stated Mr. Lewis has 20 years of finance experience. He spoke to his belief that Mr. Lewis will be a great Commissioner of Finance for Putnam County.

Chairman Jonke, as well as Legislators Nacerino, Castellano, Montgomery, Gouldman, Sayegh, and Ellner, in that order, all spoke to their approval of Candidate for Commissioner of Finance Michael J. Lewis.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Approve/ Confirmation Appointment of Michael J. Lewis – Commissioner of Finance; Seconded by Legislators Castellano and Nacerino. All in favor.

**Item #5 – Approval/ Confirmation Appointment of Patricia McLoughlin – Director of Real Property Tax Services/ County Executive Kevin Byrne**

Chairman Jonke invited Candidate for Director of Real Property Tax Services Patricia McLoughlin to introduce herself.

Candidate for Director of Real Property Tax Services Patricia McLoughlin stated she is originally from Dutchess County, where she has run an appraisal business for the past 18 years, and sold real estate prior to that. She spoke to her experience as a manager and supervisor of employees, as well as her confidence in adapting to this new position in Putnam County.

Chairman Jonke invited County Executive Kevin Byrne to speak to the merits of Ms. Patricia McLoughlin.

County Executive Kevin Byrne stated how the process for selecting McLoughlin as candidate for the position followed a similar process to the selection of Commissioner of Finance Michael J. Lewis. He stated this appointment followed the retirement of the previous Director of Real Property Tax Services, Lisa Johnson. He stated Ms. McLoughlin went through a thorough vetting process, with some help from Chairman Jonke. He spoke to Ms. McLoughlin's experience in the private sector, and further stated her lack of experience working in Putnam County's government would actually be a benefit to her in the role of Director of Real Property Tax Services.

Chairman Jonke spoke to his role in the appointment process for Candidate for Director of Real Property Tax Services Patricia McLoughlin. He expressed his confidence in the process by which McLoughlin was vetted, as well as in Ms. McLoughlin's professional ability to serve as Putnam County's Director of Real Property Tax Services.

Legislators Nacerino, Castellano, Montgomery, and Gouldman, in that order, all welcomed Candidate for Director of Real Property Tax Services Patricia McLoughlin to Putnam County. Legislators Nacerino and Montgomery, in that order, further commended County Executive

Kevin Byrne in his efforts at filling in positions in Putnam County's government in their statements.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Approve/ Confirmation Appointment of Patricia McLoughlin – Director of Real Property Tax Services; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

**Item #6 – Approval/ Putnam County Service Animals Policy/ Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge**

Chairman Jonke invited Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge to speak to this policy.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau from the Personnel Department would speak to this policy.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated employees have previously expressed interest in bringing their pets to work. She stated her desire to have a clear policy regarding this, which was the origin of the Service Animals Policy. She gave a summary of the policy, which would allow only service animals, while forbidding pets and emotional support animals. The policy has further rules, including the expected conduct of service animal holders, which includes the ability to keep their animals under control. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the policy also outlines what employees can and cannot ask service animal holders, be they coworkers or members of the public.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what identifies a “service animal”.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated the animal carries out a task.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Approve/ Putnam County Service Animals Policy; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

**Item #7 – Approval/ Putnam County Public Facility Access/ Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge**

Chairman Jonke invited Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau to speak to this policy.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated the purpose of this policy is to clarify which areas of County Property are recordable, be it by video or photography.

Chairman Jonke questioned if it was known where these areas were.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated there are three levels of public space, as is generally accepted in case law. She explained the recommendation for finding out which areas have which clearance for recording will be determined through an internal audit for each department to identify these spaces. She stated the policy has specific definitions for these

spaces, which will enable the departments of the county to abide by it. She stated the departments would use signs to indicate whether or not recording is allowed.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated employees would be trained in de-escalation, in preparation for cases of belligerent members of the general public who would be provoked by enforcement of this policy, as well as non-belligerent members of the general public which they may mistakenly provoke due to a misunderstanding of the policy.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated she was in conversation with County Executive Kevin Byrne about training employees who would be present in spaces generally accessible by the general public.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if this policy was present in other county governments. She stated her concern over the extent to which this policy would compromise the ability for the general public to have access to their county government. She questioned if there were opinions from organizations which advocate for open government, such as the New York State Committee on Open Government, regarding this policy.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated there are other counties with this policy. She stated the phenomenon of members of the general public entering areas of County property where they are not allowed has grown in recent years. She stated the purpose of this policy was both to protect the right of the general public to access their government, as well as their rights are protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, as well as the right of the county government to function properly. She stated members of the Personnel Department attended statewide training earlier in 2023 which went into this topic. She stated in creating this policy, she used another county's policy as its framework and consulted the website for the Open Government Committee to make sure the policy was in line with their principles. She stated this is, however, a legal gray area.

Chairman Jonke stated this policy is also to protect the safety of the employees of the County government. He spoke to his experience with members of the general public storming into County offices based on their belief in their legal entitlement to do so and concluded that these events were potentially unsafe for staff.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated this policy would also empower employees of the County government because it would clarify for them what is and is not allowed when dealing with belligerent members of the public.

Legislator Nacerino stated her belief that this was "common-sense" legislation, and that this was not an impediment on the rights of the general public to access their government.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to Approve/ Putnam County Public Facility Access; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

**Item #8 – FYI/ Accident Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #9 – FYI/ Incident Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #10 – Other Business – None**

**Item #11 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 6:55 pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by PILOT Intern, Eamon Howley.