

**AUDIT & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD IN ROOM #318  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairman Castellano and Legislators Ellner & Gouldman**

**Thursday**

**6:30pm**

**September 21, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Chairman Castellano who requested Legislator Gouldman lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Ellner and Gouldman and Chairman Castellano were present.

**Item #3 – Acceptance of Minutes – August 24, 2023**

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

**Item #4 – Discussion/ Request to Edit Budgetary Amendment and Transfer Forms/  
Legislator Ellner**

Chairman Castellano stated samples were provided by Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis for the Committee to review.

Commissioner Lewis stated the first example shows the previous real-time budget at the time the report is run.

Chairman Castellano stated these reports are run through Munis, which is how the Budgetary Amendments and Fund Transfers are always processed. He stated this information is available to all Legislators by contacting the Finance Department or the Audit Department.

Commissioner Lewis stated there is a workflow in Munis, meaning when a budgetary amendment or fund transfer is initiated it then goes to the respective people on the chain, then to the Audit Department, and then to the Audit & Administration Committee for consideration. He stated the funds become available after the Full Legislature approves it. He stated there are checks and balances in the Munis system. He also stated Munis will not allow a transfer from a line with insufficient funds.

Chairman Castellano stated the samples provided were created from items on this evening's agenda, the first relates to item #6b. He stated the example is straightforward, showing the line had \$0 to begin, the grant amount of \$50,150 was added in. He stated the other example is a little more complicated and relates to item #10 on the agenda.

Commissioner Lewis stated the second example shows a fund transfer dealing with overtime effecting personnel lines. He stated this example shows about \$1.4 million in the line. He stated a budget is a fluid document and is always changing; he provided an example of personnel lines changing every pay day. He stated in this instance, at the

time of the transaction there were \$1.4 million in that budget, the proposal is to move \$120,000 based on vacancy savings into their overtime line. He stated the overtime line would go from \$200,000 to \$320,000.

Chairman Castellano stated looking at the Munis report, the overtime lines shows a beginning balance of \$200,000 as of September 8<sup>th</sup> when the report was run. He questioned if there where the overtime budget started.

Commissioner Lewis stated this report strictly shows the current budget, the proposal, and what the revised budget will be if approved. He stated it does not show the year-to-date actual amount.

Chairman Castellano stated the report does not provide the whole picture.

Commissioner Lewis stated a comprehensive report could be run to show all of the information, but it would be cumbersome to run for each item.

Legislator Nacerino stated she understands the intent of this request, but she questions how valid it is to have more and more paper and backup information for each item when these are the internal operations of the Finance and Audit departments. She questioned what the advantage would be to have this paperwork for every fund transfer and budgetary amendment, especially if the budget lines may not be entirely accurate.

Chairman Castellano stated he can see the advantages of the information, however the budget is a fluid document.

Legislator Gouldman stated he would like to see the current budget line when considering a fund transfer or budgetary amendment. He stated despite changes that may happen between running the report and seeing it on an agenda, it provides an idea of what is in the line as of the day the report is run.

Commissioner Lewis stated he believes the most beneficial information would be how much is in the available balance in a particular line. He stated it is important to keep in mind there are some items, like payroll, that will change after the reports are run.

Chairman Castellano stated it sounds like a lot of work to get the real-time number. He stated example #2 shows \$200,000 in the budget line, however without the information about the previous expenditures from that line, it is difficult to tell what is actually there.

Commissioner Lewis stated in that instance, the budget line is for overtime and the department is probably trending at a rate where they can project that they will go over budget if more funds are not added.

Legislator Ellner stated he sees the issue when a fund transfer or budgetary amendment relates to payroll or compensation. He stated a report on budget lines for specific purchase items should be a more accurate representation of the current line.

Legislator Nacerino questioned what the advantage is of having that information when the transfer would not be able to move through the system without enough funds.

Legislator Ellner stated his intent behind this request is to make sure departments do not have excessive budget lines that they are transferring for other uses. He stated having that information will allow the Legislature to trim those excessive budget lines.

Chairman Castellano stated that work is done during the budget process.

Commissioner Lewis stated a comprehensive trend analysis of these types of concerns was done for the 2024 proposed budget that will be provided to the Legislature at the beginning of October.

Legislator Sayegh stated this information is available for every transaction and any Legislator can request it at any time without creating all the paperwork for each item. She stated if a Legislator requests that information, they can always speak to it during a meeting so the public is kept up to date with the information as well.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Commissioner Lewis for providing information and responding to requests quickly.

Chairman Castellano stated he understands the points made this evening by his colleagues. He stated this discussion can continue at the November Audit meeting. He stated as discussed earlier, it sounds like having up to date budget lines pertaining to payroll is impossible as it changes so often.

Legislator Ellner suggested providing the information on the budget lines for requests above a certain threshold.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated there are thresholds on each transfer form stating the amount and type of approval needed for each.

Legislator Sayegh stated she appreciates Legislator Ellner's concern that there may be budget lines with excessive funds in them. She stated those lines should always be addressed during the budget review process.

Chairman Castellano stated it is important to balance the work that goes into generating these reports, especially when a phone call can be made to obtain the same information when needed. He stated he would like to continue this discussion and have a few more samples to consider.

Commissioner Lewis restated there is constant communication between the Finance Department, Audit Department, and respective department for each request.

## **Item #5 – Correspondence/County Auditor**

### **a. Sales Tax Report – Duly Noted**

- b. **OTB Report** – Duly Noted
- c. **2023 Contingency Report** – Duly Noted

Chairman Castellano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional revised Contingency Report; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

- d. **Transfer/Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- e. **Board In Revenue Report** – Duly Noted

**Item #6 – Correspondence/ Commissioner of Finance**

- a. **Overtime/Temporary Report** – Duly Noted
- b. **Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 23A054/ County Clerk/ Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund Grant Receipt**

Chairman Castellano stated the County Clerk’s Office works with local municipalities to assist with records management utilizing this state grant.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

**Item #7 – Approval/ Fund Transfer 23T255/ Emergency Services/ 911 Center Upgrades & Services (Also reviewed in Protective)**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 23T255; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

**Item #8 – Approval/ Fund Transfer 23T260/ Emergency Services/ Supplies and Materials for Fire Departments (Also reviewed in Protective)**

Legislator Nacerino stated it is advantageous to have all the Fire Departments using the same program.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 23T260; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

**Item #9 – Approval/ Fund Transfer 23T270/ Dept. of Social Services/ Paint Project Staff Offices (Also reviewed in Health)**

Legislator Sayegh clarified this painting project is for the Child Advocacy Center, it is coming from the Department of Social Services budget because they have a contract with the Child Advocacy Center.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 23T270; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

**Item #10 – Approval/ Fund Transfer 23T272/ Bureau of Emergency Services/ Cover Dispatch Overtime Due to Vacancies (Also reviewed in Protective)**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

**Item #11 – Other Business**

**a. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 23A056/ Health Dept./ Cover Cost of Comp Time Payout**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Commissioner Lewis stated this was an administrative oversight; the Health Department proposed a budgetary amendment earlier in September. He stated this payout was for compensatory time for an employee who earned it when they were in a CSEA union position. He stated the employee is now in a PuMA management position. He stated this request is to cover the overtime line after the payout, there is some reimbursement through the grant and the rest will come from general contingency.

Legislator Ellner questioned how many hours were paid out.

Commissioner Lewis stated he only has the dollar amount.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

**b. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 23A057/ DPW/ Continue Countywide Pavement Maintenance & Rehabilitation Program**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Commissioner of the Department of Public Works Thomas Feighery stated this was bonded infrastructure money, but it now makes more sense to use contingency funds to continue the upgrades. He stated right now there are 8.5 miles that need to be done. He stated when CHIPS (Consolidated Highway Improvement Program) funding is used, the roadway cannot be worked on again for 10 years after the work is done. He stated using the County's own money allows them to maintain the work so it lasts longer.

Legislator Montgomery referred to the 2023 Capital Projects Budget attached to this request and questioned if the two projects titled "Capital Reserve – Minor Renovations" and "Tilly Foster – Fire Suppression" were still planned to be done.

Commissioner Feighery stated this request is just for paving roads.

Commissioner Lewis stated the attached report is what was proposed and approved by the Capital Projects Committee with a placeholder to fund this particular maintenance project with \$1 million of borrowing. He stated because of the economic conditions it would cost the County far more than \$1 million, therefore it is fiscally prudent to utilize money from contingency now for the project. He stated it also gives DPW access to the funds immediately and the work can begin faster.

Chairman Castellano stated funding the project from contingency rather than bonding the money will result in a savings to taxpayers.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

**c. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 23A058/ DPW/ Purchase Storage Hut for Snow Operation Equipment**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Commissioner Feighery stated the barn they had was condemned and torn down in July. He stated this hut is to keep the equipment housed and protected. He stated the hut can also be used in the future to store salt until they can get another salt shed. He stated DPW purchased salt in May, saving \$2 per ton.

Legislator Gouldman questioned how big the structure is.

Commissioner Feighery stated it is 40'X60'X18'.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

**Item #12 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 7:12pm, Chairman Castellano made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.