

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM #318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Gouldman, Legislators Addonizio & Crowley

Tuesday

July 9, 2024

(Immediately following the Personnel Meeting at 6PM)

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 by Chairman Gouldman who led in the pledge of allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Addonizio and Crowley and Chairman Gouldman were present.

Item #3 - Acceptance of Minutes – April 16, 2024 Meeting

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Discussion/Hudson Valley Regional Council/Putnam County Economic Development Corporation President Kathleen Abels and HVRC Executive Director Carla Castillo

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

HVRC Executive Director Carla Castillo stated she is here today to make a request for the County's contribution for its membership in the Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC). She explained that the HVRC is one of 10 regional councils in the state. She stated that the HVRC was established in 1978 and is one of 600 regional councils in the country. She stated the HVRC provides a variety of technical assistance across many areas to all municipalities in the region, including in Putnam County. She explained that the first handout provided to the Legislature is a map showing all of the HVRC's programmatic areas, which covers economic development, water quality, wastewater, clean energy, climate action planning, materials management, and climate smart activities. She stated that through those activities, the HVRC has been very active in providing technical assistance to all local governments in Putnam County since 2016. She explained that she began at the HVRC in 2016, and since then, she has began tracking this information. She then referenced a page in a handout that shows the results of the HVRC's involvement in Putnam County. She stated that one of the programs that the HVRC works with is the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities which helps fund to provide technical assistance to local governments in order to enact clean energy actions. She stated that to date, the HVRC has supported the local governments of Putnam County in efforts which brought in \$765,000. She explained that there is one local government in Putnam County that the HVRC has not engaged with, and that is the Village of Brewster. She stated s a result of the actions of the HVRC, local communities are primed to receive additional funding. She noted that if the local governments are able to complete clean energy actions, then Putnam County overall could see \$1.5 million in additional funding. She listed some of the amounts that local governments in

Putnam County have received through the HVRC. She explained that the contribution that the HVRC is requesting is a match that is required by a number of HVRC funders.

Chairman Gouldman stated that Putnam County had contributed to the HVRC in the past in the amount of \$11,000, and now the contribution amount would be \$5,641. He questioned when Putnam County stopped contributing to the HVRC?

Putnam County Economic Development Corporation President Kathleen Abels stated she believes that it was 2001. She stated that, although it has been a long time since Putnam contributed, the HVRC has been impressive in its assistance to Putnam County. She stated that clean energy is good for the environment and good for business, and communities that use clean energy are more attractive to prospective business owners and homeowners. She explained that clean energy actions like switching to LED streetlights, using renewable energy, and using clean water will make Putnam County more sustainable while energy costs will be reduced. She stated that she did meet with County Executive 's Office and they expressed full support for Putnam County to contribute to the HVRC.

Legislator Crowley asked why Putnam County has not been budgeting for this contribution during budget season.

EDC President Abels stated that last year was the first time that the contribution amount had decreased from \$11,000 to \$5,675. She stated that she hopes Putnam County will contribute this year, and she intends to budget for this annual contribution going forward.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo stated that when comparing the amount that different counties across the state contribute to their regional council, she decided it would be better to apportion contribution requests to counties according to factors such as population size or needs, rather than to just ask every county in the region for \$11,000. She stated this method allows the HVRC to better address the specific needs of municipalities without demanding an excessive amount from the counties. She noted because Putnam County has the least number of local governments in the region, the HVRC is asking for the least amount of money in the match.

Chairman Gouldman stated that in 2001, \$11,000 was a lot of money, so he understands why Putnam County opted out of contributing. He stated that he is glad negotiations have been made to make the contribution less. He questioned what the expected increase in the contribution amount every year will be.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo stated the HVRC is in the process of updating its bylaws, and as they update the bylaws, they will establish a contribution schedule. She explained that the contribution amount ranges a lot, as some small counties might contribute \$6,000, while other counties might contribute \$106,000. She stated depending on the grants that the HVRC brings in, the match request amount may change year to year, and most of the regional councils reassess the contribution amounts annually. She does not believe the match amount will increase significantly, because she is actively seeking out funding that does not require a match.

Chairman Gouldman stated his appreciation for the letters of support from the municipalities that were provided.

Legislator Addonizio compared the contribution request for Putnam (\$5,641) to the contribution request for Westchester (\$25,947). She stated that she does not foresee the Putnam County contribution amount increasing much higher than what it is at now. She expressed her appreciation for such a reasonable contribution request, and she thanked HVRC Executive Director Castillo for her work.

Chairman Gouldman agreed with Legislator Addonizio, and added that Putnam County could reassess if the contribution amount increases.

Legislator Jonke clarified that since Putnam County stopped contributing to the HVRC in 2001, it has still received benefits from the HVRC, therefore, he believes that Putnam County should contribute to the HVRC again.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she had asked the Legislature for funding to contribute to the HVRC in 2019, and that she submitted a budget request for an HVRC contribution the following year. She stated that she has been asking for this support that brings money to Putnam County. She expressed that the HVRC is a valuable program for the municipalities. She questioned if other counties' IDA and Economic Development Councils contribute to their portions in the same way that Putnam's are.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo stated she understands why Putnam County was hesitant to contribute \$11,000 and she is glad that number has been reasonably changed. She then explained that each region decides their contribution amounts differently.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the HVRC works exclusively with municipalities.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo stated that besides the economic development work, the HVRC does work exclusively with municipalities. She then explained that for economic development work, the HVRC works with nonprofits that submit projects in partnership with municipalities.

Legislator Ellner questioned if the HVRC would provide direct financial assistance to the privately owned community wells that are having issues.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo stated that the HVRC has two programs that support water resources, the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) 604B Program supports water quality, including wells. She stated the HVRC mainly works with local governments. She then stated that the organization that owns the wells could reach out to the HVRC for guidance. She added, as for wastewater, the HVRC is initiating a program for supporting small, disadvantaged communities with grant funding.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she is very much in support of this contribution, and she feels this is a modest request by the HVRC. She thanked the HVRC for their work.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo thanked the communities for working with the HVRC and stated that it is a real pleasure working with the members of Putnam's local governments.

Legislator Montgomery explained that a possible change in the contribution amount would have to be approved by the HVRC Board. She stated since Legislator Jonke and EDC President Abels are on the board, she hopes they can reach a favorable number for the County and prevent the contribution amount from growing to an undesirable value.

HVRC Executive Director Castillo stated that it is her goal to keep the current contribution rate as it is for as long as possible. She explained that when there is a grant application that requires a match, she will not move forward without the HVRC Board's approval, because that would have an impact on the contribution amount.

Chairman Gouldman stated that it is good that the partners in economic development and the county are working together and contributing to the HVRC. He explained that the Putnam County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation are both contributing \$1,880. He expressed his support for Putnam County contributing \$1,881. He stated he would like to make a motion to approve the County Contribution to HVRC.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated the item is only on the agenda for discussion and there is nothing to approve at this time.

IDA Board Chairman Bill Nulk stated that the contribution is now a proportional allotment, and the IDA now has the ability to be able to help support the HVRC after working with the EDC. He stated that they have had successes in bringing businesses to Putnam County which helps their goal of increasing the tax base and bringing the benefits of appropriate commerce to Putnam County.

Legislator Crowley stated that she is in support of this contribution and looks forward to seeing a resolution for this at the Audit & Administration Committee meeting.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the Legislature could prepare a resolution for this contribution for the August Economic Development & Energy Committee meeting.

Legislative Clerk Diane Schonfeld clarified that only the County Executive can initiate moving money, so the Legislature could write a letter expressing its support of this contribution to the County Executive.

Chairman Gouldman expressed his support for sending a letter.

Legislator Montgomery thanked HVRC Executive Director Castillo for her years of hard work and service of multiple communities.

Nat Prentice, speaking as a member of Climate Smart Philipstown, stated the projects that have been funded by the HVRC have greatly benefited the community.

Item #5 - FYI/Unemployment Report

Chairman Gouldman stated that the unemployment rate in Putnam County is 3.4% as of May of 2024, and that the unemployment rate was 3% in June of 2023.

Item #6 - Other Business - None

Item #7 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:07 pm, Chairman Gouldman motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by PILOT Intern Owen Lennon.