

PHYSICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
40 Gleneida Avenue Room #318
Carmel, NY 10512

Committee Members: Chairman Ellner, Legislators Crowley & Jonke

Tuesday

March 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:53p.m. by Chairman Ellner and stated that Legislator Addonizio would be sitting as a Committee Member for this meeting in place of Legislator Jonke. He requested that Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Crowley, Chairman Ellner were present. Legislator Jonke was absent, and Legislator Addonizio served as a member of the Committee for this meeting.

Item #3 - Acceptance/ Physical Services Meeting Minutes/ December 16, 2024, January 27 & February 12, 2025

Chairman Ellner stated the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/ Budgetary Transfer 25T062/ Close out Various Capital Projects and Transfer to the Capital Project Reserve Budget or use on Future Projects/ Commissioner Department of Public Works Thomas Feighery

Chairman Ellner stated Commissioner of Department of Public Works (DPW) Feighery was present to address this item.

Commissioner DPW Thomas Feighery stated this is funding going back into the County's Capital Project Reserve Budget. He stated thanks to the skilled work force of the County and collaborative efforts, we have saved the County a lot of money. He gave a big thanks to the DPW staff. He stated also some local contractors, who are on the "On Call" list, served as a benefit. He stated the funds saved will be put towards other work that needs to be done.

Chairman Ellner complimented Commissioner Feighery and his crew as they saved the County over \$307,000 from a total of four (4) Capital Projects that have been completed.

Chairman Ellner made a motion to Approve Budgetary Transfer 25T062/ Close out Various Capital Projects and Transfer to the Capital Project Reserve Budget or use on Future Projects; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item #5 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 25A023/ NYS DOT Urban Master Agreement Contract K007559- Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP) for Public Transit Funding/ Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa

Chairman Ellner stated Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barosa was present to speak to this item.

Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa stated this is funding that was received after the Legislature gave approval in December of 2024 to execute this contract. She stated this is a request to bring the funding into the County Budget. She stated the Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP) funding is new, and will 100% fund five (5) different projects.

Chairman Ellner stated this is additional funding to the County in the amount of \$551,037.00.

Legislator Crowley complimented Commissioner Barosa on the great job she does and in addition to her success in bringing funds into the County to offset costs.

Chairman Ellner stated he saw on the Schedule A the year 2028, he requested clarification on that.

Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa stated the County has until 2028 to spend the funds. She clarified if that does not happen a request for extension may be done.

Legislator Sayegh questioned what types of projects the funding can be spent on.

Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa stated the MEP Grant program is from New York State and it is 100% funding. She stated it must be allocated to public transit to modernize or enhance it.

Legislator Sayegh questioned the project listed, Bus Electrification. She stated the County does not have electric buses.

Commissioner Planning, Development and Public Transportation Barbara Barosa stated that is funding to build charging stations.

Chairman Ellner made a motion to Approve Budgetary Amendment 25A023/ NYS DOT Urban Master Agreement Contract K007559- Modernization and Enhancement Program (MEP) for Public Transit Funding; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 25A024/ Release of Soil & Water Conservation District Part "C" Funds for: Education and Outreach Initiatives, A Culvert Inspection Camera and Annual Contribution to Soil & Water Salary/ Neal Tomann, PC Soil & Water District

Chairman Ellner requested Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District to speak to this item.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District began by explaining what the Part C money is for. He stated S&W has yearly performance measures that must be met, through education and outreach and different projects. He stated if all the performance measures are met the County will receive funding. He stated the Part C funding is relatively flexible in terms of how it can be used. He stated the funds being discussed and being drawn from with this budgetary amendment would come from Part C. He stated the funds go to the S&W Board and then come to the Legislature for a second approval. He stated the \$20,000 to go toward salary is an allowable use and he believes it has been done for the past two (2) years. He stated \$8,000 was originally approved for the seedling sale. He explained in the past the funding came from the County's general fund in the amount of \$5,000. He stated the projection was that the price due to the increase in price of everything should be increased to \$8,000. He stated he discussed this with Commissioner Feighery and stated he believed taking the funding for the seedling sale made more sense to take the funds from Part C. He stated the obstacle was the timing, so it was decided this year they would leave the \$8,000 for the Soil & Water- Education & Training. He stated throughout the year there are five (5) opportunities for education and outreach: S&W Sale, a seminar in the Town of Kent for NYS Federation of Lake Associations, two (2) days of Putnam County Community Day in July, and then in September there is a Safety Day sponsored by DPW. He stated the hope is to work with Cornell and incorporate some type of seedling sale at the County's Community Day event and address Lake Protection also, which works well with the right plantings that go around lakes. He stated there are thousands of people who attend that event. He stated those are the plans for the \$8,000 and its use in supporting education and outreach. He spoke to the \$15,000.00 for S&W Other Equipment. He stated that is for a special Camera that would be used in support of the MS4 requirements that the County must adhere to. He stated as an example of the use of the inspection camera the County needs to show where all the culverts are, what are there conditions and where are the interconnections. He explained the interconnections are the connections between the County's MS4 and the local MS4.

Chairman Ellner questioned if the Camera could be lent out to the other municipalities for their use.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated it will be. He stated last year a mower was purchased with the S&W money, that is part of justifying buying equipment. He stated the equipment becomes part of a Inter Municipal Agreement (IMA). He stated if another Town uses the County's Equipment to get their MS4 program together, then the County gets credit for it also.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there are IMAs in place.

Commissioner DPW Feighery stated there are currently IMAs in place and he is working with the County Law Department on consolidating the process.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated they also make sure whoever requests to borrow equipment that they have proper insurance and proper instructions and training.

Commissioner DPW Feighery stated in some cases the County will send their own operators.

He explained that is also the case if the County borrows equipment from the Towns.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is uneasy about releasing the \$8,000 Education & Training since there is not a definitive answer to what it will be used for.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated he wishes they had more time. He stated he would like to work with Cornell Cooperative and have literature and use that at different events, again such as the Community Day. He stated the foot traffic is great. He spoke to last year's event. He stated he would like to work on improving their booth attracting more people to it. He stated he believes working with Cornell Cooperative would help with that. He continued to speak to the plan. He stated they need to improve their promotional materials.

Legislator Montgomery stated if she were a member of this committee, she would make a motion to remove the \$8,000 until further information is given on what it will be used for.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if homeowners can use the equipment purchased by the Part C S&W funds.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated that has been discussed, he stated again the County's liability would need to be protected.

Legislator Montgomery stated she believes that is a slippery slope. She stated that she would love to see that, but a policy would need to be in place.

Legislator Sayegh stated a private landowner can apply for S&W funding.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated that is correct. He stated applications are made to the S&W Board requesting Part C funding for projects. He stated the Board reviews all applications and they determine whether funding will be issued. He stated Part C money affords flexibility.

Chairman Ellner questioned Deputy County Attorney Lowell Seigel what is the proper procedure to remove the \$8,000.

Deputy County Attorney Lowell Seigel stated he does not believe the Law Department has a posture on that. He stated if the Committee would like, he can follow up with his office to make a further determination.

Chairman Ellner stated he agreed with Legislator Montgomery and more specifics are needed on the use of the \$8,000.

Resident of Brewster, Andrew Jarret, stated he is shocked that there is \$20,000 going towards salary. He stated that is a decent pay raise.

Chairman Ellner stated that is not a pay raise, it off-sets a salary amount.

Resident of Brewster, Andrew Jarret, questioned if there are guidelines for the use of Part C money. He explained his question relates to the comment made that application can be made to the S&W Board seeking funding for projects.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated applications are reviewed by the S&W Board, and then he needs to send them to his Supervisor at the Agriculture and Markets for review to see if they believe the project will benefit the program.

Chairman Ellner facilitated further dialogue with Resident of Brewster, Andrew Jarret and the members of the Physical Services Committee and the Legislature regarding the process to apply for request of use of S&W funds and what the parameters are.

Resident of Pawling, employed in Patterson, Cassandra Roth stated there seems to be confusion around the Part C funds. She questioned if there is anyone who could speak to what it is per the State Agriculture & Markets Law.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated Part C money goes towards projects that may not be eligible for funding from other sources. He spoke to some examples from past cases. He stated the project needs to be a soil and water related project.

Resident of Pawling, employed in Patterson, Cassandra Roth stated in the Agricultural and Markets, states the Part C money is specifically for Soil and Water. She stated her disagreement with using a portion of the Part C money to offset a salary. She read an excerpt from Agriculture and Markets which is the goal. She expressed her disagreement with some of the proposed uses of the Part C money that is before this Committee for consideration.

Resident Patterson, Dan Honovich, spoke to a visit that had occurred, and stated Part C money was never mentioned to him as being a possible revenue source. He concluded by offering to help in any way to better the community, better his land and the community's land.

Chairman Ellner recommended that Mr. Honovich attend the S&W Meetings, they meet once a month, usually the last Wednesday of the month. He stated if you cannot be in person at the meeting, you can attend remotely and consider submitting an application for consideration of Part C funding.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the application to apply for Part C funding can be added to the Putnam County website.

Resident of Pawling, employed in Patterson, Cassandra Roth questioned what Neal Toman's title is.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated currently his title is Interim Director of Soil and Water.

Legislator Sayegh stated she has served as the Legislative liaison on the Soil and Water Board in the past. She stated they have had an application process and evaluated projects. She stated the

S&W Board did get funds designated to the Great Swamp project in Patterson. She stated that it was her understanding also about landowners having the option to apply for Part C funds to assist in funding MS4 projects. She stated water affects everyone and that is the purpose of the S&W funding.

Neal Tomann of Putnam County Soil & Water District stated that is correct. He stated since he has been in the position they have been working to rekindle the Part C funding and forming a policy. He stated he has been working on getting the public interested. He stated it is apparent they are making progress.

Resident of Putnam Valley, Andrew Wulken requested confirmation that there is no salary increase coming from the Part C money.

Chairman Ellner confirmed that was correct, there is no salary increase coming from the Part C funds.

Resident of Putnam Valley, Andrew Wulken stated some questions regarding a current member of the S&W Board. He questioned who is responsible for appointing to the S&W Board.

Chairman Ellner Stated information comes to the Legislature for review and the Legislators confirm appointments to the S&W Board.

Resident of Putnam Valley, Andrew Wulken requested confirmation if landowners can borrow the equipment from the County purchased with Part C funding. He also made comments regarding the representative on the S&W Board who is supposed to be a Grange member.

Commissioner of DPW Thomas Feighery stated that is not the case. He explained the other municipalities can borrow said equipment.

Resident of Brewster, Andrew Jarret, stated he does not believe using Part C funds for a salary is the best use of those funds, that are available for the purposes of agriculture.

Legislator Crowley read from an email in the backup, and stated it is not clear by that email that Part C funds going towards a salary is the proper use of the funds.

Chairman Ellner questioned Legislator Montgomery as to whether she wanted to see the \$8,000 for S&W Education & Training removed from the budgetary request.

Legislator Montgomery stated it is a tough call, as it has been communicated that there is a need to get the word out and to educate people. She stated she believes having a robust website where people can submit applications is needed. She continued to speak to her ideas of what needs to be in place.

Chairman Ellner agreed that there needs to be a better outreach. He continued and read from the backup.

Legislator Montgomery stated she will make her decision at the final vote, but would not make a decision at that time.

Legislator Addonizio stated maybe we should table the item.

Legislator Montgomery stated she did not agree with that, and she stated putting the money towards a salary is a proper use.

Commissioner of DPW Thomas Feighery stated that it was vetted through the Commissioner of Finance the Legislature's Personnel Committee, last year. He stated also for the record; the person who was in the position previous to Neal Tomann was receiving a significantly higher salary. He stated the County is very lucky to have him. He stated in the research that was done comparing the position to surrounding Counties, it was found that they have a support staff of 4 – 6 people in their Soil and Water Department. He stated Putnam County has a department staff with 1 person and the Soil and Water Department is overloaded. He stated he really dislikes the conversation that was had about a County employee who was present and that employee's salary.

Legislator Crowley explained to Commissioner Feighery stated she just agreed with the comments about pot of money it would be taken from.

Commissioner of DPW Thomas Feighery stated it was fully vetted last year.

Chairman Ellner questioned one more time if any Legislator wanted an amendment to be considered to the proposed Budgetary Amendment 25A024. He confirmed no one did.

Chairman Ellner made a motion to approve Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 25A024/ Release of Soil & Water Conservation District Part "C" Funds for: Education and Outreach Initiatives, A Culvert Inspection Camera and Annual Contribution to Soil & Water Salary; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Legislator Crowley requested Commissioner Feighery provide confirmation that using Part C funding toward said salary was approved in 2024.

Commissioner DPW Feighery confirmed he would do that. *(Email was sent by Commissioner of Finance Lewis on March 21, 2025 To- Diane Schonfeld CC- to the Legislators with confirmation of approved use.)*

Item #7 - Other Business

Legislator Crowley made a motion for Other Business related to the application period for entering into the Putnam County Agricultural District. No Second. Motion Failed.

Chairman Ellner stated there was not a second on the motion. He then stated the Law Department provided correspondence in writing that was sent to all legislators, which stated in summary that the topic should be reserved for a time after the pending litigation is concluded.

Legislator Crowley made a motion to appeal. No Second. Motion Failed.

Legislator Crowley made a motion to reconsider. No Second. Motion Failed.

Chairman Ellner concluded this matter by stating again there has been not second on the motions.

Item #18 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:58 P.M. Chairman Ellner made a motion to adjourn;
Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.