

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

Members: Chairwoman Sayegh and Legislators Birmingham & Crowley

5:30pm

July 28, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested Legislator Birmingham lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Birmingham and Crowley and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 – Acceptance of Minutes – February 19, 2025 & April 28, 2025

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 – Correspondence – County Auditor

a. Sales Tax Report – Duly Noted

b. OTB Report

Legislator Birmingham questioned if this report is necessary since there is no revenue coming in.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated moving forward she can provide the report only when there is a payment received.

Legislator Birmingham questioned how payments would be made as there is no longer a physical location in Putnam.

Commissioner of Finance Michael Lewis stated the revenue is sporadic as they are closing out their operation.

Legislator Crowley stated there is a County Representative, who is also a Legislator, serving on the Catskill Regional OTB Board and perhaps that is no longer needed.

c. Board In Revenue Report

Undersheriff Lindert stated Dutchess County has boarded about 20 inmates over the past few months.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned how long those inmates might be in Putnam.

Undersheriff Lindert stated it fluctuates, but there are 18-20 daily board-in inmates.

Legislator Crowley questioned how Putnam County's board-in rate compares to others in the area. She stated she believed at one point, Putnam was on the higher end.

Undersheriff Lindert stated there are some facilities that are higher than Putnam. He stated the ease of use and transport is also an important factor. He stated Dutchess prefers using Putnam County because it is conveniently located.

d. Transfer/Revenue Report – Duly Noted

e. Contingency/Subcontingency Report

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification on the subcontingency line for outside agencies. She stated on January 1, 2025, it was at \$71,893 but she thought it was going to be \$75,000.

Commissioner Lewis stated as part of the budget process, some of those funds were used toward funding the Libraries.

Item #5 – Correspondence – Commissioner of Finance

a. FYI – Overtime & Temporary Report

Brett Yarris, resident of Carmel, questioned how much of the budgeted overtime has been used this year.

Commissioner Lewis stated 41% of the budget has been used.

Mr. Yarris questioned if that is an overall usage and if there are some departments that have used more than 41%.

Commissioner Lewis stated yes, some have underutilized and some have overutilized.

Mr. Yarris questioned what the process is if a department exceeds their overtime budget.

Legislator Birmingham stated a fund transfer would be necessary and would require Legislative approval. He stated that is a main reason the Legislature receives this report.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the report allows the Legislature to monitor the usage throughout the year.

Legislator Crowley stated there are currently 53 vacant positions that can be used to cover the cost of overtime when necessary. She stated she would rather see these positions filled, but it is a good use of that funding in the meantime.

Commissioner Lewis stated a vacancy control factor budgetary is also done periodically.

b. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A058 – DPW – Purchase Asphalt Grinder (Also reviewed in Physical)

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

c. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A060 – Sheriff – Grant Award from NYS FY22 JAG Program – Purchase Equipment (Also reviewed in Protective)

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

d. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A061 – Sheriff – Insurance Recoveries

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

e. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A062 – Dept. of Social Services – Mental Health – State Aid Passthrough to Provider Agencies (Also reviewed in Health)

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

f. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A064 – Youth Bureau – Correct Budget Lines – Match Revenue to Appropriate Program

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Item #6 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T175 – Purchasing – Telematic Installation in Transit/Planning Fleet (Also reviewed in Physical)

Legislator Crowley questioned if all County vehicles will have this equipment.

Commissioner of Department of General Services John Tully stated yes, they eventually will.

Legislator Crowley stated once the full County fleet has the equipment, it will make a positive impact on the cost of insurance.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 25T175; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Item #7 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T177 – District Attorney – Temporary (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Mr. Yarris questioned if this temporary funding is needed because of a vacancy.

Commissioner Lewis stated there is an employee on leave who is expected to return soon.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Item #8 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T179 – Health Dept. – Personnel for Early Learning Center (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the opening of the Putnam County Early Learning Center has resulted in a savings in transportation costs. She stated these funds are being reallocated to the Early Learning Center.

Legislator Birmingham confirmed that this was being used for personnel only.

Commissioner Lewis stated that is correct.

Legislator Montgomery questioned what the title of the position is.

Commissioner Lewis stated the position is Preschool Program Manager and is a PuMA position.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Item #9 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T189 – Subcontingency – County Contribution – Putnam Recreation Programs & Habilitation (PRPH) (Also reviewed in Rules)

Legislator Crowley questioned how much funding will be left in subcontingency for outside agencies after this transfer.

Commissioner Lewis stated there will be \$47,000 left.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Item #10 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T190 – Health Dept. – Early Learning Center (Also reviewed in Health)

Legislator Birmingham questioned if any of this money will be going to any school districts within the County. He stated if so, he may need to abstain from this vote because the firm he works for represents some of the school districts.

Commissioner Lewis stated he is not aware.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. Legislator Birmingham abstained. Motion carries.

Item #11 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T191 – Health Dept. – Early Learning Center Start Up (Also reviewed in Health)

Legislator Birmingham questioned if these purchases will all be used within the County.

Commissioner Lewis confirmed it is for County use only.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Item #12 – Approval – Authorizing Redemption of Certain Outstanding Serial Bonds

Legislator Birmingham stated some bonds being paid off were entered into when the firm he works for served as bond counsel. He stated he does not believe this presents a conflict and he will be voting on this item but wanted to be fully transparent.

Commissioner Lewis stated as discussed last month, the County has the opportunity to partially or fully pay off certain bonds on January 15, 2025 for the Lake MacGregor (Putnam County Golf Course) property. He stated subsequent to purchasing this property in December 2003, the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) came out with Safe Harbor rules which restricts the County's ability to work with the vendor. He stated the ability to pay off this bond would allow the County to work with the vendor in a similar manner to how it works with the vendor of Tilly's Table. He stated his recommendation, supported by the Administration, is to fully pay off the bonds in the amount of \$4,725,000. He stated utilizing the unassigned fund balance for this payment would be a proper use of those funds. He stated \$3 million has been allocated toward this expenditure and another \$2 million will be taken from the audited financial statements from 2024. He stated this repayment will save about \$500,000 in future interest. He stated the resolution before the Committee this evening gives the Administration the authority to move forward with this process. He stated bond counsel needs to be notified of the County's decision by November 15, 2025, 60 days before the redemption date.

Legislator Birmingham stated he is in favor of repaying the bond. He stated paragraph 3 of the resolution speaks to where the money is coming from, but it is vague. He questioned if this could be made more specific.

Commissioner Lewis stated he will work with bond counsel on that. He stated he drafted a proposed 2026 budgetary for this purpose, which shows that the money would be coming from fund balance.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if a budgetary is necessary, or if it would be included in the 2026 budget.

Commissioner Lewis stated his recommendation is to do this as a standalone because otherwise it will distort the budget presentation by almost \$5 million. He stated he plans on submitting this budgetary to the Legislature for Committee review in December and consideration by the Full Legislature in January.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this would be more transparent to the public to have it in the budget.

Commissioner Lewis stated it would be a standalone budget item.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is important to see how a \$5 million expenditure would affect the budget. She requested clarification on the projects referenced in the third paragraph of the resolution.

Commissioner Lewis stated there are multiple bonds being paid off. He stated at a minimum, the bond for the Golf Course property should be paid off.

Legislator Crowley stated if the County does not take advantage of this opportunity to pay off the bonds, it would cost an additional \$500,000 over the life of the bonds. She stated the County currently has a healthy fund balance that can be used for this purpose.

Commissioner Lewis stated paying it off would also release the County from the Safe Harbor provisions. He stated the County will have less liability and would not be involved in other aspects. He stated the vendor would benefit as well because they could operate more independently.

Legislator Crowley stated the County's insurance cost would go down as well.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the current vendor would continue to operate the Golf Course.

Commissioner Tully stated the proposal before the Committee this evening gives them the ability to issue an RFP (Request for Proposal) without the same restrictions currently in place with the current vendor. He clarified that the current vendor would be able to

submit a proposal. He stated there are currently three (3) contracts in place for the Golf Course property for the golf course management company, the food and beverage management and the general manager.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if there would be multiple vendors.

Commissioner Tully stated it is possible, but having a single vendor would be preferable. He stated the contract with the current vendor has been extended with a new clause in the renewal pertaining to what is being proposed. He stated the County has a good relationship with the current vendor and community members seem to be happy as well. He stated he hopes the current vendor will participate in the RFP process.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she spoke with the current vendor and they are familiar with this process, as they also have golf courses in Westchester County.

Legislator Montgomery stated she does not necessarily agree that it would be beneficial to have the same vendor for golf course management, food and beverage, and the general manager.

Commissioner Tully stated the RFP process allows for single or multiple vendors to be awarded a contract.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the line items in the backup material could be identified.

Commissioner Tully stated it will be included in the response provided.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the \$11,060,000 is all related to the Golf Course.

Commissioner Tully stated no, it is not.

Legislator Birmingham stated when the 2007 refunding bonds were issued, they refinanced multiple prior bonds of the County, which were then combined into one. He stated that is why this bond repayment covers multiple projects.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Safe Harbor rules were established to protect a tax-exempt finance facility from violating federal tax laws. She stated she is not sure if taking away the Safe Harbor rules is a good idea. She questioned what the restrictions are.

Commissioner Tully stated the manner in which the vendor can compensate. He stated the property has to be operated like a business and they can have some incentive payments if they hit certain targets and they can only be paid a managing fee for managing the property.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the County gets the profits.

Commissioner Tully stated yes. He stated from an accounting perspective, the County needs to know where every single dollar goes. He stated under the future arrangement, it is up to the private vendor to ensure they have their fiscal controls in place.

Legislator Montgomery stated the debt from this property is not too bad since the interest rates are incredibly low. She stated she would rather see this expenditure be put toward public transportation or an Early Learning Center on the western side of the County.

Commissioner Tully stated the County will save \$500,000 in interest over the life of the bond. He stated there are a tremendous amount of indirect costs related to the operation of the property.

Commissioner Lewis stated the costs the County is responsible for includes the principal and interest on the bond, the inventory of the Golf Course, and the insurance.

Commissioner Tully stated future capital investments could be made the responsibility of the vendor in the contract. He stated we do not know what the proposals might be until they are received, but it is a function of what the County is willing to provide a potential vendor.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she spoke with the current vendor of the Golf Course and they stated their willingness to make capital investments to the property.

Commissioner Tully stated there are also certain things the County would still want to have oversight on, such as ensuring the resident rate is maintained.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the vendor would be interested in purchasing the property.

Commissioner Tully stated the County cannot sell it.

Legislator Montgomery requested an analysis comparing expected return on investment from restructuring this contract versus paying the bonds.

Commissioner Tully stated it will be speculated, but that could be provided.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the cell tower on the Golf Course property would require the County to enter into a lease agreement with the vendor.

Commissioner Tully stated no, the property where the communications tower is slated will not interfere with the operations of the Golf Course. He stated if it is not completed at the time the RFP is issued, the plans would be disclosed.

Mr. Yarris clarified that the Golf Course property is owned by the County but operated by a private vendor.

Commissioner Tully stated that is correct, there are three private vendors operating there: food and beverage, golf management, and general manager. He stated the County has a tremendous amount of fiscal oversight.

Commissioner Lewis stated there is constant communication with the Golf Course regarding finances.

Mr. Yarris questioned if the fiscal health of the Golf Course would factor into the length of the contract.

Commissioner Lewis stated as presented, it is based upon the current fiscal position of the County as a whole.

Mr. Yarris questioned if the decision to pay off the bond would be impacted by the fiscal health of the Golf Course.

Commissioner Lewis stated if the property were losing money, it would be on top of the bond and interest payment.

Commissioner Tully stated all of those things will ultimately factor into the bids received through the RFP process.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she is in favor of this.

Legislator Montgomery stated it is discussed that the Golf Course is profitable because it is in the black, but that is really not known because the total amount spent since purchasing the property in 2003 has not been provided.

Commissioner Tully stated the financials of the Golf Course have been presented in different ways: with debt service and without debt service.

Legislator Crowley stated she is in favor of this as well. She stated there is some work to be done at the facility, which would be an added expense to the County.

Commissioner Lewis stated paying off the debt will bring the County's debt below \$20 million going into 2026.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the County would also be released from liability once this is paid off.

Legislator Crowley stated the vendor would also be responsible for contracting security for events.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she was unsure about this at first, but the more it has been discussed the more comfortable with it she is.

Legislator Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Item #13 – Approval – Authorization – Legislators to Attend September NYSAC Conference

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Item #14 – FYI – 2025 Real Property Tax Sale – 2016 Tax Liens

Commissioner Lewis stated informational material will be available between August 6th and September 4th and the auction will be held on Friday, September 5th. He stated the County will then begin going into contract with the winning bidders between September 15th and 16th. He stated the ratification of sales will then go before the Physical Services Committee for approval. He stated there are approximately 56 parcels, and if each one successfully sold, it would put at least \$3.2 million back on the tax rolls.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if these 2016 tax liens are the most recent being worked on.

Commissioner Lewis stated yes, he believes a few years are in the courts now and once the County gets the deeds, the process can move forward.

Legislator Birmingham stated the County is paying all the taxes for these properties including the town and school taxes.

Item #15 – FYI – Guardrail & Property Damage Table – Duly Noted

Item #16 – Other Business – None

Item #17 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 6:46pm, Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.