

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

Members: Chairwoman Sayegh and Legislators Birmingham & Crowley

Monday August 25, 2025
(Immediately following meetings beginning at 5:30pm)

The meeting was called to order at 6:36pm by Chairwoman Sayegh who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Birmingham and Crowley and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 – Acceptance of Minutes – May 22, 2025

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 – Correspondence – County Auditor
a. Sales Tax Report

Chairwoman Sayegh stated as compared to the same time period last year, the sales tax numbers are lower.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if all payments for July have come in.

Commissioner of Finance William Carlin stated the payments have come in, but it is important to remember that these numbers are estimated. He stated the quarterly final reconciled number is the actual number. He stated the County is about 6% over budget so far this year.

b. Board In Revenue Report – Duly Noted

c. Transfer/Revenue Report – Duly Noted

d. Contingency/Subcontingency Report – Duly Noted

Item #5 – Correspondence – Commissioner of Finance

a. FYI – Overtime & Temporary Report – Duly Noted

b. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A063 – Sheriff – Co-Response Team – DOJ Grant Award – Vehicle Leasing

Legislator Crowley questioned when this grant expires.

Commissioner Carlin stated it expires in 2026, but was unsure exactly when.

Legislator Crowley questioned if future plans have been made to fund the Co-Response Team since it is currently fully funded by this grant.

Commissioner Carlin stated he will inquire with the Sheriff's Department.

Captain James Schepperly stated the grant is fully funded through 2026.

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

c. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A065 – Sheriff – Utilize Reimbursement for BCI Overtime

Captain Schepperly stated this is reimbursement for an investigator who held a training in New Jersey on detecting drugs in someone's system. He stated this was funded by the Governor's Traffic Safety Counsel.

Legislator Crowley questioned how many Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) the Sheriff's Department has. She also questioned if the DRE is called upon by other agencies and if the Sheriff's Department is reimbursed for that work.

Captain Schepperly stated the Sheriff's Department is reimbursed anytime anyone is called upon by another agency. He stated there is currently one DRE and another deputy is currently in training to become a DRE and will be certified soon.

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

d. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A067 – DPW – ADA Compliant Ramp at County Office Building (Also reviewed in Physical)

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

e. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A068 – Sheriff – Create 2 Special Resource Officer Positions for Carmel Central School District

Legislator Birmingham stated he would be abstaining from voting on this item because the firm he works for represents the Carmel Central School District.

Captain Schepperly stated the Board of Education and Carmel School District Superintendent approached the Sheriff to inquire if it would be possible to provide two additional SROs (School Resource Officer); one in the high school and one in the middle school. He stated after discussions, it was agreed that the Sheriff's Department could assign the SROs if the school district funded them at 100%. He stated this was

included in their budget that passed in the spring and the Sheriff's Department is prepared to provide the officers.

Commissioner Carlin stated the methodology of funding the position 100% changed. He stated 100% used to encompass the salary and benefits. He stated the schools now fund a flat rate of \$90 per hour but the County is responsible for the administrative and supervisory charges, which includes equipment and vehicle costs. He stated he is looking forward and suggesting working with the Sheriff's Department to come up with a comprehensive program and guidelines pertaining to the SROs charges and who is paying for what. He stated the Sheriff decides which officer is assigned to which school, but the Legislature can decide who pays for what.

Legislator Crowley stated if there is a contract that outlines exactly what is being paid for that the Legislature could review.

Captain Schepperly stated the contracts are drawn up by the Law Department. He stated each district has a contract with the County and they are a little different from one another. He stated each SRO is provided with a vehicle to drive to and from the school.

Legislator Crowley stated she would like to see an audit of the contracts, especially if they do not mimic each other. She stated she would like to see a contract with every school district and a line-by-line breakdown so the Legislature knows exactly what is being paid for. She questioned if the vehicles are running all day while the SROs are in the schools.

Captain Schepperly stated the vehicles are off and parked.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the vehicles are leased or owned.

Captain Schepperly stated the SROs utilize older vehicles that are no longer suitable to be used for patrol. He stated these are essentially for transportation only; they are marked vehicles with lights and sirens.

Legislator Crowley requested line-by-line items and all contracts the County has with the schools. She stated she would like to see exactly what the County is paying for and what the differences are in the contracts.

Captain Schepperly stated the contracts outline which entity is paying for each expense. He stated the vehicle cost has not been broken out.

Legislator Crowley stated the officers are trained each year and that cost is not covered by the schools. She stated she would like to see the contracts.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she believes the contracts were provided when the SRO program began but not since.

Legislator Crowley stated it is also important to look at the cost difference of an SRO and SPO (Special Patrol Officer).

Commissioner Carlin stated the SPOs earn an hourly rate without benefits.

Legislator Ellner requested clarification on the budgetary amendment.

Commissioner Carlin stated if these positions are approved, the contract would be for the \$90 per hour rate. He stated any changes contemplated by the Legislature would be implemented for the 2026-2027 school year. He stated he believes there should be guidelines, such as providing the schools numbers February 1st because their budgets are due in May and including an automatic escalator for administrative charges to cover the increase in costs.

Chairwoman Sayegh clarified Carmel Central School District currently has one SRO at each school and are requesting an additional SRO at the high school and middle school. She stated she is always supportive of the safety within our schools. She stated this is a program the County may need to evaluate moving forward.

Brett Yarris, resident of Carmel, questioned if this additional SRO is in response to the recent issues at George Fischer Middle School.

Captain Schepperly stated yes, there were many threat assessments and other issues going on in the school that were unprecedented last year.

Mr. Yarris stated he is a parent of an elementary school child in the Carmel Central School District and he receives emails notifying parents of situations happening in the schools, many of which are in the middle school. He stated he is happy to see this as it feels like an investment in a real problem right now. He stated any way to increase safety is very much appreciated.

Legislator Crowley stated her support for these two positions and restated her request to see the financial breakdown associated with it.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. By poll vote: Two ayes – Chairwoman Sayegh and Legislator Crowley. One abstention – Legislator Birmingham. Motion carries.

f. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A069 – Pass Through Funds for Legal Aid Society

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

g. Approval – Bond Resolution – Authorizing Redemption of Certain Outstanding Serial Bonds (Tabled from August 5, 2025 Full Mtg.)

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she would like Commissioner Carlin to weigh in on this.

Commissioner Carlin stated this is a great idea. He stated the Finance Department has been keeping an eye on the call date of these bonds for many years, since the Safe Harbor rules came into effect. He stated the Safe Harbor rules were implemented by the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) because taxable bonds are great for everybody except the government and IRS. He stated once these bonds are paid off the County will have more freedom in their decision-making pertaining to the Golf Course. He stated this expenditure will be in the 2026 budget in the debt service fund.

Legislator Birmingham stated he is in favor of paying off these bonds and he believes it is a good use of the County's fund balance. He stated he was bond counsel when the original bonds were issued, but there is no conflict in relation to him voting on this. He stated this is a great idea as it will give the County more flexibility.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she is very much in favor of this.

Legislator Ellner stated he questioned the current borrowing rate in the Capital Projects Meeting and learned it was between 4%-5%. He stated some of these bonds slated to be paid off have an interest rate of 2%-3%. He questioned why the County should pay off a bond with a lesser interest rate and borrow at a higher rate.

Commissioner Carlin stated paying off the bonds releases the County from the Safe Harbor restrictions. He stated calling bonds is very rare.

Legislator Ellner requested clarification on the Safe Harbor restrictions.

Commissioner Carlin stated the Safe Harbor rules essentially transfers the risk from the operator of the property to the owner. He stated in this case, the owner is the County. He provided an example of a rainout on a Friday night event at the Golf Course, that loss is on the County. He stated although money will be saved on the interest by paying the bonds early, the main reason to pay off these bonds is to be released from the Safe Harbor provisions.

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

h. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A070 – Pay off Callable Bonds

Legislator Birmingham stated it is important to get this appropriation on the books.

Commissioner Carlin stated the budget will be locked in and will be public record.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the County's bond rating will increase.

Commissioner Carlin stated it would be one of many factors that would be included in the bond rating. He stated the County currently has an excellent bond rating, Aa1. He stated the only better rating is AAA and he believes Rockland is the only County in the state with that rating.

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

Item #6 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T208 – DPW – Golf Course – Insurance Expense through Year End

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the rate increased.

Commissioner Carlin stated it is based on activity, which increased.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if the County would continue to carry insurance on the Golf Course once the bond is paid off.

Commissioner Carlin stated yes, the County will always own the Golf Course so some insurance would be needed.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the insurance would decrease if the County no longer holds the liquor license.

Commissioner Carlin stated specifics on insurance would be best answered by Risk Manager Mat Bruno.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 25T208; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #7 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T218 – Mental Health/DSS – Furniture (Also reviewed in Health)

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 25T218; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.

Item #8 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T220 – Subcontingency – County Contribution – Garrison Art Center (Also reviewed in Rules)

Legislator Ellner questioned if Garrison Art Center submitted their financial documents to the County.

Commissioner Carlin stated if they requested funding through the budget process last year they would have submitted their information.

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

Item #9 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T245 – Subcontingency – County Contribution – CAREERS Support Solutions (Also reviewed in Rules)

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

Item #10 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T249 – Veterans Service Agency – Row of Honor Flags (Also reviewed in Rules)

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

Item #11 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T250 – County Contribution – Subcontingency – Boscobel House and Gardens

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

Item #12 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T251 – County Contribution – Subcontingency – Second Chance Foods

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

Item #13 – Other Business

a. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A075 – DPW – Capital Project – Garage Roof Repair

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Commissioner Carlin stated the engineer's estimate was lower than budgeted. He stated this work needs to be done, without it the building would need to be razed.

Legislator Birmingham stated this is one of the oldest facilities in the County.

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

Item #14 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:22pm, Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.