

**RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
TO BE HELD IN ROOM #318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Birmingham and Legislators Ellner & Gouldman

Monday

August 25, 2025

(Immediately following the Economic Development Mtg. beginning at 5:30pm)

The meeting was called to order at 5:36pm by Chairman Birmingham who requested Legislator Ellner lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Ellner and Gouldman and Chairman Birmingham were present.

Item #3 – Chairman’s Verbal Report

Chairman Birmingham explained why #11 on this evening’s agenda is listed as “Other Business of any Matters Proposed by a Member of the Legislature”. He stated at last month’s Rules Committee Meeting there was confusion pertaining to what “other business” entails on a committee level. He stated historically, it is for any matter to be raised by a Legislator. He stated sometimes there are attendees who sit through a Legislative Meeting thinking the “other business” item is a catch-all. He stated the best way for an item to get onto an agenda is for it to be brought to the attention of the Committee Chair. He stated he will be wording the “other business” similarly on future agendas and encouraged his colleagues to do the same.

Item #4 – Acceptance of Minutes – March 17, 2025

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #5 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T220 – County Contribution – Subcontingency – Garrison Art Center

Chairman Birmingham stated Legislator Montgomery was unable to attend this evening’s meeting but provided her support for this in writing.

Sean Conway, President of the Board of Directors of the Garrison Art Center, stated the Garrison Art Center is a 61-year-old non-profit art school and gallery on the waterfront in Garrison. He stated since their inception they have been utilizing the same building which was built in the 1840’s, which is charming and inspiring, however it has limitations in terms of accessibility. He stated this funding would go toward a feasibility study, the first step in the process of making the building more accessible. He stated this would allow them to make plans for improvements moving forward.

Chairman Birmingham explained the process of an outside agency, or contract agency, receiving funding from the County. He stated the County enters a contract with an

agency that performs a service that the County is unable to. He clarified this allocation is not a grant. He thanked Mr. Conway for his overview and stated his support for this allocation.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if the necessary informational paperwork had been filed with the County during last year's budget process.

Mr. Conway stated he does not believe so, but any necessary information can be provided.

Chairman Birmingham stated the Administration requires specific information be submitted before providing County funding.

Legislator Crowley agreed and stated it is only fair that each agency goes through the same vetting process. She suggested this item be tabled until that information is provided.

Chairman Birmingham stated he believes the information can be submitted and vetted without having to be tabled this evening.

Legislator Crowley stated some agencies had to wait months for their funding. She questioned if this should be tabled for next month, so the Legislators have an opportunity to review the submitted information. She requested that all agencies be treated fairly and go through the same procedure.

Chairman Birmingham stated he is not inclined to table this request this evening. He stated this can be moved forward to the Full Legislative Meeting where Legislators have an opportunity to discuss it again.

Legislator Crowley stated as long as the necessary documents are submitted with enough time to be reviewed prior to the Full Legislative Meeting. She stated it is important that this follows the same review process of the other outside agencies, otherwise she believes the Legislature is doing a disservice to the other agencies.

Chairman Birmingham stated those are fair points. He stated moving it out of Committee this evening allows that process to move forward.

Legislator Ellner stated there has been some turnover in the Finance Department and there is no one present this evening to speak to this, and these documents may already be in the County's possession. He suggested making this contingent upon receipt of the necessary information.

Legislator Crowley requested clarification if the documents have been submitted.

Mr. Conway stated he did not personally submit the documents, the Executive Director may have.

County Auditor Michele Alfano-Sharkey stated nothing was received this year, she would have to check if anything was received last year.

Legislator Crowley stated in order to be consistent, she would like to see this documentation, whether it comes from the Commissioner of Finance or from Garrison Art Center directly. She stated process and transparency are important and requested the documents be submitted with enough time to review prior to the September 2, 2025 Full Legislative Meeting.

Chairman Birmingham stated the Committee will either pre-file the resolution this evening or not. He stated each Legislator can use whatever metrics they wish to make their voting decision. He stated he would like to see the documentation as well and agreed the process should be the same for each agency. He stated he does not see the utility in delaying this tonight.

Legislator Ellner stated the process needs to be fair to the agencies as well as the taxpayers. He stated the required documentation should have been requested once the funding request was put forward. He stated he is in favor of moving this forward.

Legislator Sayegh stated she is looking back at the documents received during last year's budget process and the Garrison Art Center provided the necessary information along with their request for \$9,800. She stated this request was not funded in the 2025 budget.

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

Item #6 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T245 – Subcontingency – County Contribution – CAREERS Support Solutions

Legislator Sayegh stated the required documentation from CAREERS Support Solutions is on file. She stated this agency requested \$30,000 in the 2025 budget process and received \$15,000. She stated this fund transfer would provide that additional \$15,000. She stated this agency was present at last month's meeting to provide an overview.

Brett Yarris, resident of Carmel, stated CAREERS Support Solutions provides vocational training to adults with special needs. He stated this is the type of investment the County should be making in the community. He stated historically, adult workforce development pays off in terms of return on investment. He stated he would like to see even more funding provided in the future, especially when considering the large fund balance the County has. He stated he is thrilled that the Early Learning Center is moving forward and this is the next investment that needs to be made for that community. He stated parents of special needs children share the concern of what will happen to their child when they are no longer here. He stated investments in agencies

such as CAREERS Support Solutions can help ease those fears. He stated often, these individuals have to relocate upon graduation and aging out of school programs to receive necessary support because their home community does not offer any. He stated this investment helps our residents stay close to home and is a wise financial decision due to the return on investment in adult workforce investment.

Legislator Ellner stated CAREERS Support Solutions works with individuals with special needs by providing training and job placement, while continuing to support them. He stated his support for this funding.

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

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

Item #7 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T249 – Veterans Service Agency – Row of Honor Flags

Director of the Veterans Service Agency Karl Rohde stated this will allow them to replace the flags and poles used for the Row of Honor. He stated the flagpoles they currently have are inadequate and DPW (Department of Public Works) spends a great deal of time each year repairing and painting them and they are no longer holding up. He stated the flags being purchased are also better quality so they will not fade or fray as easily. He stated they are also looking into updating the program itself as it is no longer self-sustaining.

Chairman Birmingham questioned how long the Row of Honor program has been in place.

Director Rohde stated that former County Executive MaryEllen Odell started it about 12 years ago.

Legislator Crowley stated her understanding of the Row of Honor process was that the flags would be purchased at \$100 each in dedication to a Veteran and are put back up each year. She questioned if the process has changed.

Director Rohde stated the process has not changed yet. He stated they are going to limit the number of flags to 500; there have been over 600. He stated originally, the flags were purchased once and would be put up indefinitely, however a time limit will now be implemented because it became too costly. He stated they have not yet determined the price or time frame. He stated that since beginning the Row of Honor, every flag has had to be replaced.

Legislator Crowley questioned how the number of flags will be lowered if there are already over 500.

Director Rohde stated there were many complimentary flags put up honoring members of local Veterans agencies that had passed, which can be removed from the total count at this point. He stated there were also some families who purchased multiple flags without realizing the flag would remain.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the purchasers will be notified at the time of renewal.

Director Rohde stated yes, they are thinking about having the flags up for three (3) years after purchase.

Legislator Crowley stated she would like to see a similar program implemented for the Hometown Hero banners to make sure faded or torn banners are replaced.

Director Rohde stated he is working with a widow of a veteran who took his own life and with the help of Legislator Crowley through her other job, he was able to provide flags to his children.

Legislator Ellner stated he purchased a flag for his father when the Row of Honor began and he sees the value in replacing the poles and flags to keep this program going.

Legislator Russo thanked Director Rohde for his hard work for the veterans in our community.

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

Item #8 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T250 – County Contribution – Subcontingency – Boscobel House and Gardens

Abigail Addams, Communications and Marketing Manager at Boscobel House and Gardens stated their funding request is to bolster their Patriots and Loyalists program. She stated this program reaches about 80 schools both in Putnam County and beyond. She stated with this additional funding they would be able to expand their reach, specifically into older grade levels. She stated this funding would also help the program in their celebration of Revolutionary 250 next year.

Chairman Birmingham questioned how many visitors Boscobel gets per year.

Ms. Addams stated they get about 70,000 guests per year. She stated they are also the only museum in the area with a dedicated education team.

Amber Stickle, Deputy Director of Operations and Facilities at Boscobel House and Gardens stated Boscobel is working on reopening following the collapse of their ceiling. She stated they are now in a good place to get their education programming going and this funding would greatly benefit them.

Legislator Gouldman stated Boscobel is a wonderful place.

Legislator Sayegh questioned which schools within Putnam County work with Boscobel.

Ms. Stickle stated prior to the ceiling collapse, they saw every district in Putnam County. She stated their education program is built off the New York State 4th grade curriculum, which focuses on New York State history. She stated their goal is to expand the program to encompass Kindergarten through 8th grade.

Legislator Sayegh questioned if the repairs on the building have been finished.

Ms. Addams stated the building is safe and is open to the public. She stated their tours are "Restoration in Progress" tours as the period furniture and wall furnishings are not yet back in place.

Ms. Stickle stated it is an exciting time because each time people visit it will be a little different.

Legislator Sayegh stated the required documentation has been provided by Boscobel.

Legislator Crowley stated that even the restoration progress is an educational tool, it allows visitors to see how things were once built and how much work goes into preserving and repairing historic structures.

Ms. Stickle stated the ceiling collapse has provided the opportunity to redefine how they share history and architecture. She stated this also allows them to revamp what they have been doing and catch up with technology.

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

Item #9 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T251 – County Contribution – Subcontingency – Second Chance Foods

Martha Elder, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Second Chance Foods, thanked the Committee for their consideration. She stated they have huge presence in Putnam County with 17 distribution points. She stated through May they had distributed 100,000 pounds of groceries and 80,000 meals at no cost to the recipient. She stated they provide meals to residents of local motels, and adult protective services picks up food each week for clients. She stated they have seven freezers throughout the County, and they service six food pantries and soup kitchens. She stated there has recently been inflation on food products, directly impacting the need for these types of services. She stated at the same time, the Federal Government took away \$70,000 of pre-promised funding, which has increased the pressure to meet the needs of the community and make up that lost funding.

Chairman Birmingham thanked Executive Director Elder for her hard work for the people of Putnam County. He stated last September he attended a fundraiser hosted by Second Chance Foods, and the food served there was the food served to their clients, which was delicious and a great way to raise awareness.

Legislator Gouldman stated the work done in the community is great, especially during the COVID pandemic.

Legislator Crowley stated her appreciation for Second Chance Foods. She stated she hopes the funding is restored so support for these clients, especially seniors, can continue. She stated the food truck is also very popular among the clients as well.

Legislator Sayegh thanked Executive Director Elder for her work. She stated she has been surprised by how many people are in need of food; they are from all walks of life. She stated Putnam County has a high ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) population, which means these individuals do not qualify for other services but do not necessarily earn enough to provide for themselves and their families. She stated programs like Second Chance Foods help this population immensely. She questioned what the process is for individuals residing in a motel.

Ms. Elder stated the hotel or motel manager will contact Second Chance Foods to notify them of individuals or families staying there and are in need. She stated homeless individuals automatically get added to their list. She stated for these clients specifically, they make sure the meals provided can be heated up using what is available in a hotel or motel room, usually a microwave.

Chairman Birmingham stated the administrative side of the organization is just as important as the food preparation and distribution.

Ms. Elder stated yes, it is very complex. She stated she invites everyone to come and see the operation in action.

Legislator Gouldman requested that Executive Director Elder provide information on how to stay updated with Second Chance Foods.

Ms. Elder stated their website is <https://secondchancefoods.org/> and they are on social media.

Legislator Russo stated over the years she has donated and volunteered with Second Chance Foods. She stated a lot of work is put into each step of this process. She stated having seen it firsthand, she can really appreciate the hard work.

Ms. Elder stated there are over 400 volunteers each year.

Director Rohde stated Second Chance Foods also supports Veterans Home by providing food and meals. He stated he would also like to highlight that Executive Director Elder will also sometimes get flowers from the supermarkets that would otherwise be disposed of and give them to clients along with their food. He stated the clients are always so touched by this extra gesture.

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

Item #10 – FYI – Litigation Report – Duly Noted

Item #11 – Other Business of any Matters Proposed by a Member of the Legislature

Chairman Birmingham stated Putnam County lost a hero this past Friday, August 22, 2025 when Sheriff Kevin McConville passed away. He requested a moment of silence in his honor.

Item #12 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 6:28pm, Legislator Gouldman made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Chairman Birmingham. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.