

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

**Members: Chairman Birmingham and Legislators Ellner & Gouldman**

**Monday September 15, 2025**  
**(Immediately following the Health Mtg. beginning at 5:30pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 6:26pm by Chairman Birmingham who led 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 reviewed the wording of item #8 – Other Business.

**Item #4 – Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A073 – Veterans Service Agency – Peer to Peer Program**

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

**Item #5 – Approval – Appointment – Electrical Board – Moccio**

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

**Item #6 – Approval – Request for Funding – County Contribution – Subcontingency – Hudson Valley Shakespeare**

Kendra Ekelund, Managing Director of Hudson Valley Shakespeare stated Hudson Valley Shakespeare has undertaken a multiyear capital campaign and construction project to do an ecological reconstruction of the Garrison Golf Course and to construct a permanent open-air theater that will replace the tent that goes up each summer for the season. She stated there will also be picnic lawns and pathways which will be open to the public during the day. She stated the arts are a great driver of economic development; it drives people to live here and travel here. She stated they are very excited to welcome visitors to their site. She stated they previously submitted for County funding for lighting for their ADA accessible pathway which accesses the theater as well as the rest of the grounds. She thanked Legislator Montgomery for bringing this forward at this time.

Chairman Birmingham explained the process of the County contracting with outside agencies. He stated Hudson Valley Shakespeare is a place many Putnam County residents visit.

Legislator Ellner stated this is excellent; ADA compliance is necessary.

Legislator Gouldman stated his support for this.

Legislator Montgomery stated Hudson Valley Shakespeare was gifted the property of the Garrison Golf Course and they essentially created another park in Putnam County. She stated the property which includes pathways through meadows with a view of the Hudson River is open to the public. She stated the open-air theater is desperately needed for Putnam County. She stated she wanted to address the County Executive's memorandum stating that this organization received funding through the Putnam Arts Council. She stated the Putnam Arts Council receives a small amount of money to then regrant to organizations throughout the County. She stated this is an ambitious project that ultimately goes back to the residents of Putnam County through sales tax revenue.

Ms. Ekelund stated around \$7,000 is generated through sales tax from the non-profit organization. She stated the Garrison Restaurant and the Inn at the Garrison is a subsidiary of Hudson Valley Shakespeare and is a for-profit entity that generates about \$350,000 in sales tax revenue to the State each year. She stated they are very grateful to be the recipient of grant funding through the Putnam Arts Council for a project taking place this November.

Legislator Addonizio stated her support for providing this funding, especially for the purpose of making the property ADA accessible.

Legislator Sayegh stated she would like more funding to be provided to the Putnam Arts Council because they work to identify worthy projects to provide grant funding to. She questioned how much funding is left in the line for outside agencies.

Chairman Birmingham stated the funding being considered for Hudson Valley Shakespeare is the remainder of the funding for 2025.

Legislator Montgomery stated she wanted to address the requests made by other agencies for this funding and she stated her intention was to address those agencies that submitted for funding in the 2025 budget process but did not receive any. She stated the request made by Hudson Valley Shakespeare was extensive as the project is very expensive. She stated this contribution is modest compared to what was requested. She stated she hopes to see more funding for these organizations in the County Executive's 2026 tentative budget.

Chairman Birmingham stated a fund transfer for this purpose has not yet been received. He stated a memorandum would be sent to the County Executive requesting that a fund transfer be initiated for this purpose.

Chairman Birmingham made a motion to move this item to the Audit & Administration Committee; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Brett Yarris, resident of Carmel, stated he is not in favor of recklessly spending money; having money is not a good reason to spend it. He stated investing in a public open space typically results in a return of 2x-4x. He stated his support for this investment.

Legislator Sayegh stated her appreciation for the work being done to make this space ADA compliant. She stated she does not believe there are any parks in her Legislative district that are ADA compliant. She stated she has a constituent who is in a wheelchair and is unable to watch his children play soccer on any field. She stated this is so important.

**Item #7 – FYI – Litigation Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #8 – Other Business of any Matters Proposed by a Member of the Legislature**

**a. Approval – Authorization for Intermunicipal Agreement with Westchester County to Organize and Implement Activities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

Chairman Birmingham made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Ellner. All in favor.

Chairman Birmingham stated the firm he works for does work for Westchester County, unrelated to this Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) however in an abundance of caution he will abstain from this item and will appoint Legislator Ellner as Chairman for this item.

Legislator Ellner requested clarification from Senior Deputy County Attorney Heather Abissi, in her role as Legislative Counsel, on what documents specifically are confidential.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Abissi stated everything is confidential, including the resolution until it is entered.

At 6:49pm Legislator Ellner made a motion to go into executive session to discuss the confidential resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. Chairman Birmingham abstained. Motion carries.

At 6:56pm Legislator Ellner made a motion to come out of executive session; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. Chairman Birmingham abstained. Motion carries.

No action was taken.

Legislator Ellner made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. Chairman Birmingham abstained. Motion carries.

**b. Approval – Potential Amendments to the Putnam County Charter and/or Code in Relation to the 2026 Legislative Budget**

Chairman Birmingham stated the 2026 Legislative Budget includes the positions of Legislative Counsel for the majority and Legislative Counsel for the minority. He stated he would like to put a mechanism into place whereby the Legislature can make those positions operational on January 1, 2026. He stated it may require a change to the Putnam County Charter and/or Code. He stated he would like to work with Senior Deputy County Attorney Abissi on this. He stated there are a few places that would need to be addressed. He stated he brings this up now just to put it on the Legislators' radar so this can move forward to be implemented in the new year.

**Item #9 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 7:01pm, Legislator Ellner made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Chairman Gouldman. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Robinson.