

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated they chose Union positions the County is struggling with in terms of recruitment. He stated in his meetings with Julia Culkin-Jacobia he shared the work that had been done previously.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia stated when looking at Management Confidential positions, in addition to the market data the employees' experience, responsibilities of and performance in the position as compared to other surrounding County's same position and job responsibilities were all part of the evaluation.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if there was any Management Confidential position that would be recommended through this study by having the salary decreased.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia stated generally her recommendation is not to decrease compensation. She spoke to her reasons for that.

Legislator Birmingham clarified that he was not advocating that an employee get a pay cut, his question was specific to a position. He clarified and questioned, if there was any Management Confidential position that if it became vacant the salary should be reduced.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia responded that she did not. She stated in some cases where they saw a comp-ratio there was a justification for it.

Legislator Birmingham requested clarification. He stated he thought this study was being done to review the Nurses salaries.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated that was correct. He stated last year during the 2025 budget process he mentioned that they would like to broaden the review. He spoke to some of the factors that served as a catalyst to broaden the scope.

Chairman Jonke stated this started as a study to look into the compensation of the County's nurses. He stated money was put in subcontingency for nursing salaries. He questioned the status of the nursing staff. He stated he would like to know if there is a recommendation regarding the nurses, because he would like to move the funds based on the recommendation if an adjustment is needed.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated there were six (6) Nurse vacancies and there were challenges filling them. He stated they have filled five (5), three (3) of which are being filled in about a week. He spoke to some of the changes that they made in order to attract candidates.

Chairman Jonke questioned what is being done for the nurses who are currently employed.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated the changes that were made in the Grade levels along with the proposed Health Insurance Employee Contribution, which was the next agenda item, will both be beneficial.

Legislator Sayegh stated her appreciation for the information that was compiled and shared. She stated some of the information supported what was suspected and there was new information and findings. She questioned how Putnam County compares to surrounding counties in this type of evaluation.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia responded that Putnam County is doing well. She stated some counties have benchmark positions that are very below market. She stated she found that Putnam County had some below, but not many. She stated again there are so many factors, this review is taken from only one (1) perspective. She stated she believes from a compensation, salary perspective only that Putnam County is in good shape. She stated she believes the new structure offers availability on the management side to make adjustments as needed to attract and retain employees.

Legislator Montgomery expressed her appreciation and stated that this stems from many discussions over many years. She stated she does not see a representation of the employees who she likes to refer to as “boots on the ground”.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia confirmed Legislator Montgomery was referring to the Union positions. She stated the Union positions salary structure is in their collective bargaining agreement. She stated what she traditionally does in reviewing Union positions is to make recommendations if she believes there needs to be a Grade adjustment.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated they have addressed a couple of Union positions that they found needed adjustments and have had them approved by the Board outside the negotiation process.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why Putnam’s Management salaries are comparable with Westchester salaries, yet the Union salaries are not.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated the Management salaries in Putnam County are not comparable with those in Westchester County.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion on the topic.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she is advocating for higher salaries for Putnam County’s “boots on the ground” employees. She stated in her opinion when reviewing the County’s personnel budget, the County is top heavy and the “boots on the ground” employees suffer.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia confirmed that the Management and Union positions in Westchester County are paid significantly higher. She stated that is an example of why the market

median is used in this report, otherwise it would significantly shift the data. She provided some insight into the equation that they used.

Legislator Ellner stated for the past three (3) years it has been a challenge in Putnam County's Health Department to fill the Nurse positions. He stated Personnel Officer Eldridge just reported that there is progress being made, which was good news. He questioned if the following has been included in the evaluation: how long the position was vacant, and turnover for that position. He spoke to the fact that some Departments receive recurring grants which results in Putnam County not having to pay out the money that the grant covers. He stated that he believes Putnam County is competing with Westchester and Dutchess Counties. He stated as he understands it the last few Assistant District Attorneys and Law Department Attorneys left their jobs in Putnam County for positions in Dutchess County for a higher salary. He stated he believes a fair compensation package needs to be arrived at.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia stated the information that was presented in Catapult's report are recommendations for the County to consider as they move forward with this.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge spoke to the challenges faced in filling positions in the Sheriff's Department, Corrections Facility, and Dispatchers.

Chairman Jonke facilitated further discussion.

Legislator Birmingham stated these are very helpful recommendations to use as a tool through the budget process. He reiterated what Legislator Montgomery stated during the budget time he will have a focus on the CSEA employees, because he believes that is where a lot of the retention and recruitment issues are.

Ms. Culkin-Jacobia agreed with Legislator Birmingham that this information is one tool to use in the overall consideration.

Kathy Percaciollo, Nursing Supervisor with the Health Department, stated nurses are an outlier because after COVID, funding was made available and most counties utilized those funds to increase their nursing salaries. She stated three (3) vacancies were recently filled with two (2) nurses starting last week and one (1) this week. She stated in the past, the 8-hour, 5-day work week Putnam County offered was appealing to nurses who would otherwise work three (3) 12-hour shifts per week. She stated this is no longer the case.

Connie McCormack, a new nurse at the Health Department, stated the County nursing positions are in competition with the private clinical positions where the salaries are considerably higher. She stated there is a broad nursing shortage, therefore nurses have the choice of where to go. She stated there are many factors to consider.

Chairman Jonke thanked everyone for their input this evening. He stated this has been one of the most important presentations in his time as Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

Item #5 – Approval – Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee – County Executive – Memorandum of Agreement – Revised Employee Health Insurance Contributions – Four (4) Unions: CSEA, PCSEA, PuMA, PBA – Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge

Legislator Crowley stated she is recusing herself from this item to avoid any potential conflict of interest as her husband is a member of the PBA. She left the room for the discussion of this item.

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

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated the employee health insurance contribution rates are very high and the employees most affected are those with the lowest salaries. He stated the pattern was established, as it was across the State, to have the health insurance contribution decrease with years of service. He stated the longer an employee is here, the more their salary increases, therefore employees who had less years of service and a lower salary were also paying the highest rates for health insurance. He stated the rates currently go as high as 30%. He stated County Executive Byrne assembled the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee (the Committee) to look into rates in other areas within the Hudson Valley. He stated the Committee conducted their review and presented options to the County Executive for consideration. He stated the unions were then approached.

Chairman Jonke questioned when the unions were approached.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated he believes they went to the unions in July.

Chairman Jonke questioned if Personnel Officer Eldridge received the report before July.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated he does not recall when he received it, but he had it for the meeting with the unions. He stated the labor attorneys for the unions were contacted and multiple conversations were had. He stated they reached an agreement with the unions in late August, other than the PBA who were not yet in favor. He stated they met with the PBA separately to go over their concerns. He stated it has been agreed upon that the base level would be a 17% contribution therefore any employee paying more than that now will be reduced to 17%. He stated further reductions based on years of service outlined in the union contracts are still in place. He stated at the advice of counsel they drafted a memorandum of agreement which was signed by all unions. He stated there are 612 positions in the County that work 30+ hours per week; 225 of those employees will see a reduction in their health insurance contribution. He spoke to the history of the County, specifically in 1991 when the County was in poor financial health and had to

make adjustments. He stated during that time, 64 vacant positions were eliminated, 33 employees were laid off, and an early retirement incentive was offered. He stated since that time the County has been in better financial shape and is confident that it will remain in a healthy financial position through the life of these union agreements. He stated they believe this will have a significant impact on the County's recruiting and retention.

Chairman Jonke questioned what the cost of this reduction is.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated there are multiple options provided, however the 17% contribution rate was the one negotiated with the unions. He stated the costs of each option are submitted proposal.

Chairman Jonke stated he believes the employee health insurance contribution rate could have been reviewed by himself, Deputy County Executive Burpoe, Personnel Officer Eldridge, and Commissioner of Finance Carlin over the course of a few hours. He thanked everyone who served on the Committee for their work and volunteerism. He stated the difference between the 15% contribution and 17% contribution is a very small amount; he does not understand why 15% was not chosen.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated the County Executive and Commissioner of Finance believed 17% was the most prudent option for both the taxpayers and employees. He stated this is a significant change; the cost is close to \$1 million.

Chairman Jonke stated he has advocated for this consistently through his tenure on the Legislature and specifically the Personnel Committee. He stated he requested an update on this in August and was told one was forthcoming and then a proposal for approval was sent.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated negotiation with the unions was required.

Chairman Jonke stated a confidential memorandum with a progress update would have been appreciated. He stated the final product was provided to the Legislature rather than allowing Legislators to digest and discuss the information.

Legislator Addonizio agreed and stated she would like to discuss the 15% contribution rate further.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee provided five (5) options. He stated the members of that Committee are present this evening.

Christopher York, former Chief Assistant District Attorney for Putnam County, and Chair of the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee stated when he left the County it was around the time the health insurance contribution rates were increased and he was outspoken about the impact that would have on recruitment and retention. He stated Legislator Montgomery made a good point that the newer employees who make

the least amount in their salary contribute the most to their health insurance. He stated during his tenure in the District Attorney's office he saw the issues it caused with retaining employees and attracting new employees because the salaries themselves were not competitive. He responded to Chairman Jonke's inquiry about why this process took as long as it did and why an update was not provided to the Legislature during this process and he stated it could have sparked outrage among the unions if done so before meeting with them. He stated he understands the frustration and he posed similar questions himself, but learned there are intricacies and protocols that had to be followed to avoid issues. He stated there was some missing data that had to be collected, which took more time than anticipated. He stated County Executive Byrne and Commissioner Carlin are fiscally conservative and want to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money, therefore there was important information to gather before making a recommendation. He stated he personally advocated for the 15% contribution. He stated this is cost effective money spent. He stated being able to attract employees from other locations is vital because they come with experience they could not obtain in Putnam. He spoke to the benefits of retaining employees.

Chairman Jonke thanked Mr. York and the Committee for their work on this.

Cindy Trimble, member of the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee, stated she advocated for the 15% contribution rate as well. She stated she joined the Committee after the work had begun, replacing a member who had left and was impressed by the work that had already been accomplished. She stated she took interest in serving in this capacity because it was brought to her attention by Sheriff's Deputies that they were told they would have opportunity to work overtime, which would offset their health insurance contribution only to find out that overtime was not available to them. She stated her own professional background also leant to her interest. He stated she began working in human resources for New York State in the 1970s and she saw firsthand how the cost of health insurance could directly impact employees take-home pay, especially those earning modest salaries. She stated she had come to fully appreciate the importance treating employees as well as possible, which is in the best interest of the employee as well as the employer in terms of recruitment and retention. She stated when employees are valued, they are happier, more productive, and more invested in their work. She stated the opposite is also true, employees who feel unappreciated begin to disengage and search for other opportunities. She stated the cycle of turnover costs the employer time, money, and productivity. She thanked County Executive Byrne, the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee, and the Legislature for taking corrective action to address this issue.

Commissioner of Finance Carlin stated when the Committee was formed, it was to make recommendations to the County Executive, who ultimately negotiates with the unions and decides on the rate. He stated there is time to look at this in the budget process because this is going to be funded for 2026.

Chairman Jonke stated if the Legislature is interested in changing the rate from 17% he would like to be able to discuss that.

Legislator Birmingham stated the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)s for the unions are marked confidential, however there was an instance previously where the terms of a MOU could be discussed openly. He requested clarity. He stated he is happy with either 15% or 17%; he does not want to make the perfect the enemy of the good. He stated he would like to talk about section 2 on each of the MOUs on record but he is reluctant to do so because they are marked confidential.

Heather Abissi, Legislative Counsel stated it is an executed agreement, however an MOU does not have full force and effect until passage. She stated typically things that are not in an enforceable state are not discussed on record until passed and enforceable.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if the MOUs are subject to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated not until it is approved by the Legislature. She stated if the Legislature were to vote these down, they would remain confidential. She stated they are in a negotiable state until the Legislature chooses to pass it.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if the cost of \$12,401,529 submitted by the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee for the 17% contribution also included Management/Confidential employees.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated yes, it does.

Legislator Ellner stated he has been an advocate for a maximum active or retired employee health insurance contribution rate of 10%. He stated in the proposal he does not see any incentives for people to decline the insurance, and that is a significant portion that can benefit the taxpayer and employees. He stated incentivizing employees not to take the insurance by offering a payout would actually result in savings for the County. He stated there are employees with over 25 years of service who are putting off their retirement because they cannot afford the health insurance. He stated as employees retire, the new employees come in at a lower legacy cost because of the retirement tier.

Ms. Trimble stated the Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee discussed incentives and retirees, however because the project was so large, it was decided to take it on in pieces and the first goal was to reduce the contribution for active employees. She stated potential buyouts and retirees would then be discussed in the future.

Mr. York concurred and stated lowering the contribution was the main focus, and putting it forward in a timely manner was vital. He stated if all the other aspects were worked on as well it could have taken years.

Legislator Gouldman made a motion to approve the proposal at 15%. There was no second.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated there is a minimal buyout available. He stated the vast majority of employees need the health insurance.

Commissioner Carlin stated retiree health insurance cost is increasing exponentially. He stated people are living longer, costs are rising, and number of retirees are increasing and the County cannot outrun the math.

Legislator Ellner requested an analysis be done on the cost savings of a position where a retirement occurred and a new hire came in.

Commissioner Carlin stated it is not a savings; the County would be paying for two (2) insurances.

Legislator Sayegh stated she believes there should have been a Legislative Representative appointed to the Committee. She stated Putnam County's rates are much higher than the surrounding counties so something definitely needs to be done.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if there are currently any employees paying \$0 for health insurance.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated yes, Deputy Sheriffs working more than 13 years pay \$0.

Thomas Regan, resident of Southeast, questioned if there was give and take between the County and the unions.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated the contracts had been recently negotiated and there was a lot of give and take. He stated this was a serious issue in terms of recruitment and retention. He stated a "safety valve" was included for exigent circumstances.

Mr. York stated there was no ill intent by not including a Legislator on the Committee.

Chairman Jonke stated he would like to give this item more thought and discussion.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to table this to the next Personnel Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. By roll call vote: Two Ayes. One Nay – Legislator Gouldman. Motion carries.

Item #6 – Approval – Confirmation Appointment – Commissioner of Finance

Chairman Jonke made a motion to move this item to the end of the agenda; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Item #7 – Approval – Amending Policy for Nursing Mothers (Reso 125 of 2024) – New York Labor Law Section 206–c – Principal Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau

Principal Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated this policy was approved in 2023 when the law was passed. She stated there was recently a change to the law that made the unpaid break a paid break. She stated this is from the Department of Labor.

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

Item #8 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T232 – Health Department – Cover Nursing & Health Ed Overtime for the Remainder of 2025

Fiscal Manager of the Health Department William Orr stated this overtime is for community outreach.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if vaping education will be part of this outreach and if so can Juul settlement money be used.

Public Health Director Rian Rodriguez stated it would be possible; however those funds have not yet come in.

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

Item #9 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T235 – Health Department – Cover Nursing Overtime for the Remainder of 2025

Fiscal Manager Orr stated they believed they would have these nurse positions filled earlier, which resulted in some necessary overtime. He stated now with those positions filled, this transfer should last through the end of the year.

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

Item #10 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T277 – Department of Social Services – Fund DSS Administration Services Overtime and On Call – Commissioner DSS, Mental Health & Youth Bureau Sara Servadio

Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Sara Servadio stated the ratification of the CSEA contract, retro to January 1, 2024 is having a negative impact on the budget in the Department of Social Services, specifically in the overtime and on-call budget lines. She stated the contract now provides a stipend for supervisors, which was not in place before.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if calls have increased.

Commissioner Servadio stated they have, so the amount of times the employee is going out has increased as well. She stated this is for Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, and Child Welfare.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is happy to see this.

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

Item #11 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T283 – To Provide for Vacation Payouts of Employees, Adjust Commissioner of Finance Salary and Provide Funding for Unemployment Insurance through the end of 2025

Chairman Jonke made a motion to move this item to the end of the agenda after item #6; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

**Item #12 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T285 – Bureau of Emergency Services (BES)
– Transfer Needed to cover 911 Dispatch Overtime for Remainder of 2025
– BES Commissioner Robert Lipton**

Commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated they have calculated how much would be needed to cover overtime through the end of the year and this transfer should be sufficient to do so.

Legislator Crowley questioned how many dispatchers there currently are and how many vacancies there are.

Commissioner Lipton stated there are 18. He stated one (1) dispatcher was just hired and there are four (4) vacancies. He stated they hope to fill those shortly.

Legislator Montgomery recognized how difficult it can be to hire personnel, especially boots on the ground employees.

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

Item #13 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T286 – Health Department – Nursing – To Fund Retiree in Temp Line to Assist in Succession Plan and Orienting Replacement Employee to the Position in the Immunization Program – Health Department Senior Fiscal Manager William Orr

Fiscal Manager Orr stated they are looking to hire a recent retiree for 17.5 hours per week to assist with succession planning and orientating their replacement. He stated there is nobody in the immunization program to do the work.

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

Item #14 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T288 – Sheriff’s Office – Civil – Reclassification of an Office Assistant to Principal Account Clerk – Interim Sheriff Brian Hess

Sheriff Hess stated there is a vacant office assistant position that they would like to reclassify to Principal Account Clerk. He stated this will allow the position to assist the Fiscal Manager and will give the Sheriff’s Office the ability to have the Civil Division be accredited.

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

Item #15 – FYI – Fund Transfer 25T254 – Finance Department – Part-Time Clerk for Remainder of 2025

Commissioner Carlin stated this transfer and the next transfer on the agenda are for a part-time employee assisting in Real Property; the funds are coming from two (2) different lines.

Item #16 – FYI – Fund Transfer 25T255 – Finance Department – Part-Time Clerk for Remainder of 2025 – Duly Noted

Item #17 – FYI – Accident Report – Duly Noted

Item #18 – FYI – Incident Report – Duly Noted

Item #6 – Continued – Approval – Confirmation Appointment – Commissioner of Finance

At 8:04pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

At 8:17pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor. No action was taken.

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

Item #11 – Continued – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 25T283 – To Provide for Vacation Payouts of Employees, Adjust Commissioner of Finance Salary and Provide Funding for Unemployment Insurance through the end of 2025

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

Item #19 – Other Business – None

Item #20 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 8:19pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn, Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Beth Robinson.