

**BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
HELD AT THE
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Wednesday

October 1, 2025

12:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested Legislator Jonke lead in the Pledge of Allegiance and Legislator Ellner lead in the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Addonizio, Ellner, Jonke, Birmingham, Crowley and Chairwoman Sayegh were present. Legislator Russo arrived at 12:21 P.M.

Item #4 – Committee to Meet with the County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance to Discuss the Proposed 2026 Budget.

Chairwoman Sayegh explained the purpose of this meeting is for the County Executive to transmit the 2026 Tentative Budget to the Legislature. She stated that pursuant to the Putnam County Charter, the County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance are required to meet with the Budget and Finance Committee within five days after the transmittal of the Tentative Budget, to review that document with the Committee.

Chairwoman Sayegh introduced the Director of Personnel and Former County Executive, Paul Eldridge, who then recognized the Elected Officials in attendance for the presentation.

Chairwoman Sayegh introduced County Executive Kevin M. Byrne to present the Proposed 2026 Budget.

County Executive Byrne presented the (attached) 2026 Executive Budget as required by Section 7 of the Putnam County Charter.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked County Executive Byrne for his presentation of the 2026 Tentative Budget. She asked if any members of the Legislature had any questions or comments.

Legislator Jonke thanked the County Executive for his presentation. He stated that it states that the tax rate will be reduced to \$2.39.

County Executive Byrne said, “yes,” per \$1,000 assessed value.

Legislator Jonke stated that in looking at a random tax bill, the County’s tax rate right now is \$2.34.

County Executive Byrne stated that the budget that was approved is a tax rate of he believed \$2.70, but he could confirm that with Commissioner of Finance William Carlin.

Legislator Jonke stated that it looks like it is an increase over the last year.

County Executive Byrne said, “no.” There is a 20-year history that we provide with the budget every year. He stated that they could provide that 20-year history which would show, not just the tax levy, but also the mill rate. He explained to those who were not aware, Putnam, Dutchess and Orange counties use a mill rate which is based on a rate per \$1,000 of the property’s assessed value.

Chairman Jonke questioned if it was a blended mill rate.

County Executive Byrne said it is the same mill rate formula that we have been using for as long as he could remember in Putnam County.

Legislator Montgomery stated that the presentation gives a thorough outlook of what to expect during the October review of the budget. Legislator Montgomery acknowledged that Legislative Clerk, Diane Schonfeld, would be retiring. She expressed her appreciation, especially as we head into the budget process, for all the work she and her staff have done over the years to assist us in the budget process. She stated that this is her last budget presentation, and we wish her well.

Legislator Montgomery proceeded to read a statement she prepared. She stated that as Legislators, our first and most important responsibility is to ensure that this budget serves the people of Putnam County; the families, seniors, small businesses, workers, and the many not-for-profits and volunteers who hold our community together. She stated that she wanted to approach this budget process in the spirit of collaboration. She stated that the people of Putnam County expected us to work together, and she believed that they deserve a budget that reflects this balance, fairness, and foresight, especially during these difficult times when families are struggling with rising costs and local municipalities are pressed to deliver more services with fewer resources. She explained that as she reviews the budget, she would be looking at several priorities that have repeatedly surfaced in past budgets; transparency, accessibility, sales tax sharing and municipal support. She stated that while she appreciates the actions taken this year in sharing sales tax revenue, she believed that we need to do more. She stated that local governments are on the front lines of providing services and we should treat them as true partners. She stated that her other priority pertains to emergency services and public safety. She stated that EMS is essential, and she believed that adequate funding and support must be a priority, not an afterthought. She believed that past budgets have sometimes been underinvested in long term needs. She hoped that the proposed budget prepares us for the future. She stated that, at times, Putnam County has carried large surpluses without adequately reinvesting them into our community. She stated that while maintaining a healthy fund balance is wise, our responsibility is also to return that to the taxpayer in the form of services and infrastructure improvements that strengthen the quality of life. She stated that she was looking forward to bringing those services to the western side of the County.

County Executive Byrne explained that Legislator Montgomery will find something that will be very helpful from the County Clerk’s office which expands ancillary services.

Chairwoman Sayegh thanked the County Executive for his presentation of the 2026 Tentative Budget. She stated that the Legislature looked forward to reviewing the proposed budget during our Legislative Budget Committee meetings which are scheduled to begin on Monday, October 6, 2025. She stated that the meetings will be held in Room #318 of the County Office Building. She reminded the public to please

check the calendar on the Legislative webpage for the dates and times of the Budget meetings scheduled for this month. She stated that a Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget, as presented by the County Executive this afternoon, will be held by the Budget & Finance Committee of the Putnam County Legislature immediately following the closing of this meeting.

There being no further business, at 1:16 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.