

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE  
HELD IN ROOM #318  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairman Jonke and Legislators Addonizio & Gouldman**

**Wednesday November 12, 2025**  
**(Immediately following the Protective Meeting beginning at 6:00pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Chairman Jonke who requested Legislator Birmingham lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Gouldman and Chairman Jonke were present. Legislator Addonizio was absent. Chairman Jonke requested that Legislator Birmingham sit on the Committee in Legislator Addonizio's absence.

**Item #3 – Approval – Fund Transfer 25T384 – Dept. of Social Services – Overtime through Year End due to Increased Case Loads**

Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, and Youth Bureau Nicholle McGuire stated there have been an increase in cases; just the other night there were five (5) employees working overtime. She stated she is looking to utilize funds from a vacant caseworker position to cover this overtime.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the position has been advertised.

Deputy Commissioner McGuire stated yes, and they are in the process of interviewing.

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

**Item #4 – Overview – County Appointed Legal Defense of Indigents – Commissioner of Finance Carlin**

Commissioner of Finance William Carlin stated the County is mandated to assign and provide a counsel program regarding the defense of indigent legal persons. He stated the County Attorney's Office, the Department of Finance, and the County Executive's Office have been in contact with the State as they develop an assigned counsel plan for Putnam County to review. He stated once that plan is ready, it will come before the Legislature for approval. He stated there are \$374,000 State settlement funds for this purpose annually.

**Item #5 – Discussion – Public Information Officer Stipends – Personnel Officer Eldridge**

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated he would recommend the approval for the stipends for the three (3) Public Information Officers. He stated these stipends were set aside into subcontingency in the 2025 budget.

Chairman Jonke clarified that the positions are in the Health Department, County Executive's Office, and in the Sheriff's Office.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if the responsibility of the Public Information Officer goes above and beyond the responsibilities of the position in the County Executive's Office.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated they are always on call in case of emergency.

Chairman Jonke questioned if the positions in the other department have "communication" in their title.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated no, they do not. He stated the information they provide is related to emergency situations with the information coming from the Bureau of Emergency Services.

Legislator Gouldman stated the public is constantly looking for information and this is a streamlined way to get information out.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated this way accurate information is coming from an appropriate source.

Legislator Sayegh stated she is in favor of releasing these funds. She questioned if there would be an issue with the stipend for the employee in the Health Department because they are in a union.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated that employee will track their time and ensure it stays within overtime provisions as specified in the contract.

County Auditor Michele Alfano-Sharkey stated in order for the funds to be released the Commissioner of Finance will need to prepare a transfer before the end of the year.

Chairman Jonke stated he will send an official request for a transfer to be prepared and considered at the Audit & Administration Committee Meeting.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if there is a job description for the Public Information Officer position. She stated in her experience as administrations change and as department heads change and as politics are involved, the level of information provided also changes. She stated at one point she would receive updates from the Sheriff's Office about things happening in her district, which does not happen anymore. She stated a job description would maintain consistency and open communication.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated the three employees designated as Public Information Officers are going to create policy and procedures and that can certainly be included.

**Item #6 – Approval – Employee Health Insurance Contribution Review Committee  
– MOA – Revised Employee Contributions – 4 Unions: CSEA, PCSEA,  
PuMA, & PBA (Tabled from September Personnel Mtg.)**

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated the County has been facing difficulty pertaining to recruitment and retention. He stated the employee health insurance contribution has been a big issue, particularly with new employees who are coming in at the lowest salaries and contributing the highest percentage, as high as 30%. He stated in his research he has not found any municipality with a higher rate. He stated the family plan costs over \$40,000, making the contribution about \$12,000 per year. He stated realizing this needed to be addressed, County Executive Byrne established a review committee which supported a reduction of the highest amount from 30% to 17%. He stated he believes this will be significant in terms of both recruitment and retention.

Chairman Jonke stated many candidates were lost even with competitive salaries because once they calculated what their actual pay would be, they would go elsewhere. He stated the review committee was formed in June 2024 and he believes this could have been a faster process. He stated he is happy it is finally before the Legislature.

Legislator Birmingham suggested amending the final paragraph to say the contribution “shall not exceed” 17% so employees currently paying less than that are not penalized.

Legislator Ellner stated he would like to discuss figures in the resolution that is marked confidential, therefore requested the Committee go into executive session.

At 6:56pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to go into executive session to discuss confidential information; Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

At 7:01pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to come out of executive session; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor. No action was taken.

Legislator Gouldman stated this is the right thing to do for the employees.

Chairman Jonke stated this was a long time coming and he is happy to get this done before he leaves the Legislature.

Legislator Birmingham made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution with an amendment to the second to last paragraph: “...shall not exceed 17% as it would apply to Management/Confidential employees”; Seconded by Chairman Jonke. By roll call vote: All ayes. Motion carries.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if this will change the employee handbook.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated any necessary changes will be made in the handbook.

**Item #7 – Approval – Local Law Establishing the 2026 Salaries of Certain Appointed Officers Serving for Fixed Terms**

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

**Item #8 – Approval – Local Law Establishing the 2026 Salaries of Certain Elected Officials Serving for Fixed Terms**

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

**Item #9 – Approval – Financial Disclosure List for the Year 2026**

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

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated this list is reviewed each year for any necessary updates. He stated for instance, the Commissioner of Health is no longer on this list and is replaced with Public Health Director. He stated Medical Consultant has been added as well. He stated anyone in an advisory position files a shortened disclosure.

**Item #10 – Approval – Budgetary Amendment 25A107 – Emergency Services – Dispatcher Overtime**

Acting Commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services Ralph Falloon stated they are currently short staffed with 4 vacancies. He stated they have created a trainee position to their dispatch center which allows them to hire employees who may not have all the qualifications of the position. He stated they have had some employees leave for other opportunities and three (3) employees came back, which is beneficial because they already have the necessary training. He stated there is also an employee completing training now.

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

**Item #11 – FYI – Incident Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #12 – FYI – Accident Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #13 – Other Business – None**

**Item #14 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 7:13pm Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn, Seconded by Legislator Birmingham. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Beth Robinson.