

**AUDIT & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM #318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NY 10512**

Members: Chairwoman Crowley and Legislators Regan & Russo

Monday April 27, 2026
(Immediately following Economic Development Committee Mtg. beginning at 6:00pm)

The Meeting was called to order at 8:21pm by Chairwoman Crowley who requested Legislator Regan lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Regan and Russo were present.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to go out of order; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #5f – Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A024 – DPW – Reallocate & Eliminate 2026 County Soil & Water Budget (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Commissioner of Finance William Carlin stated the Soil & Water budget is being zeroed out and the employee is being moved to DPW.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #17 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 26T101 – Finance – Support Agriculture Navigation Program through Cornell Cooperative Extension

Chairwoman Crowley stated Executive Director of Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension Stefanie Hubert sent the requested list of responsibilities related to the role of the Agriculture Navigation Program (Ag Navigator).

Legislator Montgomery stated there was a discussion at an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) Meeting and the Ag Board was not in favor of this position, the Ag Navigator, reviewing the applications for inclusion in the Agricultural District. She stated this was also discussed at a previous Rules, Enactments & Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting and that was agreed with. She stated when the list was received, that responsibility was still listed.

Chairwoman Crowley stated she finds it to be a conflict of interest to have a Legislator sitting on the Ag Board to consider the applications for inclusion in the Ag District and then consider them in Committee and at a Full Legislative Meeting.

Legislator Montgomery stated this was forwarded to the Audit Committee to remove that task of reviewing applications. She stated she sits on the AFPB to represent the Legislature.

Commissioner of Planning Barbara Barosa stated the language pertaining to “intake” was removed. She stated the task of advising farmers that they have the ability to apply for inclusion in the Ag District was left in, which has no involvement in the application process itself. She stated the Ag Navigator would not be working directly with the AFPB.

Legislator Birmingham stated he believes confusion might stem from some of the wording of the responsibilities. He stated for instance, the first bullet point reads “Coordinating AFPB initiatives...” which gives a supervisory connotation. He stated it is important to differentiate that the activities done through the Ag Navigation Program are done so independently from the AFPB.

Cassandra Roth, Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board Chair and AFPB Member, stated the Ag Navigation Program is intended to support existing programs at Cornell Cooperative Extension. She stated it is not to duplicate roles, but to work in collaboration with the AFPB.

Commissioner Barosa stated the AFPB reports to the Legislature and has different tasks established by the State, however the AFPB is comprised of volunteers and County officials, such as herself, with other work to do and cannot dedicate full time to helping the farming community. She stated the list of responsibilities should be comprehensive enough that the person in this role can help the farming community; it is not meant to take over for the AFPB, but rather to assist the community.

Chairwoman Crowley stated the responsibilities can always be amended in the future and suggested reviewing the program annually.

Legislator D'Angelo requested clarification about Cornell Cooperative Extension's involvement with the AFPB.

Chairwoman Crowley stated a representative from Cornell Cooperative Extension serves on the AFPB and listed the other members of the AFPB.

Legislator Sayegh stated when this was first discussed she was under the impression that the Navigation Program would be a resource where people could be referred for assistance, without stepping on the toes of the AFPB. She suggested a change to the second bullet point on the list provided: *“Conducting farmer outreach, facilitating access to funding and technical resources, referring to the AFPB ~~assisting aspiring farmers~~ to correctly and efficiently file applications with the Board for inclusion in the Putnam County Agricultural District, and supporting engagement with County programs and boards.”* She stated she does not believe it should be the responsibility of Cornell Cooperative Extension to assist with applications. She suggested a change to the fourth bullet point as well: *“Reviewing agricultural policies and local laws (in consultation with the Law Department) to support economic viability and long-term sustainability of farming for consideration by the Legislature.”*

Commissioner Barosa stated it would still be the referral of the Planning Department.

Legislator Sayegh stated she believes the fifth bullet point, *“Tracking outcomes, preparing and presenting an annual Agriculture Navigation report, communicating findings with Administration and partners, and providing occasional testimony to the County Legislature on*

matters related to agriculture and Board activities.”, seems to be in conflict with the AFPB and questioned how it might differ from AFPB activities.

Chairwoman Crowley stated the person would be on the AFPB as well.

Legislator Sayegh stated this would give that member more power than the rest of the members on the AFPB.

County Auditor Michele Sharkey stated once this resolution is approved, this list of responsibilities will be added into the contract for Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi stated she believes this was taken out, but just for clarity, if the person were to be advising the public it would then be a conflict for them to similarly advise the Legislature.

Legislator Regan stated this was discussed last month and objections were made, which were subsequently addressed yet this is still being discussed. He stated this is moving at the speed of government.

Legislator Birmingham stated this list of responsibilities will be added into the contract. He suggested the following amendment to the fifth bullet point: *“Tracking outcomes, preparing and presenting an annual Agriculture Navigation report, communicating findings with Administration and partners, and providing occasional testimony to the County Legislature on matters related to agriculture ~~and Board activities.~~”* He stated including “and Board activities” puts a step between the Legislature and the AFPB, which the Legislature appoints. He stated he would rather free up this position’s time and not have them be the go-between; there is a Chair of the AFPB for that. He requested clarity on what *“Coordinating AFPB initiatives”* refers to in the first bullet point.

Executive Director of Putnam County Cornell Cooperative Extension Stefanie Hubert stated having one (1) person from the AFPB act as the “point person” to have things run more smoothly and efficiently.

Legislator Birmingham stated this is different than what he thought after the discussion at the Rules Committee Meeting. He stated he may like to further define some of the items listed.

Chairwoman Crowley stated it can be passed in concept this evening and the list can be amended per the suggestions made earlier this evening.

Legislator Birmingham stated to supplement that, he would want the AFPB to provide their input in drafting the resolution if this position is to impact the Board in any way. He stated it could be done by adding “to the extent requested by the AFPB” which would put them in control.

Legislator Regan disagreed with passing this in concept.

Chairwoman Crowley stated it would only be passed in concept out of Committee this evening; the final document would be included on the agenda for the Full Legislative Meeting.

She stated she would like to see this move forward so the program can begin to assist with the busy season coming up.

Legislator Regan stated he believes passing things in concept is a dangerous precedent to set.

Brett Yarris, Carmel resident and Vice Chair of the SWCD Board stated Cornell Cooperative Extension provides an important service to Putnam County across many areas and this discussion is not a reflection on Cornell itself. He stated that the conversation is about the slow, dysfunctional, and problematic agricultural process in Putnam County. He stated that it was this Legislature that went multiple years without approving any farms into the Agricultural District, despite the advice of the AFPB and it was this Legislature that removed the AFPB Chairperson, creating further dysfunction and chaos. He stated that while the SWCD was under the purview of the County and this government, it contributed significantly to the dysfunction and delays, but he stated that those issues have since been corrected. He stated the AFPB is now a functioning board and the SWCD now has a full functioning board that is properly and statutorily put together. He stated the SWCD Board is actively hiring a district technician, which would perform many of the duties being considered this evening.

Chairwoman Crowley stated the AFPB wrote a letter in favor of the Agricultural Navigation program.

Mr. Yarris stated he crafted that letter however what is before the Legislature today is drastically different. He stated that the letter was crafted with specific language supporting the expansion of existing educational programs. He stated that during that SWCD Board Meeting, he directly asked the Cornell employee whether the proposed functions would overlap with existing SWCD responsibilities or the duties of the AFPB and the answer to both questions was no. He stated the SWCD Board then drafted the letter that was sent. He stated he attended the April 14, 2026 Rules Committee Meeting where he explained why he supported the letter that was sent and his support for Cornell receiving the \$25,000. He stated that he made this clear because, as said in the AFPB meeting, the funding would not interfere with SWCD responsibilities or the AFPB, and he stated that he supported moving forward because Cornell urgently needs the money to continue its vital work. He stated at that meeting none of his statements were objected to therefore he is surprised that what is currently before the Legislature is in contradiction to what was originally drafted. He stated this only adds to the ongoing dysfunction and chaos that has surrounded the agricultural community in Putnam County. He stated they were on their way to fixing it and Cornell is a big part of that effort, however it does not make sense to have this position report to the Legislature on behalf of the AFPB. He stated the AFPB has a Chair and is the Legislature's Board. He stated his concern about the contradiction between what was originally submitted versus what is in front of the Legislature this evening.

Commissioner Barosa stated she does not believe Cornell Cooperative Extension meant to contradict what was discussed at the Rules Meeting as far as taking over AFPB responsibilities. She stated a lot of the discussion was about intake and the application process, which are responsibilities of the AFPB. She stated general assistance with farming and agriculture is needed beyond what the AFPB can offer. She stated the AFPB is made up of volunteers and has a specific role in regard to the Agricultural District and advising the Legislature but they do not have technical expertise on teaching farmers how to farm.

Legislator Montgomery suggested striking all the bullet points and approving this as advancing agriculture support services in Putnam County by contracting with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated the contracting branch of government can set forth the terms. She stated right now, the interplay is between the AFPB and Cornell Cooperative Extension so to the extent that the Legislature would like input, now is the time to set those terms before it goes to the Executive Branch.

Legislator Birmingham suggested a negative appropriation, which would earmark money with restrictions on what it can be used for. He stated it could be restricted in way that states no money shall be spent for the AFPB without the request of the AFPB. He stated drafting the resolution this way would require the contract to be drafted as so.

Commissioner Carlin clarified that Legislator Birmingham's intention is that funds can be spent to advance agricultural services but cannot be spent for the AFPB without their request.

Legislator Birmingham stated that is correct. He stated the AFPB could go to Cornell Cooperative Extension to request assistance without going before the Legislature.

Ms. Roth stated her support for Legislator Birmingham's suggestion.

Executive Director Hubert stated Cornell Cooperative Extension could certainly do that and made clear that they are not duplicating services.

Commissioner Carlin stated this money could go toward the technical assistance Commissioner Barosa has said is needed.

Legislator Birmingham stated yes, the only restriction he would like to place on the funds is when there is an overlap with AFPB.

Legislator Sayegh stated these boards turn over quite a bit and any training available through Cornell Cooperative Extension would be beneficial.

Chairwoman Crowley stated yes, as long as that is requested by the AFPB. She stated she believes this would solve many of the issues. She questioned if there are outstanding matters where assistance is needed.

Commissioner Barosa stated the main one will be the Farmland Protection Plan. She stated they had a meeting with the SWCD Board, the Chair of the AFPB, and a representative from New York State Agriculture and Markets. She stated they discussed the Farmland Protection Plan which opens in June. She stated she is also in the middle of two (2) other plans, and she could really use assistance from Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated it is important to address that plan is a main AFPB function. She stated the suggestion of a negative appropriation would put the decision to provide that assistance in the hands of the AFPB. She stated there is potential to hamstring Commissioner Barosa from obtaining the assistance she needs.

Commissioner Barosa stated the AFPB is involved in an advisory capacity, but they are not the ones working with the consultant. She stated while the AFPB approves the plan before sending it to the Legislature, it is not their plan.

Chairwoman Crowley stated there are two (2) options here: call the question as-is or take the suggestions made this evening into consideration.

Legislator Regan made a motion to table this item to be amended and re-considered next month. There was no second. Motion fails.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution as-is. There was no second. Motion fails.

Chairwoman Crowley requested Legislative Counsel Abissi draft a resolution incorporating Legislator Birmingham's suggestion of a negative appropriation be drafted.

Legislative Counsel Abissi requested clarification.

Legislator Birmingham stated it would be to appropriate \$25,000 from subcontingency with a provision that any funds spent on the AFPB can only be done so with the request and approval of the AFPB. He stated that will be in the contract as well.

Legislator Addonizio stated the Legislature received an email from the AFPB and requested that their suggestion be incorporated.

The Legislature and Legislative Counsel Abissi continued to discuss the logistics of composing the resolution.

Chairwoman Crowley read the proposed resolution into the record.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo.

Legislator Regan stated the amendment was not introduced.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to amend the resolution incorporating what was read into the record; Seconded by Legislator Russo. One Nay – Legislator Regan. Motion carries.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the resolution as amended; Seconded by Legislator Russo. One Nay – Legislator Regan. Motion carries.

Item #16 – Approval for Signature – Fund Transfer 26T098 – Dept. of General Services – Monthly Copier Chargeback

Chairwoman Crowley stated rather than sign this as Chair of the Audit & Administration Committee she requested an explanation in Committee so all Legislators entered the budget process with an understanding of it.

Commissioner of the Department of General Services John Tully stated when the budget for the copiers was submitted, the RFP had not yet been awarded. He stated there were sufficient funds in all budget lines for the first quarter of the year, however they saw there would be deficits in some lines and surpluses in others when they forecasted out a few months. He stated this transfer reallocates the funding approved in the budget last year to get the departments through the end of the year accurately.

Chairwoman Crowley thanked Commissioner Tully for the explanation.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 26T098; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #3 – Acceptance of Minutes – January 28, 2026

The minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4 – Correspondence – County Auditor

- a. **Sales Tax Report** – Duly Noted
- b. **Board In Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- c. **Transfer/Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- d. **Contingency/Subcontingency Report** – Duly Noted

Item #5 – Correspondence – Commissioner of Finance

- a. **FYI – Overtime/Temporary Report**

Commissioner Carlin stated next month the snow and ice overtime will be filled from contingency.

- b. **Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A019 – Emergency Services – Additional Costs for Fire Training Center (Also reviewed in Protective)**

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

- c. **Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A021 – Veterans Service Agency – Peer to Peer Program Funding Awarded to Putnam County (Also reviewed in Rules)**

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

- d. **Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A022 – Sheriff – Record Remaining Expenditure and Revenues (Also reviewed in Protective)**

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

e. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A023 – Health Dept. – Performance Incentive Initiative Award (Also reviewed in Health)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

g. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A025 – Finance – Account for ARPA Spending through 03/31/2026

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

h. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A027 – DPW – Fund Costs of Bridge 5 Project along Maybrook Bikeway – Village of Brewster (Also reviewed in Physical)

Legislator Birmingham questioned if this is coming out of the Fund Balance and if so, there would be a fiscal impact.

Commissioner Carlin stated yes, it would have a fiscal impact, that will be revised.

Legislator Birmingham clarified that the County has a capital reserve in the fund balance, not a capital project line.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is correct.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

i. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A029 – DPW – Fund SWIMS (Statewide Investment in More Swimming) Grant Program (Also reviewed in Physical)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

j. Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A030 – Sheriff’s Office – Receipt of Grant Awards – Special Victim’s Unit Facility (Also reviewed in Protective)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #6 – Approval for Signature – Fund Transfer 26T054 – Sheriff’s Office – Corrections – Kitchen Utensils (Also reviewed in Protective)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 26T054; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #7 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T055 – Sheriff’s Office – Reallocation from Senior Office Assistant to Principal Office Assistant (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #8 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T067 – Health Dept. – Early Learning Center – Move Funds from Itinerant Services to Care at Private Institutions (Also reviewed in Health)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #9 – Approval for Signature – Fund Transfer 26T069 – Probation – Education and Training (Also reviewed in Protective)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 26T069; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #10 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T070 – Real Property – Increase Part Time Position from 25 hours to 30 hours per Week (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #11 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T071 – Dept. of Social Services – Cover Mandated Child Protective Services Overtime (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #12 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T084 – Finance – Increase District Attorney Salary pursuant to Judiciary Law 183-a (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #13 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T094 – Dept. of Social Services – Temporary (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #14 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T095 – Health Dept. – Reorganization Effective May 1, 2026 – Create New Positions of Deputy Public Health Director and Environmental Health Aide – Title Change from Grade 5 Office Assistant to Account Clerk II (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #15 – Approval – Budgetary Transfer 26T096 – DPW – Fund Capital Projects 20CP04, 25CP02 & 26CP01 (Also reviewed in Physical)

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Item #18 – Approval – Semi-Annual Mortgage Tax Report – October 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Item #19 – FYI – Deposit & Investment Policies – 1st Quarter Ending March 31, 2026 – Duly Noted

Item #20 – Other Business – None

Item #21 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 10:02pm, Chairwoman Crowley made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Russo. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by Deputy Clerk Beth Robinson.