BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512

Tuesday June 2, 2026
(Immediately Following the Regular Meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 7:59pm by Chairman Birmingham who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. He requested that Legislator Regan lead in the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Russo, D'Angelo, Regan, Crowley and Chairman Birmingham were present. Legislator Addonizio and Legislator Sayegh were absent.

Item #4 – Discussion – Regarding Resolution #85 of 2026 – Update RFP – Special Audit

Chairman Birmingham stated that County Auditor Michele Sharkey worked with the Department of General Services, who prepared a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the special audit of Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) funds dating back to 2018. He stated that Resolution #85 of 2026 was incorporated into the RFP to establish the scope of the audit. The RFP was expected to be issued on June 3, 2026, with responses due in early July, but no later than July 15, 2026.

Cassandra Roth, Chair of the Putnam County SWCD Board, asked about the anticipated timeline for reviewing the proposals, awarding the contract and beginning the audit.

Chairman Birmingham explained that, pursuant to Article 2 of the Putnam County Charter and Resolution #85 of 2026, the Legislature would select the auditor. He stated that he hoped to call a Special Full Legislative Meeting in mid-to-late July to award the contract and consider the necessary budgetary amendment. He added that the Legislature would evaluate the firms' qualifications, cost and ability to complete the audit in a timely manner. He welcomed Acting Commissioner of Finance Alexandra Gordon and requested an update regarding the records required by Resolution #85 of 2026. He provided an overview of Resolution #85 including a response received from the former Commissioner of Finance. He requested an explanation as to why some records may not be immediately available.

Acting Commissioner Gordon stated that SWCD funds had been pooled within a County trust account and tracked through financial records rather than maintained in a separate bank account. She stated that she would investigate the availability of records dating back to 2018 and would cooperate with the auditor selected by the Legislature.

Chairman Birmingham stated he would expect there should be a way to access the ledgers with the auditors. He stated until this year there had been a Department of Soil & Water which was responsible for leveraging State dollars for County programs.

Legislator Montgomery asked whether the Finance Department could begin gathering the requested records before the auditor was retained.

Acting Commissioner Gordon stated that she would begin locating the available bank statements, resolutions and other supporting documentation, noting that many of the

records predated her tenure. She explained that through the audit, documentation supporting expenditures and the manner in which the funds had been maintained would be requested.

Chairman Birmingham stated that the review could identify issues arising from legislative resolutions and County practices extending back many years. He requested that the Finance Department review the Legislature's request to the former Commissioner in April and assemble the available records so the auditor could begin work promptly.

SWCD Chair Roth stated that the District had not received the records and cooperation it had requested during the prior year. She described her review of historical documents concerning the 1993 consolidation of the SWCD with the County Planning Department and stated that she had located legal opinions questioning that arrangement. She also discussed funds transferred to the SWCD without a detailed accounting, missing operational records and concerns regarding agricultural assessment documentation. She emphasized that Resolution #85 of this year required the records to be provided to the SWCD and that they should not have to wait for completion of the audit. She stated there was a wire transfer for a substantial amount of money and she has been unable to find an accounting record of it.

Brett Yarris, Vice Chair and Treasurer of the Putnam County SWCD , stated that the SWCD Board members have continuously sought a complete accounting of SWCD funds and that the deadlines established by Resolution #85 had passed. He asked what mechanism was available to ensure compliance and emphasized that the requested records were needed for the SWCD to meet its fiscal responsibilities. He commended David Vickery for his volunteer service to the SWCD and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. He stated Mr. Vickery is resigning and he will be missed.

Chairman Birmingham thanked the SWCD representatives for their service and patience. He stated that the selected auditor would work directly with the SWCD leadership to identify the areas requiring review and to determine whether the SWCD had received all funds to which it was entitled under State law.

Item #5 – Consideration and/or Adoption of the 2027 Decentralized Budget Process

Chairman Birmingham explained that the Decentralized Budget Review Process is adopted annually to establish the Legislature's policy and guidelines for preparation of the tentative budget. He stated that the Legislature was required to provide the guidelines to the County Executive no later than July 15, 2026 and since not all Legislators are present he would like to postpone this item. He drew the Committee’s attention to Section E, Item 23, which speaks to the tentative budget information being presented to the Legislature without alteration so the Legislature could compare each department's request with the County Executive's Tentative Budget and understand the reasons for any differences.

Chairman Birmingham made a motion to table the item to a Special Budget & Finance Committee Meeting the following week; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Legislator Gouldman requested that the Special Budget & Finance Committee Meeting be held on June 9, 2026, due to a potential scheduling conflict later in the week.

Chairman Birmingham agreed to schedule the meeting for June 9, 2026.

DECENTRALIZED BUDGET REVIEW PROCESS – 2027

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A. PROPOSAL SUMMARY:

The review and adoption of the annual budget is among the most important functions of the Putnam County Legislature. The various Committees of the Legislature have increasingly important roles in this approach. The respective Committee Chairs and all members of the Legislature also are called upon to contribute their expertise in several capacities.

The Budget Adoption Process for the 2027 fiscal year effectively began on March 2, 2026 at which time the County Executive filed his Annual Report on the State of the County. In addition, the various Department Heads by such time had submitted a written report detailing the activities of their unit of government.

Pursuant to Section 7.04 (A) of the County Charter, on or before July 15th, the County Legislature must notify the County Executive in writing of the policy and practice guidelines for determining expenditures, limits and priorities for the ensuing annual operating budget.

By July 15th, the County Executive shall notify, in writing, the head of each administrative unit of County government or authorized agency receiving County funds of the form of, and information to be contained in the estimates and appropriation requests *<u>and shall include the policy and practice guidelines as may be provided by the County Legislature for determining expenditures, limits and priorities</u>*.

Pursuant to Section 7.04(A)(5)(b) of the County Charter, the Tentative Budget shall be filed with the Clerk of the County Legislature by the 1st day of October and shall *<u>include the policy and practice guidelines as may be provided by the County Legislature for determining expenditures, limits and priorities.</u>*

B. COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Each committee shall meet in a timely fashion and consider the various departmental budget requests under its overview.

It shall schedule and obtain necessary information from the Executive Branch at its Committee deliberations and produce a brief and concise written report on its recommendations.

Care should be taken by the Chair to be certain that the Committee records a reason or rationale behind each recommendation. Failure to disclose a reason or rationale behind a recommendation to amend the tentative budget usually results in unnecessary delay and discussion. Observance of these responsibilities will benefit the Full Legislature in its deliberations on the suggestions of each Committee.

C. RELEVANT BUDGET DEADLINES PURSUANT TO THE PUTNAM COUNTY CHARTER

- i. **BUDGET DUE: Section 7.04 A(5b) – By the 1st day of October the County Executive shall submit the Tentative 2027 Fiscal Year Budget to the Clerk of the Legislature by 5:00 P.M. Recommended date – October 1, 2026 (THURSDAY).**
- ii. **Tentative Budget posted on the County Internet Website by 5:00 P.M. Recommended date – October 2, 2026 (FRIDAY)**
- iii. **BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETS WITH THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE: Section 7.04 B(2) – Within five (5) days after the transmittal of the Tentative Budget of the County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance shall meet with the Budget and Finance Committee to review the Tentative Budget. Recommended date – October 5, 2026 (MONDAY) – at 7:00 P.M.**
- iv. **BUDGET AND FINANCE HEARING: Section 7.04 B(3) – The Budget and Finance Committee shall conduct a Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget with the County Executive and Commissioner of Finance present to answer questions. Recommended date - October 5, 2026 (MONDAY) – at 8:00 P.M.**
- v. **COMMITTEE REVIEW: Section 7.04 B(3) – After the Public Hearing, the Budget and Finance Committee shall review the Tentative Budget as submitted by the County Executive. Recommended dates for Sub-committees are October 7th through October 16, 2026. The Full Budget and Finance Committee will meet on October 20, 2026 (TUESDAY) to review the Tentative 2027 budget.**
- vi. **COMMITTEE ACTION: section 7.04 B(3) – On or before October 24, 2026 the Budget and Finance Committee shall file with the Clerk of the Legislature its report on the Tentative Budget and shall include any recommendations made by the Committee. Recommended date for this action is October 23, 2026.**
- vii. **LEGISLATIVE HEARING: Section 7.04 B(4) – On or before the 26th day of October, the County Legislature shall conduct a Public Hearing on the Tentative Budget and the Report of the Budget and Finance Committee. Recommended date: October 26, 2026 (MONDAY) at 7:00 P.M.**

viii. **LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION: Section 7.04B(5) – Prior to the thirty-first (31st) day of October, the Legislature shall commence consideration of the annual budget. Recommended dates: October 27, 2026 (TUESDAY) to October 30, 2026 (FRIDAY).**

ix. **BUDGET ADOPTION: Section 7.04 B(6) – If a Budget has not been adopted on or before November 1, 2026, the Tentative Budget as submitted by the County Executive shall be the Budget for the ensuing fiscal year. Recommended date: October 29, 2026 (THURSDAY).**

x. **DELIVERY TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE: Section 7.04B(7) - Within three (3) business days following the adoption of the annual budget, the Clerk of the Legislature shall forward to the County Executive the changes made to the tentative budget.**

xi. **EXECUTIVE VETO: Section 7.04 B(7) – The County Executive shall approve or veto any or all changes by line item and return the same to the Clerk of the Legislature by the 9th day of November, as the 8th of November is a Sunday.**

xii. **LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION: Section 7.04 B(8) – The Legislature shall convene on or before November 16th for the purpose of reconsidering each vetoed item, as the 15th of November is a Sunday.**

TO BE ADOPTED FOR ACTION:

D. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

The Clerk of the Putnam County Legislature shall advertise in a timely fashion during the month of September for the public hearing to be held according to Action iv above and during the month of October for the public hearing to be held according to Action vii above.

1. **The County Executive will be submitting the Tentative Budget to the Clerk of the Legislature on or before October 1, 2026.**
2. **All Legislators should be present to discuss the Tentative Budget with the County Executive at the meeting held with the County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance.**
3. **All Legislators should be present to observe and participate at the public hearing on the Tentative Budget. The County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance shall be present to answer questions about the Tentative Budget.**
4. **It is recommended that the above two separate actions be conducted on October 5, 2026, as follows:**
   Legislators meet with the County Executive at 7:00 p.m.
   Public Hearing will be held by the County Legislature at 8:00 p.m.
5. **Between October 7, 2026, and until October 16, 2026, each Committee, including:**
   a. **Economic Development**
   b. **Health**
   c. **Personnel**
   d. **Physical**
   e. **Protective**
   f. **Rules**
   g. **Audit**

shall meet and consider the budgets as defined under that particular Committee's responsibilities and submit a concise, written report of changes, exceptions, additions and comments to the Clerk, including the reasoning behind each recommendation.

6. **The Budget and Finance Committee will meet on October 20, 2026 (TUESDAY) to consider and adopt the various Committee Reports. The Budget & Finance Committee shall file a report with the Clerk of the Legislature by October 23, 2026 (FRIDAY).**
7. **Legislature shall hold its Public Hearing on October 26, 2026 (MONDAY) at 7:00 P.M.**
8. **The County Legislature shall meet during a period beginning on October 27, 2026, and if necessary, through October 31, 2026 at the call of the Chair of the Legislature, to consider all recommended actions and to adopt the budget. In all cases, it shall be the responsibility of the various committee Chairs to see that all majority recommendations of the Committee are considered by the Full Legislature.**
9. **In any case, the budget must be adopted by November 1, 2026.**
10. **Within three (3) business days of budget adoption, the Clerk will deliver the budget and changes to the County Executive for approval or veto.**
11. **The last day for the County Executive to veto the budget resolutions is November 9, 2026 (MONDAY), as the 8th of November is a Sunday.**
12. **Upon receipt of a veto message by the County Executive, the County Legislature shall convene on or before November 16, 2026 (MONDAY) to consider each specific veto and shall vote to sustain or override each separate question, as the 15th of November is a Sunday.**

E. GUIDELINES TO THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADOPTED BY THE LEGISLATURE FOR DETERMINING EXPENDITURES, LIMITS AND PRIORITIES:

1. **In the Tentative Budget submission, the term "Capital Project" as used in Section 7.05 (a) of the Putnam County Charter shall not include the routine repairing and re-surfacing of highways and routine repair of guardrails (guiderails) nor shall said routine repairs be subject to long term bonding and that such routine repairs shall be included in the Operating Budget. The Capital Projects Committee shall determine which requested projects meet the criteria to be defined as a Capital Project as set forth above, and their recommendations will be included in the applicable operating and capital budget procedures contained within the Putnam County Charter.**

2. **In the Tentative Budget submission, the term "Capital Projects" so used in Section 7.05 (a) of the Putnam County Charter shall not include replacement of existing equipment and machinery, and that such replacement shall not be included in the Operating Budget. The Capital Projects Committee shall determine which requested projects meet the criteria to be defined as a Capital Project as set forth above, and their recommendations will be included in the applicable operating and capital budget procedures contained within the Putnam County Charter. A detailed narrative identifying the preceding five (5)**

year's Capital Projects Budgets and any additions or changes to same including the dates on which the additions or changes to same took place.

3. **The County Executive will submit a detailed narrative explaining any differences between the Department's request and the County Executive's recommendation and the reason for not granting the request or increasing any such request.**

4. **Any subsequent information that the County Executive is aware of that the Department Head did not submit relating to the request and recommendation must also be included in the narrative.**

5. **The revenues are to be reported and itemized in each individual department's budget for the fiscal year and not in the budget of the Commissioner of Finance, or any other department, where applicable.**

6. **Each revenue account shall indicate in the Tentative Budget the amount of revenue requested and the amount of revenue projected and actually received to date from the prior fiscal year.**

7. **All proposed changes in grades, promotions or reclassifications in position in management or non-management be collated and presented as a separate part of the Tentative Budget, including a detailed narrative for each.**

8. **a) The names of all employees engaged in employment for the County of Putnam in more than one department be separately listed and disclosed apart from the budget document with the name of the position for the current fiscal year and the next fiscal year separately.**
   b) The names of all employees engaged in employment for the County of Putnam who have had overtime be listed with the amount of dollars for overtime for 2025 and 2026 year-to-date separately.

9. **All current and expected personnel vacancies be identified by line item in the budget or in supporting documents throughout the entire budget process.**

10. **a) Each department head shall identify those personnel positions within his/her department that were entitled to either New York State or Federal Government reimbursement, either by statue, grant or otherwise, including the rate of reimbursement, amount of reimbursement actually received and amount of reimbursement expected to be received until the end of the fiscal year.**
    b) Also to be included is a separate list of personnel positions funded fully or partially by grant funds expected to expire and include the expected grant expiration date.

11. **Each department head shall identify all line items in their department that are entitled to either New York State or Federal Government reimbursement and maximum allowable reimbursement, if applicable.**

12. **The Commissioner of Finance shall supply this information with the Tentative Budget.**

13. Each department head shall complete a Motor Vehicle Inventory Control Form for any and all vehicles being used by said department. To the extent that any employee of such department has use of a County-owned or -leased vehicle on a twenty-four-hour basis, or any County employee who may at any time utilize a County-owned or -leased vehicle, such department head shall submit a copy of the Putnam County vehicle policy certification form (acknowledging the receipt and acceptance of the County's vehicle policy) signed by any such employee filed the Director of Personnel and the date of such filing. *(see Putnam County Code section 112-10)*.

14. An organizational chart by department for 2026 shall be provided along with an organizational chart for 2027 highlighting all proposed changes.

15. If the County Executive plans on out-sourcing or privatizing any department, or part thereof in the total departmental budget, in the 2027 budget, the County Executive must provide a detailed statement of the rationale and his/her proposed recommendations to the Legislature no later than August 1, 2026.

16. Certain budget lines are considered approved with specific limitations or conditions on how the funds shall be applied and this limitation shall not be disregarded without the formal approval of the Legislature. Any violation of these limitations may result in withdrawal of funding for these or other budget lines within the department.

17. The County Executive will present an inventory of all County vehicles including a report on the condition, mileage and maintenance of each vehicle. The report will be supplied with the Tentative Budget.

18. Any personnel positions which are vacant at the time of the submission of the Tentative Budget to the County Legislature shall state the calendar date at which time the position first became vacant.

19. Any and all revenue projections for the 2027 budget shall only include revenue that falls within the jurisdiction and approval of the Putnam County Legislature and requires no other jurisdiction's approval (federal, state or other). Any revenue projections that require approval from an outside jurisdiction (federal, state or other) shall not be budgeted unless the revenue has been approved by that outside jurisdiction prior to the submission of the budget to the Legislature.

20. Any contract agencies (formerly referred to as "not-for-profits") seeking funding from the County must submit to the Administration along with their request for funding the following documentation, which documents shall be forwarded to the Legislature along with the Tentative Budget:

- **Copies of each independent audit and/or auditor compilation of the contract agency's financial reports for the last three (3) years;**

- **Copies of the contract agency's IRS 990 or IRS 990EZ filed for the last three (3) years and the records relating to review and approval by the contract agency's board for said filings**.

21. The Tentative Budget shall breakout the “Contracts” line as shown in previous budgets of the Golf Facility and Tilly Foster Farm, and shall delineate any Capital improvements to each facility or its grounds.

22. The budget will break out in each department the cell phone expense from the total telephone expense and provide a separate account number for this cell phone item.

23. Notwithstanding the May 11, 2026 memorandum from the Commissioner of Finance to Elected Officials/Department Heads, the head of each administrative unit of County government or authorized agency shall include in their respective Requested Budgets an estimate of revenues and expenditures of his or her respective unit or authorized agency for the 2027 fiscal year, *<u>including any estimates for new employees and/or upgrades</u>* and the estimate of expenditures shall constitute or be accompanied by a request for an appropriation. It is vitally important that the Budget & Finance Committee of the County Legislature be provided unfiltered information directly from elected officials and department heads with respect to staffing needs of the respective units of County government or authorized agency. The “2027 Requested” column of the Tentative Budget shall include, *<u>without modification by the County Executive</u>*, any line item appropriation requests (whether pertaining to personnel, equipment, vehicles, or any other expenditure) of each unit of County government or authorized agency as submitted by such unit of County government or authorized agency.

24. Any additional new items, if desired.

F. CONCLUSION:

Implementation of this Legislative Budget Review System will bring the expertise of the various Legislative Committees and their Chairs to bear on one of the most important functions of the Legislature.

It is expected that proposal acceptance will result in increased budget efficiency and greatly reduced cost to the County.

G. PROPOSED RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, the Budget and Finance Committee has reviewed and recommended the adoption of the attached Decentralized Budget Review Process for implementation in 2026 of the adoption of the 2027 budget; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Putnam County Legislature hereby adopts the attached budget review process; and be it further

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Putnam County Charter Section 7.04 the Putnam County Legislature hereby adopts and notifies the County Executive of the policy and practice guidelines contained in Section E of this Decentralized Budget Review Process/2027 to be complied with by the County Executive; and be it further

RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be sent to each Elected Official and Department Head accompanied by a letter from the Chair of the County Legislature highlighting the changes in Section E of this Decentralized Budget Review Process/2027 from previous years.

Item #6 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:37pm Chairman Birmingham made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk, Beth Robinson.