

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

Members: Chairman Gouldman and Legislators Regan & Sayegh

**Thursday July 16, 2026
(Immediately following the Personnel Mtg. beginning at 6:00pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Gouldman who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators Regan and Sayegh and Chairman Gouldman were present.

Item #3 – Discussion – Future of 34 Gleneida Ave, Carmel NY

Chairman Gouldman stated the County-owned building at 34 Gleneida Avenue had been listed for sale for approximately seven years. He stated the property had received offers, but the Legislature ultimately decided not to sell it and removed it from the market. He stated the purpose of the discussion was to consider the future use of the property.

United for the Troops Co-Founder Jim Rathschmidt stated the organization has occupied 34 Gleneida Avenue for nearly 10 years and thanked Putnam County for providing the space. He stated United for the Troops is an all-volunteer nonprofit that relies on donations and has shipped almost 40,000 care packages to deployed military members. He stated although remaining at the location would be advantageous to the organization he is grateful to the County for being able to use the building all this time. He stated United for the Troops would support whatever decision the County makes regarding the property.

Chairman Gouldman stated there was additional correspondence for Item #3 from Town of Carmel Councilman Robert Kearns.

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

Chairman Gouldman read Councilman Kearns' letter into the record, which thanked the Legislature for holding a public discussion and referenced public interest in a youth or community center, and concern regarding multifamily development along the downtown corridor. The letter suggested the County consider removing the existing building and creating a passive park or courtyard with outdoor seating that would open the view toward the County Courthouse and stated the Town and County could collaborate on a long-term vision for the property.

Town of Kent Highway Superintendent Richard Othmer stated he is here this evening as a lifetime Putnam resident, Veteran, and former Putnam County Legislator. He stated he strongly supports the mission of United for the Troops and believes an alternative location should be identified for the organization before any work occurs at 34 Gleneida Avenue. He stated the original vision for the courthouse area included removal of the building and creation of an open green space. He directed the Committee's attention to photographs and renderings showing the courthouse with and without the existing building in front. He stated removing the structure would improve the view of the courthouse and Lake Gleneida and provide a central public space for ceremonies, rallies, parades, veterans' events and other community activities. He suggested also moving the driveway to the other side so the green space would extend from the VFW building. He stated the

County has an opportunity to preserve public space at the County seat and encouraged the Legislature to act rather than continue delaying a decision. He reiterated that relocation of United for the Troops should be addressed before demolition of the building.

Legislator Regan thanked Mr. Othmer for the presentation and stated it helped clarify the importance of the location. He stated he does not believe the County should sell the property and agreed that the Legislature should work to ensure United for the Troops is appropriately accommodated.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what the cost would be to remove the building.

Highway Superintendent Othmer stated he is unaware.

Chairman Gouldman stated he had received numerous suggestions regarding the property, including retaining United for the Troops, creating a community center or arts center, establishing space for homeless veterans, creating office or commercial space, and other possible uses. He stated parking limitations would affect several of those options and invited additional public comment.

Paul Camarda, resident, stated he supports creating public open space at the location. He stated Lake Gleneida is a major asset to downtown Carmel and suggested benches, modest landscaping and other public amenities that would encourage people to walk along Gleneida Avenue and support surrounding businesses. He stated the County is in a strong financial position and encouraged investment in the future of the Hamlet rather than additional residential development at the site.

Angela Briante, local real estate agent, stated that if the building remains, she would favor ground-floor retail with apartments above; provided parking issues can be addressed in cooperation with the Town of Carmel. She stated another option would be to remove the building and create an attractive courtyard or green space honoring veterans, with flagpoles and opportunities for County employees and the public to use the area. She stated the property should become a focal point that improves the lakefront and downtown corridor.

Mr. Camarda suggested petitioning New York City to place park benches along the lake shore.

Legislator Sayegh stated maintenance along Lake Gleneida has historically been difficult because of New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYCDEP) restrictions on cutting vegetation near the lake. She stated the County may need to continue advocating to NYS DEP to improve the appearance and accessibility of the lakefront.

Legislator D'Angelo stated the County should develop a clear plan for the property now that it is off the market. He suggested beginning with an engineering assessment of the existing building so the Legislature understands its condition and the implications of either retaining or removing it. He also suggested engaging economic development professionals or consultants to work with community stakeholders and evaluate how the different options could affect the downtown business corridor. He stated objective data and professional analysis would help the Legislature make a more informed decision.

Highway Superintendent Othmer stated the property has been discussed for many years and encouraged the Legislature to move forward without unnecessary delay.

Chairman Gouldman requested that residents with additional suggestions contact the Legislative Office. He stated additional comments could be reviewed at a future meeting and the matter could be brought forward for a vote.

Commissioner of the Department of Public Works Thomas Feighery stated the building cannot go through another heating season in its current condition. He stated the boiler failed and the temporary measures used during the prior winter are no longer available.

Item #4 – Update – Continental Village – Sylvan Pond – Aqueduct Road Dam Status – Administration & DPW

Commissioner Feighery stated the County monitors more than a half-dozen dams in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). He stated three plans for the Sylvan Pond dam have been developed and submitted for review. He stated a tree recently fell across the dam during a storm and the County received direction from DEC regarding its removal. He stated no final action has been taken on the dam beyond addressing the fallen tree and related corrective work.

Legislator Montgomery thanked Chairman Gouldman for placing the item on the agenda and stated the Continental Village community has been waiting for an update. She requested that the three engineering alternatives be provided to the Legislature and presented to the public so residents understand the options under consideration. She suggested DPW attend a future homeowners association meeting to explain the alternatives and stated she would assist with community outreach if appropriate.

Commissioner Feighery stated DPW could provide the engineering plans and participate in a future community discussion. He stated neighboring property owners had recently provided temporary access that allowed the County to reach its easement for the tree-removal work and that additional property matters were being handled with the Law Department.

Legislator Regan questioned once the plan is approved if work is done by the DEC or by the County through DPW.

Commissioner Feighery stated DEC approval would be required and the County would do the work. He stated DEC generally favors decommissioning dams where possible because it eliminates future maintenance and risk. He explained that rehabilitation could require substantial structural work, controlled inflows and outflows, fencing and continued maintenance, and could alter the appearance and environmental character of the pond. He also stated changes to the dam could affect its regulatory classification and future engineering and maintenance requirements.

Legislator Montgomery questioned whether the County could face enforcement action or fines if no action is taken and asked whether the three engineering alternatives had been submitted to DEC.

Commissioner Feighery confirmed the alternatives have been provided to DEC but stated the County had not yet received final direction regarding what DEC expects the County to complete.

Zoila Morell, resident whose property abuts Sylvan Pond, submitted a petition signed by more than 200 residents requesting preservation of the Pond. She stated residents want transparency regarding the alternatives, costs and decision-making process and requested consideration of

grants or other funding opportunities. She stated the Pond has historical, environmental and community value and provides habitat for wildlife. She stated the animals living at the Pond are important to the residents. She also expressed concern regarding potential impacts to adjoining private property and requested that the County preserve the resource while meeting DEC requirements.

Kendra Parker, a Sylvan Pond community resident, stated Sylvan Pond has long been an important feature of the neighborhood and residents have participated in cleaning and caring for the area over the years. She stated the pond supports turtles, birds and other wildlife and requested that the County pursue an option that protects downstream properties while preserving the Pond and the character of the neighborhood.

Cassandra Roth, Soil & Water Conservation District Board Chair, stated Putnam County has a significant number of dams, lakes and other water resources compared with many other counties. She stated the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is available to assist the County and residents with water-quality concerns, grant opportunities and other resources that may support future work. She encouraged continued public discussion of dam issues and stated the SWCD would like to serve as a resource and partner.

Chairman Gouldman thanked the members of the public for attending to speak on this issue.

Item #5 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T146 – Finance – MTA Railroad Station Maintenance

Acting Commissioner of Finance Alexandra Gordon stated the County receives an annual MTA railroad station maintenance charge and budgets for the expense each year, but the amount increases based on the consumer price index, therefore the final cost is not known when the budget is prepared. She stated the requested transfer of \$16,742 would be taken from contingency to fully fund the 2026 obligation. She stated next year's estimation in the budget will be higher.

Legislator Regan questioned the lack of detail provided by the MTA regarding which Putnam County railroad stations were covered by the charge and what services or improvements supported the increase. He stated the County would generally require more specific information before approving increased payment and asked whether Finance could request clarification from the MTA.

Acting Commissioner Gordon stated she would contact the MTA representative and request additional information regarding the stations and basis for the increase. She stated the charge has increased in prior years as well.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Sayegh. One Nay: Legislator Regan. Motion carries.

Item #6 – Approval – Fund Transfer 26T153 – DPW – Donald B. Smith Building 3 Renovations

Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Public Works Joseph Bellucci stated the requested transfer would fund architectural and construction costs associated with renovations to Building 3 at the Donald B. Smith Campus. He stated this transfer would cover the costs associated with the project.

Legislator Sayegh referenced correspondence from the Planning Department indicating that unused funding from transportation services could be transferred to the Building 3 project and questioned the reason for the surplus and whether transportation needs would continue in future years.

Legislator Regan requested clarification about the referenced transportation efficiencies resulting from the opening of the Putnam County Early Learning Center.

Legislator Crowley stated the Early Learning Center has reduced the need to transport children with special needs to programs outside Putnam County. She stated the County had previously budgeted for significant out-of-county transportation and the local program is reducing those costs while also keeping young children closer to home.

Senior Deputy County Attorney Kate McNeal, attending in place of Legislative Counsel, confirmed Legislator Crowley's explanation.

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

Item #7 – Approval – Acceptance of Amendment B for 2025-2026 Snow and Ice Agreement with New York State

Deputy Commissioner Bellucci stated the amendment provides reimbursement from New York State for the County's snow and ice maintenance of approximately 60 miles of State roads during the winter season.

Legislator Regan questioned how DPW tracks the County's costs for work performed on State roads and whether the County is reimbursed for labor, equipment and materials.

Deputy Commissioner Bellucci stated labor, equipment and material costs are specifically tracked and the crews assigned to State roads have defined routes, which allows the County to quantify the work and seek reimbursement.

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

Item #8 – Approval – Capital Project 26CP02 – County Park and Fire Training Center Communications, Security and Access Control

Deputy Commissioner Bellucci stated the capital project would upgrade fiber-optic communications, access control and security systems throughout the County Park and Fire Training Center campus and would support future improvements.

Commissioner Feighery stated the Fire Training Center area has limited cellular service and reliable communications are important for a training facility. He stated the conduit was installed during prior construction and the proposed project would complete the connections between the upper park, lower park and Fire Training Center.

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

Item #9 – Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A060 – Finance – Fund County Park and Fire Training Center Communications, Security and Access Control Capital Project

Deputy Commissioner Bellucci stated this budgetary amendment provides the funding necessary for Capital Project 26CP02 just discussed.

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

Item #10 – Approval – Opposing NYS Senate Bill S.4571-A – The Floating Solar Incentive and Education Program

SWCD Chair Roth stated the SWCD Board unanimously supports opposing New York State Senate Bill S.4571-A as currently written. She emphasized that the SWCD is not opposed to solar energy or renewable-energy development, but is concerned about incentivizing floating solar installations before the environmental impacts are sufficiently studied and before restrictions are established regarding where such projects may be located. She stated Putnam County has an unusually high concentration of lakes, reservoirs, dams and other water resources that serve local communities and the New York City water system. She stated this legislation could encourage larger-scale projects and does not sufficiently address the potential effects on water quality, wildlife and local resources. She stated solar development is better suited to rooftops, municipal buildings, parking lots and other previously developed locations rather than lakes and reservoirs. She stated to her knowledge this bill has passed Senate and is under consideration by the Assembly.

Legislator Sayegh stated her support for the resolution and expressed concern about State laws that reduce local control over the siting of energy projects. She referenced similar concerns regarding large-scale battery storage facilities and stated communities should have meaningful authority over projects affecting local property and natural resources.

Joe Doherty, Mahopac resident, stated he has professional experience designing solar projects which can provide important benefits, particularly when installed on rooftops and other developed areas, however lakes, reservoirs, forests and open land serve other important purposes. He stated local building and engineering review is important for solar and battery projects and discussed the need to consider safety, including battery fire risks. He stated his support for this opposing resolution.

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

Item #11a – Other Business – Approval – Budgetary Amendment 26A061 – Amend 2026 CHIPS County Capital Project Budget to Equal NYS Budget

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Regan. All in favor.

Acting Commissioner Gordon stated the County budgets an estimated amount for the annual CHIPS allocation and receives the final award after the State budget is adopted. She stated the 2026 State allocation exceeded the amount originally budgeted and the amendment would match the County's budget to the State award.

Commissioner Feighery stated the CHIPS funding is used for County paving projects. He stated the State determines the allocation and credited advocacy by local and State officials, as well as DPW and labor representatives, with supporting increased highway funding.

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

Item #12 – Adjournment

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

Respectfully Submitted by Deputy Clerk, Beth Robinson.