

**PHYSICAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
BUDGET MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318 OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Ellner and Legislators Crowley & Jonke

Wednesday

6:00pm

October 8, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm by Chairman Ellner who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Crowley and Chairman Ellner were present. Legislator Jonke was absent. Chairman Ellner requested Legislator Birmingham sit on the Committee in Legislator Jonke's absence.

Item #3 – 2026 Budget Review

Veteran's Home – Account 6511 (page 191)

Chairman Ellner stated Director of Veterans Services Karl Rohde was unable to attend this evening and communicated that he had no issues with the budget as submitted.

Planning & Dev. – Account 8020 (pages 236-237)

Legislator Birmingham questioned the revenue line 449892, NYMTC CFDA 20.505. (NYMTC = New York Metropolitan Transpiration Council; CFDA = Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance).

Commissioner of Planning Barbara Barosa stated that represents the UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) funds. She stated the funds have been moved into different lines and that they are also still billing for last year.

Legislator Birmingham questioned the increase in line 54646, Contracts.

Commissioner Barosa stated that line will be used for a matching-funds grant for the Agricultural and Farmland Protection plan. She stated the grant being applied for is a \$100,000 grant broken up as \$50,000 from the State, \$40,000 staff time, and \$10,000 cash match.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if line 439899 Planning Assistance, which shows revenue in the amount of \$10,000, is connected to this.

Commissioner Barosa stated no, it is unrelated.

Part Bus System – Account 5630 (pages 272 – 273)

Legislator Montgomery questioned the decrease in the Contracts line, 54646.

Commissioner Barosa stated when designing the micro-transit program, a placeholder was established and moving forward they will not need as much.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the \$20,000 in that line is for micro-transit.

Commissioner Barosa stated these funds will go toward a consultant that has been used in the past for assistance with pinpointing routes on a GIS map to send to the State, which is a requirement.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like to see this program expand.

DPW Engineering – Account 1440 (pages 38 – 39)

Commissioner of DPW Tommy Feighery stated he would like to share some accomplishments of the department since becoming the Department of Public Works (DPW). He stated this year many projects were completed such as the fire training center, Peekskill Hollow Road, Sprout Brook Ridge, and the Maybrook Rail Trail. He stated the Fair Street project has begun and although it is inconvenient at the moment, it will be so much better once it is completed. He stated the Youth Bureau will open their offices at Tilly Foster Farm this month. He stated the Veterans Museum at Veterans Memorial Park is completed and it will be a great place to visit. He stated there have been many ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) upgrades made throughout the County as well. He stated over 4,500 feet of new drainage has been installed under the roadways. He stated almost 10 miles of road has been paved this year. He stated DPW has also upgraded their work order system at no cost to the County. He stated they have also implemented QR codes on their equipment, which provides information on the equipment itself and its maintenance, and allows them to more efficiently track scheduled maintenance on all of their machines and equipment. He stated DPW can also train CDL drivers, which makes the job opportunities more attractive. He stated they are currently working on 120 projects at various stages and that is not slowing down. He stated this budget does not request anything more, just enough to keep DPW on track. He stated 2025 was the best year of paving in the County's history. He stated 4 years ago there were 6 "red flagged" bridges in the County and today there are none.

Chairman Ellner stated DPW runs like a business, which speaks to their efficiency. He stated he would like to utilize some WQIP (Water Quality Improvement Project) funds for trucks and he would like to see the minimum purchase level to be increased for greater efficiency.

Dept of Public Works – Account 1490 (pages 44 – 45)

Legislator Birmingham questioned line 55371, Chargeback Gasoline, which was not funded last year and has \$175,000 for 2026. He questioned if this was in a different budget line last year.

Commissioner of Finance Bill Carlin stated yes, it was allocated in a different line.

Parks & Rec. – Account 7110 (pages 215 – 220)
Tilly Foster – Account 10084000 (pages 215 – 216)
Putnam Golf– Account 10085000 (pages 216 – 218)

Legislator Crowley questioned line 54146, Feed for Farm Animals, which shows a decrease in spending for 2025.

Commissioner Feighery stated two (2) horses were replaced with cows. He stated the horses were a big expense and that they are looking to add more animals this year. He clarified that the unspent funds go back into the general fund at the end of the year.

Legislator Birmingham questioned what types of animals are planning to be purchased with the budgeted \$2,500.

Commissioner Feighery stated chickens and goats will be purchased.

Legislator Montgomery questioned why the budget for the feed would not be increased if there will be more animals.

Commissioner Feighery stated that the goats eat the grass, which helps with mowing as well.

Legislator Crowley questioned how the County obtains animals.

Commissioner Feighery stated other local farms have reached out to the County about providing animals.

Brett Yarris, Carmel resident, questioned why only about \$400 of the budgeted amount of \$5,000 in line 54560, Equipment Rental Lease on page 215 has been spent this year. He stated he noticed this on another page as well. He questioned if that goes back into the general fund if it is unused.

Commissioner Feighery stated that is correct.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if line 412902, Rent Income for Tilly Foster Farm, includes the rent for all buildings on the Farm. She stated the County is seeing an increase in the cost of utilities and questioned if this will be considered in a renegotiation of leases on this property.

Commissioner Feighery stated that would go through the Law Department and the Department of General Services.

Chairman Ellner stated utility costs are one of many that have been increasing and it is important to take these into consideration when looking at the leases.

Mr. Yarris questioned line 54633, Propane. He stated the actual usage last year was lower than the budgeted amount, and the same amount is budgeted for 2026.

Chairman Ellner stated that cost can be difficult to estimate since it can be impacted by the weather.

Legislator Crowley questioned what line 52680, other equipment, will be used for.

Deputy Commissioner of DPW Joseph Bellucci stated a mower is being purchased.

Legislator Montgomery questioned if the expenses for kitchen equipment at the Putnam County Golf Course would still be necessary once the County is free from the Safe Harbor provisions.

Commissioner Feighery stated that would have to be negotiated.

Mr. Yarris questioned the actual 2025 incomes versus the budgeted amount in line 424100 on page 216, Rental of Real Property.

Commissioner Feighery stated this shows what has been collected through August 2025 and the building now being utilized by the Youth Bureau will no longer be collecting income.

Legislator Birmingham questioned line 54710, Building Maintenance on page 219 which has been zeroed out for 2026.

Commissioner of Finance Carlin stated that was moved to subcontingency, which will require Legislative approval to utilize.

Soil & Water – Account 8745 (pages 249 – 250)

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the Tree Program was not being done in 2026 because its budget line was zeroed out.

Cassandra Roth, member of the Soil & Water Conservation District Board (Soil & Water Board) stated the Tree Program is not coming out of the general fund because the Soil & Water Board are using District 8 funds for it.

Commissioner Feighery stated Part C funding will be used for it.

Chairman Ellner questioned if the revenue budgeted in line 439101, State Soil and Water, goes to the Soil & Water District or the County.

Ms. Roth stated the Soil & Water Board would approve the allocation to the County as district funds, but the 2026 allocation has not been received.

Legislator Crowley questioned if the \$60,000 budgeted as revenue is an estimation.

Mr. Yarris, Soil & Water Board Member, stated the County does not receive the allocation, it is given to the Soil & Water Conservation District and then the Soil & Water Board votes on whether to give it to the County for a specific purpose.

Ms. Roth explained the process of obtaining those funds and that is a maximum of \$120,000 at 50% reimbursement.

Legislator Crowley stated the 2025 actual budget is showing no received revenue.

Ms. Roth stated this revenue is allocated in the County budget although it is Soil & Water District funds.

Legislative Counsel Heather Abissi stated these are earmarked funds that the County is holding in order to help with the accounting function.

Chairman Ellner questioned if that should be made more clear in the budget.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated this is important and worth further discussion outside of the Legislature's budget process.

Legislator Addonizio questioned line 54554, Agricultural Board as the allocation was barely used in 2025 and is not funded for 2026.

Legislator Montgomery stated this allocation is budgeted under the Planning Department on page 236.

Ms. Roth questioned if the discussion about the Soil & Water Board funds could continue in a Special Physical Committee Meeting.

Chairman Ellner stated he would be willing to have it on for discussion next month.

Legislator Sayegh stated this is a long-standing issue that is not going to be resolved in the next few weeks and it deserves thorough discussion.

All 02 County Road Fund Accounts (page 262)

Legislator Birmingham requested an overview of the Road Fund.

Commissioner Carlin stated the revenues listed in the Road Fund are balanced out by expenses elsewhere in the budget.

Legislator Birmingham questioned why this is not part of the general fund.

Commissioner Carlin stated each fund must be recorded separately according to the State.

Traffic Control – Account 3310 (page 263)

Legislator Crowley questioned line 54647, Subcontractors, and if those subcontractors are planned to be used for a specific project.

Commissioner Feighery stated that line is primarily used for line striping and tree work.

Maintenance Roads & Bridges – Account 5110 (pages 264 – 265)

Legislator Crowley questioned why line 52160, Highway & Street Equipment, did not have anything budgeted for 2026.

Commissioner Feighery stated those funds were moved into line 52180, Other Equipment, and would be used for small equipment such as chainsaws.

Snow Removal – Account 5142 (page 266)

Legislator Goldman questioned which line is used to purchase salt.

Deputy Commissioner Bellucci stated line 54410, Supplies and Materials, is used for salt.

Commissioner Carlin stated the purchase of salt is automatically defined as an emergency purchase so if there is a bad winter and the budget is exceeded, DPW would come back to the Legislature to adjust it later.

Road Machinery – Account 5130 (page 268)

Mr. Yarris requested clarification on line 427161, Use of Fund Balance.

Commissioner Carlin stated the line is undetermined until the year ends and the fund balance is closed out.

Legislator Montgomery thanked DPW for their help throughout the year.

RR Maintenance – Account 5640 (page 149)

Commissioner Carlin stated the Federal Cares Act money ran out so this is no longer a revenue received by the County.

Interfund Transfer – Account 9901 (pages 258 – 261)

Legislator Birmingham requested clarification on line 59057, Transfer to Debt Service, which appears to be zeroed out for 2026.

Commissioner Carlin stated that will be done this year using Debt Service Reserve which is on the last page of the budget; the callable bond. He stated line 59020 shows \$5.5 million allocated for capital projects, which is an important initiative since the County will not need to borrow that money and go into debt. He congratulated the County Executive and Legislature on this allocation.

Chairman Ellner stated it is more efficient to utilize our own funding rather than going through the bond process before a project can begin.

Item #4 – Other Business – Soil & Water

Ms. Roth stated the Soil & Water Board has been trying to have this conversation before tonight to get ahead of any confusion. She stated the Soil & Water District has the money to fund what a County department is allegedly funding.

Legislator Birmingham questioned how much money is available to the Soil & Water District.

Ms. Roth stated she believes it is about \$800,000. She stated she would like to have a discussion to clarify those district funds and performance measures in the State for fiscal transparency.

Mr. Yarris stated if the Soil & Water District can utilize that funding available to them, it would be an immediate savings to the taxpayer because County funds would not need to be used.

Legislator Montgomery stated the relationship between the Soil & Water district and the County is clearly defined by State law. She stated a simple fix may be to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would define the operational issues.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated the statute exists, therefore an MOU would be unnecessary. She stated education and understanding of the statute as it exists would be more beneficial.

Ms. Roth stated obtaining the information was not an easy task therefore she would not expect other people to do it. She stated having an agreement with the County would at least put something in writing spelling out important details.

Legislator Crowley suggested having the Soil & Water Board come before the Physical Services Committee quarterly to have those discussions.

Legislative Counsel Abissi stated her concern is that the law is extensive and trying to duplicate it in some kind of shorthand could lead to things being misunderstood or misconstrued. She stated the law speaks for itself and it is incumbent upon those involved to be educated on it.

Legislator Crowley further suggested having the Soil & Water Board come before the Physical Services Committee at their request.

Item #5 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:22pm, Chairman Ellner made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Crowley. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Beth Robinson.