## BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE

## PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Held Via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders

Tuesday <u>October 6, 2020</u> 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairwoman Addonizio who led in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Nacerino, Albano, Jonke, Castellano, Sayegh, Sullivan and Chairwoman Addonizio were present. Also present was Legislative Counsel Firriolo.

Item #3 – Committee to Meet with the County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance to Discuss the Proposed 2021 Budget.

Chairwoman Addonizio recognized County Executive Odell to present the Proposed 2021 Budget.

County Executive Odell explained that she would normally be with the Legislature at the Putnam County Golf Course making this 2021 Budget Presentation, however, as we all know this has been far from a normal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. County Executive Odell proceeded to read the attached October 1, 2020 budget transmittal letter addressed to the Clerk of the Legislature.

Legislator Montgomery thanked County Executive Odell for the Proposed 2021 Budget. She stated that in the Committee meetings that will follow, Personnel is the largest portion of each department's budget. She believed it would be unproductive to discuss department operations without simultaneously discussing staffing, along with their responsibilities to make sure County government is working as effectively and efficiently as possible. She stated that it appeared that part of the budget looks like we are defunding the police: marine units are affected and there is a 12.5% decrease overall. She stated that she loved the idea of consolidating dispatching and saving money. She explained how shortly after she became a Legislator, she coordinated a meeting with the Department of State, Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Department to talk about the local government efficiency grants that are available to study and implement the consolidation process. She stated that if you look on the Department of State's website, they have handed out a lot of funds for consolidation purposes like this. She agreed with the County Executive that we are here for the people of Putnam County and she believed they were hurting. She believed that doing a major bathroom project at Tilly Foster Farm during an austerity budget was not serving the people of Putnam County. She also did not agree with the raises that were given out in the budget when people are out of work. She stated that she was looking forward to the Budget Committee meetings when we can discuss this in depth.

Legislator Castellano thanked County Executive Odell and her staff that put together a tremendous budget during this critical time in Putnam County. He stated that we are all battling this COVID-19 pandemic together. He was looking forward to reviewing the budget over the next few weeks and doing the right thing for the people of Putnam County.

Legislator Albano stated that we continue to make Tilly Foster Farm a destination place and income producing property. He stated that, ideally, the goal is for it to cover itself and to not cost the taxpayers any money. He stated that the improvements that we are doing are well justified when you are looking into the future with the money that the Farm generates.

Legislator Jonke thanked County Executive Odell and her Administration for their hard work that went into this budget. He stated that he was pleased to know that there would be no layoffs in the 2021 Budget.

Legislator Nacerino thanked County Executive Odell and her Administration who worked in earnest to produce a sound and barebones budget under these fiscal restraints. She stated that it certainly was not an easy task to do. She stated that she looks forward to vetting the budget through our Committee meetings throughout the month.

Legislator Gouldman thanked the County Executive and her staff for putting together this budget. He stated that he was looking forward to reviewing the budget line by line.

Legislator Sullivan also thanked the County Executive and her Administration for putting together a fiscally prudent and good budget. He explained that it is almost a flat budget compared to last year's budget with an increase of only \$477,000. He stated that it is lowest budget to budget spending increase since 2011. He stated that they are certainly aware of all the challenges everyone is facing because of the COVID-19 crisis. He stated that the sales tax revenue projection was reduced by almost 10% from what was actually received in 2019. He stated that this was a very conservative measure. He stated that none of the outside agencies were cut as they remained at level funding. He stated that a lot of smart decisions were made during a very difficult time.

Legislator Sayegh thanked the County Executive and all the Department Heads for all their hard work in creating this lean budget. She believed that this County has done a fantastic job throughout the years in budgeting and sound finance practices throughout. She stated that the County recently received an excellent financial rating, saying that we are well equipped to handle the difficulties brought with this pandemic. She hoped that it will be less painful for Putnam County because of the tight budgeting practices we have adhered to over the years. She believed that Putnam County was doing well at looking at each department and consolidating and finding efficiencies. She believed it was about time that we address the consolidation of Dispatch to one (1) operation center that not only serves as saving money, but also brings better services having one (1) point of operation. She explained the difficult times for everyone. She looked forward to going through the budget line by line with the taxpayers in mind hoping to trim a little more.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated that this has been a challenging budget due to COVID-19 and she wanted to thank County Executive Odell, her Administration and Department Heads. She stated that she is looking forward to reviewing the budget this month and was also happy to see that there were no layoffs for 2021.

There being no further business, at 7:25 P.M., Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.