

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
Held via Audio Webinar Pursuant to Temporary Emergency Orders

Members: Chairman Nacerino and Legislators Jonke & Montgomery

Wednesday

September 23, 2020

(Physical Services Committee Mtg. to Immediately Follow)

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:00pm by Chairwoman Nacerino who requested that Legislator Nacerino lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Jonke, Montgomery and Chairwoman Nacerino were present.

Item #3 – Approval/ Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2020

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (20A052)/ Funding for Estimated Unemployment Costs thru December 31, 2020- 50% Reimbursable through CARES Act from 3/13/20 to 12/31/2020/ Commissioner of Finance William Carlin

Chairwoman Nacerino requested Commissioner of Finance William Carlin speak to this item.

Commissioner Carlin stated this budgetary amendment recognizes the revenue the County is expected to receive from the CARES Act and the additional expenses to the County from people filing for unemployment. He stated that the County is Self-Insured. He stated he believes in the future the County will be credited on future bills, but the County will record the revenue as we record the expense.

Chairwoman Nacerino questioned if the County had anyone participate in the “Shared Work” plan, referenced in the backup to Budgetary Amendment (20A052).

Commissioner Carlin stated no. He stated that he is not sure that municipalities are eligible.

Legislator Montgomery requested Commissioner Carlin remind her of the other things the CARES Act reimbursement can be used for.

Commissioner Carlin stated it depends on the funding source. He stated Putnam has received Transportation CARES Act funds, which were used to mitigate the cost of the Transportation System in 2020 and will in 2021 and there were Office For the Aging funds that were used for their specific program. He stated other than that the County has not received any other CARES funding.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment (20A052)/ Funding for Estimated Unemployment Costs thru December 31, 2020- 50% Reimbursable through CARES Act from 3/13/20 to 12/31/2020; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery. All in favor.

Item #5 - Approval/ Fund Transfer (20T192)/ Cover Temp in Youth Bureau for the Remainder of 2020/ Director Youth Bureau Janeen Cunningham

Chairwoman Nacerino requested that Director Janeen Cunningham speak to this item.

Director Cunningham stated the Youth Bureau has been conducting business as usual during the summer. She stated tonight they are conducting the first training session for the Youth Court Program. She stated considering all that is going on currently, due to COVID-19, the kids need programs more than ever. She stated that a full-time employee from the Youth Bureau recently transferred to a position in Social Services. She stated she is hoping the vacancy created in the Youth Bureau, as a result of this job change will be filled in 2021. She stated for the safety of the kids who participate in the County's program, we need to have adequate staffing. She stated there is more to do now, with temperature checks and sanitizing before and after the programs. She stated this request is to transfer money from the full-time budget line and transfer the funds, \$7,000, into the Temporary line.

Legislator Montgomery requested clarification that the vacant full-time position will remain vacant with the hopes that in 2021 we will reinstate it. She stated she understands the critical need for these services. She stated she cannot think of a more vulnerable population right now. She questioned if the County has advertised for the vacant position.

Director Cunningham stated they have not advertised for the position yet. She stated they need to wait until after the 2021 Budget Process, and it is approved.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated she agrees with Legislator Montgomery. She stated it is her hope and expectation this will remain a full-time position. She stated that the Youth Bureau runs such great programs and they have several great events coming up: the Trunk or Treat, the Holiday Party, the Mentoring Program. She stated this is just a few of the programs. She stated it is important and valuable to engage our youth in a positive way. She stated hopefully during the budget process this position will be reinstated.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (20T192)/ Cover Temp in Youth Bureau for the Remainder of 2020; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/ 2020 Reorganization Highways & Facilities Department/ Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge and Highways & Facilities Commissioner Fred Pena

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to waive the Rules and Accept the Additional for agenda Items #6 & #8; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated in the memorandum from Personnel Officer Eldridge dated September 17th it was reported that there have been a significant number of departures within the last 18 months from the Highways and Facilities Department. She stated as a result it has presented an opportunity to assess and evaluate the Department's needs. She stated they are seeking changes that will ultimately improve the Department's effectiveness and thus become more efficient. She stated her position is that she entrusts the County's Department Heads to make these evaluations themselves, having full knowledge of the internal workings of their respective departments. Commissioner Pena and Deputy Commissioner Tully have been working with the Personnel Department to develop a reorganization plan. She stated a reorganization that will realize the goals and objectives for the present along with a succession plan. She stated Legislator Montgomery did send an email yesterday to Commissioner of Finance Bill Carlin with some outstanding questions, which he will speak to later in the discussion. She stated Personnel Officer Eldridge will speak to the proposed reorganization.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated he and Deputy Commissioner Tully have been meeting regularly regarding the Highways & Facilities Department. He stated over the past 18 months there have been a significant number of resignations, retirements, and departures which have caused them to meet pretty much weekly. He stated what they are proposing is a department that will effectuate the best utilization of the resources. He stated while keeping within the budgetary amounts granted to the department. He stated for clarification the Civil Service Classification and Re-Classification process has been followed. He provided the justification behind the proposed positions and why they selected certain employees to fill the positions. He stated there is a proposed Reclassification position, Chief Mechanic II, there are also some proposed changes to the Fiscal Department. He stated there are two (2) vacancies in high level positions: Supervisor of Planning and Design, which was vacated in early 2018 and the Supervisor of Construction and Maintenance was vacated in July of 2020. He stated they are very critical positions. He stated they are proposing the position of Roads for Winter be a Project Manager Position. He stated it is a tested position. He stated the employee in the Roads for Winter position has taken the test and is number 1 on the list. He stated all the recommendations in the proposed reorganization are based on the needs of the department while being cognizant of the Civil Services requirements, the testing requirements, the contract requirements provisions and so forth. He stated on the reorganization chart you will see a proposed position listed "Supervising Crew Chief", that is not part of the 2020 reorganization proposal. He stated that will be a position requested in the 2021 Budget for the Highways & Facilities Department. He stated under the Parks Superintendent you will see Proposed Reclassification to a "Farm Assistant". He stated that an employee who was working as a Laborer at Tilly Foster Farm, has a good deal of experience working on a farm, dealing with farm animals and has been doing work above the level of a Laborer. He stated this would recognize the work of said individual with this proposed reclassification. He provided a brief overview of the following positions proposed in the reorganization: Tree MEO II,

proposed reclass Lead CEO III. He stated there were several retirements that they are moving forward to fill such as Supervising Crew Chief, a position under the Supervisor of Maintenance And Construction. He stated that there is obviously the ripple effect to all of these changes. He stated the Union required the posting process be done, interviews conducted and consider seniority along with all of the other requirements of the contract.

Chairwoman Nacerino requested that Commissioner Pena speak to the philosophy behind the incentives to the Tradesmen and how that works into the overall succession plan.

Commissioner Pena stated he appreciates Personnel Officer Eldridge's overview of this proposal. He stated they have been working with Personnel Officer Eldridge since they began running the Highways & Facilities Department. He stated he and Deputy Commissioner Tully's objective is to reorganize and develop a department that better delivers the best response needed to address the County workload. He stated that is an ongoing process. He stated the greatest asset are employees who can get the work done, without that there is no forward progress. He stated that they have been focused on working within the framework of the department as well as the financial budget. He stated this proposed reorganization is a step in the right direction. He stated however there are still gaps in the department. He stated these reclassifications are because there are broader expectations and deliverables from those positions. He continued to discuss the gaps they were and still are dealing with in the departments. He stated currently there are younger trades people working with the more senior trade employees. He stated this partnership is resulting in more efficiency. He continued to provide insight behind their proposal. He stated there is still Federal and State funding available. He stated he believes it to be important to be properly staffed in order to take advantage of said funding.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated the strategy that went into this proposed reorganization was a collaborative effort. He stated they continue to work and propose changes with the least impact to the County budget as possible, while having a department that will operate effectively and efficiently.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated this is a very comprehensive plan. She stated it includes a succession plan which is very beneficial in the long-range plan. She stated she also agrees with having the proper staffing in order to seize funding opportunities. She stated she knows the creation of this proposal took a lot of hard work. She stated she is thankful that a proposed reorganization has been put forward that not only is in the best interest of the department but is also in the best interest of the County, which this department serves from east to west.

Legislator Jonke stated he would like to commend Commissioner Pena, Deputy Commissioner Tully and Personnel Officer Eldridge for a very well thought out and comprehensive plan that will set this department up for many years to come. He stated he is in full support of this proposal.

Legislator Montgomery stated she appreciates all of the backup that was provided. She stated as she reviewed the proposed reorganization, having the budget lines to work with were very valuable. She requested that the two (2) positions that have been vacant since 2018 please be listed again.

Personnel Officer Eldridge stated they were: Supervisor of Planning and Design and Supervisor of Maintenance and Construction.

Legislator Montgomery stated based on the response received from Finance Commissioner Carlin there are not any positions that are being reduced in salary.

Commissioner Carlin stated correct. He stated the only position salary being reduced is the RMEO II position (10511000 51000 (10135)). He stated the funds from that position are being used to fund the new position in the General Fund. He stated the Legislature is seeing this because it is an interfund transfer. He stated all the reclassifications are being funded by the sub contingency account that was set up in the 2020 budget for this purpose.

Legislator Montgomery stated the new position of Project Manager 10149000 51000(10127)) is being proposed as part of the goal to create more project managers for efficiency as explained by Commissioner Pena.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is correct.

Legislator Montgomery stated there is no money coming in for new projects and does not foresee in the near future that there will be money readily available from the Federal Government, at least not in the near future for new projects.

Commissioner Carlin stated it depends on the project. He stated the projects funded through the Federal Taxes where there is an 80- 20 match, that funding is still available. He stated the funds that are questionable are the Marchiselli, which are appropriated by the State year to year. He stated the projects that are being referenced are mostly the Federal leverage funds. He stated it is important to get those projects done in a timely manner.

Legislator Montgomery stated she would like someone to speak to the Federally funded projects that will be worked on in the future.

Commissioner Carlin stated off the top of his head there is the Peekskill Hollow Road, the Fair Street, Sodom Road Bridge and the Bikeway Accessibility Point. He stated he will now turn it over to Commissioner Pena.

Commissioner Pena stated there is ongoing Federal support that comes through the NYS DOT (Department of Transportation) and the LPU (Local Projects Unit). He stated those funds continue to be available. He stated that every five (5) years there is a TIP (Transportation Improvement Program). He stated that Putnam County has a representative at the TIP meetings to advocate funding for the County projects that are

believed to be necessary for our region to continue to have a vibrant transportation infrastructure and economic development. He stated he does not foresee those funds drying up. He stated the Bridge New York and Pave New York funding was just released this year in the amount of \$200million. He stated that Putnam County has three (3) bridge/culvert projects that, hopefully will rank well and secure funding. He stated the Pave New York is another group of funding in the \$200million range that Putnam County should also apply for. He stated he believes the County needs to be prepared to apply for the funding, score well, bring the funding to the County of Putnam and design and construct.

Legislator Montgomery stated her appreciation for the information provided by Commissioner Pena. She stated in relation to the projects Commissioner Carlin referenced they are existing projects that she would think have Project Managers and funding, since they are existing projects.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated a great part of what Legislator Montgomery just stated is true. He stated that is why one of the proposed changes is to move an employee from the Roads program into the Project Manager role, it is a requested reclassification of the position. He stated it is a role the employee has been doing for quite some time.

Commissioner Pena stated they are in the development stage of the Project Program Management System. He stated that they have a weekly meeting, that any Legislator is welcome to sit in on.

Legislator Montgomery stated this dialogue in addition to the back up provided is very useful. She stated we are relying on our Fiscal Department in the Highways & Facilities Department to get the funding that is made available through the State programs. She questioned if staffing up with Project Managers would be information that would be included in the "Executive Summary" section of the application. She questioned in addition to the Fiscal Department employees it also requires a Program Manager to obtain funding.

Commissioner Pena stated in order to properly manage those efforts, absolutely. He stated the Highways and Facilities Department does not do this by ourselves. He stated it is a multi- department effort. He stated the Finance Department, the Purchasing Department, the Law Department and the Planning Department put forth a collaborative effort to bring said funds to the County and execute the process and work that needs to be done. He stated his department focuses on its obligation which is basically design and construction. He stated there are other departments that work diligently to make it all happen.

Deputy Commissioner Tully stated the Planning Department plays a big role in getting the funding. He stated going forward there will be \$2 million worth of Transit Projects.

Legislator Montgomery stated this discussion really does help communicate the process to her constituents. She stated she is appreciative of the efforts.

Commissioner Pena stated anyone who is interested in seeing how broad the Federal funds reach and the structure across the board both Federally and in the State there are websites that can be researched: NYMTC (New York Metropolitan Transportation Council), Mid- Hudson South Technical Council to get a better sense of what the County is involved in.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is familiar with a lot of those programs having been involved with grant writing while she was working in the Congressman's Office. She stated she believes it to be valuable to hear how it works at the County level.

Legislator Albano stated he is in support of this proposal. He stated he is glad to see those working above their job description level are getting the appropriate reclassification.

Legislator Sullivan stated he would like to thank Legislator Albano for his representation on the Capital Projects Committee and Alexis Hawley of the Planning and Purchasing Department for her work in coordinating all the projects.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated her appreciation to everyone for their participation to provide the answers to the questions.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve the Reorganization in Highways & Facilities Department; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she did vote to support the motion. She stated that she still has additional questions. She stated between now and the Full Legislature Meeting she will have some comments.

Item #7 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (20A051)/ Reorganization in Highways & Facilities Department/ Highways & Facilities Commissioner Fred Pena

Chairwoman Nacerino stated this Budgetary Amendment (20A051) is to provide the funding for the reorganization in Highways & Facilities Department.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment (20A051)/ Reorganization in Highways & Facilities Department; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Item #8 - Approval/ 2020 Reorganization Personnel Department/ Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge

Chairwoman Nacerino stated this is another reorganization for consideration. She stated that she met with Personnel Officer Eldridge about this proposal. She stated that he informed her that there have been unprecedented circumstances within the department which have precipitated the need to restructure the Personnel Department. She stated the Personnel Department does not only support the County. She stated

they also support the Putnam County Public Schools, Libraries, Municipalities and many agencies.

Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge stated in his cover memo he indicated in the 40 plus years he has worked in the County he has never faced a situation like this. He stated out of 10 staff members, he has lost four (4). He stated two (2) of his employees will be out 6 – 8 weeks due to medical reasons. He stated that will leave four (4) experienced staff members for the next three (3) months. He stated the four (4) vacancies that occurred were due to retirement and personal reasons. He stated an observation he has made is as a result of COVID-19 people are making decisions in their personal lives that they may not have made prior to the pandemic. He stated in the case of some of these departures the employees have left with tears in their eyes, as did he. He stated he has always advocated to his employees that the most important thing is to take care of their family and themselves. He stated it is hard to lose good employees. He stated he met with his Deputy Personnel Officer Adriene Iasoni and carefully looked at the needs of the department. He stated most particularly there is an urgent need to provide an employee who could address all the civil service issues that come up, in support of the Schools and the Municipalities. He stated his department provides coverage for 3,500 employees with a relatively small staff. He stated due to COVID-19 there are new laws that have come into play. He stated the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) is a Federal law effective April 1, of 2020. He provided an overview of the FFCRA Law. He stated in summary it provides flexibility for employees with children up to the age of 18 in these times of dealing with COVID-19. He stated that there are some factors that exempt certain essential employees from eligibility. He stated during the COVID-19 crisis even though there was a requirement of a 50% reduction the entire Personnel Department Staff was working, 50% in office and 50% remotely. He stated attached to his cover memo (September 17, 2020) is a listing that shows a breakdown of the Personnel Department employees by title. He stated there are some changes in titles. He stated with the exception of the across boards that apply in the union contract and potentially in management, the requested changes are in the same dollar amount that was requested and granted for the 2020 Budget.

Legislator Jonke stated he has known Mr. Eldridge for many years. He stated his department has been crippled over the worst of times in the past 40 years. He stated the Department members have hung in and not missed a beat. He stated he is totally supportive of this proposal. He stated he would like to thank Mr. Eldridge for the hard work he puts in every day.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is still working through the details of this request. She stated she and Personnel Officer Eldridge did speak. She stated he addressed many of her questions at that time. She stated at this time she does not have any further questions.

Legislator Albano stated he echoes everything Legislator Jonke stated. He stated he also would like to thank Personnel Officer Eldridge for all that he does.

Legislator Sullivan stated he would also like to echo the statements made in favor of this proposal and the fine work done by Personnel Officer Eldridge and his staff.

Chairwoman Nacerino stated she too echoes the favorable comments made by her colleagues. She stated that Personnel Officer Eldridge does a stupendous job along with his staff. She stated she supports this request. She stated during these challenging times, she believes there will be more asked of the County's Personnel Department.

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve the 2020 Reorganization Plan for the Personnel Department; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Item #9 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (20T193)/ Reorganization in Personnel Department/ Personnel Officer Paul Eldridge

Chairwoman Nacerino made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment (20T193)/the 2020 Reorganization Plan for the Personnel Department; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Item #10 - FYI/Overtime/ Temporary Report/ Finance Commissioner William Carlin (also copied to Audit Mtg)

Chairwoman Nacerino provided an overview of the Overtime/ Temporary Report.

Item #11 - FYI/ 2020 Accident Report – Duly Noted

Item #12 - FYI/ 2020 Employee Incident Report- Duly Noted

Item #13 - Other Business- None

Item #14 – Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:19PM Chairman Nacerino made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Montgomery. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.