

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
CALLED BY THE CLERK AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIR
TO BE HELD AT
PUTNAM GOLF, INC.
187 HILL STREET
MAHOPAC, NEW YORK 10541**

Thursday March 12, 2015 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Albano. The Putnam County Sheriff's Department and Civil Air Patrol presented the flag. Chairman Albano led in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Scuccimarra, Addonizio, Nacerino, Castellano, LoBue, Wright and Chairman Albano. Also present was Legislative Counsel Van Ross. Legislator Gross was absent and Legislator Gouldman arrived at 7:15 P.M.

Deputy County Executive Walker introduced County Executive MaryEllen Odell.

County Executive Odell introduced Callie Sorrento who sang the National Anthem. County Executive Odell acknowledged and thanked the Legislature, business community and her team. She acknowledged teachers, unions, farmers, laborers, health care providers, the church and Putnam County's strong faith based community. County Executive Odell's focus on this year's County Address was about "Family." She presented a slide show of pictures of County employees' new additions to their families.

County Executive Odell stated that the Administration is continuing their initiative of "One Army on the War on Addiction" by spending money wisely. As a result of this initiative, Sheriff Smith now has two (2) Deputies and an Investigator and funds were allocated for educational programs through the Department of Social Services/Mental Health. She stated that New York State Senator Terrence Murphy is the Chair of the Heroin Task Force in New York State. County Executive Odell explained the partnerships involved that are fighting for this initiative such as: the Legislature, the Sheriff's Department, the STOP DWI program, the District Attorney, Arms Acres, Putnam Family and Community Services, the Coalition That Cares, St. Christopher's Inn, the National Council on Alcoholism and other Drug Dependencies, and the Drug Treatment Court under the leadership of Judge James Reitz. She stated that through the initiative of the Youth Bureau and the Health Department the County offered three (3) Medication Take Back Days in 2014 which resulted in 2.25 tons of medications being turned in to date. She stated that the Sheriff's Department, Carmel Police Department and Kent Police Department will accept medication being turned in 24/7. She also explained the many services available to families through the Department of Social Services.

County Executive Odell continued by recognizing and thanking the "Heroes;" our Veterans, who have served this Country honorably. She stated that the Administration believed it was critical to allocate funding for a full time Director of Veteran's Affairs. She stated that access to State and Federal programs for Veterans have been enhanced. She stated that Putnam County's mission is about saving our Veterans and stated that the Peer-to-Peer Veterans Counseling Program allows Veterans to seek the help they so desperately need to understand and cope with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

She stated that the Putnam County Veterans Museum is being re-dedicated as the: Putnam Veterans & Military Museum. She stated that on September 24, 2015 through September 27, 2015 the Vietnam Veterans traveling wall will return to Putnam County. The memorial will be displayed at Putnam County Veterans Memorial Park and on the 27th a commemoration of the Gold Star Mothers National monument will follow.

County Executive Odell continued and recognized Putnam County's "Finest & Bravest" first responders; Police, Fire & EMS Personnel who provide 24/7 life, safety and property protection. She stated that through a Homeland Security Grant of \$150,000 dollars a New Emergency Response building will be constructed that will allow us to house the entire emergency response fleet under one (1) roof. She recognized the eight (8) School Resource Officers (SRO) and six (6) Special Police Officers (SPO) assigned to area schools. She introduced Putnam County's newest K9 Deputy; Sach, who is an expert in finding explosives and drugs, and was funded through grant monies. She explained the Nasal Narcan Program and stated that nasal narcan is an antidote for opiate overdoses. She explained the importance of the Sheriff Department's Marine Unit.

County Executive Odell continued and explained the Administration's fiscally conservative guiding principles such as: maintaining a strong fund balance, retaining Moody's Aa2 credit rating, meeting contractual obligations and avoiding employee layoffs, delivering mandated services and quality of life services all while staying within Albany's 2% tax cap. She provided a breakdown of the \$140.2 million dollars revenue received by the County: \$57.1m = 40% from sales tax, \$43.1m = 31% from real property taxes, \$14.1m = 10% from department revenues, \$24.8m = 18% from State and Federal Aid and \$1.1m = 1% from Inter-fund and other. She then provided a breakdown of the County's total expenses of \$143.3 million dollars with \$33.7m or 24% of the budget being designated for Public Safety, \$32.1m or 22% for Public Assistance, \$31.7m or 22% General Government support, \$12.4m or 8% for Health and \$9.8m or 7% for Education such as; early intervention preschool program and Community College tuition. She explained that Putnam County remains on solid financial ground with a fund balance at the end of 2014 of \$18.8 million dollars. She stated that the Retirement Reserve balance for 2014 equals \$3.4 million dollars which will enable Putnam County to forego the NYS Comptroller Pension Amortization Program (borrowing to pay pension costs) again in 2016. She stated that the County remains on solid financial ground in spite of the unanticipated \$4 million dollar Deskovic judgment. She stated that with strategic negotiations with NYMIR, they agreed to reimburse the County \$1.5 million dollars of the \$4 million dollar settlement. She stated that she is proposing to the Legislature that we accept the \$1.5 million dollar settlement and use it towards Capital Project improvements that need to be done to our buildings to make them safe and ADA compliant.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that the Journal News picked up on the fact that Putnam County is ahead of the curve in paying down our debt, and most particular our priority to get rid of pension borrowing. She stated that on November 30, 2015 Putnam County's additional one (1%) percent sales tax will sunset. By Resolution #38 of 2015, we have asked our State Legislators to authorize the renewal of the expiring 1% County sales tax increase for an additional two (2) years. She explained that of the 8 3/8% sales tax; the State receives 4%, the County receives 4% and the MTA 3/8%. She stated that the 1% equals \$14 million dollars in revenue for the County. County Executive Odell continued and explained the State Mandated services provided by the County which are funded by County sales tax dollars. She also explained how the County has shared with our local municipalities by providing the following: \$900,000 for

the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), \$3.2 million dollars for Community College Chargebacks and has guaranteed unpaid property taxes in the amount of \$25 million dollars.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that Putnam is one of the safest counties in New York State. She stated that the County continues to be committed to protecting our Second Amendment and has appealed the decision directing the County to disclose information regarding pistol permit applications to the Journal News. She explained the significant infrastructure issues being addressed at Tilly Foster Farm including; septic, water, dam and electric. She detailed the key partnerships; BOCES and Cornell Cooperative Extension, which have been established with Tilly Foster Farm that will enable the public to benefit from this asset. She stated that programs that will be offered by BOCES include; Environmental Science, Animal Care and Culinary. She stated that Cornell has agreed to open a Visitors Center.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that the Putnam County Trailway System is 12 miles long and we are presently working on three (3) additional projects. She stated that Putnam County Golf Course is not only a great place to play golf, but more importantly has become the event destination for the Hudson Valley. She stated that 2014 was the best fiscal year to date at the Golf Course, receiving \$2,031,055 in revenue, resulting in a gross profit of \$153,605. She also explained the fiscal impact from the many winter storms in 2015. She stated that 90% of these storms occurred on weekends and holidays which consumed 90% of the budgeted overtime. She stated that 26.4 million pounds of salt was used which utilized 100% of the salt budget.

County Executive Odell continued and explained that many of the County's critical assets are in need of repair such as; roads, culvert and storm drains, bridges and dams, communication towers, the County Office Building, the Donald B. Smith campus, the Historic Courthouse and Board of Elections building. She stated that the County is seeking a portion of the \$5.4 billion that was awarded to NYS as part of the bank settlements. She stated that Town Superintendents went up to Albany and requested a \$200 million dollar increase to the CHIPS Program and \$500 million dollars in State aid be designated to local roads, bridges and culverts from the \$5.4 billion dollars.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that when you talk about "Mobility" in Putnam County, the Putnam Transit system was rebranded last year and she thanked the Putnam County Chambers of Commerce, the Transportation Task Force and the Drivers for their assistance. She thanked the family of WWII US Navy Veteran John W. "Jack" Hearn who bequeathed his own specially equipped van to be used to transport Putnam County Veterans. She mentioned the County's Partnership with the MTA and the infrastructure associated with this partnership such as; Prospect Hill Road Bridge and Bus Shelters at County Train Stations.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that 2014 was the "Year of the Senior." She stated that Putnam County has the fastest growing population of seniors in New York State and she mentioned the many programs available to them. She stated that Putnam County is committed to keeping our seniors healthy. She stated that Nutrition Centers provide 325 meals per day and 150 homebound meals are delivered daily. She stated that Putnam County families celebrate a deep sense of "Traditions." There are many different religions which promote tolerance and the importance of family values. She stated that our many heritage based clubs and organizations also keep traditions

alive such as; the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, the Columbus Day Parade, the German-American Oktoberfest, the Polish-American Festival and our popular Native American Pow Wow.

County Executive Odell continued and spoke about "Caring." She stated that Putnam County provides immunizations through the Health Department. She stated that over 150 vendors participated in the 9th Annual Food Operators Seminar which included topics such as; restaurants and social media, special dietary options, meeting sanitary codes and ultraviolet water disinfection systems. She stated that Dr. Beals and his team are promoting the "Eat Smart Restaurant Week" which was a huge success last year. She stated that in 2015 Putnam County is promoting "Live On NY" caring for New Yorkers through Organ Donation. She presented statistics of Putnam County residents on an organ waiting list and how many have received transplants. She explained Putnam County's "Mentoring" PILOT Program. She also explained many of the exciting events in the County that are promoted by Putnam County Tourism.

County Executive Odell continued and recognized Putnam County's "Partners" by detailing Economic Development Projects such as; Brewster Revitalization Project, Stateline Retail Center, Crossroads Route 312 and Butterfield. She stated that these projects promote smart economic growth and provide an opportunity for union families to work on these projects. She stated that when we talk about the "future" a litigation has been settled and a portion of the 35 acres of prime property next to Putnam Hospital Center will now be back on the tax rolls. She stated that the residents of Putnam County have received 27.5% of the sale which equates to \$495,000. She stated that senior housing and assisted living will be on that site which will create jobs in the area.

County Executive Odell continued and announced the appointments to her administration. She also explained the process of selecting a new Commissioner of Emergency Services and announced her selection of Mr. Anthony W. Sutton.

County Executive Odell closed by stating that a flash drive was handed out to everyone. It is a directory that allows access to all the resources of Putnam County, most of which were mentioned tonight. She thanked the people of Putnam County for allowing her to be the County Executive.

There being no further business, at 8:13 p.m., Chairman Albano made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.