

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

**Thursday                      March 7, 2019                      7:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 P.M. by Chairman Castellano. The Putnam County Sheriff's Department and Civil Air Patrol presented the flag. Chairman Castellano requested Major Elena MacDermant of the Putnam County Civil Air Patrol to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance in memory of her husband Colonel Robert MacDermant. Chairman Castellano requested Legislator Sullivan lead in the Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Addonizio, Nacerino, Albano, Jonke, Sayegh, Sullivan and Chairman Castellano. Also present was Legislative Counsel Firriolo.

Chairman Castellano introduced Deputy Commissioner of Social Services, Joseph DeMarzo.

Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo introduced the elected officials and representatives in attendance, individuals running for office, Putnam County Justices, party chairs and Election Commissioners. Deputy Commissioner DeMarzo then introduced the County Executive, MaryEllen Odell.

County Executive Odell began her 8<sup>th</sup> State of the County Address. She believed that addiction and the opioid crisis is something that we are all facing in some way shape or form. She stated that the number 1 concern across the nation is the opioid crisis, substance abuse and addiction, mental health and our veterans. She explained that 2019 would focus on the many Health Providers.

County Executive Odell continued with the County's fiscal responsibility such as: consistently delivered budget on time, met the Albany imposed tax cap, strong bond rating, managing and improving our infrastructure, budget meeting the needs of the taxpayers, reduced long term debt and eliminated short term debt. She detailed the County's social responsibility such as: enhanced services at the Veterans Service Agency, the PILOT Program, Putnam Golf Course, enhanced services at the Office of Senior Resources, Tilly Foster Farm & Educational Institute, enhanced school safety (SRO & SPO) all of these being quality of life initiatives.

County Executive Odell continued and spoke about the One Army on the War on Addiction. She stated that there have been 71 opioid overdose deaths in the last four (4) years. The odds of dying from an accidental opioid overdose in the U.S. surpass those of dying in car accidents. She stated that hoping will not help someone struggling with addiction, however, working together we can. She stated that Narcan can reverse the effects of opioids in an emergency situation and 676 training kits were provided in 2018 alone. She stated that the County joined the lawsuit against Big Pharma, holding the pharmaceutical companies accountable for deceptive marketing for profit. She mentioned many of the entities within the County that have helped and explained how

they have made a difference such as: the District Attorney's office, the establishment of the "One Army in the War on Addiction Taskforce", the establishment of the Tobacco 21 (T-21) Law (restricting the sale of tobacco and E-Cigarette products to anyone under the age of 21), Judge Reitz as Drug Treatment Coordinator, Medication Take Back Day and Medication Drop Boxes, the Deterra Drug Activation System, Vital Education and Prevention Programs. She stated that the plan is always changing with Governor Cuomo backing recreational marijuana legalization. She elaborated on the many issues which the State of Colorado is now experiencing since their legalization of marijuana in 2014. She read quotes against this legalization from former NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Putnam County Commissioner of Health Dr. Michael Nesheiwat. She encouraged residents to contact their State Representatives and let them know how they feel about the legalization of adult recreation marijuana.

County Executive Odell continued and provided information on how the Sheriff's Department is committed to the war on addiction and building relationships with the community. The Sheriff's Department remains committed to our partnership with our local schools to keep our children safe. She stated that the Sheriff's Department, Bureau of Emergency Services, local Police Departments and all our volunteer first responders are there for us 24/7. She explained a plan to consolidate dispatch services with the Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Emergency Services. She stated that this year the County was working to increase the reliability of our radio communications system by installing a new microwave system and moving radio communications to a state of the art trunking system. She spoke of the dedication of the Emergency Operations Center and Incident Command System during the four (4) storms which took place last year. She continued and explained how Putnam County is dedicated to the health and safety of our residents by providing Hazardous Waste Disposal events for the safe and responsible way to dispose of certain items.

County Executive Odell continued with how Putnam County has managed infrastructure. She provided a list and explained some of the projects completed last year and those projects that are planned or in progress such as; Road Paving Projects, Renovation of the Carmel Friendship Center for our seniors, the completion of the Friendship Center in Philipstown and adding seven (7) new buses to our fleet. She stated that the fiscal state of Putnam County is strong, according to the independent financial experts, with a Moody's Aa2 rating. She explained how Moody's determines this superior rating based on the County's Economy/Tax Base 30%, Finances 30%, Management 20% and Debt/Pensions 20%. With respect to Economy/Tax Base, County Executive Odell elaborated on the projects which will allow for jobs and will improve our commercial tax base. She explained how Putnam County has met the National Government Finance Officers Association's recommendation that counties carry a minimum general fund unassigned fund balance of two (2) months of General Fund Operating Expenses, which for Putnam County equals \$23.6 million. She also explained how the County's Long Term Debt has decreased by 21% and the Short Term Debt of \$17 million has been eliminated. The Pension Amortization of \$8.5 million has also been eliminated. She explained how the Aa2 rating allows Putnam County to borrow at lower interest rates; saving taxpayer dollars.

County Executive Odell continued and explained the challenges that Putnam County faces as mandates are continually shifted to counties such as; Election Reform. She also spoke about the 2019 financial goals and shared services with our municipalities and explained the many services available to our Veterans. She stated that the 2018

**Putnam Invests in Leaders of Tomorrow (PILOT) program was a great success and for 2019 there are over 75 applicants. She presented an overview of the golf course and some of the events that are held at the Golf Course. She stated that the Putnam County Golf Course is a premier event destination and has been proven to be a solid financial investment. County Executive Odell also provided an overview of Tilly Foster Farm & Educational Institute. She provided an update on the programs offered through BOCES, the harvest of fresh vegetables, the events held there, the event which will showcase local art through the Putnam Arts Council and the renovation of one (1) of the barns in the hope to transform it into another opportunity for a destination wedding location.**

**County Executive Odell stated that due to our great fiscal management, Putnam County is clearly set to take on the future and keep building on the accomplishments of the last seven (7) years. She thanked everyone for their support and contribution for making this a great and Patriotic County of the Hudson Valley.**

**County Executive closed in memory of Mahopac native Chief Warrant Officer Michael Kozloski, who was killed while on duty at the Coast Guard facility in Homer Alaska on January 31, 2019.**

**Chairman Castellano thanked County Executive Odell for her presentation.**

**There being no further business, at 8:15 P.M., Chairman Castellano made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Sayegh. All in favor.**

**Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.**