

**AUDIT & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
TO BE HELD IN
ROOM #318 OF THE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Castellano, Legislators Gross & Nacerino

Monday (Immediately Following Special Full at 6:30pm) August 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 P.M. by Chairman Castellano who requested Legislator Gross lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Gross & Nacerino and Chairman Castellano were present.

Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – July 27, 2015

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item #4 - Discussion/ Abandoned Property Legislation

Chairman Castellano stated he has had an ongoing conversation with a constituent in a Homeowners Association at a local condominium complex. He stated the constituent was unable to attend tonight's meeting, however requested that the condominium complex not be named. He stated this is an issue that is going on throughout the State as well as the Nation. He stated the State of Florida has attempted to remedy this situation with legislation. He stated there are multiple condominium units in this specific complex that have been foreclosed on since prior to 2008 and have remained vacant since. He stated although the banks that foreclosed on the property owners have paid the property taxes, the common charges have gone unpaid. Therefore, the current property owners within the condominium complex are left to pay those charges. He stated in this specific condominium complex, there are five (5) units in this "foreclosure limbo." He stated they have all been foreclosed on for over five (5) years. He stated the common charges for these units cost \$1,492 per month. He stated the Homeowners Association is maintaining the properties to benefit the bank, who will eventually sell the property. He stated there should be a law to remedy this issue. He stated perhaps once a unit is foreclosed on, after six (6) months or one (1) year, the bank should be responsible for paying the common charges for that unit. He stated this specific condominium complex did not want to bring negative attention to their complex, however this is an issue that is going on through the County, State, and Country.

Legislator Gouldman questioned what law was passed in Florida to try to resolve this issue.

Chairman Castellano stated in Florida, after six (6) months the bank is forced to sell the property. He stated this is a problem because when the bank is forced to sell, lower bids come in. He stated the banks are paying the taxes to avoid losing the property to the Town or County, however the common charges are left unpaid. He stated this causes the other condominium owners in the complex to have to pay.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if a lien could be issued.

Chairman Castellano stated a lien could only be placed against the homeowner who has already abandoned the property.

Legislator Scuccimarra stated when regular homes are foreclosed on, the bank pays the taxes, however does not maintain the property, causing it to become a plight to the neighborhood. She suggested contacting our New York State Senators about this issue.

Legislator Nacerino stated it is grossly unfair to put the burden on the other residents of the complex. She agreed with Legislator Scuccimarra's suggestion of contacting our Senators.

Town of Southeast Councilwoman Lynn Eckardt stated the Bills have been stalled in Albany. She stated outreach to the State is important. She stated if something can be done at a local level, it is important that it be looked into. She stated she would send the Bill numbers for this legislation.

Legislator Nacerino stated if there is any recourse on a local level it should definitely be pursued. She questioned if there is anything the County can do to assist with this issue.

Legislative Counsel Clem Van Ross stated this would require a State Law change therefore there is nothing to be done at a local level.

Legislator Gross questioned if the banks pay the property taxes.

Chairman Castellano stated the banks do pay the property taxes.

Legislator Gross stated the bank technically owns the property once it is paying taxes. He questioned why the banks would not pay the common charges, as it seems to be in their best interest.

Chairman Castellano stated they do not have to pay the common charges, because those charges are the responsibility of the person residing at the property.

President of Putnam County Chambers of Commerce Bill Nulk stated when property is foreclosed on, the Town and/or municipalities will go to the property to maintain it.

Chairman Castellano stated that is the case in a single family home.

Legislator Albano suggested addressing the common charges when the property is sold.

Chairman Castellano stated it could be addressed if there was a "boom" in the property. He stated the banks wait until they believe they will get their money back, or possibly make money from the property. He stated the longer that takes the higher the amount of money increases.

Legislator Wright stated a lien can be placed against the homeowner.

Chairman Castellano stated in this particular case, there is one (1) condo causing the most concern. He stated his constituent has judgments against the individual and they have stated they left the property and are not willing to cooperate.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the Bills in the State are still in committee.

Councilwoman Eckardt stated there is one (1) Bill in committee.

Legislator Gouldman suggested sending a letter to the Senate and Assembly.

Chairman Castellano stated there is time to discuss the best options in this case. He stated there should be a law to straighten this out. He suggested having the bank assume the common charges within one (1) year of foreclosure.

Legislator Wright stated if the Bills are to impose obligation to New York State banks to pay these charges, it is meddling with mortgages written in New York State. He stated this would make them unsaleable securities in the secondary market.

Chairman Castellano stated he would like to collect more information and discuss this issue further.

Item #5 - Update/ Putnam County Golf Course/ General Manager Mike McCall

Chairman Castellano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional;
Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Chairman Castellano stated a letter was written by a golfer from Yorktown praising the Putnam County Golf Course.

General Manager of Putnam County Golf Course Mike McCall thanked the Committee for the time to present an update of the Golf Course. He stated through June 2015, golf rounds have increased nationally as compared to 2014. He stated the Putnam County Golf Course had a slow start and the spring season has been basically nonexistent for the past three (3) years. He stated despite the slow spring, May was a great month. He stated due to the harsh winter, many courses north of I-84 lost many greens. He stated due to investments made as well as luck, Putnam County Golf Course did not suffer too much damage. He stated because of this, more people are coming to Putnam County Golf Course as they are unable to play at their usual course. He stated more marketing has been put into place for the Golf Course as well. He stated rounds are up 4.2% in comparison to 2014. He stated the weather during the weekends this year has been great. He stated in one (1) weekend about \$20,000 of revenue from golf is brought in, as compared to \$5,000 during the week. He stated there was some damage to the course; however improvements are being made. He stated in regards to the financials, both golf and food & beverage are up 3% over what was projected. He stated the revenue is split

50/50 between golf and food & beverage. He stated the operating expenses are \$43,000 less than projected. He stated the Putnam County Golf Course Superintendent left in the Winter. He stated a mechanic also left. He stated this resulted in a savings in payroll for this time. He stated this savings will not show next year because the positions are filled. He stated the Golf Course is \$30,000 ahead in their budget, compared to what was projected. He stated over the last three (3) years, golf revenue has increased about \$100,000, or 27%. He stated the food & beverage revenue has basically doubled. He stated bringing in more revenue demands more, which has increased the operating expenses; however the payroll expenses have only gone up 24%. He stated the value of the Golf Course is much higher than it was three (3) years ago. He referenced the website statistics, which showed many out of County people showing interest in the Golf Course. He showed a picture of the settling pond at the Golf Course and stated that a professional photographer came to take pictures of the Golf Course. He stated the photos came out great and they will be used for marketing and to be placed on the website. He stated the bunkers that have been redone look and play much better. He stated the number of bunkers of the Golf Course has been reduced, which reduces the maintenance and makes it easier for the golfer to play, which increases the pace of play, which allows for more golfers. He stated a lot of thought goes into any change at the Golf Course. He stated the increase in marketing has made a huge difference.

Legislator Wright questioned if reducing the number of bunkers affects the PGA rating of the Golf Course.

General Manager McCall stated it does not affect the rating. He stated the Golf Course was built in the 1960's and has gone through many modifications since. He stated they are currently working with a golf course architect. He stated there is a master plan for the Golf Course, which they have given to the architect, and it has been followed with some modifications. He stated the renovations to the bunkers are 1/3 finished. He stated two (2) more holes will be done this Fall. He stated the smallest green was damaged this Winter, and this will be attended to as well. He stated usually, they bid out in the Fall to get prices on the work that needs to be done. He stated he would like to put out a unit bid for the rest of the Golf Course, in which the price would be honored for the next three (3) years. He stated a customer showed him that Putnam County Golf Course was highlighted in an engineering journal for the parking lot that was put in.

Commissioner of Finance William Carlin stated the parking lot was an environmental improvement project. He stated it helped with phosphorus reduction and was completely paid for by the DEP. He stated Putnam County paid for the lighting in the parking lot, and this was installed at the same time due to health and safety reasons. He stated in regards to the sales tax for the Putnam County Golf Course, the County accounts for it differently than the Golf Course.

General Manager McCall stated for merchandise, the Golf Course increases the revenue and expenses, which has a net zero effect on the bottom line. He stated the County recognizes it as revenue and expense, while the Golf Course does not recognize it as either.

Commissioner Carlin stated this difference will be taken care of in 2016.

General Manager McCall stated the Golf Course put a concession stand on the Course. He stated it will sell hot dogs, premade sandwiches, and drinks. He stated it is placed at the furthest point from the club house and it will also have real bathrooms. He stated the biggest complaint he gets is about the porta potties out on the Course. He stated there is a small patio area where refreshments can be set up for golf outings. He stated it can also serve as a lightening protection area. He stated there will also be a water fountain at the concession stand. He stated a life was saved at the Golf Course this year, and an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) will be added to the concession stand as well. He stated the incident that happened this year was close to the club house, but if it were further out of the Course, it may have ended differently.

Legislator Wright questioned if the bathrooms will lead to a septic tank or septic field.

General Manager McCall stated a 50 foot septic field will be made. He stated the concession stand has many access points.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the concession stand came out of the operating budget.

General Manager McCall stated it will be paid from the operating budget. He stated \$20,000 may transfer. He stated now that the porta potties can be removed, there is a \$560 savings. He stated they are still looking to make some improvements, including the bunkers he mentioned earlier. He stated the Fall is a better time to do this because it is dryer. He stated the pump station and underground piping at the Golf Course is very good. He stated the sprinkler heads are not great and they would like to look at a three (3) year plan to replace them. He stated this will be placed into the operating budget for 2016. He stated some green contours will be changed. He stated tree removal and pruning will be done as well. He stated the maintenance facility he has spoken about in the past is also being looked into, although it is not immediately in the plans. He showed a fallen willow tree that had fallen about a foot away from the pump station. He stated it was very lucky that the tree did not fall onto the pump station. He stated the bathrooms in the club house need to be addressed as well. He stated the phones have also been an issue. He stated he would like to put outdoor lighting where the concerts are held. He stated the Nerds concert that was held at the Golf Course had a great turnout, however it was dark and one (1) person did slip and get hurt. He stated in the three (3) years that the Golf Course has been holding these events, there has not been any incidents where people were out of control.

Chairman Castellano stated he attended the most recent Friday night event and there was a great turnout.

Legislator Gross questioned what would happen if there were unruly people.

General Manager McCall stated when there is a big event, the Golf Course will request a Sheriff presence. He stated they do not always know how an event will go. He stated the first time an event is held security people will be hired by Homestyle Catering to be safe.

He stated the crowd has been great and no one is there to cause trouble. He stated this coming Friday is the last for the season and they have another big event in September where the band "The Amish Outlaws" will perform. He stated this band is as popular as the Nerds. He stated when more popular bands come to the Golf Course, more people come to see them and more revenue is collected. He handed out a review of the Golf Course that outlined aspects to be improved, but praised the way it is being run.

Chairman Castellano stated he hears nothing but good things about the Golf Course.

Legislator Wright questioned if the Golf Course has looked into having snow related events in the Winter.

General Manager McCall stated he is not opposed to looking into these types of events; however it has not been discussed. He stated Orange County does this at their Golf Courses. He stated there are liability issues and the Putnam County Golf Course is not very hilly.

Chairman Castellano stated great events are held all Winter at the Golf Course as well. He stated he would like to see estimates on the outdoor lighting. He stated it is a great venue.

Item #6 - Correspondence/ County Auditor

- a. **Sales Tax Report** – Duly Noted
- b. **Board In Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- c. **OTB Report** – Duly Noted
- d. **Transfer/Revenue Report** – Duly Noted
- e. **Contingency/Sub-Contingency Report** – Duly Noted

Item #7 - Correspondence/ Commissioner of Finance

- a. **Overtime/Temporary Report** – Duly Noted

- b. **Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 15A057/ Sheriff's Dept./ Purchase Two Steam Cleaners and Two Floor Autoscrubbers (Also reviewed in Protective Svcs.)**

Legislator Nacerino stated at the Protective Services Meeting, Undersheriff Convery stated the inmates would be utilizing these machines. She questioned if having the inmates do this type of work poses any liability.

Commissioner Carlin stated there is no liability and the machines are very tame. He stated the inmates have been using these machines, and if anything, the liability would decrease with the new equipment.

Chairman Castellano made a motion approve Budgetary Amendment 15A057; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

c. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 15A060/ Sheriff's Dept./ Purchase Scheduling Software (Also reviewed in Protective Svcs.)

Chairman Castellano questioned why there is a fiscal impact for 2016 if the money being used to purchase the software was coming from a 2015 line.

Commissioner Carlin stated there is a yearly charge to use the software.

Legislator Gross made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 15A060; Seconded by Chairman Castellano. All in favor.

d. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (15A061)/ Finance/ Legal Aid Society/ Account for NYS Indigent Legal Services Distribution #5/ Grant Allocation from NYS Indigent Services for 2015 (Also reviewed in Protective Svcs.)

Legislator Nacerino made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #8 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T107/ Sheriff's Dept./ Transfer of Personnel (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Commissioner Carlin stated Undersheriff Convery was present at the meeting, but got a call and needed to leave.

Legislator Nacerino stated this was discussed in depth at the Personnel Committee Meeting.

Legislator Nacerino made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #9 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T109/ Sheriff's Dept./ Overtime due to Open Personnel Line (Tabled at July Personnel - Also reviewed in August Personnel)

Legislator Gross made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #10 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T131/ Finance/ Judgments & Claims (Tabled from Full Mtg. 08/04/2015)

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #11 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T145/ Office for Senior Resources/ Cover Unplanned Staff Shortage (Also reviewed in Health & Personnel)

Legislator Nacerino made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #12 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T150/ Sheriff's Dept./ Overtime due to Open Personnel Line (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Legislator Gross made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #13 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T152/ Sheriff's Dept./ Overtime to Cover Constant Watches (Also reviewed in Personnel)

Legislator Nacerino made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #14 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T160/ Finance/ Upgrade Current Telephone System

Director of IT/GIS Thomas Lannon stated the money is not coming from the IT/GIS Department Budget, but will rather come from Finance. He stated the current phone system is six (6) years old and there are 12 systems, one (1) in each building. He stated the voicemail system and auto-attendant is failing. He stated at the Golf Course, voice over IP is used, however it is not reliable. He stated they also have Comcast set up there, however if there is a problem with it there is nothing the County can do. He stated the Golf Course is missing the ability to have a call queue. He stated he would like to utilize the County's servers to hold software to move to a voice over IP system. He stated the same company, Tadiran will be used and the current system can be used and phased out as the new system is implemented. He stated this will save money up front.

Legislator Gross questioned if this company was used before.

Director Lannon stated Tadiran is the current phone system company. He stated they have a division that is strictly for Government. He stated the County can call and get immediate service when needed.

Legislator Gross questioned where the company is located.

Director Lannon stated they are out of Isreal and their United States division is based out of Atlanta, Georgia. He stated a lot of the Federal Government uses this company as well.

Chairman Castellano questioned if new phones will be purchased.

Director Lannon stated some new phones will be purchased. He stated currently, if there is a problem with the phones, the County must buy Tadiran phones. He stated with the new system, any phone can be used. He stated about 25 phones will be purchased. He stated the Sheriff's Department will be one (1) of the first buildings to have the new system because it has a recording ability, which is vital to their Department.

Chairman Castellano stated his office in Westchester County just switched to this system and it is great.

Director Lannon stated the queue can be seen on the screen of the phone and much more information will be readily available right on the phone.

Chairman Castellano stated the actual phone is expensive, however there is a savings in productivity.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #15 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 15T163/ Finance/ Employment of Temporary Tradespeople (As discussed in Personnel & Physical Svcs.)

Legislator Gross questioned if local tradespeople would be hired.

Chairman Castellano stated the County will attempt to hire local tradespeople.

Legislator Gross made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #16 - Approval/ Authorization/ Legislators to Attend September New York State Association of Counties Conference

Commissioner Carlin stated the NYSAC Conference is a great place to network with other Counties.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to pre-file the necessary resolution; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item #17 - Consumer Affairs/ Fines & Revenue Report/ FYI – Duly Noted

Item #18 - Other Business - None

Item #19 - Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:03 P.M., Chairman Castellano made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Green.