

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512
Members: Chairman Jonke & Legislators Nacerino & Sullivan**

Monday

December 13, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:42PM by Chairman Jonke who requested that Legislator Sullivan lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislators Nacerino, Sullivan and Chairman Jonke were present.

Item #3 - Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes – November 9, 2021

Chairman Jonke stated the minutes were accepted as they were submitted.

Item #4 – Approval/ Fund Transfer (22T001)/ Move Office Assistant Position in District Attorney’s Office from Part Time to Full Time/ District Attorney Robert Tendy

District Attorney Tendy stated in January of 2020 New York State passed new Discovery Laws and Bail Reform Laws. He stated based on a grant received from New York State to upgrade all of the equipment in his department to handle the increase of data management that these laws would generate he believed his staff would be able to meet the new requirements. He stated in March of 2020 everything shut down, due to COVID-19. He stated things in the judicial systems had not fully opened back up until a few months ago. He explained at which time it has become very clear that the newly updated computer equipment is not nearly enough to handle the enormous amount of new material that must be processed daily. He provided a broad overview of the demands the laws have generated. He explained the part time position is just not adequate.

District Attorney Chief of Staff Christina Rizzo explained currently there is funding being used from a vacant position line, as a result of a retirement, to pay an employee to work overtime to help with the workload. She stated now the Courts are up and running, they are now realizing the impact of the new laws. She spoke to the responsibilities of the position and the fact that it takes three (3) months to train an employee on the Prosecutors Case Management System (PCMS).

Chairman Jonke questioned when did the part-time hire start working extra hours.

District Attorney Chief of Staff Christina Rizzo stated the part -time employee began working in July of 2021 and began working extra hours in September of 2021.

Chairman Jonke questioned why this request was not made during the budget process.

District Attorney Tendy stated when he was going through the budget process, the Courts had not fully opened. He also stated the Discovery Rules were suspended during COVID, so they had no way of telling how good or bad this was going to be.

District Attorney Chief of Staff Christina Rizzo stated the reality of the impact of the work came after the submission of their budget.

Legislator Sullivan stated the Legislature does not add positions lightly. He stated he recalled District Attorney Tendy approaching the Legislature with concerns regarding the potential impact of Bail Reform on his department. He stated he supports this request.

Legislator Nacerino stated District Attorney Tendy has cited numerous times the challenges Bail Reform has created in the Office of the District Attorney (D.A.). She stated after listening to the rationale for this request, she too will support this request. She questioned is there a possibility of the D.A.'s office being awarded funding from the Criminal Justice Discovery Reform Grant, which would offset 100% of additional cost. She requested District Attorney Tendy speak to that.

District Attorney Tendy stated unfortunately it will not apply in this case. He continued to speak to the Grant. He stated the action they are requesting is to take the funding out of contingency for next year. He stated if there is no grant funding secured during 2022 that would apply, then he will include the funding requirement in his budget request in the future.

Legislator Nacerino stated regardless of the outcome of the grant, the position is clearly needed and that is not part of this request this evening.

Legislator Castellano questioned what happens if the D.A. Department does not meet the Discovery 15-day deadline.

District Attorney Tendy stated a motion can be filed to the Court to request additional time. He stated however to process a request for additional time, it requires additional paperwork and creates more work for the support staff.

Legislator Albano stated he would support this request. He stated pushing the deadline out just generates more work.

Legislator Addonizio stated she is in support of this request.

Chairman Jonke questioned if District Attorney Tendy has begun working on the five (5) year plan for his office, a topic and suggestion that has been made by the Legislature.

District Attorney Tendy confirmed he has.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (22T001)/ Move Office Assistant Position in District Attorney's Office from Part Time to Full Time; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #5 – Approval/ Increase Salary of Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, DSS & Youth Bureau/ Commissioner of Mental Health, DSS & Youth Bureau Mike Piazza

Commissioner of Mental Health, DSS & Youth Bureau Mike Piazza stated they have been searching for a hire to fill the vacant Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, DSS & Youth Bureau. He stated the position has specific requirements and qualifications that are required by New York State. He stated the Deputy Commissioner retired in May of 2021 at which time the salary for the Deputy position was reduced. He stated the reduced salary is not appropriate for this position. He stated the request is to bring the salary up, effective January 2022 to \$118,000.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated because of the qualifications that Commissioner Piazza has, New York State gave temporary approval to hire a Deputy that did not meet all of the requirements. He stated now moving forward to have a Deputy who meets all of the necessary requirements will allow the County to continue to have these two (2) departments combined.

Chairman Jonke stated it is also important for the County to have a succession plan in place.

Legislator Nacerino expressed her agreement and support for this request.

Legislator Sayegh questioned where the additional funding will come from.

Commissioner of Mental Health, DSS & Youth Bureau Mike Piazza stated the position will be filled in February 2022, so the funding will come from the January savings.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to approve; Increase Salary of Deputy Commissioner of Mental Health, DSS & Youth Bureau; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Item #6 - Approval/ Budgetary Amendment (22A001)/ NYS Health Fellowship Program Grant/ Personnel Director Paul Eldridge

Senior Fiscal Manager William Orr stated the New York State Public Health Corps Fellowship Program has awarded Putnam County Health Department \$1.1 million in grant funding, for over a two (2) year period. He explained this is through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). He stated the purpose of the grant is for the County to build public health capacity, to continue to support COVID -19 response operations, and increase preparedness for public health emergencies that may occur in the future. He stated the grant will expire July 31, 2023. He stated if this is approved the Health Department will hire four (4) positions for the 18 month period. He stated this budgetary amendment (22A001) is for 2021 only. He stated they are going to hire two (2) Public Health Fellows at an annual salary of \$50,000 each, one (1) Public Graduate Fellow at a annual salary of \$60,000 and one (1) Local Coordinator for the program at a annual salary of \$55,000. He stated the job specifications for these positions and the job descriptions were recommended by the Personnel Department. He stated in addition to the salaries and benefits the grant funding will be provided for desk chairs and necessary items: computers, office supplies and mileage reimbursement for the four (4) positions. He stated these

positions will be used to address COVID matters. He stated there is flexibility as far as their focus in the Health Department, which that would be up to the Commissioner of Health.

Chairman Jonke questioned when the grant is exhausted do the jobs go away or is it up to the County to continue with the positions.

Senior Fiscal Manager Orr stated both are correct, it would be entirely up to the County if they determine after the two (2) year period that the positions are needed. He stated when the people are hired, they will be told the positions will end July 31, 2023. He stated from the start of this up to July 31, 2023, these positions will have no impact on the taxpayers. He stated the \$1.1 million would fund up to seven (7) employees, however it was decided that Putnam County needs no more than four (4). He continued to speak to this matter. He stated Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau will speak to how the salaries were determined.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated New York State provided guidance as a salary base for the Fellow and Graduate Fellow positions and they provided a more specific range for the Coordinator position. She stated that was used as a reference. She stated the County is looking to recruit these candidates, so the salary for the position plays a role. She stated this is different because we are not actively looking and recruiting candidates. She explained the candidates will apply through New York State and indicate what County they would be interested in working for. She stated that puts Putnam County in direct competition with Westchester and Dutchess Counties, which are much larger Counties. She stated Putnam County wanted to make sure we would not be losing good candidates as a result of the salaries that Putnam sets. She continued to speak to the setting of the salaries.

Chairman Jonke questioned if she knew what the salary was that was set by Westchester County. Also, if it is determined that the salaries we advertise need to be changed, would we have the ability to do that.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated no we are not aware of the amount Westchester County is setting for the salary for the position. She stated if it is determined that we would need to come back to the Legislature for approval to increase the salary, that will be done.

Legislator Nacerino requested a broad description of the role of each position.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated she created the job specs for three (3) of the positions. She stated for the Coordinator position she took that directly from New York State. She provided an overview of the positions.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the fact that the job will end in 2023 would be a deterrent to recruit candidates.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated she does not think that will be the case. She stated it is working the same throughout the State of New York. She stated she sees it as a good opportunity for a new graduate to gain experience, etc.

Legislator Sullivan stated this will bring more resources into the County Health Department to assist in addressing some of the issues we are being faced with currently. He stated the fact that the State is covering the expenses is a positive and he likes that there is no commitment on the Counties to continue the positions. He stated he supports this.

Legislator Jonke facilitated further discussion.

Legislator Montgomery requested that Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau please provide the Legislature with a copy of the job descriptions for each of the positions. She stated that she supports adding staff to the Health Department and is thankful for the effort going into this to make it happen.

Senior Personnel Specialist Patricia Rau stated she will provide the job descriptions to the Legislature. She stated for the record they are still in the “draft” phase. She is working on final revisions, and they need to be approved by New York State.

Chairman Jonke made a motion to approve; Budgetary Amendment (22A001)/ NYS Health Fellowship Program Grant; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

Item #7 - FYI/ 2021 Accident Report – Duly Noted

Item #8 - FYI/ 2021 Employee Incident Report -Duly Noted

Item #9 - Other Business - None

Item #10 - Adjournment

There being no further business at 8:15PM Chairman Jonke made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Deputy Clerk Diane Trabulsy.