

**BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
HELD AT THE
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Wednesday

October 6, 2021

7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Chairwoman Addonizio who led in the Pledge of Allegiance and Legislative Prayer. Upon roll call, Legislators Montgomery, Gouldman, Nacerino, Albano, Jonke, Castellano, Sayegh, Sullivan and Chairwoman Addonizio were present. Also present was Legislative Counsel Firriolo.

Item #4 – Committee to Meet with the County Executive and the Commissioner of Finance to Discuss the Proposed 2022 Budget.

Chairwoman Addonizio introduced County Executive MaryEllen Odell and Commissioner of Finance, William Carlin to present the Proposed 2022 Budget.

County Executive Odell requested permission to recognize and mourn the loss of Dutchess County Sheriff Butch Anderson. She stated that he loved his family, community and the men and women he led for 51 years in his law enforcement career. She explained that today she and Deputy County Executive Feighery attended his service and the common theme among the speakers was Butch's dedication of teaching those to treat each other as you would like to be treated. She asked everyone to remember him and his family.

County Executive Odell proceeded to read the attached 2022 Executive Budget Remarks.

County Executive Odell stated that this is her 10th Budget Presentation and she believed that it was respectful to the County workforce, outside agencies and most importantly to the taxpayers. She stated that the County continues to pick up approximately \$5.5 million in charges that would otherwise need to be paid by our towns and villages. She stated that New York State continues to intercept our sales tax. She explained that in the past few years, the County has paid and will continue to pay the Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) program cost to local governments of approximately \$450,000.

County Executive Odell reviewed a few budget highlights reflected in the budget. She spoke about Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the financial impact on the County's budget. She stated that currently there is a Request For Proposal (RFP) out for our EMS, Advanced Life Support (ALS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) contracts. She explained that \$1.6 million has been earmarked in the budget to continue to provide support to our local volunteer agencies. She stated that volunteerism is declining in our County, State and Nation. She questioned what EMS will look like in five (5) to 10 years in this County and how will we sustain the responsibility of delivering quality services to those in need in a medical emergency or crisis. She asked for the Legislature's support to include a \$50,000 contract line in the budget to allow continued review of this topic objectively by hiring an outside agency.

County Executive Odell stated that the de-escalation of crisis situations was discussed last year by the Police Policy Review Panel's Mental Health subcommittee. She explained that Commissioner of Social Services Michael Piazza has met with our Mental Health Substance Abuse providers to create a plan to integrate Social Services, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Veteran providers with our Emergency Response Team (ERT). She stated that she has met with the commander of the ERT and Town of Carmel Chief of Police. She stated the Lieutenant John Dearman is the commander of the ERT and he understands firsthand the importance of the integration of Social Services in a time of crisis. She asked for the Legislature's support of the \$50,000 in the proposed Social Service Department's budget to allow them to integrate a plan for Social Service assistance to those members of the ERT on the scene performing hostage and crisis negotiations.

County Executive Odell stated that over the years they have noticed that one (1) of our largest line items is our Jail. She stated that the political environment today has us understanding that cashless bail is here to stay. She explained that this impacts the County's crime and fiscal commitment. She explained that there is a rolling census in our Jail of 40 to 50 inmates; 50% representing board-ins. She stated that the County's costs are based on 125 minimum manning standards. She stated that we need help from New York State legislation. She stated that we need to find a way to reduce what is costing us approximately \$9.7 million to run a Jail that is running at one-third capacity. She stated that the County receives a revenue line of \$1.4 million for board-ins, however, she believed that we needed to do better. She stated that she has included in the proposed budget a \$50,000 contract line to independently review, in coordination with all the other counties facing the same fiscal crisis due to the cashless bail reform bill.

County Executive Odell thanked the Legislature, County Elected Officials, Department Heads and employees for helping us develop this budget and navigating the County through these unprecedented times. She stated that we look forward to working with the Legislature through the month of October to conclude the 2022 process in adopting a socially fiscal and responsible budget that we have done every year during our Administration.

Chairwoman Addonizio thanked County Executive Odell for her 2022 Budget presentation. She stated that the Legislature looks forward to reviewing the proposed budget during the Committee meetings which will be held in Room #318 of the County Office Building. She encouraged everyone to check the October calendar, which can be found on the Legislature's webpage, for the scheduled dates and times of these meetings. She stated that a Public Hearing meeting on the Tentative Budget as presented by the County Executive this evening will be held by the Budget & Finance Committee of the Putnam County Legislature immediately following the closing of this meeting.

Item #5 – Comments from Legislators

There were no Legislators who wished to comment.

There being no further business, at 7:17 P.M., Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislators Jonke and Nacerino. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.