

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

**Members: Chairman Castellano, Legislators Sullivan & Jonke**

**Thursday**

**6:30pm**

**January 26, 2017**

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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairman Castellano who requested that Legislator Jonke lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Legislator Jonke, Legislator Sullivan, and Chairman Castellano were present.

**Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – December 20, 2016**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 - Approval/ Proposed/ Local Law/ Amend Chapter 220, Article XI (Cold War Veterans Exemption), Section 220-71 of the Code of Putnam County Entitled “Amount of Exemption”**

Director of Real Property Lisa Johnson stated this local law would increase the discount given to the Cold War Veterans on their assessment. She stated currently, the dollar amount off their assessment is \$8,000; \$12,000; or \$40,000 if they are disabled.

Legislator Jonke clarified if a house is worth \$200,000, a discount of \$12,000 of assessed value would be taken into account.

Director Johnson stated currently, it works out to about \$37 off of their County bill.

Legislator Jonke questioned if the school districts have adopted this amendment.

Director Johnson stated no school districts in Putnam County have adopted it; however Wappingers Central School District adopted it for this coming year.

Legislator Sullivan questioned if this would be just a County tax.

Director Johnson stated as long as the County adopts it, it would be a County tax. She stated the Towns would then probably adopt the same as the County, with the schools following suit. She stated if the County is going to adopt this amendment, it needs to be done by March 1<sup>st</sup>. She stated with this amendment, the Veterans will receive about \$166 off their County bill as opposed to the \$37 they currently get off their bill.

Legislator Albano stated the Veterans deserve anything we can do and he is supportive of this amendment.

Legislator Scuccimarra questioned what years the Cold War status covers.

Director Johnson stated the Cold War covers 1945 to 1991.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if Vietnam Veterans are included.

Director Johnson stated Vietnam Veterans could be included; however they are also covered under the Alternative Veterans because it is a specific period of war.

Legislator Addonizio questioned how many Veterans would be affected by this amendment.

Director Johnson stated there are about 360 Cold War Veterans and about 15 disabled Cold War Veterans in Putnam County.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what the dollar amounts would be if this amendment were to be passed.

Director Johnson stated it is a tax shift of about \$54,000.

Legislator Scuccimarra questioned what the impact on the County would be.

Commissioner of William Carlin stated the cost would be shifted to other taxpayers and there would be no impact on the County.

Chairman Castellano questioned why the school districts have not yet passed this amendment.

Director Johnson stated the school districts are stalled. She stated they took about two (2) years to pass the exemption for all Veterans.

Chairman Castellano questioned if Westchester County or Dutchess County have passed this.

Director Johnson stated Westchester County runs on a different calendar and Dutchess County is looking into it.

Chairman Castellano questioned what needs to be done by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Director Johnson stated March 1<sup>st</sup> is the taxable status date. She stated an amendment would have to be done by then so the Veterans who are currently in the system would get the increase on their next tax bill.

Legislator Albano clarified that this amendment will not affect the County, the shortage will be spread among the other taxpayers within the County. He questioned what the change in the tax bills would be for the taxpayers absorbing the difference.

Director Johnson stated the change would be very minimal.

Commissioner Carlin stated this amendment could have a real impact on the schools because their levy is much more substantial than the County's.

Legislator Albano stated the decision to approve this amendment would be up to the schools.

Legislator Jonke questioned what the tax rate for the County is.

Director Johnson stated it is about 3.09.

Chairman Castellano questioned why this is being done now.

Director Johnson stated the State just passed this in late November.

Legislator Jonke stated prior to 2008, the State had allowed for exemptions for Veterans that served during a defined period of conflict. He stated in 2008, the State adopted the Cold War Veterans exemption, which included anyone who served active duty outside of those defined time periods since 1946. He stated this proposal is to bring those who did not serve during a period of conflict to the same level of those who did serve during a period of conflict, not necessarily in a combat zone.

Director Johnson stated this exemption was approved for a 10 year period and is supposed to sunset next year. She stated because of this increase that was just passed in the State, she believes the State must be looking into extending this exemption for a longer period.

Legislator Sullivan questioned how many parcels the \$54,000 would be spread over.

Commissioner Carlin estimated there are about 40,000 parcels. He stated that \$54,000 is over the levy of \$41 million.

Director Johnson stated many older Veterans are moving out of the County or passing away, therefore their exemptions are coming back to the County.

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

#### **Item #5 - Correspondence/County Auditor**

##### **a. Sales Tax Report – Duly Noted**

**b. Board In Revenue Report**

Legislator Sullivan stated over the past seven (7) years, the revenue collected from board-ins has increased substantially.

Chairman Castellano stated the Sheriff's Department does an outstanding job bringing in inmates from outside of the County to board-in at the Putnam County jail.

**c. OTB Report**

Legislator Sullivan questioned if this report shows the percentage of the revenue that the County collects.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is correct.

**d. Transfer/Revenue Report – Duly Noted**

**e. Contingency/Sub-Contingency Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #6 - Correspondence/Commissioner of Finance**

**a. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 17A001/ Sheriff's Dept./ Purchase Police Motorcycle**

Chairman Castellano questioned if the Sheriff's Department currently has motorcycles.

Captain Frank Christian stated the Sheriff's Department currently has two (2) motorcycles that are 16 years old and are starting to fail. He stated the motorcycles are used during special details such as procession. He stated they are also very good to use in traffic as they can fit into more spaces than a car. He stated the motorcycle they are looking to purchase is a 2017 Harley Davidson Electra Glide and they usually retail at \$25,000; however this motorcycle will cost \$17,900. He stated the price is so low because the dealer is looking to make room for the 2018 motorcycles. He stated the additional money is to be used for outfitting, lights, sirens, and striping. He stated there are five (5) members of the motorcycle unit. He stated the Sheriff's Department would like to purchase this motorcycle using money from the T-Commission fund, which is money generated from the inmate telephone usage.

Chairman Castellano questioned if the new motorcycle would be replacing the current motorcycles.

Captain Christian stated the new motorcycle would be used for road patrol and the other two (2) motorcycles would be used for training.

Legislator Albano questioned if the Sheriff's Department has an ATV (All-Terrain Vehicle).

Captain Christian stated they have ATVs and RTVs (Rugged Terrain Vehicle).

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

Chairman Castellano made a motion to address agenda items #7, #10, and #17b before moving forward; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

**Item #7 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 16T412/ Sheriff's Dept./ Cover Overtime through Year End 2016**

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

**Item #10 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 17T005/ Sheriff's Dept./ Pay New Hire Step 3**

Chairman Castellano questioned if the newly hired employee is currently working.

Captain Christian stated this individual is already a police officer and is being brought in at the salary he is receiving at his current job. He stated he will be ready to begin work after a couple weeks of training. He stated hiring an individual who is already an officer in another department is a benefit because they do not need to be sent to the academy.

Legislator Jonke questioned what the cost of training is.

Fiscal Manager Pat Butler stated the cost is dependent on which academy the officer goes to and can be between \$2,500 and \$5,000. She stated while that person is in training for six (6) months their shift needs to be covered using overtime, which is in additional cost. She stated therefore, bringing in an employee who is already trained is a huge cost savings to the Department.

Captain Christian stated there is also an 18 month probationary period. He stated if the Deputy is not performing the job to the standards of the Sheriff's Department, they must be asked to leave.

Legislator Sullivan questioned what "Step 3" denotes.

Captain Christian stated it is a longevity step.

Commissioner Carlin stated there are usually five (5) steps.

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

## **Item #17 - Other Business**

### **b. Approval/ Fund Transfer 16T419/ Sheriff's Dept./ Purchase Equipment & Software Using Seized Asset Funds**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business, item #17b; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Captain Christian stated the original funds were set to purchase polygraph equipment, however the equipment is not offered very often. He stated it is offered by the National Guard in Pennsylvania who considers the Pennsylvania State Police first, making the Putnam County Sheriff's Department secondary. He stated Putnam County was promised a slot, but it fell through because more Pennsylvania State Police were in need of it. He stated they instead would like to utilize the funds earmarked for the polygraph equipment for upgraded evidence tracking software to replace the aging system.

Fiscal Manager Butler stated the fixed asset money was set aside in 2015 to purchase the polygraph equipment. She stated the Sheriff's Department cannot get the proper training for this equipment, therefore they do not want to purchase it. She stated therefore, they would like to liquidate the purchase order to be able to upgrade the inventory control system and get a second license on it, so two (2) people may access it at the same time.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 16T419; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

## **Item #6 - Correspondence/Commissioner of Finance**

### **b. Approval/ Budgetary Amendment 17A004/ Emergency Services/ Draw on Donations Received**

Deputy Commissioner of the Bureau of Emergency Services Robert Lipton stated the Bureau of Emergency Services received a \$10,000 donation from Entergy for flashover training. He stated the flashover training done last year was very successful. He stated 84 firefighters were run through the flashover simulator last year at the cost of \$100 per student. He stated there are other expenses that amount to about \$600, which would put the total cost of the training just under \$10,000. He stated the Chief's Association also donated \$712, which was used to purchase wood to be burned. He stated NYSEG donated \$2,000 to put toward replenishing their foam supply because the foam that was being used was found to not be biodegradable. He stated the new foam is \$250 per five (5) gallon pail. He stated the new foam trailer can hold 600 gallons.

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Budgetary Amendment 17A004; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

**Item #8 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 16T414/ District Attorney/ Pay Invoices for Expert Witnesses for Upcoming Trial**

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

**Item #9 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 16T415/ Emergency Services/ Purchase Equipment for Homeland Security**

Deputy Commissioner Lipton stated this fund transfer is to purchase a new type of light tower. He stated this is a generator powered light tower and can be easily moved around. He stated these light towers are much cheaper than the others.

Legislator Sullivan questioned if these light towers were replacing any towers.

Deputy Commissioner Lipton stated these will be additional towers. He stated the Fire Departments are using the Bureau of Emergency Services more frequently. He provided an example of a large accident that recently happened at night time on Route 6. He stated an accident reconstruction needed to be done and rather than having the Fire Department remain on the scene for hours, the Bureau came in and brought a few light towers which allowed the police to perform the reconstruction. He stated because of availability of the light towers, the Fire Department was able to return to the station to address any other calls that came in. He stated the light towers are also used for special events that happen in the County.

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

**Item #11 - Approval/ Fund Transfer 17T009/ Social Services/ Overtime for Probation Officers through 9/30/2017**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 17T009; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Chairman Castellano stated agenda item #12 will be addressed at the end of the agenda.

**Item #13 - Approval/ Re-Adopt/ Local Law Establishing the 2017 Salary of the Putnam County Executive**

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

**Item #14 – Approval/ Re-Adopt/ Revised Local Law Establishing the 2017 Salaries of Certain Appointed Officers Serving for Fixed Terms**

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

**Item #15 - Approval/ Re-Adopt/ Local Law Establishing the 2017 Salary of Certain Elected Officials Serving for Fixed Terms**

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

Chairman Castellano stated agenda item #16 will be addressed at the end of the agenda.

**Item #17 - Other Business**

**a. Approval/ Fund Transfer 16T417/ Social Services/ Reflect Actual HEAP Eligibility Qualifications**

Chairman Castellano made a motion to approve Fund Transfer 16T417; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan. All in favor.

**Item #12 - Discussion/ County Attorney/ Request for Compensation for Committee Meeting Attendance**

At 7:10 p.m. Chairman Castellano made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss agenda item #12, a personnel matter and agenda item #16, a litigation settlement; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan.

At 7:37 p.m. Chairman Castellano made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

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

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

**Item #16 - Approval/ Worker's Compensation Settlement**

At 7:10 p.m. Chairman Castellano made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss agenda item #12, a personnel matter and agenda item #16, a litigation settlement; Seconded by Legislator Sullivan.

At 7:37 p.m. Chairman Castellano made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.



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

**Item #18 – Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 7:39 p.m. Chairman Castellano made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Beth Green.