

**SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY LEGISLATURE
CALLED BY THE CLERK AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIR
HELD AT THE
PUTNAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
112 OLD ROUTE 6
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Thursday March 14, 2013 7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Othmer. There was a short film presented recapping 2012. The Sheriff's Color Guard presented the flag. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Karl Rohde, Putnam County Director of Veterans Affairs. Upon roll call, Legislators Scuccimarra, Oliverio, Nacerino, Albano, Gross, Castellano, LoBue, DiCarlo and Chairman Othmer were present. Also present was Legislative Counsel Van Ross.

Chairman Othmer stated that our nation is going through difficult times right now. He asked our government officials to look back at the World War II era when the country worked together, put their differences aside, and made sacrifices and compromises for the better good of the people. Chairman Othmer then introduced Deputy County Executive Bruce Walker.

Deputy County Executive Walker introduced Town of Putnam Valley Supervisor, Robert Tandy, to sing the National Anthem and Angelina Mandes to sing God Bless America. He then introduced all the elected officials in attendance, party chairs and a number of representatives from outside organizations. He stated that these significant individuals and organizations in this community bring to the table everyday things that this Administration has been able to capitalize on in order to move forward. They bring to the table qualities such as leadership and dedication which allows the Administration to work with them together in a very cooperative way to achieve positive solutions that benefit the residents of this County. Deputy County Executive Walker then introduced the County Executive, MaryEllen Odell.

County Executive Odell presented Chairman Othmer with the Administration's Annual Report. She started with a map of Westchester County which displayed the area of residents who held pistol permits. She stated that this issue placed Putnam County on the nation's map and defined who we are as people. When the Journal News foiled Putnam County for information regarding pistol permit holders, our County Clerk, Dennis Sant, vehemently opposed the request. He did what was right for the safety and privacy of the citizens of Putnam County. County Executive Odell believed that the release of this information would create an unprecedented public safety risk. There is now an "Opt-Out Form" available for our residents.

County Executive Odell continued by stating that she considered 2012 to be the Administration's building year and the message was "Managing our Assets and Optimizing our Resources". The theme for 2013 is "Making the Connection, Planning for the Future". She recognized Putnam County's First Responders and Emergency Management who volunteer their time, help protect our community and save taxpayers money. She continued by stating that the Administration has been working diligently with union representatives in renegotiating the three union contracts. She stated that the

County has reached a tentative contract settlement with the PBA team and details are still being finalized. She stated that she is looking forward to working with the Legislature through the Committee process as we look to building a solid approach to the many challenges faced by the County such as; the burden of the unfunded mandates, the 2% tax cap and the looming unending questions about Obama Care and the sequestration.

County Executive Odell stated that the Administration stayed true to the message in 2012 of "Managing our Assets and Optimizing our Resources". A plan was put in place and was defined by presenting resolutions to the Legislature for their support. She stated that there are many ways of "Making the Connection" in 2013 and making these connections happen. The connection of County government to State & Federal government, Putnam County Tourism to our business leaders and Chambers of Commerce and the Economic Development Corp. to Putnam County Planning Department. Connecting the east coast of Putnam County to the west coast, the private public partnership and the ultimate connection of County government to the people. The importance of these connections is to make sure we sustain our sales tax revenue and keep property taxes as low as possible, while also continuing to provide the services required. We need to encourage new smart economic growth opportunities in our County.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that new members have been welcomed to the Putnam County Team and we said farewell to a few. Most recently the 911 Dispatch Center was dedicated to Commissioner Robert McMahon. County Executive Odell stated that Hurricane Sandy hit on October 29, 2012 and Putnam County relied on a fully staffed Emergency Operations Center for critical emergency planning involving municipal leaders, local emergency responders and all Department Heads. There were over 200 Roads closed and 80% of our residents were without power. Putnam County sustained \$820,000 dollars of expenses and local municipalities, school districts and not-for-profits sustained a total of \$1.2 million in expenses.

County Executive Odell stated that at the 2012 State of the County the Administration proposed 15 resolutions to the Legislature of which 13 were adopted. All of these resolutions were proposed to reduce operating expenses and/or increase revenue. Two resolutions are still works in progress; the Project Labor Agreements and Back to School Sales Tax Free Holiday. She wanted to make sure that Putnam County's union families continue to work and have a piece of the New Tappan Zee Bridge project. She believed that if approved by Albany, the Back to School Sales Tax Free Holiday would help our families and benefit our local economy.

County Executive Odell continued and mentioned the following Capital Projects that were completed such as; County Office Building Parking Deck, Carmel Sidewalk Project, Capped the Landfill and completed the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Projects completed totaled \$7.5 million dollars. Putnam County's Operational Consolidations included merging the Youth Bureau into the Department of Social Services & Mental Health with a savings of \$75,000; merging Alternative to Incarceration Program with the Probation Department with an overall savings of \$200,000+; merging Real Property with the Finance Department with an overall savings of \$30,000; merging of Risk Department with the Law Department. The Risk Department is focusing on pursuing worker's compensation settlements. In pursuing these settlements, it is anticipated to save over \$1 million dollars in future payouts. County Executive Odell stated that in the Office for the

Aging Department we are consolidating the food services and partnering with Putnam Valley to change the parking location for our OFA busses for an overall savings of \$154,000.

County Executive Odell continued and stated that the physical consolidations were: consolidation of space with Putnam Community Action Program, proper space for Records Management, consolidation of Coroner's Office into Emergency Services Bureau. She stated that Dr. Nesheiwat projected an overall savings of \$32,000 with the consolidation of the Coroner's Office. County Executive Odell stated that the County Office Building in 2012 was at 70% occupancy. It is now at 100% occupancy. She explained the Key Initiatives for 2013 which included: The Transportation Task Force, Chapter 31 – Sale of Real Estate, Putnam National Golf Course, Tourism, Higher Education, Electric Commodity Pricing and Economic Development Corporation. She stated that her Administration is committed to making the Putnam National Golf Course a “jewel” and a great tourism destination. The RFP process has been completed, the selection has been made and the golf course will be open on March 23, 2013. The Administration is also partnering with the Paladin Center to host a College in the County and provide higher education opportunities for our residents. The County currently spends \$2.6 million for residents to attend NYS Community Colleges. County Executive Odell also introduced Meghan Taylor, the new President of the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation.

County Executive Odell stated that the Commissioner of Finance Report states that the budget for 2012 was \$141.9 million. We spent 139.2 million and replenished the General Fund Balance by \$2.7 million. She stated that the County's sources of revenue came from: Sales Tax - \$52.7 million which is 37% of revenue; Real Property Taxes - \$41.6 million which is 29% of revenue and State and Federal Aid - \$24.6 million which is 17% of revenue. She then outlined how the money is spent such as: Economic Assistance - Social Service Programs, Medicaid, Programs for the Aging and Consumer Affairs which represents \$31.6 million or 23%; Public Safety – Sheriff's Dept., Jail, Emergency Services and Probation which represents \$31.7 million or 23%; Health Programs – Early Intervention and Mental Health which represents \$12.3 million or 8%. She stated that the General Fund Balance rose from \$16.9 million to 19.2 million in 2012. Our Moody's Bond Rating is Aa2 which is an important indicator of our strong financial position. This has enabled the County to issue refunding bonds in 2012 and 2013 which will save taxpayers \$2 million over the next 24 years.

County Executive Odell addressed how County government was managing overtime. The County Executive 2013 Budget included \$900,000 dollars in overtime cuts. The District Attorney has now authorized the use of VTL Section 1806. This allows town attorneys to prosecute traffic tickets and the County will realize \$120,000 in savings. The County is also waiting for Supreme Court Justice Alan Scheinkman to authorize the use of Video Conferencing. The use of this program will save the County on expenses incurred through prisoner transports. County Executive Odell displayed bar graphs showing the increase in overtime expenditures between the years 2003 through 2012. She also addressed the unfunded mandates which equal 74% of the overall budget. She stated that there are 5325 people who receive Medicaid benefits in Putnam County. The local share costs the taxpayers \$10 million dollars. After you factor in the State and Federal funding for these same 5325 people, the total amount is \$93 million dollars.

County Executive Odell continued and mentioned some of the programs offered by the County such as the Drug Treatment Court Program. She stated that New York State was no longer going to fund this program. She explained that in having the County assume the fiscal responsibility for this program, it would permit an offender to receive treatment without being incarcerated, allowing the person to stay with their family and remain employed. This in turn allows the County to avoid paying \$100 per day for their incarceration and thereby is able to receive board-in revenues. She continued and explained Putnam County's inaugural Disability Mentoring Day and stated that on October 17, 2013 the County will be sponsoring Mentoring Day again. She stated that the Putnam County's Youth Bureau advocates for healthy choices pertaining to: drugs, alcohol, violence, bullying and eating disorders. She described other programs such as: Putnam Invests in Leaders Of Tomorrow Program (PILOT); Medication Take Back Day and a community action organization "Drug Crisis in Our Backyard". She continued and stated that the Office of the Aging partnered with our Veterans Affairs and purchased our new Veterans Van. She stated that the Health Department connected with Medical Reserve Corp to provide 5,000 flu vaccines. She stated that the County increased the funding in the 2013 budget for libraries which is a vital source of assistance for our residents in their pursuit of employment during these challenging economic times. She stated that Putnam County takes its responsibility to the environment very seriously. The County facilitated a connection with a DEC qualified service provider and picked up 260,000 pounds of electronic waste in 2012 and we also held two Household Hazardous Waste Days for our residents. She stated that Putnam County Schools have connected with Putnam County's Emergency Response Team. The Administration and the Safety Task Force welcome the opportunity to work with the schools in determining how best to keep our children safe.

County Executive Odell stated that 2013 will be when we make the connection and plan for the future. She asked everyone to enjoy the slide show which pays tribute to our Veterans and their families.

Chairman Othmer thanked the Administration for their presentation. He believed that County Executive Odell and her administration were leading the County in a positive direction.

There being no further business, at 8:20 P.M., Legislator Gross made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Oliverio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Schonfeld, Clerk.