

**BUDGET
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
ROOM 318
OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chair Nacerino, Legislators Castellano and Wright

Wednesday

October 14, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:50p.m. by Chairwoman Nacerino who requested Personnel Director Eldridge lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Chair Nacerino and Legislator Castellano were present. Legislator Wright was absent. Legislative Chairman Albano sat in.

Item #3) 2016 Budget Review (copy of Commissioner Carlin's Presentation is with written Minutes)

Chair Nacerino stated the Personnel Budget Committee is one of the most important committee meetings in the process. She stated due to the fact that the decisions made have a direct impact on people, their livelihood, their career path and their personal financial situation. She stated the County Executive referred to the 2016 Tentative Budget as firm but fair. She stated as the County struggles to stay under the tax cap, endure escalating costs and unfunded mandates she recognizes that firm but fair decisions are not always popular nor are they pleasant. She stated with that being said it is the Legislature's fiduciary responsibility to work in earnest for the people in Putnam County and make decisions for the greater good. She stated that she would touch upon the salient points of tonight's topics. A Voluntary Resignation Program was offered to the employees of the County, in an effort to save money. She stated four (4) people participated; the participation was less than anticipated. She stated that almost all of the proposed upgrades in the 2016 Tentative Budget were rejected by the County Executive in order to keep costs at bay. She stated contract employees will still receive their STEP and their percentage increase in accordance with their respective contracts where applicable. She stated all Non-PUMA and Management and Confidential will receive a 2% increase. However, Medical Insurance Premiums will be increased in concert. She stated the increase in pay is an effort to maintain parity between Management and Union Employees along with the imposing health insurance increase. She stated in the proposed 2016 Budget Retirees have been asked to contribute more towards their health insurance. She stated increases have risen more than 8% in past years, making it unsustainable for the County to continue funding 95% of the health care cost. She stated that the County is currently paying \$4.7 million for 377 employees. She stated that it is recognized that personnel issues are sensitive in nature and perhaps emotional. She stated professional decorum will be maintained this evening and she will not tolerate disparaging remarks. She stated that everyone will be treated with the utmost respect. She stated any person who wishes to speak will have the opportunity to do so without interruption. She introduced Commissioner of Finance William Carlin. She stated that he will begin the meeting with a presentation that will speak to the proposed increase in the Retiree Health Insurance for Putnam County employees.

Commissioner Carlin began with "Opening Remarks" stating that the Retiree Health Insurance is the biggest cost issue that the board faces. He stated dating back to 2003 and 2005 with the efforts of the Blue Ribbon Panel the County has been trying to find a solution to this problem. He stated the problems have been getting worse. He stated now there is a tax cap to work with and other cost constraints. He stated that Deputy County Executive Walker has explained in the past that the County is dealing with making Pensions whole. He stated that many of the County's Taxpayers have lost their Pensions. He stated that the County is working to keep the County Retirees whole when many of the County's Taxpayers have lost their Retiree Health Insurance. He stated the Administration has proposed, this being the third attempt to address this problem, for the first time the proposed increase is tied to Retirees Pension Income vs the years of service. He explained that the Administration believes this is the fair

approach. He stated those Retirees who make more in their Pension will contribute more to the Retiree Health Insurance. He began his presentation. His first slide : *Cost of Retiree Health Insurance 2007 – 2016* he stated in 2007 the Gross Retiree Health Insurance costs \$2,704,881, the Cost to the Taxpayers \$2,444,880, the Taxpayer covered 90% of the costs. His slide provided the numbers for each year up to the proposed 2016 budget year. He stated the projected calculations were done taking into the equation the proposed increase for the Retiree Health Insurance. He presented the Gross Retiree Health Insurance costs \$4,683,733 Cost to the Taxpayers \$3,929,132 the Taxpayer would be paying 84% of the costs. He stated if no action is taken the Taxpayer will be funding approximately 92% vs the 84%. He stated by in large this program is still being subsidized by the Taxpayers. He stated that 85% of the County Retirees pay 5% towards the contribution of their Health Insurance. He stated the reason the costs have grown so much over the years is due to the increase in costs for the NYSHIP Annual Premium. He showed a table that displayed the NYSHIP cost for 2007 & 2016 (projected) and the % Increase cost of the plan. He presented that for Individual Plan the percentage Increase is 54%, Family Plan Increase is 63%, Individual-Mediprime Increase is 38%, Family Mediprime (1) 60% and Family Mediprime (2) Increase is a 55%. He continued to review the proposed plan.

Legislator LoBue stated that she believes that the increase of 10% for a Retiree with a pension of \$0 - \$19,999 who is not Medicare eligible living on a fixed income is too much. She stated she believes those individuals are going to have a hard time making the increased payment. She stated that these people are now being put in a difficult situation to cover the cost of something they were told was going to be free. She stated in her opinion this entire thing is wrong. She stated and those who do receive the Medicare reimbursement have budgeted their pension income based on the Medicare reimbursement. She stated and this proposal now will require them to give it back to the County in essence.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated this is a matter that has been addressed many times and attempts have been made to address it for a long time. He stated for clarification by being in the NYSHIP Program and meeting the certain criteria for eligibility for Health Insurance the employee is told by the employer that they are making it available, so the employee would have it available upon retirement. He stated what has never been guaranteed to the Retiree, and it has been made very clear from the beginning, is that it will be made available to them at no cost. He stated there was a period of time when the Retiree did not pay, but it was never a guarantee. He stated the only employees who have that guarantee are the PBA Employees who are covered under the interest arbitration. He stated that they are guaranteed 10% contribution. He stated when the County granted the Retiree Health Insurance and was part of NYSHIP, the rates were much less. He stated the dramatic increase for Health Insurance compared to the cost of living has increased more dramatically. He stated during the 90s and 2000 the increase averaged double digits.

Legislator LoBue stated that she believes a change should be put in place from this point of time going forward. She stated that she does not support taking away money that people rely on. She stated that in this County there is a lot of money spent. She stated nearly \$150 million budget. She stated it is no secret regarding her voting record in her opinion of non-prioritized spending. She stated for the County to leverage millions of dollars at the Tilly Foster Farm and now to make a proposal to go after the Retirees, she cannot support that.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is a matter that has been trying to be resolved since 2000.

Legislator Albano stated everyone today is suffering from increased expenses. He stated when he first began his business, 38 years ago, Health Insurance cost between \$2,000 - \$3,000. He stated the last year he had to pay for his Health Insurance, which was approximately seven (7) years ago, it cost him approximately \$20,000 with a \$5,000 deductible. He stated he does not support putting our heads in the sand. He stated that there is an increase in costs. He stated that this recommendation is coming about to adjust things in accordance to what is happening in the world. He stated he does not see continuing as we

are as being fair to our taxpayers, some of them who have lost their pensions and have lost the equity in their homes. He stated in his opinion slight adjustments are necessary in order to keep the burden from being put on the other members of the County.

Chair Nacerino stated that the County is looking at unsustainable procedures. She stated Commissioner Carlin has stated many times, “how much longer can we go on kicking the can down the road”? She stated that it is important to be attentive to the current Retirees, the Taxpayers of this community and the future generations. She stated that the purpose of this meeting is to vet this topic, discuss it and listen to everyone’s opinion. She stated everyone’s opinion is valued. She stated for the most part the reimbursement from the County does exceed the expenses incurred to insure the Retiree. She requested that everyone be cognizant of that fact. She stated also there is 25% of the County population that are Senior Citizens. She stated not every Senior Citizen in Putnam County, the people the Elected Official represents, receive reimbursements. She stated many of the Senior Citizens in Putnam County have to take the \$1,258 out of their Social Security check. She stated that the County Retirees are fortunate in the fact that the County pays the \$1,258. She stated as it was explained, some the Retirees are breaking even while others are actually make a profit. She stated that the decisions being made regarding this matter will not only affect 377 people, but also 25% of the County’s population.

Commissioner Carlin finished his presentation. His summary slide stated the following:

- ▶ The Cost of Retiree Health Insurance has gone from \$4.3 million in 2015 to \$4.7 million in 2016 – an increase of 9.3%.
- ▶ The increased contributions from Retirees to offset this cost (from \$357,000 to \$759,000) is an increase of \$402,000 which still only represents 16% of the total cost.
- ▶ We believe that modest increases based on pension income, is a firm but fair way to confront escalating costs without further overburdening the real property taxpayer.
- ▶ Future unaddressed growth in Retiree Health Insurance Costs is UNSUSTAINABLE. For example, the entire 2016 tax cap is \$432,000!

Chair Nacerino stated consideration must be given to the ability to sustain this program into the future. She stated that she is of the belief that some of the bands that are listed in the Administration’s proposal are a bit ambitious. She stated that she will recommend adjusting them.

Glenn Blackman Labor Relations Specialist in Putnam County for the CSEA Members stated that he came on board approximately ten (10) years ago. He stated the numbers that were projected, in the presentation, were kind of skewed. He stated that the Part B Reimbursement, \$1,258.00, has become part of the Retirees income. He stated the tax cap, is not a mandatory law. He stated that it is a recommendation from the Governor and the leaders of the State of New York. He stated that there is nothing that says you cannot exceed the tax cap. He stated unfortunately costs continue to go up. He stated Commissioner Carlin did not suggest in his presentation why the Employees/Retirees are reimbursed for their Part B. He stated there is a Medicare 1 and Medicare 2 rate, which is less than it is for actives and that is to take into account the reimbursements, because Medicare becomes primary during those times. He stated so there is an offset to the cost of that insurance and that is mandated and part of the provision of the plan. He stated he would like to know the percentage breakdown of the \$4.7 million dollars which is contributable to CSEA Members, Management Confidential and the Sheriff’s Department. He stated that CSEA has requested for years to put the Retirees Health Insurance on the table and put it into collective bargaining instead of making it a political football. He stated during the last round of contract negotiations CSEA had put a proposal on the table that was removed. He stated the proposal would have resulted in a significant cost reduction in salaries going forward in exchange for putting something in the contract in regards to Retiree Health Insurance.

Janet Canaday, County Resident, Employee and Union President, stated that she just learned today of the proposed resolution. She stated that she has asked that the County work with her, and that has been happening up to this point. She stated due to the lack of notice on this matter all of the retirees were unable to make arrangements to be present tonight and be a part of this discussion.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated he could clarify that. He stated that the resolution to implement this is before the Legislature to be consider, it has not been adopted.

Janet Canaday, Union President, stated that she was aware of that. She stated but this is the first time everyone is hearing about it.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated it was submitted with the budget.

Chair Nacerino stated that the Legislature Office received the copy of the proposed Resolution from the County Executive on October 7, 2015.

Janet Canaday, Union President, questioned if other insurance carriers have been contacted and reviewed to serve as another option to reduce costs.

Chair Nacerino stated that she was part of a team who looked into that when she was a member of the Town Board. She stated that it was found that the NYSHIP plan is the better plan for the money.

Janet Canaday, Union President, stated that in the future, 2018 there will be something called the "Cadillac Tax" implemented. She questioned is that being considered in this proposal. She questioned if in 2018 will there be another 5% increase for each group.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that the County did look into other Insurance carriers. He stated that the NYSHIP plan is who requires "Medicare Part-B Reimbursement". He stated they have looked into the other plans. As Chair Nacerino stated they are not as good as NYSHIP and many of them are more costly, unless you go with a high deductible. He stated that there is a Committee looking at the "high deductible" plans. He stated that they are still looking into them.

Janet Canaday, Union President, requested if tonight's presentation could be made available on-line.

Commissioner Carlin stated that he will have it posted on the County Website.

Janet Canaday, Union President, thanked Labor Relations Specialist Glenn Blackman, Director Eldridge and Commissioner Carlin for the information that they have shared and brought forward tonight. She stated that she is concerned with the way that this was proposed.

Janet Krivak, Retiree, questioned as a retiree, if she is entitled to a certain amount of Social Security benefits. She stated that money is taken away from her and put where; she stated she thought it went into the Medicare Program.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that the Medicare Part B payment that is taken out of the Social Security payment and is a payment to the Federal Government for Medicare.

Janet Krivak, Retiree, questioned if the money that is deducted from her Social Security and given to the Federal Government is then paid back to the Retiree by the County.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated it is the New York State Civil Service Law requirement.

Janet Krivak, Retiree, stated why wouldn't the County go after the New York State Civil Service Department to change the requirement.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated the County has tried many times.

Janet Krivak, Retiree, stated that the New York State Civil Service Department has a voice. She stated she sees this as a case of the County was not successful in negotiating a change with the State, so now the County is coming after the Retirees to try to get the reimbursement that was basically forced upon the County. She stated the Retirees of the County did not ask for that money, however since the Retirees are entitled to it according to the law they should get it.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated the Retiree would still receive the reimbursement.

Janet Krivak, Retiree, stated that when a person retires they do so and base it on the amount of income that they are given. She stated if this proposal continues to move forward she would like all of those people who will be voting on it to take her comments into consideration and remember that this proposal will be affecting the financial status of a group of people who mostly have no way to supplement their income.

Rebecca Wittenberg, Employee, stated that she was a member of the Health Insurance Committees on and off for the past 20-plus years. She stated that she very much understands a lot of this information and concept. She stated that she is blessed to have her Mother still alive, and is relatively healthy at 91 years old. She stated that she and her husband help other Seniors in the County up to the age of 96 years old so they can manage and remain in their homes. She stated that she understands some adjustments need to be made due to the fact that costs keep increasing. She stated however she does not see a 15% or 20% as a slight increase. She stated that she does assist some Seniors with the management of their finances. She stated an increase of that percentage would be a huge impact on their fixed income and budgets. She stated people are being forced to leave this County. She stated she understands that things may not be able to be kept at the current contribution rate. She stated that she sees Seniors each month decide where to spend their money, on their medication or on their food or pay to stay in their house. She stated that is the case for several of the County's Retirees who have been retired for quite a while now and still live in Putnam County. She questioned if the County has the right to do this to these people after they have given their 20-30 years of service. She stated that she believes there should be some level of respect for people who have hung in here for 25-30 or more years.

Chair Nacerino questioned Ms. Wittenberg, with her familiarity of Health Insurance for Seniors, what is the average cost of a supplemental plan for Seniors. She stated when Seniors are on Medicare and in addition to that coverage they must pay for a supplemental plan, which the County pays for its Retirees.

Rebecca Wittenberg, Employee, stated it can range from \$100- \$140 per month depending on the plan. She stated that many of them have to pay for Medicare Part D in order to receive prescription coverage.

Chair Nacerino questioned if those supplemental plans increase in cost.

Rebecca Wittenberg, Employee, stated that they do, but not at a level of 8-10%. She stated because people cannot take that on.

Legislator LoBue stated that Ms. Wittenberg was here during the Bondi Administration. It was pointed out earlier this evening that this is not the first time this has been tried. She stated however the manner in which this proposal has been brought forward is concerning to her. She stated that in her opinion this

proposal and the way it has come forward is not respectful to the former employees or the Legislature. She stated this proposal has been dropped on the lap of the Legislature, putting the Legislature's back against the wall. She stated that the clock is ticking, there is two (2) weeks to get this straightened out. She stated as everyone has said tonight they had no idea this was part of the budget, she stated she believes that is unfair to do that. She stated that there is something so disingenuous and disrespectful about this. She stated that she is embarrassed for the County.

Janet Krivak , Retiree, stated this is not the first time it has been kept, a secret; secret may not be the right word but there have been other times when CSEA was told that they would advise them if there is going to be an increase. She stated however tonight she was told, the County cannot advise them now because it has not gone through yet. She stated so they will be advised when it is all set and done, and there is nothing that can be done about it.

Legislator LoBue stated to Ms. Krivak that she is part of the other half of the County Government and she had no idea that this was going to be imbedded in the budget. She stated there was general conversation on this concept; however not that revenue would be booked in the budget. She stated the Legislature has the option to unfund it and find the money someplace else to make up for it. She stated as she said earlier, there will either need to be a tax increase for the entire County or more money will be needed to be removed from the reserves. She stated there has already been a lot of money taken from the reserves. She stated therefore this is a very precarious predicament. She stated that the analogy of managing our individual home budgets has been stated tonight. She stated that the County knows this expense exists in the budget currently and going forward. She stated in January of 2015 there should have been a concerted effort to set this funding aside before deciding to bond \$2.5 million for the Tilly Foster Farm and spend more money on the renovations at the Putnam Golf Course. She stated also it has been stated that alterations need to be made at the Carmel Senior Center and there needs to be another Senior Center built; in her opinion this is irresponsible government. She stated the fact that this was booked in the proposed 2016 budget is outrageous. She stated in her seven (7) years of a Legislator she has never seen this done.

Legislator LoBue stated also during 2015 the County was reimbursed \$1.5 million in connection with a Law Suit. She stated the money had originally been removed from the reserves fund. She questioned why at that point was the Legislature not told that there is a \$450,000 bill that needs to be covered. She stated instead it was decided by the Administration and the majority of the Legislature, which she was not in favor of, to put that money towards "capital projects".

Chair Nacerino stated this is a real situation, although it came with the Budget Address, and it must be dealt with. She stated the County cannot sustain this and that is the realization that needs to be dealt with.

Legislator Albano stated everyone in this County is dealing with these health insurance financial challenges. He stated the bottom line is there is a basic math formula. He stated when you run a business and the costs go up there needs to be action taken. He stated if you speak to the residents of the County they believe this to be very reasonable. He stated when the pensions fell apart in 2008 \$14million dollars was needed to make the pensions whole. He stated the County taxpayers are the ones who contributed to achieve that. He stated some of those taxpayers lost their retirement and their money. He stated what is being proposed is a basic business plan to make a slight adjustment in accordance with the financial times we are facing.

Legislator Addonizio stated the Public and Private Sector are having this same problem. She questioned how many Retirees fall into the pension income range of \$19,000 - \$30,000.

Commissioner Carlin stated from 0 - \$20,000 there are 116 Retirees and from \$20,000 \$30,000 there are 62 Retirees totaling: 178 Retirees.

Legislator Addonizio questioned what would be the savings in revenue for those two (2) groups.

Commissioner Carlin stated that it depends on the plans that the individuals have.

Legislator Addonizio stated that she would like to say it is our duty to protect our constituents. She stated that the people in those brackets will suffer the most. She stated that she agrees that the proposed percentages need to be reduced. She stated she would like to have the lower level band eliminated all together.

Jane Meunier-Gorman, President of CSEA Local 840 Putnam County, stated her Officers and Members have already tried very hard to work with the County Administration. Whether it be the County Executive's Office or the County Legislature. She stated she found out about this just this morning, and she found that very disheartening. She stated they have had many conversations with the County Executive's Office asking them to please keep them apprised of issues like this. She stated that they want to work with the Administration, and they would provide the resources they have in Albany and CSEA Inc. She stated that they have a Health Benefits Program that is probably second to none that could probably come up with some great ideas for as far as ways to cut costs in the Retiree Health Insurance. She stated that she is in agreement that something needs to be done. However, she does not believe it needs to be done overnight. She stated that she has been a County Employee for twenty-nine (29) years and planned to retire in the next five (5) years. She stated with the proposed plan and increase in contribution she may not be able to carry out her plan. She stated County Employees do not make the salaries that Private Sector Employees do. She stated however, during negotiations it has always been the position that the Public Sector Employees may not get the salaries, however they receive longevity, great Health Insurance, and receive Retiree Health Insurance. She stated these are things that the Public Sector Employees have made concessions for year after year. She stated this situation did not occur overnight nor can it be fixed overnight.

Chair Nacerino stated she too is a Civil Service Employee. She stated that she is very cognizant of the fact that there is no guarantee that she will be guaranteed the Health Insurance Rate that she retires with from the Brewster Central School District. She stated that there is no guarantee from any municipality.

Jane Meunier-Gorman, President of CSEA Local 840 Putnam County, stated there was a guarantee.

Chair Nacerino stated to her knowledge there has never been a contract or some other commitment that can be presented to support that claim.

Jane Meunier-Gorman, President of CSEA Local 840 Putnam County, stated that she believes this is an unfair proposition. She stated that she would be happy to work with anyone to come up with a fair proposition. She stated the current proposal is unfair to the current Retirees and the current County Employees.

Legislator Albano stated he has been self-employed for 38 years. He stated he will work another 10 – 12 years. He stated that is the world that we live in today. He stated the County is proposing this recommendation to create a more realistic financial projection. He stated he does not want to have to take coverage away or go backwards. He stated this recommendation is in sync with what is happening in the world.

Chair Nacerino stated that the Legislature cannot speak to the fact that the Union representatives were not apprised of this proposal sooner. The Legislature was given the information at the presentation of the 2016 Tentative Budget, October 1, 2015.

Legislator Albano stated there would never be a good time to be apprised of information like this. He stated if anyone has suggestions and would like to work on this that would be welcomed in the future.

Legislator LoBue stated that she was just handed this presentation as she arrived for the meeting tonight. She stated she was not provided an opportunity to review it prior to meeting and she is supposed to be representing the best interest of her constituents. She stated the entire thing has been mishandled and she recommends that the Committee Table this item until a fair discussion can be had. She stated that she believes this entire matter is disrespectful to the Employees, Retirees and the Legislature. She stated the Legislature should take action rather than make excuses.

Chair Nacerino stated she does not believe there are excuses being made.

Legislator LoBue stated that she and Chair Nacerino agree in terms of “proper process” being followed.

Chair Nacerino stated the process being discussed was not implemented by the Legislative Branch of Government.

Legislator LoBue stated that this was included in the 2016 Budget, without notification being given to the Legislature. She stated that is disrespectful to the Legislature. She stated that is why she asked her colleagues to stand up and say “no, we are not accepting this proposal tonight”. She stated it can be tabled to be addressed next month or the month after that. She stated also tonight, Legislator Wright is missing. She stated that he did send a lengthy correspondence stating that he was upset that this was include in the budget. She stated that it is a comprehensive change to what currently exists and it has not been vetted with the Retirees or the current Employees. She stated that an open and transparent public discussion can be had in the beginning of 2016, an open and transparent discussion.

Chair Nacerino stated that is what is taking place tonight. She stated that all of the comments made tonight will be taken into consideration.

Glenn Blackman Labor Relations Specialist in Putnam County stated that they would like to be invited into the discussions they would like to be part of the solution.

Chair Nacerino asked Deputy County Executive Walker if he would like to make any statements.

Deputy County Executive Walker stated that he had no comment.

Legislator Castellano stated the cost of the Retiree Health Insurance has an increase of \$402,000 from 2015 to 2016. He stated that puts the County in a bind. He stated he has been with a Civil Service worker for 20 years. He stated that he understands what is being said tonight. He stated that this is the process. He stated the budget process is not over tonight. He stated that he recommends that the Union bring forward any recommendations they have. He stated that the fact is the County is dealing with a \$400,000 increase. He stated if this proposal does not get approved something else is going to have to happen to cover the increase. He stated a decision needs to be made.

Legislator Albano stated so it increased \$400,000 this year, hypothetically let’s say it goes up \$1 million next year and then \$2 million the following year. He stated should the County do nothing? Or should the

County approach it as a math formula acknowledging something has got to change to stay current with the changes.

Chair Nacerino stated that she believes that the Legislature is getting a little sidetracked in light of the fact that the matter was built into the budget and that is the problem in of its self. She stated the real problem is the unsustainability and escalating costs that exist. She stated a solution and a resolve has got to be made. She stated the reality is that this has been stated as a problem in previous years and has been looked at in previous years. She stated it is realized that something has to be done to alleviate these costs.

Commissioner of Health Beals stated that he as a person who has supervised a Staff, most of his entire life, agrees it is inappropriate not to give people adequate opportunity to reposition themselves, if there is going to be a dramatic change made. He stated for example if a Retirement Age is going to be changed those over the age of 50 are excluded because they have already structured their lives accordingly. He stated perhaps this should be looked at in the same way.

Legislator Castellano questioned when was the last increase implemented.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated in 2007. He stated but there have been proposals and plans put in front of the Legislature multiple years since 2007 that were rejected.

Commissioner Carlin stated that in 2007 the 5% increase was met with resistance. He stated it was implemented the same way, it was put in the budget, and processed the same way that it is being done now.

Chair Nacerino stated for clarification, then this is not unique.

Commissioner Carlin and Director Eldridge both stated no, this is not unique.

Chair Nacerino stated she wanted to thank everyone for attending the meeting and providing their input. She stated that all the comments made tonight will be taken under careful consideration as the Legislature moves through this process.

Legislator LoBue stated that she requested the Personnel Committee table this item.

Chair Nacerino stated there is not a motion to Table this item by the Personnel Committee.

Proposed Upgrades:

Chair Nacerino stated that there were 17 proposed upgrades and only one (1) was funded in the County Executive's proposed budget. She stated that she believes the rationale behind this was that no upgrades would be afforded this year due to the fiscal restraints of keeping a tight and bare bones budget. She stated last year there were thirteen (13) upgrades. She stated that she will take liberty to speak on behalf of the County Executive, as she invited Deputy County Executive Walker to correct her if she is wrong. She stated that she believes at this juncture the County could not afford to have any upgrades this year. She stated that there is one (1) upgrade in the tentative 2016 Budget in the Planning Department (802010904) Upgrade to Sr. Planning Asst-Grade 16/STEP 4. She stated this upgrade was discussed during the course of the year by Commissioner Pena. He stated that most of these positions will receive their STEP upgrades.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that his intent is to continue to do his evaluations and bring them forward through the first of the year if that makes sense and there is money available. He stated that he is

aware that there are limits and there are limits in the contingency budget and there are still two (2) outstanding Union Contracts, obviously there was discussion tonight about the money coming out of the designated fund surplus for this year and the issue with the Health Insurance. He stated there are a lot of issues on the table.

Chair Nacerino reviewed the proposed Upgrades and facilitated discussion.

Health Commissioner Beals spoke on behalf of his employees that he requested receive upgrades. He stated that in the three (3) years that he has been the Commissioner of the Health Department there have been positions that have not been replaced, he provided a handout. He stated in that time period the County's Health Department has run more initiatives, more programs and more service to the community. He stated that has been accomplished through the efforts of his incredibly talented and professional staff. He stated that they have high moral and tremendous productivity. He stated that his requested upgrades account for approximately a net effect of \$26,000 in a \$14 million budget. He stated that to keep the budget productive and well run he believes it is essential that this upgrades be granted. He stated it will set the tone in the entire department of 70 employees to know that their work is appreciated and whenever he needs them to extend to serve the community, in a pretty essential service, which the Health Department does, those employees respond. He stated that they are professional and educated people. He stated he has reviewed every single one of the upgrade request. He stated every single one of them is currently working at a level higher than they are getting paid. He stated from a contractual standpoint, they should be given the upgrade. He stated his role is to manage a department that is efficient and serve the community while protecting the health and safety of the County's residents. He stated that has been accomplished through the efforts of his employees. He stated that is why he needs these upgrades for him to be able to deliver the level of service that has been enjoyed in Putnam County. He clarified that he is just speaking to his department's upgrade requests.

Legislator LoBue stated there were a total of 17 upgrades requested in the budget, and she believes what Commissioner Beals spoke to is indicative to what is going on in all of the other departments. She stated if all 17 upgrades were approved it would total roughly \$63,000. She stated that she would be in favor of funding that. She stated that there are new positions being requested in this budget, changing the structure of the Emergency Services Department and the Planning Department. She stated by removing the proposed new positions it would fund the cost of the requested upgrades. She stated by doing that the employees who currently work for the County and are working above their job requirements. She stated she does not know one (1) department in the County that is not giving 125%. She stated in the next week and a half, the Legislature needs to prioritize the funding.

Legislator LoBue moved on to an employee that works in the Parks Department who has been in a Clerical position without benefits for ten (10) years. She questioned Personnel Director Eldridge if he was familiar with the employee she is referring to.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that he is and believes that employee is paid out of the 1094-Temporary Line. He stated that the employee is permanent but paid out of the 1094 budget line.

Legislator LoBue questioned if that employee is going to be made permanent and have health benefits.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that he does not believe that is the position that is listed in the tentative budget. He stated that the employee can have benefits if they ask for them. He stated regardless of what budget line an employee is paid it is the individuals option to participate in the Pension plan or not.

Legislator LoBue questioned why would a person remain on a temporary line for such a long period of time. She stated that she sees it as being disrespectful for the employee. She stated she would like to see the financial impact if this employee were brought on as a full-time employee.

Chair Nacerino questioned if this matter has been raised in the past years.

Legislator LoBue stated no, not since she has been here. She stated that it was brought to her attention a few months ago.

Janet Canaday, Union President stated that there are other permanent employees who are paid from the Temporary Line. She stated some of them have been here for a number of years. She stated that the person being discussed from the Parks Department has been on the Temporary Line for a long time.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated the Parks Department Employee is not referred to as Temporary.

Legislator LoBue stated again, she would like the financial information pertaining to the Parks Department employee.

Chair Nacerino stated that in Real Property there is a new position that will be shared between two (2) Departments: Finance and Real Property: Account Clerk II – Grade 8/STEP 1. There are two (2) new positions in Emergency Services – Indian Point Deputy Commissioner of Emergency Services at a proposed salary of \$79,917 (pg. 37 line 390913105) and a CAD Administration for \$50,000 (page 37 line 398913106).

Commissioner Sutton stated that he has been in his position for five (5) months. He stated in that time he has been analyzing the Bureau of Emergency Services (Department), looking at how it is currently organized and ways to improve it. He stated that he looked for ways to save money in his Department. He stated that he did propose to eliminate a position in his department to soften the financial impact of the two (2) new positions that he requested for his Department: *Deputy Commissioner of Emergency Services & CAD Administrator*. He stated that there are other cost savings that he is reviewing and planning to bring forward in the future. He stated that his department is a small department with a big mission. He stated to be successful and to be there when the community needs them will require some reorganization, and these proposals are the first step in achieving that.

Chair Nacerino stated for clarification, if approved, there will be two (2) Deputy Commissioners in the Bureau of Emergency Services. She questioned if they will each have different duties and responsibilities.

Commissioner Sutton stated that is correct and stated yes they will have different areas of responsibility.

Legislator LoBue requested clarification on the following: the position that is being removed from the Bureau of Emergency Services Department is the *Emergency Systems Planning Administrator* position (pg. 37 line 398913104). She questioned how this position was funded in the past. Also, how will the two (2) new positions be funded?

Commissioner Sutton stated that the *Emergency Systems Planning Administrator* position was funded through a grant.

Chair Nacerino questioned if the grant funding that went towards the position is being removed to be transferred to help pay the salaries of the new positions.

Commissioner Sutton stated that with local emergency management planning money a certain portion can be used to fund “positions” the funding is not specific to a position in the department. He explained that it is called a grant, but it is actually a steady stream of funding that is provide by the State and comes from the Federal Homeland Security. He stated that it is meant to support local Emergency Response.

Chair Nacerino questioned if that is ongoing funding or does it cease.

Commissioner Sutton stated it has been in existence since he has been in the business, which has been a long time.

Chair Nacerino stated that the person who holds the position that is in the budget to be eliminated is here tonight. She stated that she would like to give him an opportunity to speak.

Legislator LoBue stated that she would like to make a statement before Mr. Ciulla speaks. She stated that she was very surprised and disappointed to see the removal of funding for the *Emergency Systems Planning Administrator* position. She stated when the County Executive presented the 2016 Tentative Budget it was stated that there were no layoffs in the budget. She stated in her mind this is clearly a layoff. She stated an employee will be losing their position. She stated that she is absolutely against the fact that tied to the removal of this position is this proposed reorganization. She stated there has never been two (2) Deputies in the Putnam County Bureau of Emergency Services. She stated prior to bringing Commissioner Sutton on board it was presented that bringing a person with his skills, experience and background, would help Putnam County. She stated after being in the position for just five (5) months Commission Sutton is requesting a second Deputy Commissioner be added to the department. She stated she cannot support this. She stated the gentleman who is losing his job, Mr. Ciulla, has a very extensive background and experience. She stated in terms of the need for a CAD Administrator, she believes that Mr. Ciulla’s background and experience with I/T makes him very capable to handle that responsibility. She stated it makes no sense financially to her to cut an employee who has been instrumental in his department, its function, and an asset to the County and create a position that will need to be filled with a person with the similar skill-set.

Chair Nacerino stated if Commissioner Sutton would like to respond, please be aware that it will need to be done in Executive Session as it would be regarding a specific employee. She stated that she would like to hear from Mr. Ciulla.

James Ciulla stated that he would like to bring to the Legislature’s attention to an important Personnel Matter that is in the 2016 Budget. He stated that he currently holds two (2) positions in the Bureau of Emergency Services: (1) the Emergency Services Coordinator, which is a Part-time appointed position. He stated that he was appointed to that position by past Bureau of Emergency Services Commission Robert McMahon. He stated that he has held that positions for the past 18 years. He stated that the position is a 24/7/365 response position. He stated that a small stipend approximately \$3,100 is received. He stated the second position is his full time position entitled: Emergency Systems Planning Administrator. He stated that it is a competitive Civil Service Tested Management position. He stated the salary of the position is approximately \$54,000. He stated that he has been in this position for eight (8) years. He stated the job description is listed on the Putnam County website and he brought printed copies with him if anyone would like to see it. He stated that he emailed each Legislator and Chair Nacerino has handed out a copy of his resume. He stated that he has been a member of the Volunteer Fire Service for 43 years and served as a Chief for the Mahopac Volunteer Fire Department. He stated the news that he received that his job was being eliminated and that he will no longer have a job come January 1, 2016 came as a complete shock to him. He stated he, as Legislator LoBue stated, was even more shocked based on the fact that it was stated that there were no layoffs in the 2016 budget. He stated that although there are no specifics listed for the new CAD Administrator position, from his experience in

emergency services, he is confident that he has most of the qualifications, which would be similar to the qualifications needed to be an Emergency Systems Planning Administrator. He stated that he could assume the role of the CAD Administrator. He stated that his qualifications and experience enabled him to rank as one (1) of the top five (5) candidates for the recent Commissioner of Bureau of Emergency Services position (which Anthony Sutton was selected and assumed the position). He stated that since past Commissioner McMahon became ill, the Bureau has been understaffed. He stated that he worked very hard for past Commissioner Stiebeling, Deputy Commissioner Lipton, as the rest of the Bureau's staff has done, to carry out the important duties of the organization. He stated in today's world there is a need for preparedness and emergency planning is paramount to the safety of the public. He stated that he finds it hard to believe that Putnam County can afford to eliminate a dedicated employee with his qualifications in critical areas such as interoperable communications, the incident command system, fire services and emergency management. He stated in summary he requested the Legislature to reconsider the removal of his position, Emergency Systems Planning Administrator, from the 2016 Budget. He clarified that his comments are in no way personal to newly appointed Commissioner Sutton. He stated that Commissioner Sutton also has a passion and extensive experience in public safety. He stated Commissioner Sutton has extensive experience in the field of emergency medical service and the emergency management field. He stated that he looks forward to working with him to help support the residents of Putnam County. He thanked the Committee and Legislators for allowing him to speak tonight and for their consideration of this matter.

Legislator Gross stated that he supports Mr. Ciula and knows his background. He stated that he would like to see the position reinstated. He stated with all due respect to Commissioner Sutton the two (2) new positions that he has requested totals approximately \$120,000. These are challenging times financially. He stated raises and upgrades have been denied in this budget due to that reality. He stated also in light of the proposed increase to Retirees Health Insurance to try to address the financial burden to Putnam County Taxpayers; this proposal is a dramatic contrast. He stated he cannot support the two (2) new positions requested and stated that he would like Mr. Ciula's position to be reinstated.

Legislator Albano stated that the CAD System is a critical system and it is important to get it up and running.

Commissioner Sutton stated the CAD System (System) is a very expensive system. He stated the System, currently, is not being used to its full capability. He stated that he is not placing blame, because there was not training provided on the operation of the System. He stated that the information still needs to be inputted.

Chair Nacerino question if the new CAD Administrator is a tested position.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that it is a tested position.

Chair Nacerino questioned if the Emergency Systems Planning Administrator position is eliminated how will the duties and responsibilities of that position be absorbed into a department that has been described as already being under staffed. She questioned also with the expertise and knowledge of both technology and emergency services would Mr. Ciula be a candidate to fill the CAD Administrator position and make a lateral move, is there an existing list.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated there has never been an exam given for this title before, so there is no list.

Chair Nacerino stated then this entire process will take quite a bit of time.

Commissioner Sutton stated that the appropriate candidate will need to have an extensive background and experience with GIS and Software experience. He stated the individual will need to have really good communication, back and forth between the Sheriff's Office. He stated that they have a specific set of needs that they require the CAD System to meet. He stated the individual will be the liaison also with the County's I/T Department.

Chair Nacerino stated a job description will be developed to customize to the needs of the Department because there is no job, per say, that a test can be administered right away. She stated the prerequisite for the testing will need to be developed and facilitated and posted. She stated this entire process could take as long as six (6) months which would free up approximately \$25,000 merely by virtue of the process.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated a person could be hired, pending the exam.

Chair Nacerino questioned who would fit the description, described by Commissioner Sutton, which seems to be very specific to the needs of Putnam's Department. She stated that she believes it would behoove Putnam County to develop the job first.

Personnel Director Eldridge stated that they have developed a job description for this position.

Chair Nacerino invited Mr. Ciula to speak to this matter.

Mr. Ciula stated that he has been intermittently involved with the Putnam County CAD System. He stated that he is familiar with the problems and some of the functions that they want it to perform. He stated that he was tasked to sit on a committee to research what other CAD Systems are available that would meet the needs of Putnam County, in the event funding was made available to replace the current system. He stated that he is very familiar with the CAD System and would welcome the opportunity to work on the System. He stated that he administers a couple of other systems that tie in with the CAD System. He stated the job of a System Administration is to make the system work and get it to do what it needs to do. He stated currently the County pays Mobile Tech a great deal of money to provide support to the CAD System. He stated the System Administrator would work with Mobile Tech, the end user, and the Fire Chiefs to configure the system to meet their needs.

Chair Nacerino questioned if Mr. Ciula considered himself a candidate for this job position test once it is posted.

Mr. Ciula stated if you look at his job description the CAD System is included.

Legislator LoBue stated that she is confused. There is a current County Employee, Mr. Ciula, who has the ability and skill to operate the CAD System. However, the Legislature was told this evening that a map was not able to be downloaded; it took two (2) months. She questioned if Mr. Ciula was able-allowed to assist in this effort.

Mr. Ciula stated that since he has been at the County there has been four (4) different Directors of E-911 Communications. He stated that he has offered his assistance. He stated the function of the mapping falls under the IT/GIS Department, which he is not a part of. He stated that he was aware that they were having difficulties, and he did offer to assist.

Legislator LoBue stated that the County has an IT Department; she does not understand how there could not be an employee in that department who could operate the CAD System. She stated that she would like to give Mr. Ciula recognition for the work he has done in assisting in securing grant funding for the County.

Mr. Ciula stated that he was involved in securing the PSAP Grant, which the County was recently rewarded \$80,000. He stated there is a second Grant, the Interoperable Communication Grant. He stated that was received this year, approximately \$3 million. He stated that he was not directly involved in that grant, a certification that he has enable to County to apply. He stated in order to receive the Interoperable Communication Grant the County needed to have an employee certified as a "Communications Leader". He stated as far as he knows, he is the only employee in the department who is a certified "Communications Leader".

Commissioner Sutton stated that for clarification there is more complexity in the running of the CAD System in the Bureau of Emergency Services versus the CAD systems in the Towns. He stated that in his opinion a Personnel Matter should not be discussed in a public forum. He stated that he prides himself as a professional. He stated he will not respond to any of the comments made by Mr. Ciula. He stated that he has a professional relationship with Mr. Ciula. He stated that he believes Mr. Ciula would be the first to say that he has been upfront with him from the start. He stated he was given the charge as the Commissioner of Bureau of Emergency Services to decide what the best path forward would be for Putnam County and make the proposals.

Chair Nacerino stated that the Committee will adjourn into Executive Session at the end of the meeting's agenda. She stated she did encourage Mr. Ciula to come forth and speak on his behalf. She stated she believes he deserves that courtesy in light of being told that he was laid off. She stated that they will move on to the next matter.

Director of Consumer Affairs Noel stated that in her department she is requesting a Confidential Secretary Position. She stated that she has an individual in her department that has passed the Confidential Secretary Test. She stated that consistently her department has worked to operate the office with fewer personnel. She stated it is her professional opinion that this position is critical to the department. She stated when she reviewed her budget she looked at needs versus wants, this position is needed.

Legislator LoBue stated that she is disappointed and confused. As Chairwoman of Personnel, Legislator Nacerino requested months ago that any proposals for new positions, upgrades etc. be brought to this Committee to be updated prior to the budget process. She stated she will not be supporting any of the new positions. She stated in lieu of the fiscal crisis the County is facing.

Director of Consumer Affairs Noel stated that in her department she is eliminating two (2) positions and requesting the Confidential Secretary Position. She stated that she is not looking to bring in a new employee. The employee who is the candidate for this position is currently working in the department.

Legislator Albano stated that the adopted 2015 budget for the department of Consumer Affairs is \$336,710.00 and the requested/tentative budget for the same department is \$307,927 and there will be two (2) positions removed and one (1) position added to the department. He stated that he wishes this was the scenario for all of the departments. He stated that the request is being made by the Department Head, who is stating this proposal stating it makes sense for the functionality and productivity of the Department. He stated with all of that being said he supports this request.

CSEA Janet Canady stated this department has lost three (3) Union positions in the last three (3) years, she stated that she is very concerned with this fact. She stated and now there is a request to put in a Management Position. She continued to articulate her concern with this request. She stated that her main concern is that Union positions are being removed and replaced with non- Union employees.

Chair Nacerino stated there is no motion, therefore the request for the position, which is included in the tentative budget will remain.

Chair Nacerino moved to the new position request in the Office for Senior Resources, Typist – 20 H/P/W- Grade 5/STEP 1.

Commissioner Carlin stated an employee the department of Office for Senior Resources is taking the Resignation Incentive. He stated rather than replace the person with a full-time employee the Department Head is proposing to replace the employee with the Typist – 20H/P/W- Grade 5/STEP 1, which is a part time position.

Chair Nacerino stated then a full-time position is being vacated and replaced with a part-time. She stated in her opinion that is cost efficient. She stated next she would like to discuss the proposed new position: Deputy Commissioner of Planning.

Commissioner Carlin stated a Planner in the department is leaving. Currently Putnam County is lacking in its projects' formula funding. He stated the County needs an expertise in the signing of Grant Agreements, following through, reviewing the contracts, seeing that the project is done properly, getting the reimbursement and closing the project out. He stated the State and Federal Governments are getting stricter and are pulling back on reimbursements. He stated the Deputy Commissioner of Planning position will include the ownership from cradle to grave.

Legislator Gouldman questioned how much money, approximately has been lost this year.

Commissioner Carlin stated just with the projects that were failed to be closed out, at least a half million dollars.

Legislator LoBue questioned why has the Commissioner of Planning position been vacant for at least two (2) years.

Commissioner Carlin stated that the Commissioner of Planning position has an emphasis on planning; and Putnam County is planned out. He stated there is a need for a Commissioner but there is a need to change the specs and job description to mirror the actual needs.

Legislator LoBue stated that she does not support this proposal of filling the Deputy Commissioner of Planning prior to filling the Commissioner of Planning position.

Legislator LoBue stated that it has been known that the Planner, who has been with the County for approximately 30 years, will be retiring on December 31, 2015. She questioned why were there no plans put in place to position the County to accommodate this pending change. She stated also the Planning Department will be top heavy; you would have a Commissioner and a Deputy Commissioner overseeing a department of four (4) people. She stated that is absurd.

Commissioner Carlin stated that he disagrees. He stated that he believes it too absurd not to watch these Grants from cradle to the grave.

Chair Nacerino stated that she does not believe that the focus here is to have oversight of employees. She stated that she believes the mission is to attain the expertise needed to carry out the Planning Department's mission.

Deputy County Executive Walker stated that he believes there is a misunderstanding to what the Planning Department has jurisdiction and control over. He stated while they do not have a lot of employees, they have very significant realm of responsibility. He stated that Transportation is within the responsibility of the Planning Department. He stated also there is NYMTC (New York Metropolitan Transportation Council), which the County has a seat on the board that has consensus voting. He continued to elaborate on the different facets that are within the responsibility of the Planning Department.

Legislator LoBue stated she does not agree with filling the Deputy position before filling the Commissioner of Planning position. She stated that the logic behind this does not make sense. She stated that the County has a Transportation Manager, which she stated should be overseeing and taking on the responsibilities that the prior Commissioner handled.

Legislator Albano stated this proposal is being made for the department, who is stating the position is needed. He stated that he values their opinion. He stated he supports this request.

Chair Nacerino stated that she agrees with Legislator Albano.

Chair Nacerino stated that there has been a request to give a 1% raise to the Legislators. She stated that in the past Legislators received an increase in years: 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006. She stated that there has been no increase in compensation for the past decade. She stated that the total amount ends up to be an annual increase of \$364 per Legislator. She stated that in her opinion more than this being a monetary gain it is a vote of confidence and good faith.

Legislator LoBue stated for the record, she sent an e-mail to the Legislative Office stating she does not support the 1% increase proposal for the Legislators. In lieu of the fact that in the budget proposal there is a request to increase health insurance contributions. She stated that she does not support this proposal.

Chair Nacerino facilitated further overview of the budget. At the conclusion of the discussions she stated that the Committee would be convening an Executive Session to address a personnel matter. She stated that the comments made will be taken into consideration and thanked everyone from attending the meeting.

10:35p.m.

Chair Nacerino made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the qualifications of a particular Person for a Particular position; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

11:00p.m.

Chair Nacerino made a motion to come out of Executive Session and to waive the rules and extend the meeting by 30 minutes and go back into Executive Session ; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

11:25p.m.

Chair Nacerino made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Chair Nacerino stated no action was taken in the Executive Session.

Item #8) Adjournment

There being no further business, at 11:26P.M. Chair Nacerino made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Trubusy, Deputy Clerk of the Legislature.