

**SPECIAL
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
Held in Room 318
Putnam County Office Building
Carmel, New York 10512**

Monday

6:30p.m.

January 30, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by Chairman DiCarlo. He requested that Legislator Oliverio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Chairman DiCarlo, Legislators LoBue and Oliverio were present.

Item #3 – Discussion/County Executive’s Recommendations for Reorganization & Consolidation

- a) Approval/Budgetary Amendment (12A004)/County Executive/ Reorganization Planning & Highway Departments**
- b) Approval/Amend Resolution #387 of 2011 (2012 Salaries for Officers & Employees Paid from County Funds)**

Legislator Oliverio stated that he is interested in hearing the thought process and strategy behind this proposal. However he would like to state that he believes that the Planning Department is a critical Department in the County. That Department has been responsible for securing numerous Grants in the past. They led all of the work on the creation of the Bikeway project. He stated that he is not in support of getting rid of the Planning Department. He stated that he has been told that it is a cost savings move. He stated the amount of money that would be saved, in his opinion, does not outweigh the negative impact that losing the Planning Department would have on the County.

Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stated that he has examined the Putnam County Charter and examined the responsibility that falls under the Planning Department. He stated that the cost savings is not the only factor behind this recommendation. He stated that there is a natural relationship between planning & facilities. Planning is part of the development and construction phase of any project. He stated that this recommendation is not only to eliminate positions, but to elevate the positions that the departments have and to cross pollinate these two departments in terms of responsibilities.

Legislator Oliverio stated that a more logical recommendation, he believes, would be to put the Highway Department under the Planning Department. The Planning Department over sees all of the projects and future projects. He stated that this is being looked at backwards. The department that is responsible for building the bridges is being recommended to be in charge of the department that designs and approves the bridges. He stated that he would like to understand what is really behind this recommendation. He stated that he is very uncomfortable with this proposal.

Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stated that planning does have the foresight, but there must be knowledge of a facility impact. That relationship is what is being examined, and the Administration believes this would be a good step towards developing efficiency throughout the County.

Legislator Oliverio stated he sees this recommendation as putting the Planning Department, a department that has stood independent as a watchdog of the County,

under the auspices of the Highway Department. He stated that he wants the Planning Department to be whole and independent. To merge these two departments seems to create a conflict.

Legislator LoBue stated that there is an inherent conflict with this proposal. She stated that the County Planning Department is responsible for working with all of the Towns in the County. She stated that currently there are specific educational requirements and responsibilities associated with the Planning Department. She stated that the Commissioner of Planning John Lynch has a Masters Degree in City Planning. She stated that he has announced his retirement and has agreed to stay on for an additional month. She stated he has agreed to stay on for 30 days, and there are strict restrictions from the New York City Pension Law that he must comply with. She stated that it would be impossible for one person to oversee these two departments. She stated in terms of the net savings of \$69,000 it is inconsequential. She stated that it is important in terms of infrastructure, to be making plans for the next 20 years. She stated that we need to have educated people in these departments. She stated that she is not in support of this proposal.

Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stated that this recommendation was not made with the intent to dismantle the Planning Department. He stated that currently they are two separate entities that need to speak together and have a working relationship which is natural for these two departments.

Legislator LoBue questioned if Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena believes the communication is not going on between the two departments currently.

Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stated from what he sees the communication is not as robust as it should be between the two departments. It should be developed further. He stated that the Bikeway is one example of the disconnect between the two departments. Grants were applied for; this great project was developed and now there is this infrastructure and nothing was prepared.

Legislator LoBue stated that there was a disconnect and that is why the Legislature approved to hire Fred Pena who has an Engineering Degree as the Commissioner of Highways & Facilities. She stated that the disconnect existed in the Highway Department not in the Planning Department. She stated that the funding for the Planning Department's building was Federal Dollars and must be used for that purpose.

Legislator Oliverio stated that consolidation occurs with the recommendation of the elimination of the Commissioner of Planning Department position and the creation of the new proposed position of Assistant Superintendent of Planning. He stated that this dismantles the Planning Department, because that position would report to the Commissioner of Highways & Facilities. He stated that is where he is most uncomfortable with this recommendation. He stated that he agrees that there has been a disconnect, however Mr. Pena has been hired into the Highway Department to fix that.

Legislator Birmingham stated that the Bondi Administration also consolidated and eliminated departments. He stated that the consolidations have worked not only to the benefit of the tax payer, but also contributed to a leaner more efficient government. Having said that he does have some questions about some of the proposals in the proposed changes. He would like to know the thought process behind the 8% increase in the salary of the Management-Confidential Secretarial position, which is currently a vacant position. He stated that there has been a policy in the past few Budget Years, of not increasing the salary of a new person, higher than that of the salary that the incumbent was making, in the Management classification of positions. He stated that

also there are certain procedures that must be followed when filling a vacant seat. The procedures put in place by the Vacancy Control Committee.

Commissioner of Finance Carlin stated that the fiscal perspective is the focal point here. He stated that a Fiscal Technician has been requested in the Planning Department for the past 2-3 years. However the request has been turned down by the Administration and the Legislature each time due to financial restraints. He stated that the thinking behind this is to hire a person into the Management-Confidential Secretary position who would absorb some of the fiscal responsibilities as well.

Legislator Birmingham questioned if Personnel Director Eldridge has developed a job description or does New York State have a job description for this proposed position. He stated that generally speaking he is in support of this consolidation.

Chair DiCarlo questioned what would some of the markers would be to measure the success of this consolidation.

Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stated that currently the transportation aspect is not being reviewed, in his opinion, as it should be. He stated that the transportation aspect falls under the planning department but needs to cross reference with the facilities department. Central automotive needs to be examined in terms of how they are managing their workload and how are they planning to manage to integrate the current fleet into the Planning Department. He stated that there is an inter-relationship. How many vehicles there are under Planning has an impact on Facilities. He stated again, the purpose of this consolidation is not to dismantle the Planning Department.

Legislator LoBue stated that she would like some clarification. Is Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stating that currently the County is not maintaining nor has a plan for fleet maintenance? Is the County Transportation Department currently not meeting the Federal Guidelines requirements?

Commissioner of Highways & Facilities Fred Pena stated that he would like to look further into that.

Legislator Birmingham requested clarification that the vacant Watershed Administrator Position has met all of the requirements as far as, vacation time and sick time etc.

Commissioner Carlin stated that is has been handled, as far as he knows.

Chair DiCarlo stated that he believes that some of the Legislators would like more information for the reasoning behind this proposal. He stated that he believes there needs to be specific benefits listed for this proposed consolidation. He stated the \$70,000 projected savings, does not warrant this action. In terms of a consolidation, such as this, there needs to be concrete facts to support it. How would this consolidation make things better for the County?

Legislator Oliverio stated that he does not see the overriding need for this consolidation. He stated that it is a dismantling of the Planning Department. There will be a Commissioner of Highway and an Assistant Superintendent of Planning. He stated that the Planning Department has been a safety net for the County. Commissioner of Planning John Lynch would bring matters forward that were not appropriate to do or needed to be done.

Legislator LoBue stated that she would be more comfortable if Mr. Pena were coming forward with some recommendations after being here for at least two (2) years. She stated that she is very uncomfortable with this proposal, with Mr. Pena just joining the County. She stated her intent is not to disrespect Mr. Pena in any way. She stated that he has a great resume. However he is coming into a department that has had so many issues and your Deputy Commissioner is someone who is coming from the County Executive's Office. Not from the Highway Department. She stated that Mr. Pena is going into this department blind. She stated that she cannot support this proposal.

Commissioner Carlin stated that the Planning Department's projects are all intertwined with other departments. He stated that this proposal is an effort, within in the budgetary constraints that the County has, to maximize efficiencies and get as much out of every employee as possible. There have been no new jobs approved in the Planning Department in a decade. He stated that in this 2% Tax Cap Economy he does not foresee any positions being approved.

Chair DiCarlo stated that agenda item #3a has been tabled.

Legislator Birmingham stated that agenda #3b should be partially approved. It affects the salaries of people that have already been approved and are not part of this proposed consolidation. If this committee does not approve it, it will delay these employees from receiving their full paychecks.

Legislator Oliverio made a motion to approve page 1 and the first one on the second page of Agenda Item #3b; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Item #4 – Other Business

a) Approval/Budgetary Transfer (12T006)/Sheriff/Re-assignment of Deputy Sheriff Salaries

Legislator Oliverio made a motion to approve Budgetary Transfer (12T006) Sheriff/Re-assignment of Deputy Sheriff Salaries; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

b) Approval/Fund Transfer (12T011)/Consumer Affairs/Acting Directory & Temporary Lines

Legislator Oliverio made a motion to approve Fund Transfer (12T011)/Consumer Affairs/Acting Directory & Temporary Lines; Seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Legislator LoBue requested that the Salary Rate for the position be approved before the February 7, 2012 Full Meeting.

Item #5- Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:12P.M., Legislator Oliverio made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator LoBue. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by, Diane Trabulsy, Administrative Assistant