

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD IN ROOM 318 OF THE  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Montgomery**

**Thursday**

**5:30pm**

**September 19, 2019**

---

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who requested that Legislator Addonizio lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator Addonizio, Legislator Montgomery, and Chairwoman Sayegh were present

**Item #3 - Approval of Minutes – August 13, 2019**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 - Update/Department of Tourism/Director Tracey Walsh**

Chairwoman Sayegh stated tourism in Putnam County is a driver of economic development. She stated according to the Tourism Economics Annual Report, traveler spending in Putnam County was approximately \$64 million in 2018, with food & beverage being the top category, followed by second homes. She stated without the revenue generated from tourism, households would have to pay an average of \$230 more in taxes. She stated this shows how beneficial tourism is for our taxpayers. She stated Putnam County has even more potential for tourism growth. She welcomed Tracey Walsh as the new Director of Tourism.

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Tourism Director Walsh gave the attached PowerPoint Presentation. She stated the way for this to work best is with open communication and transparency. She stated she is a lifelong Putnam County resident and is "Putnam Proud". She stated she was a school teacher for 17 years and for 20 years worked for the American Cancer Society. She listed her first actions in the job were to reapply and receive the I Love New York funds and to apply for the 2020 funds. She stated the Tourism Department is working with a new marketing firm. She showed pictures of three (3) different posters highlighting what is available in Putnam County. She stated the new tagline is "Perfectly Putnam" and they are working on a new logo. She stated there will be a new radio advertisement that will be featured on widespread radio stations. She stated part of the marketing package will be collecting and analyzing data so that smart, efficient, cost-effective choices can be made. She stated she welcomes any questions and comments. She stated she hopes to meet with each Legislator to discuss each district's needs. She stated she has already met with various people and organizations including: Arts on the Lake, Carmel/Kent Chamber of Commerce, Kent Conservation Foundation, Putnam County Historian's Office, Southeast Museum, Cultural Arts Coalition, Magazzino Italian Art Museum, Thunder Ridge, Mahopac/Carmel Chamber of Commerce, Putnam County Transportation, Patterson Rotary, and

Metro North. She commended the Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce for their new trolley schedule design. She stated Putnam stops are being added to the MTA's getaway programs. She stated the new hotel will be opening in November will hopefully attract more overnight guests to Putnam.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned what the priorities of the Tourism Department are moving forward.

Director Walsh stated right now it is to establish and reestablish relationships throughout the County. She stated trust needs to be built up that she will deliver results.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned who is the target for the advertisements.

Director Walsh stated it depends on the attraction. She stated the target audience is really anyone from Fairfield to Westchester Counties, and all the way up the Hudson River. She stated Putnam County has so much to offer.

Chairwoman Sayegh requested more specifics about the marketing campaign.

Director Walsh stated there is a focus on print and digital advertisements. She stated they are developing their social media platforms. She stated the websites needed to be rebuilt from scratch. She stated she is working on search engine optimization.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it seems like social media marketing would be the most cost effective in reaching the most people.

Director Walsh stated social media is very cost efficient but if it is not done correctly, it is not effective. She noted that people use Facebook to figure out where to go, but once they get there, they use Instagram.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the younger audiences barely use Facebook.

Legislator Addonizio thanked Director Walsh for her presentation and information provided. She stated she wants to clarify misconceptions that this is a new position in Putnam County. She stated the only difference is now the position is within the County. She noted that there is no more money is being expended. She requested clarification on how the I Love New York funds must be utilized.

Director Walsh stated the funds cannot be used to promote one (1) attraction or event. She stated it must be thematic in nature.

Legislator Addonizio stated the amount of funds fluctuate each year.

Director Walsh stated the goal is always to bring revenue into the County.

Legislator Montgomery questioned how the marketing firm was chosen.

Director Walsh stated she did research marketing firms and she chose one that is already dealing with the County and does great work. She stated they provide the best prices and the best work.

Legislator Montgomery stated the County has diverse tourism needs. She stated the Cold Spring area has trouble handling the amount of tourists they already have. She questioned how the needs for Philipstown will be balanced for the rest of the County.

Director Walsh stated for the past 10 years she has been balancing successful events on both sides of the County. She stated no part of the County is the same and that helps make Putnam wonderful. She stated she was recently discussing alleviating the congestion of tourists who arrive on the train in Cold Spring. She stated part of her job is to listen and solve problems.

Legislator Nacerino questioned how Director Walsh plans to market Thunder Ridge, as we are now entering the Fall and Winter seasons.

Director Walsh stated she met with Thunder Ridge and discussed synergy with the new hotel that is opening. She stated Thunder Ridge can be used in I Love New York advertisements because you are allowed to showcase a specific destination if it is the only one (1) in the County.

Legislator Nacerino stated there are many facets of Putnam County and the goal is to realize their potential.

Director Walsh stated she has heard complaints that there is no snowshoeing available at Thunder Ridge, but it would not be safe to have it there. She stated there are miles of snowshoeing available across the County, such as on the bikepath.

Legislator Albano stated he is confident that bringing Tourism in-house was the right move.

Legislator Castellano questioned where the print advertisements are going to be.

Director Walsh stated they will be in a variety of travel and concierge magazines. She noted the I Love New York funds cannot be spent inside the County, so they are being focused on the surrounding counties. She stated it is frustrating to have people who live in the County leave to spend their money.

Legislator Castellano requested more clarification on the social media presence of the Tourism Department.

Director Walsh stated there is a Tourism Facebook page entitled "Putnam County Tourism." She stated their website is VisitPutnam.org. She stated it is part of the County website but can be accessed on its own. She stated the website is still a work in progress but it will be categorized by attraction. She gave credit to other County departments for their assistance. She stated she hopes to have an Instagram and Twitter account up and running in the next five (5) days. She stated she believes social media is key.

Legislator Castellano stated he hopes that Director Walsh can come to these committee meetings every few months to provide an update.

Director Walsh agreed that that would be the best approach.

Legislator Montgomery stated Director Walsh has been very generous with her time in agreeing to come meet with municipal boards.

Alexandra Ballentine, Brewster resident, stated she is the owner of a marketing firm who offers the same services to businesses that the Tourism Department offers. She stated she disagrees with her tax money going towards the Tourism Department and she believes businesses should fund their own marketing.

Director Walsh stated she would be happy to meet with Ms. Ballentine. She stated the goal of the Tourism Department is to drive money into the County.

Ms. Ballentine stated it should be left up to the businesses.

Director Walsh stated all other counties in the State have a tourism agency.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the ads are varied and promote the County as a whole.

**Item #5 - Approval/Fund Transfer 19T221/Office of Tourism/Fund newly established Office of Tourism with Clerical Assistance, a Cellphone, and a Laptop**

Chairwoman Sayegh requested clarification on the need for these items.

Director Walsh stated she needs a cell phone so that she does not mix her personal and County business. She stated she needs to be out in the community connecting with people and places, so this requires having a laptop. She stated the clerical help will be only up to seven (7) hours per week. She stated every department has someone to assist with the financial side. She stated it will help to have someone to help in the office to keep up with the paperwork.

Chairwoman Sayegh questioned if this is a temporary position.

Director Walsh stated it is a temporary, non-competitive position.

Legislator Albano stated these are reasonable requests.

Legislator Nacerino stated she agrees with Legislator Albano. She stated it is a necessity for success.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated this is coming out of the County contribution to the Tourism Department, so it not increasing any costs.

Legislator Montgomery stated she is in favor of giving the department the necessary tools. She stated the cell phone and laptop are essential. She stated she does not approve of a new position. She stated the previous Director was at a lower salary. She stated new positions were denied in the Sheriff's Department. She stated positions were eliminated in the Health Department. She stated she would like to wait to create this new temporary position.

Legislator Addonizio stated the facts pertaining to the previous Director of the Visitors Bureau were not provided.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the previous tourism organization also had part time help in the office.

Legislator Nacerino stated unforeseen circumstances have brought upon this situation. She stated

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to move Fund Transfer 19T221 to the Personnel Committee Meeting; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. Legislator Montgomery voted no. Motion carries.

#### **Item #6 - Discussion/Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce/President Eliza Starbuck**

Cold Spring Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) President Eliza Starbuck stated Board Member Linda Kagan will also be participating in the discussion. She stated the Chamber has been active and has worked to communicate with its members, along with the community. She stated Cold Spring has an abundance of tourism and it needs to be managed because it is an asset. She stated they are looking to find the right balance for tourism in the area so that the residents are comfortable. She went over a list of tasks they have partnered with the Village of Cold Spring on. She stated the Chamber is strictly on a volunteer basis. She stated they created a tourism map for the Philipstown area.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she has seen that map and it is gorgeous.

Chamber President Starbuck stated the PCNR (Putnam County News & Recorder) did a great job producing the map. She stated the Chamber worked hard to make sure businesses were included and highlighted. She stated they have worked to make the trolley schedule more accessible and easy to read. She stated the goal is to make sure tourists have an idea of where they can go, so they are not wandering. She stated there is a visitors' booth that is located right near the train station. She stated hundreds and sometimes thousands of tourists come via the train on the weekends. She stated the booth is a great place share promotional materials and she suggested it could be for county-wide attractions. She stated the booth is manned by volunteers and sometimes it is hard to find someone to man it. She stated the Chamber has been working with Seastreak, which is a boat that comes up the Hudson River and drops off 400 to 1,000 people per day on Saturday and Sunday during October. She stated the Chamber works with the businesses and municipalities to manage the volume of tourists. She commended Tourism Director Walsh for meeting with the different municipalities and businesses. She stated the Chamber launched a new website this year and the biggest improvement is the events calendar.

Director Walsh stated she is working on a county-wide events calendar for the tourism website, which will be categorized.

Chamber President Starbuck stated it is helpful for businesses to be able to schedule their events around when other businesses are having events, so that multiple businesses are not having major events at the same time. She stated the Chamber has created committees to handle different matters. She stated the Chamber's future priorities are to continue supporting tourism growth while being conscious of the community. She stated the Chamber may be coming to the County for support on various projects to manage their tourism.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the schools or senior citizens have been approached for assistance with manning the visitors' booth.

Chamber President Starbuck stated most of the volunteers are seniors. She stated the Chamber is starting to work more with Haldane Schools.

Board Member Linda Kagan stated Cold Spring has so many tourists that she does not even go into Main Street on the weekends, even though she has an office there. She stated the County could benefit from having a trolley or bus to bring tourists who are in Cold Spring throughout the County. She stated many of the tourists do not realize how much else there is to do in Putnam County. She suggested that the difference Chambers of Commerce work together to help connect the County.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she is a member of the Mahopac/Carmel Chamber of Commerce and they recently had an event in Garrison to network with other Chambers of Commerce.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Tourism Department is attracting more people to Putnam County, but it should also help the municipalities manage their tourists. She expressed that different municipalities have different needs.

Chamber President Starbuck stated they would appreciate help from the County, not just the Tourism Department.

Legislator Nacerino thanked Chamber President Starbuck for this information and the Chamber's volunteerism.

Legislator Castellano stated it was great to have this discussion along with the discussion regarding the future of the Tourism Department. He stated this is a great opportunity to work together. He stated Chamber President Starbuck is always welcome to attend these committee meetings and provide her input. He stated he was in Cold Spring once when the Seastreak boat unloaded its passengers and he could not believe how many people were there. He stated this matter should be discussed further.

Chamber President Starbuck stated it is not something to say no to, as they are providing people who will support local businesses. She stated it is not a matter of turning down tourists, it is about being able to manage them.

Legislator Castellano stated maybe the Tourism Department can help reach out to the boating company to figure out a better system so Cold Spring is not overrun. He suggested the Transportation Department could be involved as well.

Board Member Kagan suggested incentivizing people from the boat to explore other areas of Putnam County.

Legislator Castellano questioned how often the boat drops off tourists.

Chamber President Starbuck stated it comes at 11am on Saturday and Sunday and leaves around 3:30pm. She stated the Village Board has suggested having the trolley there to take people to different Putnam County attractions.

Tourism Director Walsh stated more needs to be done in regards to transportation and signage when and where the boat unloads. She stated there is a bottleneck that needs to be solved. She stated she knows that Metro North is aware of the problem as well.

Chamber President Starbuck stated they are looking to alleviate the bottleneck as well and that is why they have invested so much into the trolley.

Legislator Sullivan stated trying to disperse the crowd is a good idea.

Legislator Jonke stated it is a good problem to have.

Legislator Montgomery stated the bottom line is that more support is needed from the County.

**Item #7 - FYI/Unemployment Report – Duly Noted**

**Item #8 - FYI/Foreclosure Report**

Chairwoman Sayegh stated there has been an increase in foreclosures docketed and it is much higher than last year.

Legislator Castellano stated this is due to an increase in property values, so banks put the properties back on the market.

Legislator Addonizio stated the number of foreclosures is about the same as 2018.

**Item #9 - Other Business - None**

**Item #10 – Adjournment**

There being no further business, at 6:56 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.



**PUTNAM COUNTY**  
*Perfectly Putnam*

**I♥NY**  
iloveny.com

# ADVENTURE AWAITS

*Discover Putnam*

PUTNAM COUNTY GOLF COURSE



*Hiking*

*Family Fun*

*Boating*

*Biking*

**THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

**WWW.VISITPUTNAM.ORG**



© I LOVE NEW YORK is a registered trademark and service mark of the New York State Department of Economic Development; used with permission.



PUTNAM COUNTY  
*Perfectly Putnam*

I♥NY  
iloveny.com

# EXPLORE CULTURE

*Discover Putnam*



TILLY FOSTER FARM



SO MUCH TO OFFER  
SO CLOSE TO HOME

[WWW.VISITPUTNAM.ORG](http://WWW.VISITPUTNAM.ORG)



I LOVE NEW YORK is a registered trademark and service mark of the New York State Department of Economic Development; used with permission.



**PUTNAM COUNTY**  
*Perfectly Putnam*

**I♥NY**  
iloveny.com

# GET AWAY FOR A DAY

*Discover Putnam*

SKIP PEARLMAN PHOTOGRAPHY



**SHOP, SIGHTSEE, EAT AND PLAY**  
ONLY MINUTES AWAY

[WWW.VISITPUTNAM.ORG](http://WWW.VISITPUTNAM.ORG)



© I LOVE NEW YORK is a registered trademark and service mark of the New York State Department of Economic Development; used with permission.



WHUD-FM  
www.whud.com

COVERAGE AREA

Westchester  
Rockland  
Putnam  
Orange  
Dutchess  
Ulster  
Fairfield

FORMAT

Full Service  
Adult Contemporary  
Live & Local 24 / 7  
News & Weather  
Metro Traffic  
15 Units per Hour

TARGET AUDIENCE

Adults 25-54  
Female Skew  
Median Age 50

KEY FEATURES

50,000 Watts  
Regional Coverage  
Westchester & The Hudson  
Valley's Music and Information  
Station  
In Format Since 1974



WSPK-FM  
www.k104online.com

Dutchess  
Orange  
Westchester  
Putnam  
Ulster  
Sullivan

Today's Hits CHR  
Live & Local 24 / 7  
News & Entertainment  
Weather  
Horoscopes B-Days  
Metro Traffic  
15 Units Per Hour

Adults 18 - 49  
Female Skew  
Median Age 33  
Adult CHR

50,000 Watts  
Regional Coverage  
Today's Hit Music  
In Format Since 1981



WXP-FM  
www.1071thepeak.com

Westchester  
Putnam  
Rockland  
Northern NJ  
Fairfield CT

Adult Album Alternative  
Active ~ Passionate  
Music Lovers  
Weather  
Metro Traffic  
12 Units Per Hour

Adults 25-49  
Slight Male Skew  
Median Age 48

6,000 Watts  
World Class Rock For New  
York's Backyard  
In Format since 2004



WBPM-FM  
www.wbpmfm.com

Ulster  
Dutchess  
Columbia  
Greene

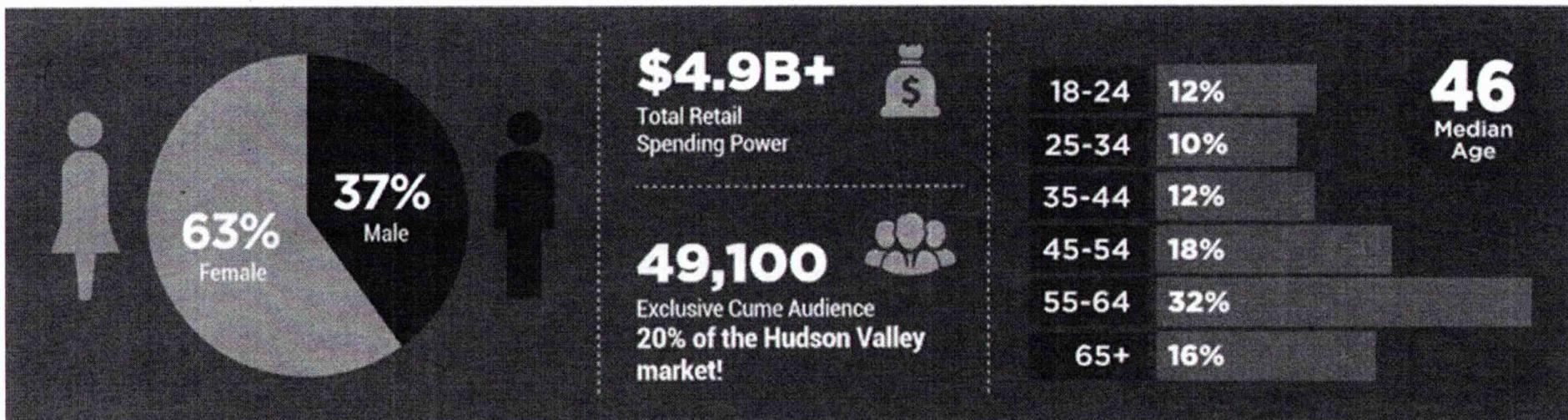
Classic Hits  
All Hits 60s-70s-80s  
Soft Rock / Pop  
News & Weather  
Metro Traffic  
10 Units Per Hour

Adults 25-54  
Slight Male Skew  
Median Age 49

6,000 Watts  
In Format since 2006



**Pamal Broadcasting reaches over 368,000 Adults 18+ for an average of nearly 7 hours every week!**



**66%**  
Own home

**62%**  
Some college or more

**55%**  
HHI \$75K+

**44%**  
Employed full-time

**52%**  
White collar occupation

**29%**  
One or more children in HH

**50%**  
Married

**20%**  
Market value of home \$500K+