

**RULES, ENACTMENTS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
HELD IN ROOM #318  
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING  
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

**Members: Chairman Sullivan and Legislators Albano & Castellano**

**Tuesday July 20, 2021  
(Immediately following Physical Services Meeting beginning at 6:00pm)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Sullivan who requested Legislator Albano lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Albano, Castellano, & Chairman Sullivan were present.

**Item #3 – Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2021**

The minutes were approved as submitted.

**Item #4 – Approval/ Fund Transfer 21T130/ Board of Elections/ Lease 26 Voting Machines Rather than Purchasing**

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the leased machines are only for this year's election cycle or if they are leased for longer.

Chairman Sullivan stated the machines will be leased for seven (7) years.

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

**Item #5 – Discussion/ Committee Meeting Format – Continue Use of GoToWebinar**

Chairman Sullivan stated now that the Legislature has resumed meeting in person, the possibility of continuing to stream the Legislative meetings is being explored. He stated Chairwoman Addonizio has met with Director of IT/GIS Thomas Lannon to discuss the most cost effective way to stream the audio and/or video of the meetings. He stated under the Open Meetings Law, the Legislature is required to utilize technology to make the audio minutes available to the public after the meeting.

Legislator Addonizio stated we are looking into livestreaming the meetings.

Director Lannon stated the issue currently is outdated infrastructure and technology. He stated the sound quality in the Legislative Meeting Room, #318 of the County Office Building is not great but the quality is even worse in the Historic Courthouse where the Full Legislative Meetings take place. He stated right now the air conditioning is broken in the Historic Courthouse so temporary window units were put in, however they are very loud and cannot be on while the meeting is in progress. He stated the audio

system in the Historic Courthouse was designed for court proceedings, not for meetings. He stated the only speaker is behind the judge's bench, which is not currently working, and there are no speakers in the back of the room. He stated for meetings, the speakers should be where the audience is sitting. He stated any upgrades or work that is to be done in the Historic Courthouse must comply with keeping its historic status and because it is a courthouse, everything must be approved by the Office of Courts Administration. He stated he obtained quotes for upgrades that would solve the problem the Legislature is facing in this room. He stated in the mean time before a permanent solution is found, a temporary PA (public address) system has been set up in the Historic Courthouse for the August 3, 2021 Full Legislative Meeting. He stated it might be difficult to stream video from the Historic Courthouse. He stated GoToWebinar is the simplest format to broadcast the meetings live, however the audio systems in both building must be fixed in order to effectively livestream. He stated he contacted Town of Carmel Supervisor Kenneth Schmitt to inquire about their live streaming system and he found that they invested about \$180,000 into their system. He stated the Town of Carmel has six (6) cameras and they hire someone to control the cameras from the studio room during each meeting. He stated if the Legislature installs one (1) camera, no one will be needed to run them, they would just need to be turned on and off by the staff. He stated multiple cameras would require monitoring of each camera. He stated the Town of Carmel has a contract for the person to come to every meeting to control the cameras.

Legislator Addonizio questioned how much the Town of Carmel pays to have the person control the cameras.

Director Lannon estimated the monthly cost to be about \$1,500. He stated if they go over the set number of meetings, it is then \$350 per meeting.

Legislator Jonke suggested mounting one (1) camera on the wall in room #318 pointing toward the front of the room capturing the dais where the Committee sits and anyone at the table presenting to the Committee. He stated the podium would not be in the shot, but the audio would be there.

Chairman Sullivan agreed with Legislator Jonke and stated that would be a great first step to get used to livestreaming while keeping the costs low.

Legislator Gouldman also agreed with Legislator Jonke and stated the podium could always be moved so the individual speaking could be seen on the video.

Legislator Montgomery stated livestreaming the meetings is a great idea. She stated she is disappointed because this is the second initiative that has been considered tonight that she brought forward and she was not acknowledged. She referenced her memorandum dated May 28, 2021 requesting that the Legislature continue to utilize the GoToWebinar format to stream live meetings. She stated when the other Legislators bring items forward they are acknowledged and she is being overlooked. She stated she brought this forward because she thought it was a great idea and the public wants

access to the Legislative Meetings as they are happening. She believes the video camera should be capturing the speaker at the podium because this work is not about the Legislators; it is about the public. She stated the disrespect she is facing should stop. She stated she brings many important things forward that are not approved.

Legislator Jonke stated this topic has been discussed for a long time.

Legislator Addonizio stated Legislator Montgomery's memorandum is included in the backup material on the agenda.

Legislator Montgomery stated the Chairman has not acknowledged her as the Legislator that brought this forward while in the public meeting. She questioned where this was discussed for a long time. She stated she has not attended any meetings where this was discussed.

Legislator Albano stated he is glad this is being discussed now and he believes it is a good idea.

Chairman Sullivan stated the reason this is on the agenda is because Chairwoman Addonizio wrote a memorandum to him requesting this be placed on the agenda in response to the memorandum she received from Legislator Montgomery. He stated both memorandums were included in the backup material for tonight's agenda.

Legislator Addonizio stated she would like to discuss the quotes Director Lannon received.

Director Lannon stated the quote for room #318 is for the audio and video together because it is a smaller room with less work needed. He stated the upgrades to be done in the Historic Courthouse was broken down into two (2) separate quotes; one (1) for the audio system and one (1) for the camera system.

Legislator Jonke questioned if it is possible to set up the temporary PA system each month in the Historic Courthouse. He questioned where the equipment is stored when it is not being used.

Director Lannon stated the IT Department has a portable PA system that is used throughout the County when needed. He stated it takes about 30-45 minutes to set up.

Legislator Jonke stated if we were able to use that system each month it would avoid having to do work in that building.

Director Lannon stated the system he brought to the Historic Courthouse to use is an older system and he got a quote for a new portable PA system, which would cost \$1,000. He stated the system would have speakers that could be up high, which would be best.

Legislator Jonke suggested testing that out for a couple months to see how it works. He stated if it works well, he would be in favor of keeping it simple.

Chairman Sullivan stated before any upgrades are done there may need to be a transfer of funds.

Director Lannon stated the PA system can be used temporarily at no cost. He stated if the Legislature wanted to buy the new PA system, he would recommend that it be purchased through the IT Department so it could be used throughout the County in between Full Legislative Meetings.

Chairman Sullivan agreed with using the PA system, especially since it can be used elsewhere as well.

Legislator Montgomery stated the reason the request came from Chairwoman Addonizio is because she believes that is how requests must be made. She stated she believes it is in the Legislative Manual.

Chairman Sullivan questioned Legislative Counsel Robert Firriolo if that is in the Legislative Manual.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated no. He stated in reference to Chairman Sullivan's earlier statements about providing access to the minutes, the Open Meetings Law states that to the extent technologically feasible and fiscally possible that meetings should be livestreamed on the County website. He stated this is not the same as using GoToWebinar, which requires each meeting to be set up individually by the Legislative staff. He stated he believes the preferable alternative would be to have it streamed directly to a webpage which would allow anyone with a web browser to click on it and watch or listen to it. He stated this eliminates the need to download any software. He stated there were some issues with GoToWebinar as well.

Director Lannon stated the County has a government YouTube channel, where meetings can be streamed and recorded at the same time, allowing it to be played back instantaneously. He agreed that there are more limitations with GoToWebinar.

Legislator Albano stated since the cost of an additional PA system is reasonable, it should be purchased to have a spare and be able to store it at the Historic Courthouse instead of traveling with it.

Director Lannon stated there will be a few other items that would be needed to go along with the PA system, but nothing major. He stated having spare microphones is also a good idea so any malfunctioning microphones can be swapped out right away.

Legislator Addonizio clarified that the discussion for the system in the Historic Courthouse is about only audio.

Director Lannon stated that is correct however a video quote was obtained.

Legislator Castellano requested clarification on the systems for each room.

Director Lannon stated the quote for the audio and video system in room #318 was about \$11,000 which will replace all the microphones, add a camera, and a streaming box. He stated in the Historic Courthouse the quote for the video system was \$10,000 and the audio upgrade was \$11,000.

Legislator Castellano questioned if the meetings can continue to be videoed in the Historic Courthouse the way it is currently being done.

Director Lannon stated it can continue, but it is an antiquated way of doing it.

Legislator Castellano stated the way it is being done does not allow it to be livestreamed directly to the website.

Director Lannon stated that is correct, a streaming camera would need to be installed. He stated if that is to be installed the Office of Courts Administration would need to approve it because they have restrictions on cameras. He stated his understanding is that the judge must have control to turn the camera off.

Legislator Albano stated it would be a good idea to explore the possibility of this with the Office of Courts Administration so we know what can be done.

Chairman Sullivan clarified that the portable PA system would be used in the Historic Courthouse for now.

Director Lannon stated yes, the August 3, 2021 Full Legislative Meeting will use the PA system.

Legislator Nacerino questioned if the courts would share the expense of any upgrade put into the Historic Courthouse since it is a shared space.

Director Lannon stated it is possible they would share the cost but he does not know how much they might cover.

Legislator Addonizio stated all Full Legislative Meetings are currently videoed and put on YouTube and linked to the County website. She stated the audio minutes from all Full and Committee Meetings are usually available online the next business day.

#### **Item #6 – Discussion with Sheriff Langley Regarding the Taranto Arrest Incident & Related Police Brutality Civil Lawsuit**

Chairman Sullivan stated the Rules Committee is charged with the responsibility to, among other things, review and advise the Legislature concerning any suits against the

County as well as any other litigation of County interest. He stated the Rules Committee regularly receives confidential reports on litigation against the County, including litigation involving the Sheriff's Department. He stated moreover, the Rules Committee also routinely discusses confidential litigation matters with the Law Department and outside counsel in executive session.

At 7:27pm Chairman Sullivan made a motion to go into executive session to discuss litigation. He invited Sheriff Langley to join the Legislators in executive session to participate in the discussion.

Sheriff Langley requested that Captain Lisa Ortolano, who is the Records Access Officer in the Sheriff's Department participate in the executive session to bring the records in.

Chairman Sullivan stated he does not believe bringing records in is required at this time.

Legislative Counsel Firriolo stated Captain Ortolano could give the records to Sheriff Langley to bring into executive session; she does not need to physically bring them in. He suggested that Chairman Sullivan move to go into executive session for both item #6 and item #7 as they both pertain to litigation, therefore eliminating the need to come in and out of executive session.

At 7:28 Chairman Sullivan made a motion to go into executive session to discuss litigation pertaining to item #6 and item #7 on the agenda; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

At 8:49pm Chairman Sullivan made a motion to come out of executive session; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor. No action was taken.

#### **Item #7 – FYI/ Litigation Report**

At 7:28 Chairman Sullivan made a motion to go into executive session to discuss litigation pertaining to item #6 and item #7 on the agenda; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor.

At 8:49pm Chairman Sullivan made a motion to come out of executive session; Seconded by Legislator Albano. All in favor. No action was taken.

#### **Item #8 – Other Business – None**

#### **Item #9 – Adjournment**

There being no further business at 8:49pm, Chairman Sullivan made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Castellano. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Beth Robinson.