



## County Executive Chairs First Panel Session to Work on Putnam County Shared Service Property Tax Savings Plan

May 24, 2017 / in County Executive, General News, Press Releases  
for County Executive

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*Meeting at TOPS Center Draws Quorum of Representatives from County's Six Municipalities*

CARMEL, NY – On Thursday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell initiated a county-wide planning session designed to save money for taxpayers through increased efficiencies across government services. As mandated by Governor Cuomo, Thursday's panel included supervisors and mayors or their designated representatives from Putnam's six towns and three villages. Representatives from the Carmel, Mahopac and Putnam Valley Central School Districts, municipal Highway Departments, and the county legislative body, were also in attendance among others at the public hearing.

County Executive Odell presented details associated with the initiative, which includes a narrow execution timeline. An initial Shared Services Plan, including certification as to the accuracy of tax savings, must be collaboratively developed with the panel and submitted to the county legislature before August 1, 2017. Upon review, the legislature will provide an advisory report and the County Executive may modify the plan and resubmit it no later than September 15, 2017. Also

within this timeline, the panel, Putnam County Legislature and County Executive will accept input and testimony on the plan from the public via two additional public hearings, which are scheduled for June 20<sup>th</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Putnam County Training & Operations Center (TOPS) in Carmel, NY.

“Putnam County has the lowest portion per tax dollar of any of New York State’s 62 counties, and my administration is proud of that fact,” said Odell. “We got there through diligent fiscal responsibility, including sharing services wherever possible. I am optimistic that by working together toward a shared objective that Putnam County will continue to drive innovative cost-saving strategies that reduce duplicative services and share resources wherever practical.”

The County Executive opened the meeting by asking the municipality representatives if they were already implementing shared services strategies. The overwhelming majority of panel members raised their hands in the affirmative.

Odell raised the issue of school taxes, which comprise 0.71cents of every tax dollar paid by Putnam County residents. “As co-chair of the New York State Association of Counties, our goal is the reduction of property taxes in New York State, but in order for a realistic discussion to take place, school taxes and how public education is funded must be part of the discussion,” said Odell. “We keep chasing the small money and we need to address the areas that cost big money.”

Several current initiatives and new ideas were discussed, including the East of Hudson Watershed Corp., which is a collaboration of 19 municipalities charged with meeting storm water regulations in a cost effective and efficient manner; the Putnam County Commission for Fiscal Vision and Accountability, which has been focusing on fiscal vision for Putnam County since 2014; and Video Court Appearances, a new alternate method of arraignment that was started by the Commission for Fiscal Vision and Accountability. The county has implemented this on a limited basis successfully and has proven that it will save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“In order to fully implement an electronic video court appearance option across the county, we need legislation from Albany,” said Odell. “We have two bills awaiting the Governor’s approval to move forward on

this plan, which will significantly reduce overtime, and wear and tear on transport vehicles while ensuring safe, judicially sound, and efficient arraignments.”

A video recording of Thursday’s panel meeting and a copy of the slide presentation is available on the Putnam County website at

<http://www.putnamcountyny.com/>

[\[http://www.putnamcountyny.com/\]](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/). Additionally, a

copy of the New York State Shared Services law is available at:

[https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/countywide\\_services.html](https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/countywide_services.html)

[\[https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/countywide\\_services.html\]](https://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/countywide_services.html).

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[\[http://www.putnamcountyny.com/shared-services-initiative/\]](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/shared-services-initiative/)

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