

# PUTNAM COUNTY SUPERVISORS

Ken Schmitt, Town of Carmel  
Maureen Fleming, Town of Kent  
Richard Williams Sr., Town of Patterson

Richard Shea, Town of Philipstown  
Sam Oliverio, Town of Putnam Valley  
Tony Hay, Town of Southeast

## PRESS RELEASE

October 4, 2017

The Town Supervisors of Putnam County would like to set the record straight. We Supervisors are very much interested in discussing how services between the Towns and/or the County might be consolidated or shared to improve efficiency, or to reduce taxes. We, as Supervisors can never be satisfied with searching for means to reduce the tax burden on our residents.

We agree with the County Executive that the Governor's initiative left much to be desired. The Shared Services initiative is nothing more than a means to have the public focus on local government, rather than the true root of the problem; a State Government that consistently refused to address mandate reform, tort reform, insurance reform or any of several areas that might ease the costs on local government. The Governor must stop playing the blame game and begin showing leadership, working with local government to solve problems. Not blaming us for the high property taxes, while the State is rigging the game against us.

We need to develop that same spirit of cooperation here in Putnam County. Under the Governor's plan, the first step in the Shared Service Initiative required the creation of a shared services panel which included the Supervisors. In Putnam County this first step never occurred. The County Executive never convened a Shared Services Panel with the Supervisors. No meaningful attempt has ever been made to meet with the Supervisors to discuss ways that services might be shared or consolidated. Instead the County went straight to holding the public hearings on a non-existent plan, hoping that one would be developed along the way.

With the delays caused by a flawed process, on June 16, 2017 the Supervisors sent a letter to the County Executive asking for her to meet with the Supervisors to discuss a plan. That meeting never occurred. We also suggested that a more cautious approach be followed in order to develop a more comprehensive and well-thought plan, believing that two months does not allow sufficient time to develop a plan which provides a full understanding of the potential cost savings, or how the plan may affect the quality of service to each of our respective municipalities. The County Executive, in concurring with our opinion, sent our recommendation to the County Legislature. It is October, and we have still not heard from our County Executive.

In order to meet the requirements of the Shared Services Initiative the Supervisors continue to meet to discuss how we can work together to lower the tax burden on our residents. It is our desire to have a workable shared services plan for the 2018 deadline. As we have no choice but to go it alone, this is the route that Putnam County's Towns are pursuing.

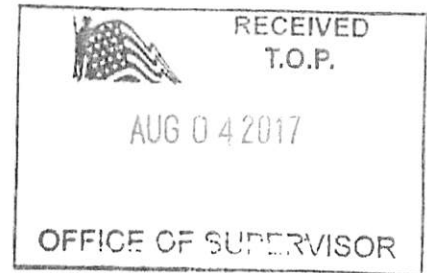
MaryEllen Odell  
County Executive

Bruce J. Walker  
Deputy County Executive

40 Gleneida Avenue  
Carmel, New York 10512  
(845) 808-1001 Fax (845) 808-1901  
www.putnamcountyny.gov

Patricia Simone  
Chief of Staff

Nicholas DePerno Jr.  
Director of Constituent Services



## MEMORANDUM

To: Ginny Nacerino, Chairwoman  
Putnam County Legislature

CC: Ken Schmitt, Town of Carmel  
Richard Williams Sr., Town of Patterson  
Sam Oliverio, Town of Putnam Valley  
Maureen Fleming, Town of Kent  
Richard Shea, Town of Philipstown  
Tony Hay, Town of Southeast  
Ann M. Thane, Director, Division of Local Government  
Honorable Terrence Murphy  
Honorable Kevin Byrne  
Honorable Sandy Galef  
Honorable Sue Serino

From: MaryEllen Odell, Putnam County Executive

Re: County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan

Date: August 1, 2017

*MaryEllen*

Please see attached, for review and discussion memo from the County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan deadline and severe time constraints in making it impractical and impossible to finalize a substantive and well-reasoned plan. As such, the panel will not be submitting a certified Shared Services plan for your consideration and review in 2017.

The Fiscal Year 2018 New York State Budget enacted a new law entitled "County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan". This law requires that the County Executive, convene a panel of local officials to develop and submit the first County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan to the County Legislature on or before August 1, 2017. As the budget was signed by the Governor on April 10, 2017, the County was given less than four months to accomplish this goal for 2017. Although the panel members from all necessary stakeholders have been convened and have begun to work diligently to identify and explore shared services that could result in new property tax savings, the severe time constraints made it impractical and impossible to finalize a substantive and well-reasoned plan. As such, we will not be submitting a certified Shared Services plan for your consideration and review in 2017.

Attach please find a letter dated June 16, 2017 from the Putnam County Supervisors, who are required panel members under the law and who will ultimately vote on a final Shared Services plan. Their letter urges an approach that will allow for the development of a more comprehensive and well-thought out plan. I agree with the Supervisors and believe that our constituents would be best served if we focused on preparing a fully vetted and comprehensive plan for the 2018 deadlines. We will continue to have meaningful discussions through the end of 2017 and into 2018, including further public panel meetings and consultation with local collective bargaining units. I welcome your suggestions for the Panel to explore and will continue to keep you updated throughout the process for 2018.

Finally, I would ask that the Committee on Fiscal Vision and Accountability be reconvened to investigate how to execute the recently enacted state legislation for electronic court appearances for inclusion in the "County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan". Additionally, I would ask that the concept of a County-wide tax assessor organization which has been proposed by Legislator Jonke be vetted for possible inclusion in the "County-wide Shared Services Property Tax Savings Plan".

**PUTNAM COUNTY  
SUPERVISORS**

Ken Schmitt, Town of Carmel  
Maureen Fleming, Town of Kent  
Richard Williams Sr., Town of  
Patterson

Richard Shea, Town of Philipstown  
Sam Oliverio, Town of Putnam Valley  
Tony Hay, Town of Southeast

June 16, 2017

Honorable Mary Ellen Odell  
County Executive  
Putnam County Office Building  
40 Gleneida Avenue, 3rd Floor  
Carmel, New York 10512

Re: Putnam County Shared Services Initiative

Dear Mrs. Odell:

Thank you for taking the initial steps towards addressing the Governor's proposal on shared services. The Town Supervisors heeded your advice offered at the initial public hearing held on May 18<sup>th</sup> and have met to discuss potential ways that we may share services. We have discussed several shared services which may result in cost savings to our taxpayers that may be of value to explore further. We would first like to have a better understanding of the direction that the Shared Services Committee is taking, and what you see as appropriate areas of sharing services that warrant further evaluation.

We are also concerned that deviating from the process provided by the State statutes leaves any potential opportunity to develop a shared services plan that we can all support doomed to failure at its inception. The Law is clear on the process; 1) a Shared Services Panel should be convened consisting of the County Executive the Town Supervisors and the Village Mayors, 2) a Shared Services Plan should be developed, 3) After the Plan is developed three or more public hearings should be held, 4) The County Executive shall submit the Plan to the County Legislature for an advisory report, 5) The Shared Services Panel votes on whether to approve or disapprove the Plan, 6) If approved the Plan is submitted to the State. If disapproved the County shall follow the same procedures to attempt to produce a shared services plan for 2018.

We would like to meet with you prior to the July 18, 2017 meeting to understand where you feel there are potential areas of sharing that may be explored. It would be beneficial to fostering a constructive dialog if prior to our meeting we receive your priorities to explore for cost savings.

One area we believe that we can all agree on as producing the greatest savings for our tax payers is our public school system. As you indicated at your May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, in Putnam County on an average 71% of real property taxes are created by our public schools. Spending per student for Putnam's

schools runs well above the State average of \$22,658 or even the Mid-Hudson regional average of \$26,636 per student. The average cost per student in adjoining states is half of what we pay in Putnam County. Reducing the burden placed on our taxpayers from school taxes, while maintaining our tradition of excellence should be our number one priority. We recommend that an independent study be conducted to review school expenditures, including both administration and operations, with a focus on developing means and methods to reduce costs to our taxpayers.

While we acknowledge the Governor's desire that a plan be submitted to the County Legislature by August 1, we do not believe that two months is sufficient time to develop a plan which provides a full understanding of the potential cost savings, or how the plan may affect the quality of service to each of our respective municipalities. A hastily written plan is likely to miss areas of importance, produce unintended consequences and not result in the cost savings it was originally intended to create.

We urge a more cautious approach be followed in order to develop a more comprehensive and well-thought plan. A plan that the municipalities have reached consensus on its implementation before it is sent to the Legislature. We understand that this may delay submission of the plan to the full Legislature until August of 2018, which is well within the parameters of the enabling legislation.

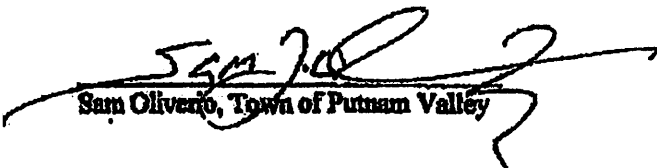
We look forward to working with the County on addressing this important issue.

  
Ken Schmitt, Town of Carmel

  
Maureen Fleming, Town of Kent

  
Richard Williams Sr., Town of Patterson

  
Richard Shea, Town of Philipstown

  
Sam Oliverio, Town of Putnam Valley

  
Tony Hay, Town of Southeast

cc: Honorable Terrence Murphy  
Honorable Kevin Burns  
Honorable Sue Serino  
Honorable Sandy Galef