



TOWN OF PUTNAM VALLEY

Town Board Special Meeting

March 4th, 2026

Town Hall

6 PM



Meeting called to Order
Pledge of Allegiance

1. **Public Hearing:** Local Law Waiving Residency Requirements for Town Assessor
2. Appoint Town Assessor
3. Discuss Deadline Date for Acceptance of Exemption Paperwork
4. Approve Appointment of Part-Time Clerk in Assessor's Office
5. Approve Temporary Inter-Departmental Hours for Clerk in Building
Department
6. Public Comment (Three Minute Time Limit Per Person)

Adjournment

Next Town Work Session: Wednesday, March 11th, 2026, 5 pm

TOWN BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, March 4th, 2026

6:00 PM

PRESENT: Supervisor Jolicoeur
Councilman Brooks
Councilman Russo
Councilwoman Howard

ABSENT: Councilman Luongo

ALSO PRESENT: Town Clerk Michelle Stephens
Deputy Clerk Amy Cargain
Town Counsel David E. Daniels
Town Counsel Lillian Mead

Supervisor Jolicoeur opened the meeting at 6:00 pm with the Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence

A motion was made to open the Public Hearing to pass a Local Law waiving Residency Requirements for the Town Assessor.

Seconded by Councilman Russo, unanimously carried

Supervisor Jolicoeur noted that **three individuals applied for the assessor position:**

- One applicant currently works full-time in Ossining.
- One applicant resides in Connecticut.
- **Mr. John Wolham**, who was present, applied for the position and is highly qualified.

The Supervisor stated that Mr. Wolham had already received positive feedback from members of the public and had been responsive to questions from residents.

The proposed local law waiving the residency requirement for the Town Assessor is a matter of public record and is **available on our Town Website.** [Town of Putnam Valley – The Town of Lakes](#)

Public Comment

The floor was opened for public comment regarding the proposed local law.
No public comments were made.

Close Public Hearing

Supervisor Jolicoeur made a **motion to close the public hearing**.

Seconded by: Councilwoman Howard, unanimously carried.

LOCAL LAW WAIVING RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS FOR TOWN ASSESSOR

Presented by Supervisor Jolicoeur

The Local Law to waive the residency requirements for the Town Assessor is a public document available on our website.

[Town of Putnam Valley – The Town of Lakes](#)

RESOLUTION #R26-148

Town of Putnam Valley Local Law No. 4 of 2026

LOCAL LAW WAIVING THE RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT FOR THE TOWN ASSESSOR

Part 1. Title

This Local Law shall be known as the “Local Law Waiving the Residency Requirement for the Town Assessor.”

Part 2. Legislative Intent

The purpose of this local law is to waive the residency requirement for the office of Town Tax Assessor, permitting the appointment of a qualified assessor who resides anywhere within the State of New York, as authorized by Municipal Home Rule Law and consistent with Real Property Tax Law § 310.

Part 3. Enactment

This local law is enacted pursuant to the authority granted by Section 10 of the Municipal Home Rule Law of the State of New York, which empowers local governments to adopt and amend local laws relating to the qualifications of local officers.

Part 4. Residency Requirement Waived

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, including but not limited to Public Officers Law § 3, the person appointed to the office of Town Assessor need not be a resident of the Town, provided that such person is a resident of the State of New York at the time of and during their service as Town Assessor.

Part 5. Severability

The invalidity of any part or provision (e.g., word, section, clause, paragraph, sentence) of this Local Law shall not affect the validity of any other part of this Law which can be given effect in the absence of the invalid part or provision.

Part 6. Effective Date

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Office of the Secretary of State of the State of New York, in accordance with the applicable provisions of law, and specifically, Article 3, Section 27 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law.

Dated: 03/04/2026

Moved: Supervisor Jolicoeur

Seconded: Councilwoman Howard

Motion passes/ fails: Ayes 4 Nays 0

AYE NAY ABSTAIN

PRESENT/ABSENT Councilwoman Howard	<u>X</u>	___	___
PRESENT/ABSENT Councilman Luongo	___	<u>ABSENT</u>	
PRESENT/ABSENT Councilman Brooks	<u>X</u>	___	___
PRESENT/ABSENT Councilman Russo	<u>X</u>	___	___

PRESENT/ABSENT Supervisor Jolicoeur X _____

APPOINT TOWN ASSESSOR

Presented by Supervisor Jolicoeur

This is a public document available on our website.

[Town of Putnam Valley – The Town of Lakes](#)

RESOLUTION #R26-149

Resolution Appointing Assessor for Unexpired Term

RESOLUTION NO. 149 OF 2026

A RESOLUTION APPOINTING JOHN WOLHAM AS TOWN OF PUTNAM VALLEY TAX
ASSESSOR (“ASSESSOR”)

WHEREAS, the position of Assessor became vacant upon the resignation of the
prior Assessor effective on or about January 31, 2026; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to § 310 of the New York Real Property Tax Law, the Town
Board is authorized to appoint a successor Assessor to serve the unexpired portion of
the existing term of office; and

WHEREAS, the unexpired term of office (“Term”) for the position of Assessor
expires on September 30, 2031; and

WHEREAS, John Wolham is a resident of the State of New York, is otherwise
qualified for appointment, and has expressed his willingness to serve as Town Assessor
on a part-time basis;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Putnam Valley hereby
appoints John Wolham to the position of Town Assessor, effective March 4, 2026, to serve
the unexpired term ending September 30, 2031;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the salary for the Town Assessor shall be fixed
at \$55,000 per year for the first twelve (12) months of service;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Assessor shall not be provided with any benefits.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in the event that the Assessor's appointment is terminated in accordance with applicable law prior to the expiration of the Term, the compensation payable to the Assessor shall be pro-rated to reflect the portion of the time period served;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that for the first twelve (12) months of service, the Assessor shall be a part-time employee of the Town and shall work twenty-four (24) hours per week with all services to be provided at the Town Hall or at other locations as may be approved by the Supervisor from time to time;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that at any time and from time to time following the Assessor's first twelve months of service, the compensation, hours of service and other terms and conditions of the Assessor's appointment may be changed by resolution of the Town Board to the fullest extent permitted by applicable law; provided, however that such hours of service shall not be less than 24 hours per week or more than 35 hours per week; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately

Seconded by Councilman Brooks, unanimously carried.

Supervisor Jolicoeur made a motion to go into **Executive Session** to get legal advice regarding the **Acceptance of Exemption Paperwork**

Seconded by Councilwoman Howard, unanimously carried

All Town Board members and Town Counsel, except for Councilman Luongo, were present for the Executive Session. The Executive Session adjourned. The Town Board Meeting reconvened at 6:10 pm

Supervisor Jolicoeur made a motion to close the Executive Session and to reopen the meeting, as no resolution had been passed at this time.

Seconded by Councilman Russo, unanimously carried

DISCUSS DEADLINE DATE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF EXEMPTION PAPERWORK

A request from the school was discussed during the Executive Session. They are seeking additional time to submit paperwork for a property tax exemption.

Discussion:

- Town Counsel reviewed the request and consulted with the school's legal counsel.
- Counsel advised that **extending the taxable status date would be legally complex**, and there is **no clear legal authority to grant an extension**.
- Supervisor Jolicoeur reported that she became aware of the issue in December and followed up promptly in January upon assuming her role as Supervisor.

Conclusion:

- The Board agreed that **granting additional time is not feasible** due to legal and procedural limitations.

Councilman Russo read the following

CHRISTIAN RUSSO
Town Councilman



Town of Putnam Valley

March 4, 2026

TO: Supervisor Joliceur and Town Board Members,

FROM: Christian Russo
Town Councilman

RE: Drafting error contained in Section 108-3(B) of the amended Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption Law

Good evening,

I want to speak regarding the substantive drafting error contained in Section 108-3(B) of the amended Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption Law.

As written, the law states:

“...NO EXEMPTION shall be granted if the income of the owner or the combined income of the owners of the property for the applicable income tax year immediately preceding the date of making application for exemption IS LESS THAN \$58,400.”

This language disqualifies seniors whose income is below \$58,400 — which is the opposite of how senior exemptions are structured and the opposite of what this Board voted to do.

When this mistake was brought to the Town’s attention, I immediately emailed our Town Attorney, the Town Supervisor, and the members of the Town Board. I specifically asked whether this error could unintentionally exclude residents who qualify for the exemption while potentially including residents who otherwise would not qualify.

The response from our Town Attorney was that because the intent of the exemption was clear in other sections of the law and during the public hearing, the Assessor could proceed with filing exemptions and the law could be amended at a later date.

Out of an abundance of caution, I then contacted the legal division of the New York Association of Towns. They advised me that this is a substantive error, not a mere technical defect, and that it should be corrected immediately.

The filing deadline for senior exemptions is typically March 1st. Because March 1st fell on a Sunday this year, the statutory deadline was 4:00 p.m. on March 2nd.

I again emailed the Town Attorney, the Town Supervisor, and the Board, suggesting that we hold an emergency public hearing. That email was sent early enough to allow the required 72-hour notice to be given so that a public hearing could have taken place on Monday, March 2nd, and the amendment could have been corrected before the filing deadline.

I did receive a response from the Town Supervisor indicating that the attorneys did not believe immediate correction was necessary because the intent of the amendment could be found elsewhere in the law. Councilman Luongo agreed that we should hold a public hearing to correct the mistake.

Ultimately, no public hearing was scheduled, and the filing deadline passed.

At this point, according to the New York Association of Towns, it is up to the Assessor to determine how to proceed. If the Assessor believes the legislative intent is clear, exemptions could be processed using the newly adopted income thresholds. However, if there is uncertainty, the Assessor could default to the prior year's income levels.

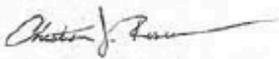
The New York Association of Towns further suggested that our Town Attorney draft a formal memorandum to the Assessor stating that the exemptions should be processed using the new income thresholds, based on the clearly documented legislative intent throughout the law and the public hearing record.

This situation creates uncertainty for our seniors — the very residents this exemption is intended to protect.

This was correctable before the deadline. It should still be corrected formally, and we should provide clear written guidance to our Assessor to ensure consistent and legally defensible application of the law.

Our seniors deserve clarity, certainty, and fairness — not ambiguity.

Respectfully,



Christian J. Russo
Putnam Valley Town Councilman

Key Points:

- The Assessor confirmed that **legal counsel and the Association of Towns advised** that the intent of the exemption is clear, despite the wording error in Section 108-3(B).
- The statute provides **clear income thresholds**; the drafting error does not prevent processing exemptions.

- No **emergency public hearing** was scheduled before the filing deadline due to timing constraints (March 1–2), but the Board acknowledged this did not affect the assessor’s authority to proceed.
- The Assessor affirmed that exemptions will be **administered according to state law and the intended income thresholds**, ensuring seniors are not excluded.
- The Board agreed that the **local law language should be formally corrected** in a future public hearing to prevent confusion, but this does not impact current filings.

Conclusion:

- Exemptions will proceed as intended, applying the **corrected income thresholds (65% level)**.
- Formal amendment of the law will occur in a future public hearing to clarify statutory language.
- Supervisor Jolicoeur reported the **reorganization of the office**, noting improvements in efficiency and cost savings for the Town.
- The Board recognized the positive progress made in the office transition.

APPROVE APPOINTMENT OF PART-TIME CLERK IN ASSESSOR’S OFFICE

Presented by Councilwoman Howard

RESOLUTION #R26-150

RESOLVED, that the Town Board appoint Sharon Irving to the position of Part-Time Clerk in the Assessor’s Office, working at an hourly rate of \$25.00, with no benefits.

Seconded by Councilman Russo, unanimously carried

APPROVE TEMPORARY INTER-DEPARTMENTAL HOURS FOR A CLERK IN THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Presented by Councilman Russo

RESOLUTION #R26-151

RESOLVED, that the Town Board approve the sharing of Clerk Samantha Cunitz with the Building Department on a part-time basis. Stephanie Conte, the Clerk to the Building Department, will be out on maternity leave. The Town Clerk has agreed to share Samantha. The hours Samantha will be working will be included in the Building Department's budget. Stephanie Conte will not be getting paid for the time she's out, so we will be saving money on the Building Department End. This is a Clerk's position to Clerk's position, so there is no negative impact.

Seconded by Councilman Brooks, unanimously carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Sam Oliverio expressed disappointment that the Town **cannot extend the exemption deadline for the school district**.
- He asked about the statutory basis for the March 1st filing deadline for senior exemptions.
- The Assessor explained:
 - Legally, **all exemption applications must be submitted by the taxable status date**, typically March 1.
 - If March 1 falls on a Sunday, applications can be accepted the following Monday (March 2).
 - There is **no explicit statute mandating the March 1st deadline**, but guidance from prior practice and Office of Real Property Tax Services indicates that exemptions should align with the taxable status date.
 - Each municipality may have some discretion, and **school districts may file later**, as long as applications are received before the final assessment roll is completed.
- The Board acknowledged that while the school cannot meet this year's extended deadline, **seniors' exemptions will be processed as intended**.
- It was emphasized that this delay is **due to administrative issues and not the fault of applicants**.
- The Assessor confirmed:
 - Exemptions will **proceed according to state law and the intended income thresholds** (55%, 60%, 65% benefit levels).
 - Each taxing jurisdiction (town, county, school districts) must implement the changes independently.
- Historical context and research were provided to clarify that **some confusion arose from old opinions and risk-avoidance practices**, not from statutory requirements.

- The Board reiterated that the **intent of the law is clear**, and seniors will **receive their entitled benefits**.

Administrative and Technology Updates

- Discussion included potential updates to **digital technology and record-keeping systems** to improve the display and accessibility of town records.
- The Board is exploring **funding sources** to support these upgrades.
- Current tools, including document snipping and Google Docs, are being used to improve workflow efficiency.
- Patty Villanova acknowledged that many exemptions exist beyond seniors (veterans, disabled, volunteer firefighters, charitable organizations), and the senior exemption is one of the **few means-tested exemptions**.
- The meeting concluded with expressions of appreciation for staff and the community's cooperation in resolving these matters.
- The Board confirmed plans to **update local law language and formalize exemptions** in upcoming sessions.

Seniors will receive their exemptions as intended, and while the school district's extension request cannot be accommodated this year, all procedures remain compliant with state law.

With no further comments, Supervisor Jolicoeur made a motion to close the meeting at 6:35 pm

Seconded by Councilman Russo, unanimously carried

Next Town Session March 11th, 2026, 5 pm

Link to watch Town Board Special Meeting

[Town Board Special Meeting": March 4, 2026](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Stephens

Michelle Stephens

Town Clerk 3/5/2026

