

BUDGET COMMITTEE
of the
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
Minutes

A regular meeting of the Budget Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on **March 26, 2001**.

Members Present:

Legislator Cameron Alden - Chairman
Legislator David Bishop - Vice-Chairman
Legislator Michael J. Caracciolo
Legislator Andrew Crecca

Also In Attendance:

Paul Sabatino - Counsel to the Legislature
Ken Knappe - County Executive's Budget Office
Todd Johnson - County Executive's Office
Clare Bradley - Suffol County Health Commissioner
Nina Tooker - Suffolk County Health Department
Fred Pollert - Budget Review Office

Minutes Taken By:

Donna Barrett - Legislative Secretary

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(*The meeting was called to order at 5:45 P.M. *)

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. I'd like to welcome everybody to the Budget Committee, and I think we'll start with the pledge of the flag -- pledge to the flag and we'll have that led by Legislator Caracciolo.

Salutation

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Thank you very much. We had scheduled Steve Jones from the Suffolk Water Authority, he appeared at the prior committee meeting, and we have Doctor Clare Bradley with us today, and I'd like to ask Doctor Bradley to come. Hi, Dr. Bradley. This is I believe it's -- this is 1195, right, that you're going to be addressing?

DR. BRADLEY:

I'd also like to say a few words about the Osteoporosis Resolution as well.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Great. Okay.

DR. BRADLEY:

Actually, Nina Tooker who is the Administrator of the Tri-Community

Health Center is also here, if it's all right if she came up.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Sure. Absolutely.

DR. BRADLEY:

Okay. About two years ago, the Health Department had to plan for the computerization of the W.I.C. Program. The State was moving forward with computerization such that checks which used to be sent down from Albany would be printed on site at each of the W.I.C. sites to give out to those women who are in the work program. And the State was going to start out with some site visits of all of our facilities. They had specific requirements in terms of private rooms for those places where the checks were going to be printed. So when we looked at our different facilities, and we looked at Tri-Community, we realized that we didn't have the physical space in Tri-Community to move forward with the computerization.

So we looked at what our options were, and one was to move the W.I.C. off site which was not a good option because there is significant crossover between the patients who are seen in the Health Centers and the W.I.C. clients. So we looked, we had a Contract Agency who was in the building and that was Sunrise. And we met with Sunrise and we proposed that they kind of go out to the other sites in the community. Sunrise had, at that time, they had a Wyandanch clinic, they had the Tri-Community clinic, they had a clinic on Broadway and on Birch Street in Amityville. And at that time they were in the process of trying to get another clinic on John Street in Amityville. So after several meetings with them, we were going to have our mental health people work with them and with the State to try to get them their new

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buildings so that they could move out, relocate from Tri-Community, so we could move forward with the computerization of W.I.C.

In addition to the computerization of W.I.C., the Tri-Community Health Center is very overcrowded, and often times there are multiple services going on in one room. So we're in desperate need for space. So we saw with the new facility for Sunrise that they could move out. What we opted to do about a year and a half ago, was to take some of the rooms from Sunrise, and with their moving into the new building, we would get the other rooms from Sunrise. So they'd gone from about five or six rooms to now where they have two to three rooms. And we still have problems with overcrowding, so we went back to Sunrise and said, "Okay. You have your new building, which is on John Street. You have the other facilities in Amityville. We think it might be time that you relocate to the other facilities so we could have the space for Tri-Community." And Sunrise was not eager to leave the building, and Legislator Postal has put in a resolution for the portable trailer to go on site at Tri-Community for Sunrise. Some of the issues that the Health Center has with that is -- number one, is parking. If we put a trailer on site at Tri-Community as per Public Works, we would lose about seven spots.

And I'll let Ms. Tooker talk about parking issues at the Health Center now. The other is that we have to make sure that we make allowances for sewage hook-up for the trailer, for the water, for all those other things, and have a plan as to who is going to be responsible when

there are problems with sewage, with water, with custodial, with all that other stuff. So that's kind of it in a nutshell. And that's how we got here.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

One other question that came up was the number of visits that they actually would be doing, you know, in that portable building?

DR. BRADLEY:

Well, I'm not speaking for them at -- they are a contract agency of the Health Department. So I don't have their statistics in terms of what they're seeing now. Nina, being the Administrator of the Tri-Community Health Center, has some information about the number of patients slash clients that they're seeing now.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Through Legislator Postal, we invited, you know, members of either their Board or their Director or somebody to come down and adjust that issue. So if you don't have those statistics or those numbers, then that's fine. I suspect we're not going anywhere with that today then because we're going to need those numbers just to justify, you know, like the expenditure of the County funds. I'm sorry to interrupt, and go ahead.

MS. TOOKER:

Hi. Thank you. Just a comment generally. I saw a copy of a letter that went from the Sunrise Satellite to yourself. Maxine Postal had shared that with me stating that they had 240 patients seen during the month of January, 2001.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

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But it wasn't specific as to where they saw them.

MS. TOOKER:

Oh, I see. That was for all of their locations.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Right. So --

MS. TOOKER:

What we did do after the last Legislative meeting that this was discussed at, at the Health Committee meeting, we did keep a record of directly observed visits, and they are very few. I don't know if you wish to see that.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

If you could just put it on the record, how many -- just --

MS. TOOKER:

For a two week period there were 31 patients seen.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay.

MS. TOOKER:

And that's during a 66 hour week. Six days, twelve hours.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. Good. Now, did you have anything else you wanted to put on the record on that?

MS. TOOKER:

Right now the parking at the Health Center is a problem. By nine o'clock in the morning, nearly all, if not all, of the spots are taken. If you go to the mall about a week before Christmas and you see cars circling and then a driver has to follow somebody out from the mall entrance to their car to wait for them to pull out and take the spot, I would liken our situation to that.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. Have -- have they related to you how much of a problem it would be administratively or just physically to actually see these people at their other sites in the community?

MS. TOOKER:

Right now -- right now I'm aware that they have three locations in the community, one is on Route 110 and Montauk Highway, one is the new facility that is being completed on Route 110 near John Street, and the other one is further north on 110 near Brunswick Hospital, if you know where that is.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Yes.

MS. TOOKER:

What they're stating is that they've purchased this building, and they've spent quite a bit of money renovating the building, but they

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state that that building even renovated that they can not accommodate the number of staff or the number of patients that they're seeing. Like I said, what we have directly observed is normally one to two staff members, and over the course of a, you know, it -- I averaged it out, it was a 0.2 patients per hour.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. Thanks. Any other questions then of the committee?

MS. TOOKER:

I was hoping I could elaborate a little bit, if you have a moment.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Sure, go ahead.

MS. TOOKER:

Okay. I've been the Administrator at the Health Center for 20 years, so I've seen the Mental Health Program that's been there for as long, and I think that the quality of the program is good and nobody is questioning the service that they offer to the community. The problem is that over the years the Health Center has taken on so many new services, that the Health Center portion has become extremely crowded, and we're really servicing patients in places that I don't feel are appropriate. We're talking to mothers about handicapped children in the hallway, we're talking to patients about social problems or financial problems when they're sitting back to back. And we've been cited by the State Health Department for this. There really is no privacy. We've had many, many patient complaints on this matter so

we're as we're sorry to see mental health go by way of a service to the patient, we look at those three rules that are so under utilized and who we could put in there and what service we could provide in there given the sensitive things that we're doing in places that are inappropriate.

DR. BRADLEY:
That's it.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
That's it?

DR. BRADLEY:
And again, since they do have other facilities in Amityville, we thought that the patients could be accommodated in the other facilities.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
Okay. Thank you very much for the presentation. Any questions again? No. Okay. Thank you. We already had Steve Jones from the Water Authority, like I said, in the prior committee, so he's really not available to answer questions, but before we actually go to the agenda, I believe we have a rookie here that is going solo for the first time, and it's usually the Legislature's history and tradition that you get up and sing your alma mater. All right. We'll pass over that then. Thanks. All right. Agenda. Tabled resolutions.

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TABLED RESOLUTIONS

1125-01 (P) Amending the 2001 operating budget and transferring funds for the removal of iron from drinking water (CP 8203.510). (ALDEN)

We have 1125 and that's the one we were discussing in the prior committee, and that's for the removal of iron from drinking water. I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. BISHOP:
I'll second it, but it's like the devil made me to do it.
They really should --

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
They should. I think that with this and with the success that this would have, would cause the Water Authority to actually go ahead with the other 90 or 80 percent that was just elaborated to us as far as making those type of remedial things.

LEG. BISHOP:
Can I ask you as Chairman, temporary Chairman, of this committee --

LEG. CARACCILO:
Rotating --

LEG. BISHOP:
And --

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
Rotating Chairman.

LEG. BISHOP:
Rotating Chairman, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
There's -- there's some resistance to rotating Chairmanships though.

LEG. BISHOP:
But more importantly, the initiator of -- of this Legislation, if you could prepare a letter for those of us who represent the South Shore; yourself, Legislator Carpenter, myself, to sign to the Water Authority asking them to budget for this in -- in their capital plan in a comprehensive manner.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
I will do that, and with your permission I will also go and attend a Water Authority meeting where I will make that plea in person.

LEG. BISHOP:
Thank you. I will appreciate that, and I would be --

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
On your -- on all of our behalves.

LEG. BISHOP:

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Yeah. No, and schedule permitting, I'll -- I'll join you.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
May I make a suggestion that we do a Sense of the Legislature Resolution to the Water Authority.

LEG. BISHOP:
No.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
We could do both. I don't see why not.

LEG. BISHOP:
We should also, you know. We're going to write all the Directors who we voted on and approved and let them now where we -- how we feel about this.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
I have a motion and second. All those in favor?

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
All right. Counsel, every resolution in this committee requires unanimity, correct?

MR. SABATINO:
In order to be discharged, tabling only requires a majority. But the discharge, yes, it takes a unanimous vote.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
Given the a -- the intent of Legislator Alden on this matter and the

sincerity in trying to address a community need, I have reservations about perhaps the Legislature opened up Pandora's Box, but I will defer to his good judgment and support the resolution.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

I appreciate that, Legislator Caracciolo.

LEG. BISHOP:

The next five resolutions, which is the rest of our agenda, is all Legislator Postal.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

All right. So we have --

LEG. BISHOP:

She's on a spending binge.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

All in favor is three. None opposed, and no abstention. So that passes. APPROVED (VOTE: 3-0-0).

1132-01 (P) Amending the adopted 2001 Operating Budget and transferring funds in Connection with lot clean-ups. (Postal)

LEG. BISHOP:

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Eleven --

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

And that's assigned to Budget.

MR. SABATINO:

This is one that Real Estate spoke at Ways and Means on earlier today and said that they would like to have the money to clean up properties and make them more marketable.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

For Legislator Caracciolo's benefit, I'm going to try to just elaborate a little bit more. I think that there was some testimony offered in Ways and Means that it does more than just clean up lots, it also allows them to expend money to enhance some of the values of lots that we're auctioning off. So they made a fairly impassioned plea for the passage of this.

LEG. BISHOP:

This is budgeted for in the Operating Budget every year, right? Why what's going -- I mean we certainly had it, because I put it in one year.

MR. POLLERT:

Yes, you did. The funds were included last year in the omnibus for the fiscal year 2000. It is a Legislative initiative. The funds were not completely expended for 2000. It was not included again in 2001. The County Executive did not continue to fund any Legislative initiatives, and it was not included in the omnibus, so they don't have any money.

LEG. BISHOP:

Right. Okay. I'm going to make a motion to table.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. We have a motion to table by Legislator Bishop. Mike, you want to second that?

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Oh, what is the motion?

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Motion to table.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. Seconded by Legislator Caracciolo. All in favor? Opposed?
1132 is tabled. TABLED (VOTE: 3-0-0).

1135-01 (P) Amending the adopted 2001 Operating Budget and appropriating funds to implement Osteoporosis Testing Program in Suffolk County. (Postal)

LEG. BISHOP:

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Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Motion to table by Legislator Bishop.

LEG. BISHOP:

That's at the request of Legislator Fields.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

Okay. Seconded by myself. All those in favor? Opposed? Unanimous,
1135 is tabled. TABLED (VOTE: 3-0-0).

1140-01 (P) Amending the adopted Operating Budget and appropriating funds for Family Service League. (Postal)

This is the one we just heard something about testimonial on; isn't it?

LEG. BISHOP:

No, it's not.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

I believe -- did you speak to this one?

MR. POLLERT:

I don't know anything about this.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

You don't want to speak -- speak to this one. Okay.

MR. SABATINO:

This one is \$36,100. The same question came up two weeks ago, it's to add funding for this Home-based Program at DSS and Probation.

LEG. BISHOP:
Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
Motion to table by Legislator Bishop. Seconded by myself. All those in favor? Opposed? 1140 stands tabled. TABLED (VOTE: 3-0-0).

1195-01 (P) Amending the adopted 2001 Operating Budget and appropriating funds in portable building at Tri-Community Health Center. (Postal)

LEG. BISHOP:
Motion to table subject to call.

LEG. CARACCIOLO:
Second.

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
We have a motion to table subject to call by Legislator Bishop. Seconded by Legislator Carraciolo. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled subject to call. TABLED SUBJECT TO CALL (VOTE: 3-0-0).

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CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
We have no Introductory Resolutions and that really pretty much ends the agenda. Thank you very much.

LEG. BISHOP:
Motion --

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:
I'll make a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Legislator Bishop. All those in favor? Opposed? We stand adjourned. Thank you.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 P.M. *)
Legislator Cameron Alden, Chairman
Budget Committee

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