

**BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**of the**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**Minutes**

A special meeting of the Budget & Finance Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the conference room of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on **April 20, 2004**.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Legislator Andrew A. Crecca, Chairman  
Legislator William J. Lindsay, Vice-Chairman  
Legislator Allan Binder  
Legislator Daniel P. Losquadro  
Legislator Lynne C. Nowick  
Legislator David Bishop

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mea Knapp, Counsel to Legislature  
Ilona Julius, Deputy Clerk  
Jim Spero, Director of Budget Review  
Nick Dispenziere, Aide to Legislator Nowick  
Frank Tassone, Aide to Legislator Crecca  
Anthony Manetta, Aide to Legislator Crecca

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Kraus, Court Reporter

**(THE MEETING CONVENED AT 9:22 AM)**

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Good morning everyone. This is the Budget and Finance meeting that was adjourned from its last date to today because we had some questions about one bill which was **Introductory**

**Resolution 1184 amending the 2004 Operating Budget and transferring funds for Family Service League Social Service and Youth Program.**

Budget Review, on this one here, what's -- I think offset originally was Pay-As-You-Go.

**MR. SPERO:**

It still is. It uses up \$49,022 of the remaining Pay-As-You-Go money.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

How much is left?

**MR. SPERO:**

None. That removes all the Pay-As-You-Go money.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Where did the rest of it go?

**LEG. NOWICK:**

O'Leary.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

O'Leary's bill?

**MR. SPERO:**

The budget resolution -- O'Leary's 75 for the mosquito testing.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Okay.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

The bugs.

**MR. SPERO:**

So, this 49,022 is the last of the Pay-As-You-Go.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Wasn't it originally 53,000, this bill?

**MR. SPERO:**

Yes. The other remaining amount needed came from other agencies Legislator Cooper had funded in the Omnibus. He's taking some money away from those agencies and transferring them to family services.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Will you recognize me, Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Yeah, the Chair recognizes the guy over there in the corner.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

He does look familiar.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

He does. Yeah, you look very familiar.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

It's not that I'm opposed to the Family Service League, but I -- but I was opposed to Legislator O'Leary's mosquito testing. Again, not that I'm opposed to mosquito testing. I just thought with the limited amount of money we had in Pay-As-You-Go, it should have been prioritized and spent wisely instead of the first one in the boat gets to fund their program. So -- I mean it's really too late now but --

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

I guess the question is for me is what do we do -- we've got \$49,000 left in Pay-As-You-Go. I hate to say it's almost a meaningless amount, but it is almost a meaningless amount. And I'm not so sure -- the 5-25-5 waiver still has a sixty-day requirement on it any way so we can't bond on Pay-As-You-Go items until the 60-day period has passed.

**MR. SPERO:**

That's right. The resolution hasn't come back to the Secretary of State so technically the waiver is not in effect at this time.

**LEG. BINDER:**

Mr. Chairman?

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Yes. Legislator Binder.

**LEG. BINDER:**

There isn't a lot left, so we're talking about a de minimus amount. And if I look at agencies, as you know, I'm a Legislator 14 years and ten of those years -- the first year as Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee. And I've had a chance to look a lot of agencies across the board. The agencies that I've seen doing work for Suffolk County, there are few, if any, that could hold up to the kind of work that Family Service League does in terms of paying for the buck, in terms of money that goes to administration versus money that goes to actual services for the types of services and for the results that they get. They're really one of the most efficient, best-run agencies that we have. So if I were prioritizing, the money would go to an agency. Now, we might prioritize on what other types of things we would do with the money; but if we were prioritizing that, there are a number of agencies that need the money. And, no, I have not always agreed with Legislator Cooper in the past on a lot of things. But on this, I would agree that this agency, which is a county-wide agency, I would put as a very high priority in terms of who we're funding as an agency.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Are you done?

**CHAIRMAN BINDER:**

Yes.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Because that was eloquent and wonderful.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

I think that sitting here trying to make the decision, this is -- this is the type of thing I want to hear. Family Service League is ostensibly a very, very good organization. I wanted to hear from somebody else. I don't like the idea of using up every penny we have, but if we were going to prioritize and this was going to be the agency anyway, and this is going to help people, maybe that's where the money should go.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Pay-As-You-Go was originally, I believe, designed to pay for small capital projects rather than bond it. And, again, it's really immaterial now because this is the end of it. And it's gone. But I don't think Pay-As-You-Go was originally designed to fund, you know, other programs besides Capital programs.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Not relative to -- well, a little bit relative to what Legislator Lindsay just said, I need to ask Budget Review, and maybe you're not the right person. We spent all that money on mosquito education or testing, which I agree on, because if you can save a life that's fine. But do you know of any way the County could look into some type of a grant to help us with that \$250,000? Is there anything out there? And if there is, how would we go about it? It seems to me that that should come under some type of a New York State grant, federal grant. What do you think is there? Is that just a crazy thought?

**MR. SPERO:**

Grant money, I can't speak to specifically. There maybe some reimbursement.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

How would we go about that?

**MR. SPERO:**

On the back end through the normal reimbursement mechanism the Health Department has from the state, which is about 30% of whatever we spend.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

So, if we got 30% back --

**MR. SPERO:**

We spend the money first; then we get reimbursed afterwards.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

If we got 30% back, we could put that back into Pay-As-You-Go?

**MR. SPERO:**

No, you can't.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Why not?

**MR. SPERO:**

You can't do that. Because you can appropriate funds during the year if it's a grant. Reimbursement would not be a grant.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Okay. Well, I understand that. I just went out on a tangent. I was just hoping somebody could go after some money. How do we get the Health Department, somebody to go after --

**MR. SPERO:**

I would surmise that the money was put in -- Legislator O'Leary put the resolution in because there were no sources of grant funding for that type of thing.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Okay. That's my answer.

**LEG. BINDER:**

There's a motion to approve.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

There's a motion to approve by Legislator Binder, second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor to approve 1184? Opposed? That's five in favor, zero against and one absent. So, the bill's carried. And I would direct the Clerk to have it added to today's agenda under the Budget and Finance Committee.

**MR. SPERO:**

Just to keep the Committee abreast of where we're at with our budget model as of today in light of the good news we got from the County Comptroller's Office the other day on the unanticipated fund balance in both the General Fund and the police fund, right now we're not showing a problem in the General Fund, but that could change depending on the state budget, negotiated wage increases, pulling additional waivers on the jail. The big problem's in the police district budget where we're showing about a \$67 million problem. So, that assumes the wage increases be applied to the other bargaining units. And there's no pension relief. A lot of the costs for the pension is in the police funds. So the police district is where our big problem

now is. And it's not likely we'll be able to afford a tax increase in the police funds; near impossible. Just to bring the committee up to date.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Jim, one question and then we should really get into the meeting. Yesterday when I had an informal conversation with Fred Pollert, there seemed to be concern about the number that Joe's announcing has yet to be certified.

**MR. SPERO:**

Right. It's an unaudited number. But they've closed the books on '03. And -- so that number shouldn't changed much.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Okay. That's all I wanted to ask you. I know it's not definite. It's not in stone until certified but --

**MR. SPERO:**

But based on that -- if it holds --

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Assuming that's true, the deficit everybody was talking about goes down to what?

**MR. SPERO:**

In the General Fund? There won't be one.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Okay.

**MR. SPERO:**

Unless, again, you have to look at -- negotiated wage increases could impact that.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

But overall.

**MR. SPERO:**

The state budget could impact that.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Talk to him in September.

**CHAIRMAN CRECCA:**

Yes, I was going to say. Meeting adjourned.

**(THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:31 AM)**