

**WAYS & MEANS and CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE**  
**BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Of the**  
**Suffolk county Legislature**  
  
**Operating Budget Minutes**

A special meeting of the Ways & Means and Consumer Protection Committee and the Budget & Finance Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on **October 21, 2004**, to discuss the matter of the 2005 Operating Budget.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Cameron Alden • Chair/Ways & Means and Consumer Protection  
Legislator Bill Lindsay • Vice•Chair/Ways & Means and Budget & Finance  
Legislator Daniel Losquadro • Member/Ways & Means and Budget & Finance  
Legislator Lynne Nowick • Member/Ways & Means and Budget & Finance  
Legislator Elie Mystal • Member/Ways & Means and Consumer Protection  
Legislator Pete O'Leary • Member/Ways & Means and Consumer Protection  
Legislator Vivian Vilorio•Fisher • Member/Ways & Means and Cons.Prot.  
Legislator David Bishop • Member/Budget & Finance

**Members Not Present:**

Legislator Allan Binder • Chair/Budget & Finance

**Also in Attendance:**

Mea Knapp • Counsel to the Legislature  
Ilona Julius • Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature  
Ed Hogan • Aide to Legislator Nowick  
Carl Yellon • Aide to District #12  
Paul Perillie • Aide to Democratic Caucus  
Maria Ammiratti • Aide to Legislator O'Leary  
Terrence Pearsall • Aide to Legislator Lindsay  
Eric Brown • Aide to Legislator Schneiderman

**Ginny Suhr • Aide to Legislator Vioria•Fisher**

**Jim Spero • Director/Budget Review Office**

**Gail Vizzini • Assistant Director/Budget Review Office**

**Lance Reinheimer • Legislative Budget Review Office**

**Kevin Duffy • Legislative Budget Review Office**

**Joe Muncy • Legislative Budget Review Office**

**Verna Donnan • Legislative Budget Review Office**

**Jill Moss • Legislative Budget Review Office**

**Fred Pollert • Deputy County Executive for Finance**

**Ben Zwirn • Assistant Deputy County Executive/IR**

**Jeanine Dillon • Assistant Deputy County Executive/State**

**Bob Bortzfield • Director/County Executive's Budget Office**

**Alan Kovesdy • County Executive's Budget Office**

**Ken Knappe • County Executive's Budget Office.**

**Jeff Tempera • Director/Suffolk County Labor Relations**

**Martin Haley • Chief Deputy Treasurer of Suffolk County**

**Alan Schneider • Director/Suffolk County Department of Civil Service**

**Roscoe Reynolds • YMCA Family Services/The Quality Consortium**

**Cheryl Felice • President/AME**

**Bob Tuerlings • Executive Vice•President/AME**

**Lydia Sabosto • 1st Vice•President/AME**

**Sondra Palmer•Randall • AME/Secretary**

**Edward Karmelin • AME/Retired**

**Bob Schroeder • AME/White Collar Unit•DPW**

**Frank New • Abrams, Herde & Merkle Accounting Firm**

**Barrie Abrams • Abrams, Herde & Merkle Accounting Firm.**

**Bob Fuchs • Abrams, Herde & Merkle Accounting Firm.**

**David Fitzsimmons • Abrams, Herde & Merkle Accounting Firm.**

**Pete Smith • President/Suffolk County Detective's Association**

**Jack Weishan • President/Detective Investigator's Association**

**All Other Interested Parties**

**Minutes Taken By:**

**Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer**

**(\*The meeting was called to order at 9:36 A.M.\*)**

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Good morning. We're going to get started with this budget, this budget committee hearing and we're going to start, we'll have the pledge led by Legislator Bishop.

***Salutation***

I'd ask for just one moment of silence, also, in memory of those we've lost up to this point and just to remember those that are serving overseas for the protection of our freedoms.

***Moment of Silence Observed***

Thank you. This process is basically so that we can hear input from the public on our budget or proposed budget, and we have a few cards, we have Roscoe Reynolds. Hi. Now you have the choice, you can come up and use the podium or you can sit down, whichever makes you more comfortable. If you make sure that that's on, then you have to pull it up.

**MR. REYNOLDS:**

Good morning. I'm Roscoe Reynolds, I'm the Director of YMCA Family Services Addiction Treatment Program in Centereach. On behalf of the •• I'm speaking on behalf of The Quality Consortium of Suffolk County, it's a group of 24 non•profit addiction treatment and prevention agencies in the County. I'd like to make a statement in support of the restoration of the Deputy Director's position in the Community Mental Health Service Budget for 2005, it was omitted from that budget.

The Quality Consortium of Suffolk County has recently learned that the position of Deputy Director for the Chemical Dependency Division, Community Mental Health Services, has been eliminated in the County Executive's budget for 2005. The position is in the County Charter but was omitted because it was temporarily vacant at the time the budget was being prepared. Approximately four years ago at a County meeting concerning the merger of Alcohol and Chemical Dependency Services, the Quality Consortium committed its support to the merger with the proviso that Chemical Dependency would be maintained with a separate voice within the administration; that voice was supposed to be the Deputy Director's position. At a time

when New York State OASIS is promoting regulatory reform which will have an immediate impact on services to Suffolk County and the amount of local assistance we received, we lack a strong voice specific to chemical dependency. Without a Deputy Director for Chemical Dependency within the Division of Mental Hygiene Services, the County staff leadership needed to address the impact of these changes will be permanently missing.

There are immediate issues that need the full attention of the Deputy Director. Among those issues are sober homes, inadequate Medicaid dollars to support the needs of our clients, forced conversions of drug-free outpatient care services to higher and more expensive care, as well as our ability to service the uninsured and the under insured. The chemical dependency field has struggled for years to maintain autonomy and an independent voice. We constantly work with a complex regulatory and oversight process that is always in flux. The nature of our work requires years of educational preparation and dedication to serve a difficult client population for relatively little financial compensation. We need help in addressing our many problems and this position, if properly filled, would be a major step in that direction. The Quality Consortium strongly encourages the Legislature to support the reinstatement of the Deputy Director for Chemical Dependency position in order to adequately represent the chemical dependency field in Suffolk County government. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Thank you. And just before we take any •• if there are any questions from Legislators, Ben? Ben Zwirn is here from the County Executive's Office. We'll just look into it, if it's a matter of it's got to be in because of the Charter, I don't see a big problem with that. Thanks. Any questions, comments? Okay, thank you very much for coming down.

**MR. REYNOLDS:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

And actually it's on page 269 of our review of the 2005 Recommended Suffolk County Operating Budget. Okay. Next up is •• I'm going to apologize already on your last name •• B•R•O•E•G•A, Broega?

**MR. BROEGE:**

Broege.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Broege? Sorry.

**MR. BROEGE:**

It's an E. No, that's okay.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Oh, it's an E? Okay.

**MR. BROEGE:**

It's probably more my handwriting than your difficulty pronouncing the name.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

It looked a little like my handwriting, actually, I couldn't read it.

***(\* Legislator Viloría • Fisher entered the meeting at 9:42 A.M. \*)***

**MR. BROEGE:**

My name is Wally Broege, I'm the Director of the Suffolk County Historical Society. We're located in Riverhead, we operate a museum, a library and archives and we offer educational programs there at the Historical Society. We're an authorized agency of Suffolk County which puts us into the contract agency category. I realize that there may be a number of Legislators serving this year that aren't familiar with our programs and I prepared something, it looks like this, it's in your package and it gives a little bit of background about the Historical Society and some details about our programs. So I don't want to drag you through all that this morning, I know you've probably got lots to do today.

I'm here to speak on behalf of our 2005 Operating Budget. The County Executive's Recommended Budget for 2005 reduces funding for the Historical Society by \$28,657. And the cut in funding is really going to have a devastating impact on the Historical Society, it could mean the loss of five staff positions, we could lose three museum educators, a custodian or rather our gift shop manager and our receptionist. The salaries are not high at the Historical

Society, we're a small institution; in fact, 2004 is the fourth year in a row there hasn't even been a cost of living increase for salaries. We're asking the Legislature to please consider restoring the funds that we have lost, that would bring our funding from the County in 2005 up to the 2004 level of \$199,140.

Over the last couple of years we have taken some pretty drastic measures to balance our budget. It's no secret this has been a very financially challenging time for the Historical Society. We've eliminated key staff positions, we're only using part-time librarians, we lost our full time curator in 2003 and we've cut our discretionary spending down to the bear minimum. I'm sorry, it doesn't sound •• is this still working?

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Yes.

**MR. BROEGE:**

Oh, good, okay. I think that's it in a nutshell. I just received the Legislature's Budget Review Office's recommendation today, it's on page 429, and I was pleased to see that they recommended restoring the funds. I know that doesn't necessarily mean it's going to happen, but I appreciate your consideration, the Legislature has been good to us before. And actually, the funding we lost in the 2005 budget was a Legislative initiative that the Legislature put into the budget for 2004. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Any questions or comments from the committee? Thank you very much for coming down.

**MR. BROEGE:**

Thanks very much for the opportunity.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Okay. Now, Cheryl Felice is next. Cheryl, whichever way you want to handle it because the next four or five cards are all AME. I know you sent me a letter and said you had a presentation, so whichever way you want to do it, just as you have people speak just have them identify themselves for the record.

**MS. FELICE:**

Actually, what I would like to do is the people who signed up for AME that they could defer their time to me so that we can stay within your three minute time limit, and I'll be the only one speaking on behalf of AME?

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Okay. Well, we have a lot of latitude and discretion in the committees rather than the General Sessions.

**MS. FELICE:**

All right.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

So until my fellow members of the committee start throwing rocks at me, go ahead and speak.

**MS. FELICE:**

Okay. I'll just wait for Ann to finish handing out our testimony.

I won't read the entire testimony verbatim as you'll have it front of you, but I will point out the highlights. First let me just say good morning to Chairman Alden and the remainder of the committee. This is a combined committee, so Chairman O'Leary as well? Are you the new Chairman of the ••

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

No, Legislator Binder.

**MS. FELICE:**

Where's Binder, is he here?

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

I'm Vice•Chair.

**MS. FELICE:**

You're Vice•Chair, okay. Well, good morning to the entire committee. As you know, my name is Cheryl Felice, I'm President of the AME, Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees and the over 7,000 members of AME who represent the backbone of this community and this

County.

With me today is Ann Abel, AME Treasurer, a Principal Accountant and former Senior Auditor, and our analysis team from the firm of Abrams, Herde & Merkle led by Barry Abrams, Dave Fitzsimmons, and former members of the City of New York Comptroller's Office and the Mayor's Office of Management & Budget. We are here today to give you our initial response to the Suffolk County Operating Report and we will also provide you with additional details by the time you vote on this budget November 4th.

This is the second time that I have testified before this committee, and as President of AME I would just look to state that this 2004•2005 budget, although submitted by two different County Executives, some things were the same and other things were quite different. Certainly we'll all agree the County's financial situation is far better than it was this time last year, this is the result of a proactive Legislature and improving economy as well as the contributions made by the County Executive and all County employees.

Throughout the County Executive's budget he refers to smart government is good government; I'm sure we'll all agree, no one has a monopoly on good government, we all have a stake in good government. And as President of AME, the first recommendation I would like to offer to the Legislature is to create a task force, a smart government task force to be developed and include representatives from the Suffolk County Executive's management team, the Legislature and the unions. This task force would meet regularly and informally to discuss smart government initiatives introduced by members of the task force. My membership welcomes the opportunity to become part of this endeavor and I'm sure you will agree that the employees on the front line have much to contribute with regard to what smart government is and what is not.

We are very pleased that the County Executive chose to implement some of the initiatives we presented in AME's report last year, namely reducing our reliance on contracting out for services, finding ways to conserve energy and the creation of a separate pension fund. AME supports initiatives to create jobs in the County that were previously contracted out, for example, the hiring of a pharmacist in the jail unit to replace an outside vendor as well as hiring staff to perform oversight functions of the Historic Parks Facilities is being proposed and we

wholeheartedly support it.

We also want the Legislature to look at the fact that we have learned that the Department of the Public Works Highway & Design Construction budget provides for \$100,000 for the services of an Engineering Aide for only a three month period. Why does the County •• why doesn't the County staff at a more reasonable rate and do this work in-house? More needs to be done to support the concept of the County employees performing these functions while reducing our reliance on outside contractors. Additionally, with the cost of energy rising dramatically, more needs to be done to solidify a comprehensive energy conservation strategy.

AME also supports the budget and the two civilianization initiatives. However, we would like to say that although civilianization is a good start, it should be done in areas and only where the concept is workable with the bargaining units.

Last year my remarks concentrated on highlighting the high number of vacancies that exist in this budget and the negative impact on the agency operations. In 2004 and the proposed 2005 budget, 295 positions have been eliminated; this approach, in our opinion, is not smart government. The high number of vacancies forces existing staff to do more with less. By virtue of the County Executive's contracting in initiatives, the County Executive correctly believes that the County employees can replace private vendors and do so effectively. We can't stress this enough, more has to be accomplished in this area.

The Parks Department continues to have one of the highest percentage of vacant positions among County agencies. Additional workers would provide better care of the more than 48,000 acres of parkland and would result in additional County revenues as usage of the park would increase.

The Department of Health Services and the Department of Social Services can't seem to achieve their authorized head counts, yet the budget for contracting out continues to increase. In several divisions throughout this County our workers report to us that they must take work home or work overtime without compensation in order to keep up with the ever expanding caseload. Now, we have several outstanding grievances on this, but understand, these people that I am referring to here with Health Services and Social Services are either nurses by trade, they're social workers by trade and they have a compassion that is being taken advantage of by these departments and it's something that has to stop.

Last year we pointed out that the Department of Public Works custodians are responsible for maintaining 25,000 square feet per employee as opposed to the industry standard of 15,000 square feet; this situation still exists. The Budget Review Office Report last year appropriately pointed out that there are many large projects forthcoming that will tax the department in the next few years. Case in point, the new Riverhead Court Facility, a 200,000 square foot facility being staffed by four custodians, that's 50,000 square feet per worker. This is dead head set on a collision course to set these employees up to not being able to do the job and then to have to contract out those jobs. We highlighted it last year, we're highlighting it again this year and we're putting everyone on notice that we know what's going on.

Again, another area that's also suffering the same job losses is Fleet Maintenance. Our cars are being asked to stay on the road longer yet we're getting less and less mechanic to do those jobs.

The Department of Social Services, again, caseloads continue to exceed our ability to handle them given the lack of necessary staff, yet in this budget there is a call for contracting out casework managers and community service workers for homeless services when this work could be done and has been done more efficiently with additional full-time personnel.

In addition, the procedure to fill vacancies, which is also a problem that plagues us, after it has been approved by the County Executive's Office needs to be reengineered. A situation where it takes three months or more to finally get a person hired and on board is becoming more commonplace. The situation appears to be the worst in the Department of Social Services. We need to find out what the bottleneck is within this agency so that it can be corrected.

This budget also points out a handful of layoffs that in our opinion is simply outrageous considering the high number of vacancies that exist in the County. These workers should be redeployed in other areas and we ask the County Executive to reconsider implementing these layoffs for the Legislature to intervene on their behalf just as you have done before.

We also took notice to the several salary increases in this budget. For a little known reason, as you know, AME is without a contract since December of 2006 (sic). We notice that the contract agencies are receiving 2% across the board, the County Executive and the Legislature are receiving 3.3% annual salary increases, and the County Executive states throughout his budget

that he's committed to support the living wage. As I mentioned, AME has been without a contract since December of 2003 and we expect that reasonable salary increases will properly compensate our members who have been doing more with less and have been doing it extremely well. Keep in mind, the rising consumer price index continues to erode our purchasing power which is the equivalent of a salary reduction. We need to bring more functions in-house which this budget also points out in certain areas. We believe this is a tribute to the quality and cost effective nature, the work performed by our membership presents for the County. We'd also like to point out that our neighboring Nassau County, a County emerging from near bankruptcy, negotiated an agreement with CSEA Local 830 for a five •• 3.5% salary increase in the upcoming year. We are glad to see that our brothers and sisters are finally earning their well deserved raises in spite of their troubled times in their respective County.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to express our views on behalf of all the members of AME and we look forward to becoming partners in planning for the future of our great County. Thank you very much.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Thanks, Cheryl. Before we go to other questions, Jim, doesn't the budget as proposed create new positions also?

**MR. SPERO:**

Yeah, it creates and abolishes positions and they're listed in the personnel section of the report; each position that's created and/or abolished is listed in that section.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Cheryl, do you have any comments on, you know, like the positions ••

**MR. SPERO:**

There's 191 new positions.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

•• that were created?

**MS. FELICE:**

In our detailed analysis that we'll provide for you, although you have positions that are being

created and abolished, the net loss in our estimate is somewhere about 180 positions.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

No, but my point would be that, you know, you're abolishing, you know, workers type of positions and you're creating managers or exempt type of positions, that might be something that we should be aware of from your perspective, you know, how you would feel on that before we go and look at maybe realigning what positions were created and what positions were abolished.

And the other thing that I want to ask you, too, is you asked for a task force •• and maybe somebody else can answer this question, too •• but I seem to remember that I think it was in his Inaugural Speech or maybe in the State of the County Speech that the County Executive said that he believes in a bottom•up type of government, and I know he said it on the campaign trail. Do you feel that he's doing that now? Obviously you might not feel he's doing that if you're asking for a task force, because that to me •• and just to get a definition out there •• would mean that he's going to go to every department and go to the workers and say, "Do you see some way that we can do this more efficiently or do you need more people," you know, that type of recommendation and an action that would be indicated from many of the recommendations; is that happening or is that not happening?

**MS. FELICE:**

Well, what I will tell you that is happening, first of all, we've always enjoyed an open relationship with the Legislature and bringing our ideas to you and you've been very receptive. What we presented to the County Executive's team this year was to do the same and we were afforded the opportunity to sit with Fred Pollert and his team and they sat with our budget analysts as well to go through our questions before we came up with our detailed report. So in those interviews and in those talks, I do believe we have the start of a good working relationship. We wanted to solidify it in something that is more tangible that the community sees the interest that we are generating in this County to perform an alliance with the County Executive, the Legislature and the unions because we're all stakeholders in this County, so we wanted to formalize those talks a little bit more.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Yeah, more informal like they would be created by Legislative action or Executive action,

something along those lines, that's what you envision?

**MS. FELICE:**

Perhaps, yes.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Okay.

**MS. FELICE:**

sure.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Legislator Nowick.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Good morning, Cheryl.

**MS. FELICE:**

Good morning.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

This is a quite extensive report. Just for my curiosity, your negotiations for your new contract, are they going on; what is the problem?

**MS. FELICE:**

Negotiations for the new contract are proceeding.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Have they been over the last eight months?

**MS. FELICE:**

Yes, they •• we started in June. Is Jeff here? Yes, we started in June. I know the Director of Labor Relations is anxious to see what we pointed out in the budget analysis.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Okay. Because you had mentioned you didn't know why •• you said you don't know why you

don't have a contract, is that what you said before?

**MS. FELICE:**

No, no, no, I didn't say I don't know why.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Oh.

**MS. FELICE:**

I'm sorry if I misrepresented myself. No, I just wanted to make sure that the Legislature was aware that the process is ongoing and we expect, you know, those talks to proceed and conclude, and then naturally we'd be back to you for the approval of that package.

**LEG. NOWICK:**

Okay, good.

**MS. FELICE:**

Okay? Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Legislator Viloría • Fisher?

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Hi.

**MS. FELICE:**

Good morning.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Thanks for coming down.

**MS. FELICE:**

You're welcome.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

I have a question regarding the Parks Department because we have seen a number of changes based on the fact that the Friends of Long Island Heritage are no longer the contract agency handling so many of our historic sites, so I had looked at that part of the County Executive's budget. And it seems to me that there are a number of new positions in Parks which made sense, having the Environmental Analyst position, having other environmental management positions. And I believe that there was some •• a look at management of our organic golf course, those types of positions. Now, in your analysis you did say that we should look at additional workers; now, haven't there been additional workers provided? I'm looking at page four of your analysis, although there is still vacant positions ••

**MS. FELICE:**

We made highlight of the fact that there is more contracting in taking place in the Park's Department.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Right, yes.

**MS. FELICE:**

Yet there is still a high number of vacancies percentage wise in that department.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Okay. Now, my question is although we have some vacancies there seem to be new positions that have been created.

**MS. FELICE:**

That happens throughout the budget.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

So there may be actually a net gain, or not a net gain but perhaps getting closer to filling all of the numbers, not specifically ••

**MS. FELICE:**

Our analysis right now has shown that there is a net loss in positions and that's what we are in particularly highlighting in this round of budget talks.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Okay, so ••

**MS. FELICE:**

There is most definitely a net loss. The other ••

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

No, in Parks, though, what is the net loss?

**MS. FELICE:**

I don't •• I wouldn't have that figure.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

And how are you calculating that?

**MS. FELICE:**

Do they have it, do the guys have it in the back, would they have that yet?

**MS. ABEL:**

No.

**MS. FELICE:**

No? We won't have that yet but we will establish that for our detailed report before you vote on the budget; can I get that to you?

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Okay. Because I've been looking over the years very closely since I had been Chair of Parks for a few years.

**MS. FELICE:**

Okay.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

And I know that historically Mr. Gibbons has been the only person in Parks who was out there looking at the environmental management, and as we acquire more and more property we need management plans, so I was very pleased to see those additional positions working with Mr. Gibbons in environmental management. So I was surprised to hear you say that there was a net loss in Parks, particularly because all of those duties that had been contracted out to the Friends of Long Island Heritage are now in-house which you did note in the historical parks area of the Parks Department, but I really find it difficult to believe that we would have a net loss. Okay? So perhaps we could look more closely at those numbers.

**MS. FELICE:**

Legislator Fisher, I will get that information back to you.

**LEG. VILORIA FISHER:**

Thank you, Cheryl.

**MS. FELICE:**

My entire team, the entire budget analyst team is here, so the questions you're asking of me I'm sure they're feverishly writing down.

**LEG. VILORIA FISHER:**

Okay.

**MS. FELICE:**

And we will make sure that that information is provided to you. What I really ••

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Let the record indicate, though, that there was a whole bunch of nodding of heads yes behind you.

**MS. FELICE:**

Good, good, there should be five nods of heads. In particular, what I want to point out, especially with the reference to vacancies, we've been talking with the County Executive's Office as well as all the Commissioners and •• in fact, we sponsored a Commissioner's luncheon just in September because of the fact that our members are coming to us and crying for more help,

they're telling us that secretaries that used to facilitate just one team of case workers over in Social Services, CPS, a team of say six or seven caseworkers, are now doing two and three teams. So now they're working from fourteen ••

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Notice I didn't question at all what you said about Social Services because I know what's going on there.

**MS. FELICE:**

But the problem is we can't seem to identify are the SCINS being signed, are the Commissioners withholding signing the SCINS? We did get a confirmation from •• can somebody answer that? There's a big sign out there.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Elie, take your pocketbook and get it out of here, huh?

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

It doesn't match your shoes, Elie.

Well, getting back to Parks for a minute, because I know that Legislator Alden and I have looked at this in the past on management of our golf courses, the organic golf course, you know, our famous field trip to New Jersey, we had seen the importance of having good management there, so I was very pleased. So I specifically just want •• I know it's Social Services, we have looked at the issue last year, you know, I personally added positions in Social Services to the budget because last year there had been Social Services positions that were •• and I'm not talking about the after budget position, I'm talking about the positions we added during the budget process, and so that's an area where we know that people are stretched and we need to look carefully.

**MS. FELICE:**

Well, we've learned now that yes indeed SCIN forms are approved, but now we need to find where that bottleneck is between the County Executive's Office and the Commissioner's; is it a recruitment problem, is it because the salaries are too low? We need to identify what these issues are. I would agree that the salaries probably have a lot to do with it. I know in the

Police Department, the Commissioner told me himself, they have SCINS approved for about a dozen Police Operation Aides, they can't get people to take a Grade 11 job that has to work nights, weekends, holidays and rotating shifts, it's just not happening. So there is a recruitment issue there.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Well, Cheryl, in Social Services we also looked at an additional problem last year in maintaining positions filled which is there's one entry-level test and sometimes that entry-level test I feel is a problem because you have so many different divisions in Social Services that require different skills and people enter a division and find that their skills aren't commensurate or their expectation of that position wasn't commensurate with the test or the title that they took.

**MS. FELICE:**

I would disagree with that, I would say a lot of the problem that's happening in Social Services is the type of cases these case workers have to endure day in and day out. And the turnover rate is because of the lack of support that we see administration is giving those case workers. They are taken advantage ••

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Well, we'll take a closer look at that.

**MS. FELICE:**

It absolutely has to happen, but I have to make this point.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Both are an issue, though, both are an issue.

**MS. FELICE:**

I have to make this point. The point is, the point is that you're talking about the most compassionate of worker in a Social Service worker, in a Social worker, and their good nature because they care for the clientele that they are taking care of, is being taken advantage by administration who knows these people will come in early, go home late, work through lunch and will be intimidated from putting in overtime slips and they will do the work anyway because of the people they protect, that's what's happening in this County and that's what we have to address.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Okay. Getting back to another question that I have which has to do with the Department of Public Works. There have been •• this has been an ongoing discussion with the Legislature discussing contracting out to engineering companies rather than hiring the engineers and sometimes it has been brought to our attention that they seem to have recruiting problems; do you support that that's the problem there in the Department of Public Works, recruiting problems rather than ••

**MS. FELICE:**

Recruiting problem for engineering aides?

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Uh•huh.

**MS. FELICE:**

I would disagree with that, too. There were Engineering Aides that were on the list, scored too low, got let go and now those positions lie vacant; I would disagree with that as well.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Okay. Well, that's important to know because that has been an issue that when I was a member of the Public Works Committee had sometimes come up, although I think it was more on the professional level, the Civil Engineers, those types of positions.

**MS. FELICE:**

Well, the SCIN forms that we just reviewed yesterday do show that there are several high level positions which the County needs to manage, we support that you need the administrators there as well. But no laborers are being asked for, no mechanics are being asked for, the front line workers are just not •• the backfill isn't happening the way it should. Actually, Ann wanted to speak to that issue about backfill; Ann?

**MS. ABEL:**

In this meeting that we had with Fred Pollert and some of his staff, he explained to us that in the budget, and I from my level within the Probation Department can tell you also, that in the

budget when you create a new position you may have abolished another position. If you're trying to upgrade somebody's title or if you're trying to put in a position, say, for a Principal Accountant such as me and you had a position in there for an accountant, you might have had to abolish the account position to use that slot, to upgrade it to the principal position you want, but in your budget process, in the process of doing your staffing, you abolish one position and create a new one. So my only concern is •• and I don't know how in•depth the Budget Review goes into this, I have not seen the report, I just was handed a copy when I walked through the door this morning. I don't know whether they took into consideration that there were these types of instances, so if you're saying there's a hundred new positions that were created, were those positions created because there were a hundred titles abolished to flip/flop it from one title to another title.

**(\* Legislator Losquadro entered the meeting at 10:08 A.M. \*)**

So, you know, my caution is only just the idea that are they •• you know, are we talking about a hundred brand new positions to the County or is it an exchange of positions where •• you know, so that is the one thing that was brought up in our discussions and I said to Cheryl that would just be one other thing to consider, you know, it might not be creating brand new positions. But we have seen SCIN forms come through, and this was something I addressed with Fred Pollert as well, when a SCIN form comes through for a supervisory say in the Social Services division, are they also submitting five other SCIN forms behind that to create the line worker positions? Because I would assume if you're promoting an individual to a supervisor that that person is now leaving the caseload that they were doing and that there will be other people for them to supervise, and this seems to be where a lot of our problem is, you have people with exorbitant amounts of caseloads, numbers on their caseloads and this is where we're running into problems, we don't necessarily have all the line workers that we need. And as he said, if you put in a SCIN form for a supervisor and then you need five other people to do line work, now you have six SCIN forms and that sets up red lights. I don't know, like Cheryl said, it's taking so long to get these positions filled, is it because the SCIN forms are not being submitted? Is it because the supervisory one is going through and then two months later the department is then going to submit the rest of the SCIN forms that they need so they don't overwhelm, you know, the County Executive with their request? These are issues that we feel also have to be addressed, like Cheryl said, where is the bottlenecking getting these people into the positions we need.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Ann, with regards to the caseloads in Social Services, there are State guidelines; how close are we to compliance with those State guidelines or how out of whack are we with them?

**MS. ABEL:**

I don't have exact numbers at this point, but I know in the review analysis that we did last year that we did a comparison even to other •• you know, to the local Counties to us and that we were •• our numbers were grossly over those.

**MS. FELICE:**

Three times.

**MS. ABEL:**

Three times what, you know, I think it was Nassau County, we had even three times the number in our caseloads that Nassau did. And the problem is is just that, you know, these people are trying to get their job done and they're going to whatever extremes they have to and now what we're finding out through the union is that there is a lot of burnout with the employees at that staffing level, that they just cannot continue to handle the caseloads.

**MS. FELICE:**

And the reason why there's a dispute with caseloads and how many cases our case workers handle is because of the way that the results are tallied. Trainees are only allowed a limited number of cases, supervisors have even less number of cases, all of those are averaged in together that ultimately skew the results and lower the caseloads per worker. Our report last year highlighted in depth the State caseloads, Nassau and New York City, and in all cases our people were one, two and three times the rate of each of those individual named municipalities, and we will have that detail again for this year's figures in the remainder of our report.

**LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:**

Thank you very much.

**MS. FELICE:**

You're welcome. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

I think Jim Spero wanted to comment on one of the questions that was raised and then we have Legislator Lindsay and then Legislator O'Leary.

**MR. SPERO:**

To let you know that on pages 142 and 143 of our report we highlight the total number of filled positions in the County, there's a chart showing how many positions they are, and also the number of authorized positions, vacant positions and authorized SCINS by department; that's in a chart on page 143.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Thank you, Jim. Legislator Lindsay?

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Yeah, Jim just answered some of what my question was because I was going to refer it to him. Just so you ladies realize, you got this report this morning, so did we; Budget Review just finished it yesterday afternoon.

**MS. FELICE:**

We understand.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

So we haven't had a chance to really study as well. But maybe Jim can clarify this point, we talked about the creation of new positions and some of them sound like management positions. And it goes back to the point that Cheryl made about Social Services, it probably could hold true, the question is does it hold true for Parks as well? I mean, are we hiring supervisors and don't have anybody out with a rake? Do we have chiefs and no indians to supervise; is that part of the problem?

**MR. SPERO:**

Well, if you look on page 138 of the report you'll see the complete listing of all the •• I'm sorry, the wrong page, 140 of the report is all the new positions. Just to highlight a point, 191 new positions are in the budget, 82 of them are in the Sheriff's Office, they include 50 Correction Officer I's, 20 Deputy Sheriff I's and 12 clerical slots. Now, there are a few promotions in the

budget but I don't think it's a significant number where the positions are created and abolished for the same title.

**LEG. LINDSAY:**

Okay.

**MR. SPERO:**

And on page 141, you can see the total number of authorized positions from 2001 through 2005 recommended. In 2004 we had 11,907 positions, the recommended budget includes 11,820 positions.

**MS. FELICE:**

Just also ••

**MR. SPERO:**

(Inaudible).

**MS. FELICE:**

We have it, the fellows in the back who are writing down the notes have the report. But I just wanted to point out, too, Legislator Lindsay, that our detailed report, the reason that we don't have it today for you is also because we like to look at the BRO report since it is so inclusive and extensive. So before we gave our final numbers to you, we like to take a look at that as well and include it.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Jim, what's the deadline for submission of any resolutions?

**MR. SPERO:**

Tuesday, five o'clock.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Five o'clock.

**MR. SPERO:**

So if you think you might want to include a resolution, just make the request.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

We're under the gun, Cheryl.

**MS. FELICE:**

We're writing that note down, too.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

So are you, good.

**MS. FELICE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Legislator O'Leary?

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Yeah. Good morning, Cheryl.

**MS. FELICE:**

Good morning.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

And Ann as well.

**MS. ABEL:**

Good morning.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

In the proposed budget the County Executive is proposing the creation of two new departments, Environment & Energy and Economic Development & Affordable Housing, and with that comes the anticipated transfer of personnel from their current positions in the current departments that they're in to these new departments. We've had some conversation concerning this matter.

**MS. FELICE:**

Yes.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Is that still a legitimate concern on your part with respect to the status of these individuals, when they get transferred, whether or not they have the Civil Service protection of the bump and retreat fall back?

**MS. FELICE:**

Yes, it is, and actually your office was kind enough to provide us with the particular section of the legislation. And I had conversations also with Counsel to the Legislature. I had a conversation with the Director of Civil Service, Alan Schneider, and expressed to him our concerns, so he has that legislation right now and is going to offer an opinion back to me as to what we need as far as legislation to protect those employees to make sure that in the unlikely event •• and we certainly would hope it would be unlikely •• that there were a layoff, that the people going into the new division, the new department, would still retain their bump and retreat rights from their former department, because bump and retreat rights is only within the department only within your career ladder. So even though these people are going to be moving within their job title and their career ladder, they will be crossing over departments and lose that retention right, that is something that we are analyzing if the Legislature •• if the legislation does cover those people and will provide for that bump and retreat, or if it does not and needs additional resolutions then we'll have that information for you just as soon as we get the opinion back from Civil Service.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Okay, thank you.

**MS. FELICE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Could a solution be found in your new contract? I know you're negotiating the contract, too, but I'm just throwing that out as a possibility.

**MS. FELICE:**

I would have to defer back to the operative to see if that is a possibility.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

And I don't need an answer now, but I'm just throwing that out.

**MS. FELICE:**

Okay, we'll look into that.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

I just want to follow•up on the same ••

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Legislator Bishop.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

Cheryl, you speak with some confidence that there is a •• it's a solvable problem; do you have experience with that?

**MS. FELICE:**

Only in the conversations that I did have initially with Civil Service that told me, which is why I reached out to Legislator O'Leary, that it is solvable through resolution.

**LEG. BISHOP:**

Very good.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Any other comments or questions? Okay, did Dan Farrel want to •• because I was handed this late.

**MS. FELICE:**

He got here late.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Dan, you're included in everybody else's.

**MS. FELICE:**

He was late.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Okay. Hi, Dan, how you doing? All right, thank you very much, Cheryl.

**MS. FELICE:**

Thank you very much. Thank you, members of the Legislature, a pleasure.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

That's all the cards that we have from the public portion, but if anyone else wanted to address us on any issue relating to the budget; former Legislator Haley?

**MR. HALEY:**

I'm fine, thanks.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Freddy Pollert, anything you wanted to add or subtract?

**MR. POLLERT:**

Yes.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

And we have Jack Weishan here, too; the Detective Investigators, they're okay?

**MR. WEISHAN:**

We're good.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

All right, thanks. The Detectives are okay?

**MR. SMITH:**

Yes.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Okay. Hi, Fred.

**DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE POLLERT:**

Yes, good morning.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Wait, wait, wait, let's move a little bit further apart here.

**DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE POLLERT:**

I also recently got a copy of the Budget Review Office Report, so I have not had an opportunity to review it in detail. But I would mention when Jim had referred you just a few minutes ago to page 142 and 143, the graph on 142 looks like we have been bringing down the work force from the beginning of the year, but I would note on page 143 of the report there are currently nearly 370 signed SCIN forms. We have had discussions with the unions, in some cases there are protracted time lines between the time that the SCIN has actually been signed and the spot is actually filled. When the signed SCIN form goes out the door of the County Executive's Office, the departments are free to recruit, in some cases there have been long types of delays, we're also interested in finding out the reason why and we're going to be following up as well.

Just in general, if the graph on page 142 were to include the filling of all the SCIN forms, you would actually have staffing at the end of the year higher than it would be at the beginning of the year. So with the number of signed SCIN forms, you have the potential to have a work force of 10,775 by the end of the year.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Fred, on your side of it, when you prepared the budget, did you look at all the projected savings that we had to have for the early retirement and things like that? Because I know we •• some of those we scheduled out a number of years; are we on•line still with what we did a couple of years ago?

**MR. POLLERT:**

What I had mentioned to the Legislature in the past, it's almost impossible to track what is going on with respect to the early retirement incentive program, often because a title will go out and a different title will be requested. In general we've had strict position control during 2004 until we knew that the financial situation was turning around. So I would say probably yes, but we have not specifically been monitoring and I have not been monitoring it, I don't know if the Budget Office side has been monitoring it.

**CHAIRMAN ALDEN:**

Thanks. Any questions of Fred? Any other comments? Anybody else want to address the committee on this budget? All right, I don't see any other takers so I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

**LEG. O'LEARY:**

Motion.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Motion by Legislator O'Leary, second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? This public hearing and committee meeting stands adjourned. Thank you.

**(\*The meeting was adjourned at 10:22 A.M.\*)**

**Legislator Cameron Alden, Chairman  
Ways & Means &  
Consumer Protection Committee**

**Legislator Allan Binder, Chairman  
Budget & Finance Committee**