

BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A meeting of 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 December 12, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Ricardo Montano - Chairman
Legislator Louis D'Amaro - Vice-Chair
Legislator Jon Cooper
Legislator Vilorio-Fisher
Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Jay Schneiderman

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Bob Martinez - Aide to Legislator Montano
Linda Burkhardt - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Gail Vizzini - Director/Budget Review Office
Linda Bay - Aide to Minority Caucus
Ben Zwirn - Assistant County Executive
Brian Beedenbender - County Executive Assistant
Allen Kovesdy - Deputy Director/County Executive's Budget Office
Denis Yuen - Peconic Community Council
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Donna Catalano - Court Stenographer

(*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER 9:41 A.M.*)

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

We're going to start with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Alden.

SALUTATION

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Good morning. We have one card from Denis Yuen and the Peconic Community Council. You want to step forward, Denis. Three minutes, sir. How are you?

MR. YUEN:

Good morning. Thank you for your time. I also gave a copy of what I'm going to say to all the Committeemen -- Committeepersons, I'm sorry. Good morning, Mr. Chairman, fellow Legislators. Since 2002 -- first of all, my name is Denis Yuen, and I am the coordinator for Maureen's Haven, a program under Peconic Community Council.

Since 2002, Maureen's Haven, a program initiated and run by the Peconic Community Council, provides safe, warm, temporary housing to those who are homeless in Eastern Suffolk seven nights a week from November through April. Transportation to and from the many houses of worship is contracted to the Suffolk County United Veterans Transportation Services. Our volunteers provide a hot dinner, breakfast, a bag lunch and encouraging support every night in one of 12 houses of worship which provide a roof over head for our guests.

During the 2005-2006 Winter Season, the Maureen's Haven Program housed 122 unduplicated individuals over the 158 nights it operated. This equals to a total of 3369 beds night provided, an increase of 34% over the prior year. Based on the figure of \$75 per night to provide temporary housing, according to the Department of the Health and Human Services, we estimated that we saved the County Department of Social Services \$252,675 last winter. Multiply that figure by the three winter seasons, and you can see how valuable a service our program provides.

Twelve houses of worship have opened their facilities, while close to 1000 volunteers from other houses of worship, community organizations such as Rotary and Kiwanis, businesses, specifically Waldbaums, and a group of private citizens provide fellowship, overnight chaperones and hot meals. The houses of worship which are currently participating are the Sacred Heart in Cutchogue, Immaculate Conception and St. Mark's Episcopal in Westhampton Beach, East Quogue Methodist, Westhampton Presbyterian, St. Agnes in Greenport, Southold Presbyterian, Mattituck Presbyterian, the First Universal Unitarian in Mattituck, St. Mary's Episcopal in Hampton Bays, Southampton Presbyterian and Our Redeemer in Aquebogue.

The cost of these guests -- transporting these guests every night to and from each house of worship is our largest overhead expense. And Maureen's Haven would not be the success it is without the dedication and cooperation of all the volunteer groups who donate their time and resources to help make our homeless population's lives a little bit more bearable.

We know where the concentrations of the homeless are, and we post fliers in and around these areas. All we can do is invite and encourage them out of the woods or their cars. We do not force anyone to go. The sad fact is that we cannot address the homeless population east of Hampton Bays. We hear through the network of social workers that there are pockets of homeless in Southampton and East Hampton, anywhere from 25 to 40 individuals that have nowhere to go. We are not financial or physically able to address servicing those communities yet, even though we do have one church in Southampton who hosts weekly.

Since November 1st of this year, we have hosted nearly -- we have hosted 70 unduplicated individuals at an average of 19 guests per night and a total of 763 bed nights through December 10th. Considering the weather has been fairly mild, this is a concern that we get going into the colder temperatures.

One of Legislator Cooper's concerns is the need for a bus on the East End. Let me clarify that we run 14 passenger vans, so technically they are not buses. We are currently running two vans every night to transport up to a maximum of 27 guests to the houses of worship and back to their original locations the following morning. From Greenport to Riverhead to Hampton Bays, this is the most efficient way to transport our guests in a timely manner. We cannot and will not ask our volunteers to use their own vehicles. There are just too many liability issues. Plus, each van can run up to 74 miles per trip twice a day.

We are contracted with the Suffolk County United Veterans at \$150 per round trip for each vehicle. This amounts to \$23,700 per van based on 158 nights for a total of \$47,400 for the season. The new proposed van with either alleviate the need for one of two SCUUV vans or possibly allow Maureen's Haven to expand services to a homeless population further east. I would like to thank Legislator Romaine for sponsoring this resolution, Legislator Schneiderman for his unwavering support and Legislators Alden, Cooper, Lindsay and Losquadro for their understanding on this matter. Thank you for the opportunity to address your concerns.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you very much. We have some questions. Legislator Alden would like to ask you some questions.

LEG. ALDEN:

Just to start out. Are you familiar with the HIHA Program that --

MR. YUEN:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

It's up in Huntington.

MR. YUEN:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

One of the differences that I've noticed in that program as opposed to yours is that they use existing vans, so the vans during the day are out there taking food to, I guess, senior citizens and other type of transportation. Is there anybody else that you partner with out on the East End that would already have the vans? Because if you can use a van all day long, I think it's more of an economical use of County --

MR. YUEN:

This is our fourth year running, and I haven't run across a partnering situation yet on that. Now, if I had a van, again, under the program itself, we possibly could partner with other groups to utilize the van more efficiently also in addition to the night runs and morning runs.

LEG. ALDEN:

So your early in the morning and then you're later at night or late at night?

MR. YUEN:

Let's start -- the guests start with us in the evening. We pick them up at one of the three pick-up locations; Greenport, Riverhead or Hampton Bays.

LEG. ALDEN:

Approximately what time do you start that kind of run?

MR. YUEN:

Our vans -- the vans we contract leave the office at 4:30 with one of our screeners. We, again, hit the first pickup location probably by 5:00, and then continue on to the other two locations. So five o'clock we start our pickups. Again, we usually get to the house of worship for that night by 6:30, quarter to seven with the two vans full of guests. The van then leaves them there for the evening, and then the next morning, between 6:30 and 7 o'clock in the morning, the two vans come back and pick up the guests and bring them back to their original pickup locations.

LEG. ALDEN:

Have you contacted anybody like Sweezy Bus or Bellport Bus or any of those that --

MR. YUEN:

I personally haven't, but again, my predecessor Jen Truscott who spoke with me a couple of months ago has probably done that over the course of the last three seasons.

LEG. ALDEN:

And they would be more expensive Suffolk County United Vets or in line?

MR. YUEN:

I have to assume they would be, because they're out there quite a few hours between the two shifts. And again, each bus could run up to -- what did I say -- 74 miles per trip, you know, twice a day. So it's a lot of milage, it's a lot time for drivers. And I know the drivers aren't paid probably as high as some of the nonunion and union bus companies. But I have to assume they'd be higher per night.

LEG. ALDEN:

Now, your program is under --

MR. YUEN:

Peconic Community Council.

LEG. ALDEN:

Do they do any, like, feeding of the senior citizens or anything like that?

MR. YUEN:

We are a group -- we have membership also of about 150 other businesses, groups, non for profits. We're more or less an umbrella program. We offer other programs, not under Maureen's Haven, but under Peconic Community Council; counseling, we have an office in Riverhead, we provide services through our social workers, and we also do referrals.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Because we have a major problem out on the East End with getting veterans to hospital appointments or doctor appointments and things like that. Now, if it's at all possible -- I support this resolution, but if at all possible, I'd like to see that van used during the day to transport either veterans or seniors to and from their hospital appointments or doctor appointments or even centers where they can receive, you know, the type of services. So I would hope that you would look into something like that. Now, have you guys ever bought a bus before?

MR. YUEN:

No.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. So your organization doesn't own or operate any other vehicles?

MR. YUEN:

No, it does not.

LEG. ALDEN:

All right. So you're going to need some help on that end too, which I would hope that our -- if we do pass this that DPW would help set you up on the -- you know, because the maintenance schedule is important and things like that.

MR. YUEN:

Of course.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. All right. Thank you.

MR. YUEN:

I appreciate it. Thank you. Any other questions?

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Yes. Legislator Vilorio-Fisher has some questions or a question.

LEG. VILORIO-FISHER:

Good morning.

MR. YUEN:

Good morning.

LEG. VILORIO-FISHER:

Thank you for coming down again. I have a question that's both for you and Budget Review, because it is so late in the year, and when the money is received it has to be spent within that year. Now, do you have the acquisition all set up so that if you were -- if we were to pass this you would be able to do a quick turn around? And I'd have to ask that same question to Budget Review, if there's enough time to approve this, pass it, and have you spent it in a timely manner.

MR. YUEN:

Can I pass that over to Ms. Vizzini?

MS. VIZZINI:

Your absolutely right, Legislator Vilorio-Fisher, it's very late in the year. It's my understanding that you're going to be purchasing one vehicle?

MR. YUEN:

Correct. And it's, I guess, through a State contract.

MS. VIZZINI:

It's on State contract.

MR. YUEN:

That's where the figure came from.

MS. VIZZINI:

And you know exactly what you're going to buy?

MR. YUEN:

I believe so. That was part of what's -- part of that contract line.

MS. VIZZINI:

Certainly if there was a was a recognition that this was a priority and it was to move forward, it could be accomplished, but it would require someone to be on top of it and track it through the process.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. And it would be through DPW, that would be the agency, or would it would it be Social Services?

MS. VIZZINI:

I think the contract is in Social Services, isn't it?

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Ben, are you weighing in on this regarding the ability to move it quickly. Mr. Chair, if I could.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Sure, go ahead.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Because, you know, we do know that these will get bogged down and that -- it is mid December. So, you know, we don't want to pass it here and then have you see that you can't -- you can't achieve it because we're not going to be -- you know, the General Meeting is the 19th. So, Ben.

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah. Gail mentioned that we did expedite last year's money for food pantries at the very end before the year expired so that make sure they were funded. I'm advised that the only way this could happen is that if there is a van, you know, on the lot so that it can be purchased right off the -- - you know, right --

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Drive off the lot.

MR. ZWIRN:

Drive it right off. And, you know, that might be worth -- worth giving it a shot. We would rather see a different offset than Social Security, but --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I think the offset was changed. Am I correct on that, Gail?

MS. VIZZINI:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Now what's the offset.

LEG. ALDEN:

It's your salary, Ben.

MR. ZWIRN:

What's left of the entire -- there goes Christmas.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

What's left wouldn't cover it.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Gail, what is the offset on this?

MS. VIZZINI:

The offset was changed to Photostat, photograph and blueprints in the Board of Elections.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Oh, Board of Elections.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah. The '07 budget shows that in '06 this money is going to be spent, \$110,000. They have spent next to nothing. We have confirmed with the department that there is \$25,000 there. So it would in no way upset the carryover fund balance.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Vivian, are you done?

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes. I've had my questions answered. And so, Ben, what you are saying is -- now does the State contract slow you down? I mean, I don't know how that works. Can you just tell me what you mean by that? You have -- the facilitated the --

MR. YUEN:

That's right. We're told the figure came from -- that was the State contract figure, that 25,000.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

I guess because -- since you're registered as a 501-C-3 you deal with the Department of State with that, is that it?

MR. YUEN:

I believe we're helping to expedite, but that's where the van was proposed from.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. So you're going to have to go car shopping real fast.

MR. YUEN:

This afternoon.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

No matter what color it is.

MR. YUEN:

I will get it done if the money is there.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

It looks like the County Attorney -- Budget, I mean.

MR. KOVESDY:

Good morning. I can clarify the timing a little bit better because it comes through our shop. If this gets tagged into an existing contract, like Peconic, it can be done. If it's a new agency and they have to go through all the forms and things like that, it won't get done this year.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

No, they're not new. We have funded them before.

MR. KOVESDY:

Right. So if there's an existing contract that can be modified, like we did with the food pantries last year, it can be done. If it's a completely new organization, it won't be done in time. So it has to be tagged into an existing organizations as a modification and has to be purchased before December 31st. But if it's a new contract -- if it's completely new to a new contract agency, by the time they do all the forms, it won't happen.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

No. I remember working with Maureen's Haven before, and we've funded them before.

MR. KOVESDY:

So that's how it would be done, it would be a modification.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I have a question. This is a one-shot appropriation from the 2006 budget, correct? Is there or was there anything put in for 2007, either from the County Exec's Office or the Omnibus Committee?

MS. VIZZINI:

(Shaking head).

MR. KOVESDY:

Not to my knowledge.

MS. VIZZINI:

I'll check that for you, Mr. Chairman. But Mr. Kovesdy indicates there was no funding for Peconic community Council, but I'll check.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. So just to be clear, unless we come up different, there was no funding in 2007 for the --

CHAIRMAN ALDEN:

For the van.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

For this program, or -- for the van. How about for the program?

MR. KOVESDY:

I'd have to look.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All right. We're going to move on, because in the interim, I think Legislator Schneiderman has some questions.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Not necessarily questions, but going back to Legislator Fisher's question about timing. If this passes today, which I certainly hope it does, and it goes next week to the full Legislature, then it goes -- if it passes there it goes to the County Executive, who we don't know whether he'll veto or he won't veto. If he vetoes, it comes back. Either way, that veto window brings us, I think, to the end of the year.

Maureen's Haven can't really spend this money until it knows it's going to get it. So we have to have some kind of assurance from the County Executive that they'll be able to do the paperwork in time, that there is adequate time left in the year. Otherwise we're better off just doing it in the first of the year. I know winter is coming and they need it, but I don't want to see them get stuck in a situation where they spend the money and they can't get it back. And we have seen that with other organizations.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I kind of agree with you. Isn't this something that can be done in February?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, if we can get the County Executive's Office to, you know, say that if it passed they'd sign it into law immediately, they wouldn't wait the two full weeks --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I don't think -- I'll ask him, but I don't know that Mr. Zwirn is ready to make that commitment.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

That would give -- either way, he can get the commitment before the full Legislature meeting, and, you know, we can pass it today out of committee and put it on the floor next week. Maybe by then we can have the County Executive on record on that.

MR. ZWIRN:

If I might.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Ben, you want to weigh in on this?

MR. ZWIRN:

The County Executive hasn't seen the bill, and I don't think he's -- I'm prepared to speak on his behalf. I don't think that would preclude the Legislature from taking the action it wants and, you know, putting it on his table, so.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I don't want to see, you know, Peconic Community Council lay out the money and not get reimbursed. That's the worst thing that can happen in this situation.

MR. ZWIRN:

I still think there would probably be time to work through the Budget Office, the County Exec sign the bill, there would still be time to get this done before the end of the year.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, I'm recalling last year where, you know, receipts that weren't put in by November, the County Executive's Office said, that's it, we're not doing anything unless it was put in before November 1st or something like that.

MR. ZWIRN:

When there was an emergency situation, as I said, again, with the food pantry situation, we expedited it and it was done. I am saying, if the Legislature wants to move forward on this, then let them move forward. I haven't spoken to the County Executive on it, but --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Gail.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

It would help to get that commitment by next week is what I'm saying, you know, for the organization's sake. Even if we pass it, they are not to go out and spend the money unless they know it's going to be reimbursed before the end of the year. It's as simple as that.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Just to be clear on that. What you're saying is that if we pass it by the 19th, but we don't have the clearance from the County Exec's Office that he's going to approve it or not veto it, and they spend the money and they don't get the contract, then in essence they're not going to get reimbursed is what you're saying.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

They certainly should not spend the money until the County Executive signs it.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Oh, absolutely.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

That could be somewhere around the 25th, 26th. You know, you're in the Christmas holiday period. It doesn't give them a huge window of time to go out and buy the van and get reimbursed before the end of the year. However, I think it can happen if the County Executive said, look, we want this to happen and we're going to bend over backwards to make sure you get that reimbursement.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All right. But also, we could do this in 2007 and have the appropriate time to do it in. We can do this in February, can we not?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I think if we can do it now, we should.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I understand that. Legislator Viloría-Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Since I don't want to debate the bill while we have the speaker standing there, I would think -- I agree with what you said, Legislator Schneiderman. And I believe we should have a demonstration of full support on the part of the Legislature as much as we can for this. And I think in the mean time that Maureen's Haven could get their ducks in a row.

MR. YUEN:

I certainly will.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

And, of course, you don't want to expend the money before you have the signature of the County Executive, but you could certainly get your ducks in a row, make sure that someone is ready to jump into that driver's seat and drive it out of the car dealership. And whoever you are working with perhaps, you know, whichever dealer you're working with could help you, you know, get that all set with the understanding that you are a not-for-profit, that you're waiting for these approvals, and they'll have it all set to go so that when you have the approvals you can move it out.

MR. YUEN:

I certainly will do that. I will definitely not spend the money until I know that we have the money. We cannot do that.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Right.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Are there any more questions or comments for the speaker? I thank you very much for -- go ahead. You want to say something? Go ahead.

MR. YUEN:

I believe we are -- we had a line in 2007's budget for about 40,000 in funding for the Peconic Community Council --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Oh, you did?

MR. YUEN:

Down from about 67,000 from two years ago.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Not for the van, but for another program.

MR. YUEN:

For all the other programs, yes.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Do you know if that was approved? I'm asking Gail?

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, he's correct. They had funding in '05 of 67,739. The recommended funding for '07 is 41,000 roughly, and that's where it remained.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. YUEN:

Thank you for your time.

LEG. COOPER:

Mr. Chair? I'd like to make a motion to take Resolution 2099 out of order.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

We have another speaker on this.

LEG. COOPER:

Well, so Mr. Yuen can leave.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

But we have another speaker. I brought in the Deputy Commissioner. At least let him come forward and make his presentation. Ed Hernandez. At the last meeting, Legislator Alden requested that someone from the Social Services Department come here and speak on this. I spoke with Deputy Commissioner Hernandez, and he is here.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Good morning. My name is Ed Hernandez, Deputy Commissioner of Social Services.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Good morning, Ed.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

I don't really have a presentation. I was just briefed on some of the issues that went on at the last committee meeting. I'm more here to answer any questions in terms of --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All right. Anyone have any questions?

LEG. ALDEN:

Mr. Chairman, you want me to start then?

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Yes. You invited him.

LEG. ALDEN:

Well, actually, you invited him.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I invited you. I'm glad you are here, Ed.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

I'm here.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Alden would like to ask you some questions.

LEG. ALDEN:

On the East End, how are we structured as far as talking care of homeless population?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

We do have a single men's shelter out in Riverhead that's recently opened and several family shelters out East. Actually, some have closed, because the number of homeless is down. So we're pretty set up in terms of accommodating homeless singles. But again, Maureen's Haven is taking people who don't usually come into the system. We have two classifications of homeless. We have the ones that make their way into the shelter system, which we can serve and get them along the path of staying out of homelessness, and we have the more transient populations.

I think what you are seeing in Maureen's Haven and HiHi in Huntington are the people that either won't or can't come into the system. Now by can't, I mean they may be sanctioned individuals, they may be undocumented individuals, they may be people whose mental illness or other conditions are so severe that they don't want to be into the shelter system.

LEG. ALDEN:

Is this a good program, or is it not something that you would endorse?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

No. This is a good program, because we have seen, we've really addressed the singles in the motel population, and we're down to virtually none in the motels now, because we made a conscientious effort to go after people and bring them into the system, to help them get the services and get the things that they need to stay out of homelessness. And they will come to DSS, they may go to Maureen's Haven or HiHi, and that's the first step in getting them engaged in the services that they need to move forward in life.

LEG. ALDEN:

On the West End we partner up a little bit with the Police Department, because they can identify the areas in the woods, near the railroad tracks, different areas, behind industrial areas. They can pretty much identify those areas. I know we've been going with the Police Department to those sites. In the East End, do we partner up with the different police forces, because this would cover Riverhead Police, Southampton?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Let me address it in a couple of ways, and perhaps Dennis can talk about specific policing. But the Parks Police invited us out to a special meeting, and most of the parks are out on the East End, because they've encountered homeless encampments out in the woods. And part of the presentation was the Department of Social Services and what they offer, but also at that time, Maureen's Haven came and talked about the services that they had in order to find a place for the police to make referrals. So there is interest on the Police Department, especially in the parks out on the East End. And I'm sure the local Police Departments -- if you don't mind me turning it back over to Mr. Yuen.

LEG. ALDEN:

I was just asking from your point of view, the Social Services' point of view. We formally go with the Police Department in the Western End. You don't have that formal arrangement with the Eastern End -- well, it's a little bit informal, but.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

If we're going to send somebody out, it's going to be Adult Protective Services, and usually they go out with the Police Department when they're going into the woods. I know my son did his field placement for a Social Work Program with Maureen's Haven, and part of what he did was visit camp sites in the woods, and I'm sure they must still do that.

LEG. ALDEN:

You agree that this type of program and this HiHa Program over in Huntington are good programs for the County?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Anything that can reach the people. At Social Services, they need to come to us and declare they're homeless before we will step in. These programs go out there and get the people that aren't coming into the system. So they operate in the wintertime. We don't want to see anybody freeze in their cars or out in the woods. So anything that can get people off the streets into housing and give them a shot at getting the services they need, we would support.

LEG. ALDEN:

Good. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Are there any other questions?

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes. I have some.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Viloría-Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

How much of this population on the East End -- what portion of the East End population is constituted by vets in this homeless population? Are there a lot of veterans in that group?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

I can't answer -- I'm not prepared to answer that question in terms of the homeless system.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

But I don't know if Maureen's Haven itself has done any statistics or background.

MR. YUEN:

I did about my first three weeks into the program. And passed those -- I don't have the file with me, but I believe out of the -- back then, we only had -- not only, but we had 30 or so guests up to that point. I believe five to six were veterans.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

So out of 30, five or six. So that's about 20%.

MR. YUEN:

Yes. This is three weeks ago.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Twenty percent were vets.

MR. YUEN:

I do survey -- when they come in, I get name, address -- not address, but name, birth date and if they're a vet or not, and where they technically reside.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Anecdotally there had been a comment to me that this is helping to serve the vets population that's homeless out there.

MR. YUEN:

We do have vets in the program, yes.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Thank you. Ed, I want to thank you for coming in. Is there anyone else that would like to address the committee either on this issue or on any other issue? Hearing none, we're going to get to the agenda.

Tabled resolutions.

1658, Electing a cents per gallon rate of sales and compensating use taxes on motor fuel and diesel fuel, in lieu of the percentage rate of such taxes, pursuant to the authority of Article 29 of the Tax Law of the State of New York.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to table.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Schneiderman, seconded by Legislator Cooper. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).

1788, A Common Sense Cost Mitigating Offset Plan for the cents-per-gallon sales tax.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion by Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by Legislator Viloria-Fisher. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0)**.

1815, Establishing a Program to Reduce Unfair Home Energy Nuisance Taxes on Suffolk County Residents.

LEG. ALDEN:

Has to be tabled. Motion.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion to table by Legislator Alden, seconded by Legislator Cooper. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries.

TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).

1816, Repealing home energy nuisance taxes on Suffolk County residents.

LEG. ALDEN:

Has to be tabled. It has the wrong start date. Motion to table.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion to table by Legislator Alden, seconded by Legislator Cooper. No discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0)**.

1985, Of the Suffolk County Legislature electing a cents per gallon rate of sales and compensating use taxes on motor fuel and diesel fuel, in lieu of the percentage rate of such taxes, with a \$3.00 cap, pursuant to the authority of Article 29 of the Tax Law of the State of New York.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to table.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion by Legislator Schneiderman, seconded by Legislator Cooper. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries.

TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Same motion, same second on 2024.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

2024, Adopting offsets in connection with cap on gasoline sales tax.

Same motion, same second, same vote. **TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).**

2045, Adopting Local Law No. 2006, A Charter Law to provide for fair and equitable distribution of public safety sales and compensating use tax revenues.

LEG. COOPER:

Motion.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I think the public hearing is still open, isn't it?

MR. NOLAN:

It has to be tabled.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Has to be tabled for a public hearing. 2045, I'll make the motion to table.

LEG. COOPER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **TABLED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).**

2099, Amending the 2006 Operating Budget and transferring funds to the Peconic Community Council for the purchase of a van for Maureen's Haven Program.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to approve.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

I'll second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion to approve by Legislator Schneiderman, seconded by Legislator Viloría-Fisher. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).**

LEG. COOPER:

I'd like to be a cosponsor.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Cosponsor.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let me just say too -- first of all --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

All right. Put everyone on the committee as a cosponsor. Is everyone fine with that?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you for the work that you're doing out there. And I hope that we are able to get this to happen before the end of the year so you can get that full reimbursement.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

If not, see us in February.

2414, Adopting Local Law No. 2006, A Charter Law requiring Legislator Line Item Budget Amendment Identification.

LEG. COOPER:

Motion to table.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Second.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Subject to call, motion to table.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

It's the end of the year.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

But it doesn't die.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

That's right. Subject to call.

LEG. COOPER:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion to table subject to call made by Legislator Losquadro, seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion subject to call carries -- I mean **TABLED SUBJECT TO CALL (VOTE:7-0-0-0)**.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Introductory Resolutions.

2443, Amending the 2006 Operating Budget in connection with the purchasing of vehicles.

Can I have a brief explanation?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

If I may, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

You may, Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I spoke to the Presiding Officer about this. And many of you know my fondness for anything automotive. So I took the opportunity yesterday to go look at these vehicles over at the Department of Labor. They already are in the County fleet. They are all in the milage range of the low to mid 20,000 miles. They all appear to be very good condition. They've been maintained by the County. And all would be a substantial improvement in gas mileage from what we are realizing on our current vehicles.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Did we have a motion to -- go ahead. I'm going to hear from Linda.

MS. BURKHARDT:

This is the second time the Legislature has purchased these type of vehicles. They are at an extremely good price. And the Legislature has benefited greatly by them.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Thank you for that comment. Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

These are used vehicles?

MS. BURKHARDT:

Yes.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes. From the Labor Department.

LEG. ALDEN:

Oh, they're coming off lease then?

MS. BURKHARDT:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Did we get that for the record? They're coming off lease. You got it. Ben, did you want to --

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah. It's not a bad idea to purchase these vehicles, but they're designed to replace vehicles that are in the Legislators -- Legislative fleet. And according to DPW, the mileage on the fleet is not near the time for replacement on that.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

You say that they're designed -- you mean they're slated to replace --

MR. ZWIRN:

They're slated to go back, yes.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

This is another conversation I had with the Presiding Officer, and the intention to -- we will get some lower mileage vehicles at a substantially reduced rate. And we have a number of vehicles which will be suitable to then transfer to other department such as Probation or other departments that are --

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Public health nurses.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Public health nurses. That are currently in need of vehicles. So the vehicles we're replacing would not be wholesaled out, they're not -- Mr. Zwirn is correct, they're not at the end of their usable life. So we would transfer those to other departments. But since we have the opportunity to secure these vehicles at such a reduced cost, it's a very worthwhile opportunity.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Any other comments? Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'm getting the feeling of a news conference or some kind of news release here, a press release from the County Executive.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Don't give him any ideas.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll put on my bullet proof --

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

I'm sure he thought of it.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'm going to get my bullet proof vest out anyway, though.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

The motion is to approve. Who made the motion? Legislator Losquadro, seconded by Legislator Vilorio-Fisher. Any further discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion to approve carries. **APPROVED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).**

2461, Apportioning Mortgage Tax By: County Treasurer.

LEG. VILORIA-FISHER:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Can we place this on the Consent Calendar?

MR. NOLAN:

No, you shouldn't.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

No. Okay. We won't. Motion to approve by Legislator Vilorio-Fisher. Who was the second?

LEG. D'AMARO:

I'll second.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator D'Amaro. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries.

APPROVED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).

2476, To readjust, compromise, and grant funds and chargebacks on correction or errors/County Treasurer by: County Legislature #262.

I'll make a motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar, seconded by Legislator Cooper. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **APPROVED** and placed on the **CONSENT CALENDAR (VOTE:7-0-0-0).**

2479, Amending the 2006 Capital Budget and Program, amending the 2006 Operating Budget, transferring Assessment Stabilization Reserve Funds to the Capital Fund and appropriating funds in connection with planning for improvements to Sewer District No. 11 - Selden (CP 8177).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion to approve. I'll be happy to explain it.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Motion to approve by Legislator Losquadro, seconded by Legislator D'Amaro. Would you give an explanation, Legislator Losquadro?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Much in the way that Legislator Alden had done at a recent meeting, this was an improvement that was recommended by Department of Public Works to this sewer treatment plant. This was an amount that they recommended, and it's simply using the Tax Stabilization Funds within the sewer district to offset the cost of the project.

LEG. ALDEN:

I have a question.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

So to sum it up, this is in not response to, but this would bring us into compliance with the -- what the voters spoke on as far as that referendum that passed.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Simply using the sewer stabilization money for what it's intended.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Any further discussion on this? Just bear with me one second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries.

APPROVED (VOTE:7-0-0-0).

And I believe that -- the rest are tabled subject to call. Ben, would you like to say something before I adjourn.

MR. ZWIRN:

Allen Kovesdy from the County Exec's Budget Office just has handed out a document. He would just like to speak to the committee.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Yes. I think all of the Legislators should have received one, Allen. But go ahead and explain it. Let me grab mine. I did say I would give you some time to explain it. I apologize for that.

MR. KOVESDY:

Good morning, again. At the last meeting, there were a few IT projects that got tabled due to the length of the meeting, and there wasn't ample opportunity for myself or any of the members to explain it. So we went back to the Steering Committee, Sharon Williams, myself and Allen Fung representing the three offices. And we decided to be -- to present a little fact sheet for the Legislature to fully understand what these -- what these projects are, who they impact and so forth.

And so from now on, any IT project that's coming before the Legislature to vote, we're going to have a little one page fact sheet to tell you which -- how much it costs, which department it impacts and how -- the necessity to pass it. We didn't give you enough information to fully understand it. So it's coming up. It was tabled, three of them subject to call.

At the meeting next week, we wanted to provide you with the adequate information. The first one is a cluster. It's to replace -- Project 1789. It's a cluster. It's for the e-mail service for Yaphank. It's a simple replacement. We've provided you a package here which deals with the e-mails and what it does.

Project 1794, which was a fiber optics project, which you had some questions on. We will defer to next year on that project. It's late in the year, it's not going to go in between now and December 31st. It is in next year's Capital Budget, but we will defer on that -- on that particular one. And Sharon will be making a presentation along with other people on the optical imaging one. We wanted to get this in front of you. We're going to give this out to every committee, and either Ms. Williams, Mr. Fung or myself will present this to the appropriate committees from now on so you have all the adequate information to vote on it.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Just so I'm clear, 1789 was tabled subject to call?

MR. KOVESDY:

It was tabled at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

That's what I'm trying to clear. What happened with it.

MR. KOVESDY:

It's a Capital Project.

MS. VIZZINI:

These are not correlated to the IR numbers.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. I got you. In any event --

MR. KOVESDY:

I'll get you the resolution number. I'm sorry. We were in a rush to get this. I'll get you the resolution number. It was tabled at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Right. It was just tabled. I thought you had said --

MR. KOVESDY:

It was just tabled.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Just tabled. Okay.

MR. KOVESDY:

There were three of them that were tabled. There was this one that was tabled, there was the fiber optic one, and there was one for optical imaging that were tabled. Those three projects were tabled.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

And are you going to make -- are you going to seek to discharge these at the next meeting?

MR. KOVESDY:

Yes. Sharon will make a formal presentation at the meeting on Tuesday going over these in detail to answer any questions you have. And we would hope that they would be voted on this year.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Legislator Losquadro?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I apologize. I'm just saying. You don't have to discharge them, they're tabled on the floor.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Oh, they're tabled on the floor? Okay. Gotcha. Legislator Alden, you want to make some comments?

LEG. ALDEN:

Well, actually, just through the Chair. This is nice that you came over with this explanation, but I think there's a bigger picture too. On the Capital Program, we have approximately somewhere around 300 million, maybe a little bit more than that of an overhang, that these are projects that have been approved, and the money hasn't -- sometimes hasn't been appropriated yet, but sometimes it's been bonded.

And one of the questions I ask, and it's been for about eight or nine years, and sometimes I really don't get, you know, like, a straight answer on it, where some of these Capital Programs fit in. In other words, which one is going to be pushed aside so that we can do this Capital Program? Because over the course of years, there are some of these things that have been pulling along for five, six, seven, eight years where we've actually approved the project, we've authorized somebody to go out and get the money to issue the debt, and the project just doesn't seem to take off. So if you could, you know, give us that presentation too, I would appreciate it, you know, where this fits in in the whole scheme of, you know, all that overhang on the Capital Program.

MR. KOVESDY:

What I can do is -- I'm here basically representing the Steering Committee. I don't know how familiar you are with the Steering Committee.

LEG. ALDEN:

I used to sit on it for a while.

MR. KOVESDY:

Okay. So the four of us, two representatives from the Legislature, two from the Executive Branch and the Commissioner or Director of IT -- these projects come before us three times. They come before us as a capital request from the particular department. If approved by the Executive and the Legislature, it comes before us a second time when they want to appropriate it, and comes before us a third time for comment before it actually becomes a resolution.

At that particular time, all the resolutions have a clause in it that says that the Steering Committee has voted to approve it. At that particular time, the resolution comes to the Legislature for your vote one way or the other. We feel that being nobody asked any questions on any of these three resolutions in committee, we might have been remiss in explaining these three particular ones that were already approved in the Capital, that were approved in the committee. We wanted to try to give you more information so you can vote --

LEG. ALDEN:

And that's nice. But I think that -- I'm going to be real focused now and just tell you exactly where I have, like, a major problem, other than what I just said about some projects coming along five, six, seven years. At the last meeting, we took Capital Projects that we all thought were very important, and we had appropriated money, and we had approved the project, only to watch those Capital Programs and those Capital Projects get cannibalized into another project.

So I think that just for open government and so that the people know exactly what we're doing, I think it would be very, very helpful for us in the Legislature and for the people that, you know, we represent if you could come forward -- or somebody, I don't really care who from the Budget Office or if you want to delegate someone from DPW to come forward -- and just tell us where everything stands in the whole scheme of things, in the whole Capital Program. Because I think what we did was a little bit disingenuous, just to put it very, very mildly. I think it was very, very much smoke and mirrors. I think it wasn't transparent government.

So I would just like to see where things stand as we go along, and then what things are going to cannibalized in the future. Then we can make a little bit of an informed choice on what we're going to cannibalize or what we're -- we've told people in the past that was priority for this Legislature and for this County that we're going to change. So I just think -- I like this, I like the idea that you're coming forward with a lot of information. I think that there's some pieces missing, though.

MR. KOVESDY:

I'll bring the message back.

LEG. ALDEN:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MONTANO:

Okay. Anything further? Hearing none, meeting is adjourned.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:28 A.M.*)

{ } DENOTES BEING SPELLED PHONETICALLY