

**JOINT WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE,
BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE,
and EDUCATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

of the

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Operating Budget Minutes

A special joint meeting of the Ways and Means Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, and the Education and Information Technology Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on October 22, 2014 to discuss the Operating Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Lou D'Amaro – Chairman, Budget & Finance
Member, Education & Information Technology
Legislator Steve Stern - Chairman, Ways & Means
Member, Budget & Finance
Legislator Robert Trotta - Member, Education & Information Technology/Budget & Finance
Legislator Sarah Anker - Chairwoman, Education & Information Technology
Member, Budget & Finance
Legislator Tom Cilmi - Member, Education & Information Technology
Legislator John Kennedy - Member, Budget & Finance/Member, Ways & Means
Legislator Kate Browning - Member, Ways & Means
Legislator Robert Calarco - Member, Ways & Means Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Lora Gellerstein - Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Legislator Al Krupski - 1st Legislative District
Legislator Jay Schneiderman - 2nd Legislative District
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Justin Littell - Aide to Legislator D'Amaro
Tom Vaughn - County Executive's Office.
Robert Lipp - Director, Budget Review Office
David Kilmnick - Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth
Doug Miller - Director, SC Department of Information Technology
Daniel Farrell - AME President
Bob Bortzfield - AME Consultant
Ed Vogel - AME Consultant
Angie Carpenter - Suffolk County Treasurer
Penny LaValle - Director, SC Department of Real Property
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Gabrielle Severs, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

*(*The meeting was called to order at 11:08 a.m.*)*

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the joint Ways and Means, Budget and Finance and Information Technology Committee meeting. Please rise and join the committee in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Tom Cilmi.

*(*Salutation*)*

Okay, thank you. Okay, we're going to start our joint committee meeting by first addressing the Ways and Means Committee aspect of our hearing today and for that purpose I will turn the Chair of the meeting over to Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning everyone. I do not have any cards in relation to the Ways and Means Committee public hearing. Is there anybody that would like to be heard as a part of the Ways and Means Committee public hearing? Seeing none, we'll certainly move on, Mr. Chairman, but I did want to just note for the record that the County Attorney is with us today. At the conclusion of the public hearing portion of this joint committee hearing, we will be going into executive session so I just wanted to place on the record. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Stern. Also today part of this proceeding is the Information Technology Committee. Is there anyone here who would like to address the committee with respect to Information Technology? I haven't received any cards for that purpose. There being none, for the record, we will now move onto the Budget and Finance portion of the meeting and for that portion of the meeting I do have two cards and I'll call the first. Each speaker will have three minutes, come on up to the podium. The first is, of course, Dan Farrell, President of AME. President Farrell, welcome and good morning. Please, go ahead.

MR. FARRELL:

Good morning. Thank you. Once again, AME has done its full analysis with my consultants, Ed Vogel and Bob Bortzfield. I have copies for each and everyone of you. And to be brief it's the same old story for AME as far as we're concerned. There's a structural imbalance in that you don't have enough revenues to cover your expenses and due largely to no increases in the General Fund for the last 12 years and that directly affects our membership because then we become totally dependent on sales tax revenue, which really is hard to put a finger on and a number on. We can guesstimate all we want, but as I do every year, I'll come here imploring you to raise the General Fund tax.

It's not in this budget but, again, in dealing with Ed and the General Fund tax 20 years ago, there was over \$100 million in that fund, it's now down to 49 million and I do understand you have a two percent tax cap and two percent of 49, I can do that math, is less than a million dollars but because that fund has not been raised in other 12 years you keep falling behind in the General Fund and I would suggest or recommend, I don't know how you feel on it, but there's a sewer tax that was automatically getting raised 3% every year. I don't know if that's feasible for you to do for the General Fund tax but certainly if we had raised the General Fund tax 3% for the 12 years we'd be in really good shape and that's about all I have.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay and thank you very much.

MR. FARRELL:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Appreciate your advice and opinion.

LEG. CILMI:

Can I ask a question?

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Yes. Mr. Farrell, Legislator Cilmi had a question.

LEG. CILMI:

Hey, Dan.

MR. FARRELL:

Hi.

LEG. CILMI:

This is, I guess, sort of directed to you, may be directed to Budget Review, I'm not sure. But with respect to your comments as far as the General Fund property tax goes; how have we dealt with in next year's proposed budget the -- the difference in what we allocate to the General Fund, from sales tax, you know, this year compared to next year maybe compared to last year; are we allocating more money, less money from the sales tax to the General Fund and how much?

MR. LIPP:

I'm going to call up a file and I'll see in one minute.

LEG. CILMI:

Because while I think Dan's remarks are -- I think while Dan's remarks are valid, in terms of the volatility of sales tax, I wouldn't want to sort of -- if we're getting more of an increase in our budget -- in terms of supporting positions and what not that are in the General Fund from sales tax revenue then we could get by increasing our property tax revenue, I think that we have to consider as well.

MR. LIPP:

So up on the screen is the sales tax that's in the recommended budget for 2013 actual for this year 2014 and what's being recommended and -- well, first of all, the Quarter Cent Program, Fund 477, is a separate piece, if you will, it's almost \$78 million recommended for next year.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right. Well, that's dedicated to that.

MR. LIPP:

Right.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

So let's not go there.

MR. LIPP:

The other two are the combined, I'll say 4% remainder of the County portion of the sales tax, and then the police district portion it's -- we have the discretion to give them anywhere from zero to 3/8th's of a cent and 3/8th's of a cent equates in 2015 to about 117 million. As you could see this year, in 2014, the police district is getting \$90.6 million, the recommended number for 2015 is 47.8, a reduction of \$42.8 million.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So let me just stop you there for a second, Rob. So what I'm seeing then is we are increasing as a -- for budgetary purposes where we see an increase in sales tax revenue generally and we see a decrease in the amount of sales tax that we're allocating to the police district, therefore more money from the sales tax is being allocated to General Fund expenses than next year compared to this year. In fact, \$42.8 million more is being allocated to the General Fund and not to the police district. But that's sort of mitigated by the fact that we are taking TPVA. Right?

MR. LIPP:

Okay, so I just switched from sales tax revenue to what we'll refer to as structural changes in the recommended budget related to the police district. The last line here is -- or what we saw about the reduction in sales tax going to the police district of \$42.8 million, but that's more than compensated for by revenue from the Traffic Parking and Violations Agency being shifted in 2014 to the -- it's in the General Fund and starting in 2015 its's recommended to go to the police district and the recommended amount is 37.6 million. On top of that there's a property tax increase of almost \$12 million in the police district and then there's a net shift -- personnel from the police district in the General Fund which equates to salaries and benefits of 15.3 million. So even with the reduction of 42.8 million in police district sales tax this gives a net increase in revenues to -- or a cost avoidance to the police district of 22.1 million.

LEG. CILMI:

But what does it do to the General Fund?

MR. LIPP:

Well, you have the shift-- well, first of all, the 42.8 million will go to the General Fund, other things being equal, that's the sales tax piece. There'll be a loss in the General Fund associated with or an increase expenditure because now these sworn officers are -- will be listed in the General Fund not in the police district so that's 15.3 million. So there's a net impact from these actions on the General Fund of a -- a 40 -- a 27 and-a-half million dollar net increase to the General Fund, which is made up of an increased revenue of 42.8 million from the sales tax but a higher expense that were 15.3.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So there's net 27 million.

MR. LIPP:

Right. So if you look over here I highlighted those two cells and it comes to \$27 and-a-half million.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So I'm not sure if I'm completely following this but, Dan, I guess my point is if we can continue to increase the General Fund by reducing the reliance of the police district on the sales tax then the increases to the General Fund that we see will probably be greater than if we just continue to increase the property taxes. You understand what I'm saying? Now I'm not saying we shouldn't do both, I'm just saying that we get more bang for the buck from the -- from the sales tax component then we would from the property tax component.

MR. FARRELL:

Yeah, if you're limited by the two percent cap, yes. But your sales tax, do you know, do you really have a crystal ball and know where it's coming in?

LEG. CILMI:

And that's the problem and you're absolutely right.

MR. FARRELL:

But if you don't mind, I can defer to Bob to explain the General Fund.

LEG. CILMI:

No, I don't mind at all. I'd love to hear it.

MR. BORTZFIELD:

Just an issue because he's saying the increase going into the General Fund in 2015 is rather substantial and is a real decrease in the police district. The only reason for that is shifting of the revenues from the Traffic Violations -- Parking and Violations Bureau to the police district. The reason that was done, as far as we can tell, is that the police district was reaching the max on the amount of sales tax they can get. They're limited to 3/8th's of a penny, what have you. If they had done that for 2015, just increase the sales tax into there, they would have been short as to the amount of revenues that are going in and the taxes would have been raised even higher than they are. By making this shift and putting the monies from the Traffic Violations Bureau into the police district it reduces the base of sales tax that's going into the police district for future years so come 2016, okay, now the police district will be getting the Traffic Violations Agency revenues as well as they can get rather substantial increases of sales tax revenues going into there to keep their tax increases lower in the future. So although the General Fund get's a one-shot boost, so to speak, in 2015, in the future it's going to lose those revenues, those increases cause it can go back to the police district.

LEG. CILMI:

I understand. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. Dan, hi, welcome. Good to see you again this morning. And, as a matter of fact, I probably -- I apologize if you spoke to this but I'll ask you about this and I want to ask Bob about this.

I want to pick up a little bit on the police transfers but first I want to talk about the number of positions that we have it seems that throughout the year, we always go back and forth talking about where we need positions filled, whether it's 911 operators or it's well drillers in groundwater or it's, you know, some of the matrons in the jails or wherever it is your members who are working in various categories and functions who are understaffed and are either getting burned out with overtime or just, you know, suffering medical consequences or whatever. But nevertheless, there's more positions typically that we see that are created. Now in this -- well, that exist.

So my question is in this budget we have before us, surprisingly to me there is a -- quite a bit that's going on with abolishing positions and creating positions with a net 50 new positions that are being created. But what does that say to the number that are out there now that exist that are unfilled? Do you have any sense with that as far as, you know, what the underlying consequences are? Maybe you or Bob or Eddie?

MR. FARRELL:

Well, from what I've seen from the budget, and we do have a no-layoff clause in our contract, there are more positions being -- there aren't any positions being abolished and taken away so there'll be more positions, which is a good thing, as far as I'm concerned.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well --

MR. FARRELL:

Can every unit need -- use more people, yes, absolutely. But we do understand the crisis that we're here in, the fiscal crisis and if I could get 10%, 20% more positions filled in every department, yeah, the departments would be, the members would be feeling much better and not as burnt as you said.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. But the nature of the positions that are being created; have you guys taken a look at any of those positions that are being brought forward and what your sense is from the trenches?

MR. FARRELL:

I'll defer to Ed.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. VOGEL:

Hi, I think the --

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Ed, could you just state your full name for the record, please.

MR. VOGEL:

Yeah. Ed Vogel.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Nice to see you again.

MR. VOGEL:

Past budget director many years ago.

Anyhow, Robert's report pretty much documents where the -- where the increases are. And, for example, in the DA's Office it's essentially it -- trying to maintain or retain positions so in effect giving raises.

But overall, I mean, there's very -- the staffing levels, you know, 50 positions really isn't a big factor in terms of, you know, your normal changes in the budget. The County Executive is asking for positions related to a -- performance measurements, which, I think, and, I think, even the Budget Review report identifies -- is a good idea except you want to have a little more detail in terms of what they mean by performance measurements.

To get to your question and, you know, I looked at it from my perspective, which was 20 years ago, you had 13,000 positions in 1995, today you got maybe 8500 positions. I'm not even sure how many of those are filled. There's a dramatic decrease. Now, politically that makes good politics because as far as the general public is concerned and it's even stated in the message, reducing positions it means a good thing. There's efficiencies they say. They're taking advantage of efficiencies without identifying where those efficiencies are and that's your question. To what extent are these efficiencies real efficiencies and to what extent are they politically statements that don't have any bearing upon what's happening. So the question is two-fold from the union's perspective, and I'm an ex union president for a unit so we, Bob and I both feel some sympathy for the AME itself because they're being pressured out and as -- the General Fund is where most of the -- most of the -- their people are, what's happening is that as you decrease the number of positions you're stating that there's more efficiencies without any benchmarks to document that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right.

MR. VOGEL:

The real question is in terms of -- we used to have benchmarks in the budget, there are absolutely no benchmarks in the budget anymore. There's no performance measurements in the budget anymore. The budget document has become an accounting document without any relevance to what's actually happening out there. So where are the decreases happening? Mainly in health. Now, if the decision -- policy decision is to get out of patient care, which apparently that's the decision, well, what else is happening in health that has reduced the number of positions in the Health Department to the level they are because they also have a regulatory function. Now whether or not that regulatory function is being met is questionable.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right.

MR. VOGEL:

So all of those issues have to be addressed and, of course, the Legislature is the one who has to address those issues, but you have nothing to look at in terms of benchmarks and Budget Review has nothing to look at in terms of benchmarks unless they create the benchmarks themselves. If you got to create a performance review, you know, measurement unit, then make sure that that performance measurement unit does something about developing benchmarks. When I was with the credit union, the bank, we all had benchmarks, we knew exactly in a competitive world how many people had to be -- how many tellers you needed for how many members you had. We all had these type of benchmarks, you don't have that. That's your question.

LEG. KENNEDY:

That's what (indiscernible) used to do.

MR. VOGEL:

There's no answer. Thirteen thousand down to 8500 is a big decrease. People seems to like it but what's happening to the customer out there.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, that's it, people like it in a general sense but the individuals who aren't getting wells tested or who aren't getting 911 calls met or who aren't getting what we purport to put out don't like it at all.

MR. VOGEL:

The biggest asset you have and the biggest asset I had are your -- are your employees. If your employees aren't being -- are being overworked you have a serious problem, you have a morale problem.

The second thing that you have is the customer. To what is the customer being impacted by this reduction in staff. So every year, it's like, I -- we've looked at it -- I looked at for the long-term. Every year we have the same problem, every year there's an emergency session called, every year positions are held vacant and every year everybody takes benefit because they resolved the problem with one-shots. One-shots are fine as long as you have an offset to the one-shot in terms of a structural recurring revenue. The recurring revenue happens to be the property tax. Where we solved the problem with this -- we solved the problem back in the 80's when Cohalan came in the most important thing to him was resolving the Southwest Sewer District. He understood that you had to raise the taxes before they could access the sales tax. The same thing applies to one-shots, if you want to use one-shots, make sure you raise the taxes to a certain level, you won't have a problem going forward and the staff wouldn't have a problem.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Well, you know, that therein again lies, you know, kind of the dichotomy between what we do for our constituents and citizens and what we do in a way to try to be honest and transparent in the services we put out there and offer and what's realistic. What I've always said is change the -- the exoskeleton of, you know -- don't deceive the public. If we can't meet a particular, you know, service or need or whatever, be honest and do it and state it. Don't make it appear that we're doing it.

Go to the TVB transfer for a second. Moving that -- either you or Bob -- I understand, I think, that that facilitates the opportunity to get a much bigger bounce with the sales tax cap again. I hadn't realized that previously. But it seems to me that this doesn't belong in the police district. It's much more of a function that belongs on a General Fund side.

MR. VOGEL:

Robert pointed out in report that's a policy issue you have to make -- you decide upon. You have to decide whether or not those revenues are really police, you know, district fund or Countywide. They were originally Countywide but the County Executive's making a case for it to be district. But he mentioned -- he writes that pretty good in the report in terms of what the policy issues are.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay, all right. Listen, thank you, it's always good to see you. Nice to see you yesterday too, that was great ceremony.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Kennedy. President Farrell, anything you want to add?

MR. FARRELL:

No, that's it.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Thank you very much for your time also.

MR. FARRELL:

Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

And your staff, we appreciate your time.

Okay. The next individual to address the committee is David Kilmnick. David, nice to see you. Good morning.

MR. KILMNICK:

Nice to see you too. Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today about some of the funding that I talked about with the County Executive's staff and also with several of you. And, so, I want to take the few minutes I have to let you know what the funding is going to provide and address some huge gaps in the County for Suffolk's LGB -- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families.

Since 1995, our organization, Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth, well, since 1993 actually, our organization Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth has operated Long Island's only LGBT Community Center in Bay Shore. Since then we've opened up an additional center out in Sag Harbor in 2012 and we'll be opening up one in the next few months in Patchogue right off Sunrise Highway. So we will have three community centers that will increase our capacity to serve many more of Suffolk's

families.

One of the things, before I go into what this funding will do, one of the things I think that's important to keep in mind is that there is no duplication of services. We are it for the County. There is no one that shares in the task of providing services to the LGBT community. Our organizations, Long Island Gay and Lesbian Youth and SAGE Long Island, which is for elders, are the only ones that do that.

So what this funding will do and the great impact that it will have, part of it will be to -- to build up foster care and adoption services for LGBT youth in foster care and also for foster and adoptive parents. And some of the ways that we're going to do this is that we're going to work with the Family and Children's unit at the Suffolk County Department of Social Services to create and implement a series of ongoing comprehensive trainings for child welfare staff and foster parents that will address the key content to -- related to promoting a safe and respectable environment for GLBT youth and their families involved in the child welfare and detention and juvenile justice system and this training needs to be ongoing to address staff and parent foster turnover.

We'll also continue to offer free resources and outreach to child welfare agencies on best practices working with GLBT families and finding permanent placement in households. And one of the things that I, I'm going quickly because there's only three minutes, but one of the greatest needs out there is that GLBT youth are overrepresented in the foster care system and in the child welfare system. It's estimated that at least 10% of GLBT's are in the system here and we haven't had any coordinated efforts in the County to address this issue until now.

In addition to that, we'll also be expanding our mental health and HIV services. The new epidemiology data that's coming out from the State, it's not out yet, but we were privy to receiving that data is quite scary for Suffolk County. Suffolk County is one of the four counties that has seen an increase in new HIV infections when the rest of the State has seen a decrease and most that increase is seen in gay and bisexual men. So with this funding we will increase our efforts to certainly get out there and do more testing, provide people who are positive with linkage to care to our community partners that we work with, which include Hudson River Healthcare, Stony Brook Hospital, Southampton Hospital, North Shore-LIJ and etcetera. And all of what we're doing also is going to be able to expand these services from where it exists right now, which is just in Bay Shore to Sag Harbor and also to our new center in Patchogue.

And then one of the other things we're doing, and if you follow the recent events you'll know why this is so important, certainly you've seen that we were the -- we were the -- a recipient of some hate letters that came to our offices recently that threatened not only my life but also to -- threatened to burn down the senior housing that we just talked about and previously had threatened to bomb the parade that we run in Huntington every year. And so, you know, the need to, you know, while we've achieved many gains in equality and we see new states that are recognizing marriage every day, that doesn't necessarily translate to the safety of our community.

So one of the major things that we're going to be doing as well is increasing our anti-violent services so we're going to increase our training with the Suffolk County Police Department who we work with very closely right now as well as other Suffolk County victim service agencies that call upon us frequently to provide assistance in working with GLBT crime victims including victims of domestic violence. We'll be providing free and confidential short-term counseling and healing and support groups. We'll be providing court and police advocacy and we'll be working with the Suffolk County Police Hate Crimes Unit to utilize our three service sites so that people can report these hate crimes. You know, in the last six months or so I talked with three different Legislators who are having concerns from some of their constituents whether they were being harassed where they live by others for being gay or whether they felt that they were being treated unfairly by the police or

situations like that and these are just on the -- they're on the increase, most of the time they go unreported and by working with the Hate Crimes Unit to provide a safe space in Bay Shore, in Patchogue and in Sag Harbor these incidences will be not only reported but they'll receive the proper attention that they deserve.

And then, lastly, our youth services, which is, you know, certainly what we're very well known for will be expanded out to Sag Harbor and we will bring new programs to the North Fork of the East End of Long Island too.

And, let me just step back for a second, that two years ago there was a sixteen-year-old student named David Hernandez Barros who had come to this country only a few years ago before then from East Hampton and he came here to live with his mom, he grew up with his grandmother in Ecuador and he moved here and he went to East Hampton High School and he was bullied both in and outside of school. David Hernandez couldn't travel 60 miles to get to Bay Shore, which was our only center at that time, 60 miles one-way to get to Bay Shore. Unfortunately, he took his own life and he did so after being bullied in school and outside of school, he went to his pastor in his community, and he said to his pastor that -- he said *I have a friend who's thinking about coming out at gay, what should I tell him*, and the pastor said to him *tell them not to, they're going to go to hell*. Two days later he hung himself and he killed himself. And if our organization was out there, which we are right now, but we need to have support to be able to really get out to all five East End towns, perhaps he wouldn't have taken his life. His mom and his sister are now involved in our programs and so it's real important that we provide these accessible services to all of Suffolk County's residents.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. David, thank you and Legislator Cilmi has a question.

MR. KILMNICK:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Anyone else? And the Presiding Officer next.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you. I'm just looking through the budget and I want make sure that I have -- that I've seen everything in here and for Budget Review's participation, I guess, if necessary in this conversation I'm looking on page 992 of the budget, which is the contract agency listing by pseudo name, which, David, gives us sort of an alphabetical listing of all our contract agencies and what the budgets are. And it appears to me that compared to what we have adopted in this year's budget for your organization that next year's budget proposes roughly a \$425,000 increase is that correct?

MR. KILMNICK:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. I just wanted to be clear. And you said you went through a very comprehensive description of what that funding will be allocated for. You mentioned in the course of your description that part of it will be used to provide safe spaces in Bay Shore, Sag Harbor and Patchogue. I remember reading about the Bay Shore development proposal but not about Sag Harbor and Patchogue. Could you just elaborate on that a little bit for me?

MR. KILMNICK:

Sure, sure. So what you just read about is, something I'm probably coming back on November 18th

and talking about, which is the -- which has nothing do with this budget, by the way, but it is the development of the first LGBT and LGBT friendly senior housing in the tri-state area. It's a trend we're going to see -- we are seeing pop up all around the country and Suffolk County is in the lead in that. So you read about on our current site, which is where our Bay Shore community center is, that's where the -- where the housing will be built alongside a brand new community center there. But Patchogue and Sag Harbor are two other community centers that provide services to all of Suffolk's families and children.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay, so we're not -- we're not talking about additional developments in Patchogue and Sag Harbor.

MR. KILMNICK:

Oh, God, no.

LEG. CILMI:

This is just your existing centers that you're -- where you're looking to expand your centers in those areas.

MR. KILMNICK:

Yeah, we're looking to be able to --

LEG. CILMI:

Provide services in those.

MR. KILMNICK:

Accessible, yeah, accessible.

LEG. CILMI:

Right, right. Okay. If you don't mind at some point over the next couple of days give me a ring in my office, I'd like to talk to you about some things.

MR. KILMNICK:

Sure, would love to.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you.

MR. KILMNICK:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Cilmi. Presiding Officer Gregory.

P.O. GREGORY:

Thank you and thank you, David, for coming here today and I want to thank you and your organization for all the wonderful things that you guys do to address a need that's not being addressed by any other organization and you're saying that the funds -- you're allocating funds to different programs to address those needs. One is foster care, you're saying that the LGBT kids are overrepresented and therefore, they're -- they suffer consequence to the other kids in foster care don't suffer and you're trying to address those needs as well as some others and I'm certainly supportive of what you do and I want to congratulate you and thank you and I have been meaning to reach out to you and I apologize I read the threats that you received. It's unfortunate that we still have people that think that way but I know that there's a larger majority of the community that

support your efforts and we stand behind you.

MR. KILMNICK:

Thank you. Appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay, thank you. Legislator Browning, please, go ahead.

LEG. BROWNING:

Good morning, I think, yeah. You'd -- on what DuWayne just said, and again, there's no overlapping with what you do but I want to kind of bring you back, you talked about HIV services and we do have two organizations currently that provide services for people with HIV. So I'm just curious what -- is there something different that you're going to do? Or, you know --

MR. KILMNICK:

Sure.

LEG. BROWNING:

That's my concern right now because of the money issues that I don't, you know, I don't want to see any overlap and, you know, so just if you could explain what the services are that you're looking to provide.

MR. KILMNICK:

Sure. Well, we know that HIV does not discriminate. It affects everyone. Right? But a recent report from the New York State Department of Health indicates that 40% of gay men in Suffolk County are not receiving any services, HIV services, and that could be for a myriad of reasons. One, those services may not be offered. (inaudible) Two, they may not feel that the services are targeted towards them or that the place is welcoming. And, so, part of what -- only part of what we're going to do with that piece of funding, a large piece of it is mental health too, mental health and substance abuse prevention. Part of it, what we're going to do are to make sure that, first of all, people know their status. As I said, the new epidemiology data that -- that's about to be released is scary for Suffolk County and we need to make sure that people know their status, that they're getting into treatment and that they're getting the linkage to care, which is so important. So when they come to us, and we provide HIV testing, we provide a full range of -- our HIV testers are also cross-trained as phlebotomist so we're able to do a full range of STD screening. We're also able then to get them -- link them into mental health services right on site and then when they're linked into mental health services we're then able to link them to medical care whether it's Hudson River Health Care, whether it's Stony Brook Hospital, whether it's Southampton Hospital or North Shore-LIJ, those are all institutions we work with closely right now.

So, you know, our concern are the 30 to 40% right now that are -- that know they're positive and are not accessing any care. And one of the things that we're going to see as, I was just appointed to the governor's End of Aids Task Force. They're only 50 -- I was the only person from Suffolk County appointed to that and one of the big things that we're going to see is a movement towards, we've always heard about prevention for those that are not HIV positive, now we're going to see a big move to prevention for those who are HIV positive and in order to do that you need to get the folks into care or into our centers to be able to do that. So it's not happening right now for a large segment of the population. We work very closely with the other organizations too so it's going to be a mutual, you know, working relationship to make sure there's no overlap.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, thank you.

MR. KILMNICK:

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Any other questions? David, thank you very much.

MR. KILMNICK:

Thank you very much. I appreciate all your support.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Thank you. I just want to recognize that that Chairperson of the Information Technology and Education Committee has joined us, Legislator Anker. Is there anyone present who would like to address the committee, the joint committee, at this point? I have no further cards. Yes. Our Suffolk County Treasurer, Angie Carpenter. Good morning.

MS. CARPENTER:

Good morning. How are you?

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

I'm fine, thank you.

MS. CARPENTER:

I will try to be brief since you're ready to wind up. I'm here to make an impassioned plea to revisit the issue of staffing in the Treasurer's Office. This has been going on year after year. We're down about four positions and despite everything that we try to do to mitigate delays, we're still going to have delays because the volume of the certs keeping coming in. We requested two positions, one in the Hauppauge office cause we are down a person there, someone transferred out, and that position hasn't been replaced for over a year. So I would just ask that you look at the issue again and hopefully consider getting at least one position.

The other issue I wanted to raise, it seems that of late we've been getting --

LEG. CILMI:

I'm sorry, Madam Treasurer, could I just interrupt you for a moment just to address that specific issue if you don't mind, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

I don't mind.

LEG. CILMI:

In the County Executive's budget, and I'm rushing to find it here --

MR. LIPP:

It's on the TV screen too.

LEG. CILMI:

I'm not looking at the review though, I wanted to address the budget itself. In the treasurer's section is that under finance or is it under T for treasurer?

MR. LIPP:

Finance. Finance and taxation.

LEG. CILMI:

Can you bear with me for just a quick minute.

LEG. TROTTA:

What page is that?

MR. LIPP:

One sixty-five.

LEG. CILMI:

What page is it? Oh, I got it, I got it. Okay. So on page 429 of the recommended 2015 budget it says "*At the request of the County Treasurer, funding has been increased for temporary salaries to assist with tax collections, expediting payments in the Property Tax Adjustment Unit and processing tax grievances.*" Angie, can you talk about that. I know that's what we were just talking about but it says in the budget that funding has been increased as it -- it sounds like --

MS. CARPENTER:

It's a minimal increase in funding for temporary positions.

LEG. CILMI:

Uh-huh.

MS. CARPENTER:

But I am looking for a permanent solution. We're still going to need those temp positions, that is historical because once the May 31st tax deadline come and goes, the volume in the record room increases extraordinarily. And so we bring in those interns to help process the payments, to help work with the taxpayers, to help with the phones and that goes through the fall, really, but that issue is -- is going to be there but we have been using some of those temporary positions for other areas in the department like tax grievances, which traditionally had five people, now there are three, and we're using temp employees to do, you know, quite frankly, what should be done by permanent employees because it's a year-round task.

LEG. CILMI:

Right and just to be clear the 2014 adopted budget has \$73,866 in it for temporary salaries, seventy-three eight, and the recommended budget has \$82.7 thousand so it's -- so it's like a \$9000 increase.

MS. CARPENTER:

A couple more weeks. Right.

LEG. CILMI:

But you're saying that it's really not the temporary salaries that -- that you're looking to augment significantly; it's more the permanent salaries that relate to those functions that we discussed and we've discussed many times before.

MS. CARPENTER:

Exactly.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay, thank you.

MS. CARPENTER:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Cilmi. Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Madam Treasurer. How are you today?

MS. CARPENTER:

Good, thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Oh, good. Glad to hear it, glad to hear it. Let's talk about something that we spoke about at length last year and the statistics, you know, catch my eye once again. So I want to make very sure that I understand about the -- what, I believe, is a cost impact to us associated with the SCAR's with small claims.

So we've sustained a 35% increase in SCAR's through '09 to '13. We're at 39,485 it looks like, in '13. And you have some dedicated staff who are attempting to process and, but nevertheless, we still do have some backlog, I guess.

MS. CARPENTER:

Yeah, and we're going to continue to have that and even adding a full-time staff person is never going to eliminate that backlog because as taxes go up and the firms are growing that are soliciting people to challenge their taxes, it's going to continue to grow. And unlike other states, New York has no limit on the amount of times that you can grieve your taxes. So someone can get a successful grievance today and then go walking down to their, you know, tax grievance specialist in the neighborhood and then start the process all over again.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So there's two things that come out of this then, I guess, one; citizens experience a degree of frustration because even when they have their day in court and they prevail, they don't wind up seeing the economic reimbursement until an extended period of time. So that provides a degree of frustration. But there is a cost impact of that delay to us. Isn't there?

MS. CARPENTER:

There is a cost impact initially and it really affects our cash flow more than anything because, and I don't have the numbers in front of me and I don't have the updated numbers, but I'm going to say it was probably a million-and-a-half, close to a million-and-a-half last year and that number could be reduced significantly but eventually we will recoup that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

We will recoup it; "we," meaning the County of Suffolk.

MS. CARPENTER:

The County.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But we will recoup it from whom?

MS. CARPENTER:

From the taxpayers because it's going to go on the tax warrant.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So because we've not added additional staff analogous to a clerk typist at the amount of 35 or \$40,000 with interest and benefits. In fact, what we are doing is we're driving a million-and-a-half dollar additional expense onto our citizens.

MS. CARPENTER:

Exactly.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Just wanted to make sure that I was up to speed on that one. Thank you.

MS. CARPENTER:

The other thing I'm kind of looking for --

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Angie, can I just ask you on that. You said exactly. So the one position would eliminate the interest expense?

MS. CARPENTER:

We went through this last year.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

I remember.

MS. CARPENTER:

It would not eliminate it.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

In fact, you were the one that asked the question.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

Because I -- we had done an analysis and it probably could have reduced it by about \$500,000.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

About 500.

MS. CARPENTER:

Right. And you said, *Well, what if we give you two positions?*

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

Then would we reduce it by a million?

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

And I said, Well, that would be lovely, but I'd be happy to just have one.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

And I thank Legislator Cilmi because I know last year he put a stand-alone resolution to add that one position but unfortunately did not get enough support.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay, go ahead.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So, Mr. Chair, let me just make sure because I think I'll be happy to put forward a stand-alone and maybe someone will join me. Forty grand gets us 500,000; 80 grand would get us probably a million plus. Ballpark, ballpark.

MS. CARPENTER:

Ballpark.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'm not asking you to drill down to the numbers today, you came in, we did not have this conversation previously so I'm talking in estimates.

MS. CARPENTER:

But just as I said last time, I would not feel comfortable asking for two positions because I don't think into the future it would be sustainable and is practical and we still can use part-time staff and people have to understand there's going to be a little bit of a delay, I really wouldn't feel comfortable with it.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But you would subscribe to and endorse or request for one position.

MS. CARPENTER:

Absolutely.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Forty grand gets us 500.

MS. CARPENTER:

Well, it's less than --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Legislator Kennedy, I just -- I just want to be clear on this and we can talk about the policy and I know we talked about it last year, but when you say it gets us 500, you mean -- it doesn't impact the Operating Budget. It doesn't add \$500,000 to the Operating Budget.

LEG. KENNEDY:

No, and it does not come to the County of Suffolk as a revenue. In fact, actually, what it does is,

and I just wanted to make sure I went through that with the treasurer, in fact, what it does is that act on our part to fill a position -- actually, let me rephrase because I want to make sure that I'm very clear here, if the County Executive would sign a SCIN form for the treasurer to get a clerk typist the citizens of Suffolk County would realize a half-million dollar savings.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. And, right, but it does impact though cash flow.

MS. CARPENTER:

It does impact cash flow.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

In the amount that we have to borrow. And it's not as simple as just signing a SCIN form because when the positions were eliminated we now have to go back and recreate. So, yeah -- yeah, that's the problem. That is the problem. There are no --

LEG. KENNEDY:

So we have to create the position and then have the Executive sign the SCIN form. Okay, great. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Thank you, again, Legislator Kennedy. Are there any other questions for the treasurer?

MS. CARPENTER:

Okay, if I could just --

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Oh, go ahead.

MS. CARPENTER:

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Sure.

MS. CARPENTER:

The other issue, we've had a couple of phone calls over the past few months regarding the tax levy in the Southwest Sewer District and it really started me thinking and had me go looking at the budget a little bit more carefully in that regard because I do remember when I was sitting on the Legislature, there were many, many, many discussions about the Southwest Sewer District, the Quarter Cent, you know, the Assessment Stabilization Reserve and everything that that whole issue entails. And I know it was in the early 2000's, Legislator Alden, in particular and Legislator Postal, had gone into a big discussion about this and, again, it was our understanding, and I too am a resident of the Southwest Sewer District and pay taxes into the sewer district and user fees into the sewer district, but when the bonds were retired, when all of the debt service was paid for, it was our understanding that the taxes would be reduced for the residents of the Southwest Sewer District because unlike most districts there are the taxes, the ad valorem, and then there are the user fees and initially when the District was formed it was understood that everyone was required to hook up to the sewer district and I remember quite vividly, because we had just moved into our home, this is the late 60's and panicking cause we, you know, were living paycheck to paycheck and trying to

scrape together the money to hook up to the sewers because we had to, we were required, the law told you you had to.

You know, years later we found out that that wasn't, not everybody had hooked up to the sewer district and people still aren't hooked up that are in the district and the County never went forward with enforcing that requirement that everyone within the district had to hook up because there would be some savings associated with more users, more paying into as users it would reduce the cost for everybody else.

But anyway, it brought me to this. It seems that in '13 when the bonds were satisfied, that \$33 million was transferred from the Sewer District to the Assessment Stabilization Reserve Fund. And in '14, another 42 million was transferred and this is all in the budget. In '15 we anticipate transferring another 39 million so that at the end of '15 we will have \$117 million in the Assessment Stabilization Reserve Fund for the Southwest Sewer District.

Now, the Comptroller's cash flow and borrowings are based on using the cash from the Stabilization Reserve Fund, the Assessment Stabilization Reserve Fund, to meet payroll and other obligations and the '15 budget says that this borrowing, by using the 77 million borrowing that it's going to generate \$114,440 something for the taxpayers in the sewer district. Well, it got me wondering if we were using the money from this 117 million that we're going to have at the end of '15 or part of that 77 million for the projects that we've bonded in the Southwest Sewer District and back in June, I think, it ranges anywhere from about 12 to 17 million, I'm not quite sure, I have to go back and look at it, but it -- let's say approximately 15 million that we're borrowing, okay, the savings for using the money from the reserves would certainly benefit the taxpayers far greater than the \$114,000 they're going to see in interest because we are borrowing from that fund because you know that when the treasurer borrows from any given fund and goes to pay it back we have to pay it back with interest so that fund would have \$114,000 more. But our -- our debt service, despite these high reserves, our debt service has gone up 2.4 million in '13, 3.4 million in '14 and 5.8 million in '15.

Now, the County Executive in the budget narrative there was some comment about the outfall pipe and that I guess they're squirrelling away possibly this money for the outfall pipe, yet the County Executive states that the outfall pipe will be funded with a no interest federal loan so it seems that we could very easily be utilizing some of those reserves to pay for some of these capital projects.

Now recently, there was an article in Newsday, just a couple of days ago, that the New York State Comptroller came down pretty hard on a lot of school districts and has in the past on other municipalities that are keeping extra ordinarily large reserves. Now, at the end of next year we're going to be sitting with \$117 million in reserves, that is really far in excess of what should be held in reserves, I think, and that's really where I look to Budget Review for their guidance. I know we need an appropriate tax levy to fund the debt service and some of the capital projects that come up or the unexpected emergencies, but it needs to be appropriate. And this, I guess, is really a major policy decision for this body to grapple with and I just wanted to bring it forward, you know, as it came to my attention -- as we're looking at this budget for next year, which really, really, really has some serious -- serious implications.

So I leave you to with that and hopefully, you know, you can get back to me with some information.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:
Yes, go ahead.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. Besides the policy decision, Madam Chair, I believe that there's something, and I was looking for Mr. Brown, I don't see him in the room nor do I see George Nolan, and I'm not going to offer a legal opinion, but have worked with sewer districts extensively and my recollection is that State law is very clear about what the proceeds can be utilized for that are raised in a way of sewer rents. Having worked ten years to have Galleria completed up in Smithtown, much of our back and forth discussion was to what extent sewer rents can be applied to out of district activities. And the one thing that you spoke about that really has me a little concerned and troubled here is it sounds like sewer rents out of Southwest are actually being utilized to subsidize or to temporarily fund general operating conditions here in the County.

So I would hazard to say not only are we talking about a policy issue but we may, in fact, have an issue associated as to whether or not funds are being applied elsewhere that don't belong being applied elsewhere. But I'll take that up with Mr. Brown and Mr. Nolan.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Yes, Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

So, quickly to address Legislator Kennedy's point, correct me if I'm wrong, if there's anybody here who can, but currently, I believe, we are permitted to use funds in ASRF in excess of \$140 million for a couple of different purposes. This Legislature passed a bill to do that, which we were sued for and are still being sued for, it's my understanding a couple years ago. So we are, in fact, using a portion of -- or have used a portion of ASRF for General Fund purposes in the past, in the last couple of years. That aside, it takes me to what the Treasurer said with respect to the potential for cost avoidance when we're -- when we're bonding sewer projects within the Southwest Sewer District so if there are sewer projects within the sewer district that require funding and we have this reserve fund, I think what the Treasurer's saying, correct me if I'm wrong, Angie, is that better to use that reserve fund to fund those projects to the extent that we practically can with -- within the bounds of keeping enough money in there to stabilize sewer rates, but use that fund for that purpose to avoid the interest expense on the bonds that we would float to fund those projects otherwise. Right? I mean, that's really what you're suggesting here.

MS. CARPENTER:

Perfect example, I think it was the June borrowing, there's a whole list of projects, maybe a dozen or so in the Southwest Sewer District and one that struck me was the \$250,000 feasibility study. Certainly if you're sitting, you know, with \$77 million why not just pay the \$250,000 upfront out of Operating for the feasibility study and not bond it.

LEG. CILMI:

And, but wouldn't we require then -- and this is again a legal question, I'm not sure that you can answer, but wouldn't you require legislation to authorize us to do that or no?

MS. CARPENTER:

I guess I would -- I'd ask Counsel that or --

LEG. CILMI:

Well, you said you transfer funds between different accounts and then we have to pay those back.

MS. CARPENTER:

We borrow, right.

LEG. CILMI:

We borrow funds from different accounts and we have to pay those back.

MS. CARPENTER:

We borrow. And if it's the capital reserve fund you can't borrow. So if -- at the end of last year's budget, or this year's budget, I believe there was supposed to be a 68 million dollar transfer from the sewer, from the Southwest Sewer District to the capital reserve but that never happened because once you transfer that \$68 million, it was recommended, it was in the document, it was in the budget, that \$68 million was to be transferred to capital, you know, projects for the Sewer District so there'd be no question about it. But once you do that, you can't use that to -- for cash flow purposes, to meet payroll and everything else that we have to do on a daily basis. So that, I mean, to me, again, you're the policymakers. This is a big, big conundrum you're faced with, but I think it needs to be faced cause the ramifications of this, you know, could be quite far reaching and I don't know if, as Legislator Kennedy alluded to, if perhaps we're doing something that might be less than appropriate especially in light of the State comptroller coming down on some municipalities that are holding too much in reserves.

LEG. CILMI:

Now, you said something else in your -- in your testimony with respect to the law that created the taxation on the sewer district and you said the bonds were paid off in 2013 or something like that.

MS. CARPENTER:

It's my understanding that, yes, in '13 the bonds were satisfied. And, again, I would -- I'd look to Robert who probably could speak to it better than I.

LEG. CILMI:

And did you say that your understanding of the -- was it the tax in the district; the purpose of that was to pay back the bonds.

MS. CARPENTER:

Again, I'm going from memory, you know, this is 21 years ago that I was first started in the Legislature and the Southwest Sewer District was very, very, you know, a hot topic and I can remember, you know, God bless his soul, Legislator Rizzo, was so impassioned about the issue as was Legislator Alden and trying to -- and Legislator Postal too, I mean, she --she too, you know, this was such a -- an important issue to her making sure that the residents in that district were not being unduly overburdened and taxed. And, again, you know, the understanding and I really could not find anything definitive that I could point to and said, yes, it say right here on page seven that once those bonds are paid for you cannot continue taxing the residents in district but it kind of makes sense.

LEG. CILMI:

It's interesting. And, in fact, I was actually -- I was at a community meeting last night and was approached by a constituent within the Southwest Sewer District who said to me if you have this tremendous reserve fund, why -- why are we continually -- why are our taxes in the sewer district continually being increased, why is there a 3% increase every year in the sewer district tax when you have a \$100 million in a reserve fund? Couldn't we just have a couple years where there are maybe no taxes increases in that district?

MS. CARPENTER:

Well, I know that the County Executive, one of his hallmarks of his budget is pointed to the historic fact that for the first time he is freezing taxes in the Southwest Sewer District.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MS. CARPENTER:

But I'm raising the question here should we be freezing them or should we be lowering or eliminating them.

LEG. CILMI:

Right, interesting. Thank you.

MS. CARPENTER:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

All right. Thank you, Madam Treasurer. Thank you for coming down and for sharing your insights with us today.

Is there anyone else who would like to address the joint committee? For the record there is no further response. We are adjourned.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair, hold on before we let go.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

We are not adjourned.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. We do have somebody here from IT and I would like, since we have a substantial number of asks in the budget, and I know we talked a little bit about this in the budget operating group --

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

-- I'd like to see if we can at least have --

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Who's here from IT today?

LEG. KENNEDY:

We got a couple of people. As a matter of fact, Acting Director Miller is here and there are a few other people. I'd just like to ask about what the magnitude of the administration request is and how things are going these days in IT.

Also, Penny LaValle, at some point we'd like to ask you to come up as well so if you could just be patient and bear with us. Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good afternoon. How are you?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

I'm good. How are you?

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'm good, I'm good.

So, you know, without getting too -- tell me about the request. Tell me what the range of asks and tell me what the needs in the department are.

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Okay, so we prepared our request, you know, back in May in conjunction with the County Exec's instructions and we put that request in good faith and it came back and we're pretty happy with our request, it included everything we thought we could get with the -- with the guidelines that we were given. And so we get the recommended budget and I was actually, like, kind of surprised because since I'd been in IT every year, I put in a request and invariably, we're doing this about six months before the actual fiscal year hits --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sure.

DIRECTOR MILLER:

-- we get the recommended budget, it gets adopted, we get into the beginning of the year and the economy takes a hit and we were forced to cut back and so we've been in sort of a -- a downward spiral for many years.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Uh-huh.

DIRECTOR MILLER:

This went back and it actually adds resources and positions to it, which we haven't experienced yet and so in a way I was, like, pleasantly shocked in this one.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. But let's talk a little bit about now, you were one of the departments when we go back, I guess, what was it, eighteen months, two years ago, that we cumulatively laid off I think about 220,230 folks. Your department took a hit with that, my recollection is that it was programmers or --

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Yeah, we had about 13 people get laid off during that period of time. Programmers, you know, computer operators, you know.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Are any of these new positions those folks that got laid off?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Yeah, our program analyst line. We had a couple of computer programmers that are still out that were laid off, yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And do those programmers wind up -- do they help maintain and support the IT functions that we have?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Yeah, we're down right now with the amount of workload that we have. It would be very helpful to add more positions there to alleviate some of that -- some of that workload and --

LEG. KENNEDY:

And, I forget, what is a programmer typically, what do they come in at, Doug? What are they, 17, a grade 18, something like that?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Yeah, the entry level's I think about 50, 50 to 60,000 depending on where they land in the salary plan there.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okey doke. All right. That sounds good. I appreciate that. Thank you very much for being here. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I appreciate that. That's all she wrote.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

All right. Thank you, Legislator Kennedy. Are there any other questions? Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

I just want to thank the Commissioner for the work that he's done with IT, you know, with all the issues with security. We really need to do everything we can to make sure that we remain safe and that, you know, people's personal information, you know, dealing with County whether it's Health Department or Police Department it stays secure. So, again, thank you for all the work that you do.

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Thank you, Legislator Anker. Legislator Calarco.

LEG. CALARCO:

Good afternoon, Doug. How are you?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Very good.

LEG. CALARCO:

One quick question and it's not about the positions, it's actually about something else that I know that the Department was looking for and it had to do with pictometry and getting out there and getting a current reading of our landscape so to speak. I know that was something that was requested, it wasn't put in. What's the Department's feelings on that.

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Well, we originally wanted it when we put in the request because the last time it was done it was in 2012, we had done a flyover for the County. We're a service department for other County departments that use and consume our information. The biggest consumer for pictometry is Public Safety in the Police Department. And everything they're doing with ShotSpotter and video walls, it's important to have the most up-to-date aerial imagery to, you know, perform those functions.

LEG. CALARCO:

Is there a plan that's going to be put in place in terms of getting a new updated pictometry up? Is there a, I mean, are you just going to throw it out there again for next year and hope you get it or are you gonna try to do it to the capital budget or is it something that you're not sure what the plan is.

DIRECTOR MILLER:

Yeah, depending on what happens in the operating budget we'll either try for the capital budget or for the next year's operating budget in 2016.

LEG. CALARCO:

What's the cost?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

This one was for \$554,000 for one flyover.

LEG. CALARCO:

I've heard that Nassau County has a drone that they use to do this stuff. Is that something we can look at?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

I'd love to get a drone, but Nassau County, I think they just used their drone for, you know, specific surveillance activities. We like to do that too for cell towers, surveying and things like that.

LEG. CALARCO:

What's a drone run these days?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

You know, we're supposed to talk to Nassau County about that. I don't think they have like, you know, military spec drone. I think it's more like consumer level.

LEG. CALARCO:

Yeah, it's not, you know, the big jet that drops bombs. It's just this little helicopter type thing. Right?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

I think their's was under \$2000.

LEG. CALARCO:

That's in a duffle bag, I heard. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Any other questions? Commissioner, thank you. Is there anything you want to add?

DIRECTOR MILLER:

No, that's it. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Okay. Thanks again for coming down.

Okay. Miss LaValle, if you don't mind. Hi.

MS. LAVALLE:

Good morning.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Good morning. Legislator Calarco had a question for you.

MS. LAVALLE:

Sure.

LEG. CALARCO:

Hi, Penny. How are you?

MS. LAVALLE:

Very good, thank you.

LEG. CALARCO:

I had one quick question and it had to do with the Budget Review's report. They were noting that they have some concerns about our ability to meet revenue projections for 2014 from your department.

MS. LAVALLE:

Can I pass something out?

LEG. CALARCO:

Sure, please.

MS. LAVALLE:

For the year 2014 my revenue projection was 9 million. So the revenue report that I just handed out shows that right now we're at 8.1. We currently, as of this morning, have a backlog of about 3000 documents. We'll be doing some overtime this -- in November and December and so we should bring -- our revenue projections are bringing it close to, if not, over 9 million closer to ten. Next year might be a little bit different.

LEG. CALARCO:

So but for '14 you're actually saying that you feel that you're going to be right on if not a little bit better then.

MS. LAVALLE:

We feel pretty confident.

LEG. CALARCO:

Pretty confident you're going to hit the number. And in '15 you're saying you're a little concerned about meeting the projection that's put in the budget.

MS. LAVALLE:

The revenue projection was closer to eleven five if I recall correctly. My projection was 11.4 million.

LEG. CALARCO:

And, I'm sorry, what does the projection --

MS. LAVALLE:

My projection.

LEG. CALARCO:

Yours is 11.9 and the Exec put in?

MS. LAVALLE:

11.4.

LEG. CALARCO:

Oh, so he's -- he's coming -- the recommended budget is slightly below your projection. So it's, you know, we're better off if we underestimate and we go over, that's a good thing. And if we overestimate and we come up under, we have an issue.

MS. LAVALLE:

I tell everybody I don't have that crystal ball, it's just a matter of averages and what the economy sort of looks like.

LEG. CALARCO:

Sure. Okay, very good. Well, I appreciate it. Thank you very much, Penny.

MS. LAVALLE:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Thank you. Are there any other questions for the Real Property Tax Service Agency? If not, Penny, anything you want to add?

MS. LAVALLE:

Thank you; no.

CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:

Thank you for your time. Thank you for coming down.

All right. There's also -- is there anyone else who would like to address the joint committee this morning? For the record, there is no response. There is an executive session that is required, Legislator Stern, I believe, at this point, so the committee will now -- the committee will now adjourn into executive session for the purposes of the Ways and Means Committee holding that executive session, and we'll be back on record shortly. Thank you.

[*An executive session was held from 12:22 p.m. UNTIL 1:01 p.m.*]

We're back on the record. Having discussed the status of pending litigation during executive session, we are now back in session. There being no further business before the joint committee, we are adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 1:01 p.m.*)