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4 **BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
5  
6 **OF THE**  
7  
8 **SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**  
9  
10 **MINUTES**

11  
12 A meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee of the Suffolk County  
13 Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative  
14 Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building,.  
15 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Tuesday,  
16 July 18th, 2017 at 10:30 a.m.

17  
18 **Members Present:**

19 ***Legislator Lou D'Amaro - Chairman***  
20 ***Legislator Monica Martinez - Vice Chair***  
21 **Legislator Thomas Barraga**  
22 **Legislator Kate Browning**  
23 **Legislator Leslie Kennedy**  
24 **Legislator Steven Stern**

25  
26  
27 **Also in Attendance:**

28 ***Presiding Officer Gregory - Legislative District No. 15***  
29 ***Legislator Sarah Anker - Legislative District No. 6***  
30 **George Nolan - Counsel/Suffolk County Legislature**  
31 **Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature**  
32 **Amy Ellis - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature**  
33 **Robert Lipp - Director/Budget Review Office**  
34 **Thomas Corcoran - Budget Review Office**  
35 **Justin Littell - Aide to Legislator D'Amaro**  
36 **Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern**  
37 **Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy**  
38 **Seth Squicciarino - Aide to Legislator Hahn**  
39 **Robyn Fellrath - Aide to Leg. Anker**  
40 **Katie Horst - County Executive's Office**  
41 **John Marafino - County Executive's Office**  
42 **Ben Zwirn - Suffolk Community College**  
43 **Pam Farino - Resident of Smithtown**  
44 **Ryan McGarry - AME/Government Relations**  
45 **David Schwartz - Newsday**  
46 **All Other Interested Parties**

47  
48 **Minutes Taken By:**

49 **Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer**

50  
51 **Minutes Transcribed By:**

52 **Denise Weaver - Legislative Aide**  
53  
54  
55  
56

1 (The following was taken by Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer  
2 and transcribed by Denise Weaver - Legislative Aide)

3  
4 (THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:37 AM)

5  
6 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

7 Okay, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. We'd like to get  
8 started. Welcome to the committee -- the Budget & Finance  
9 Committee of the County Legislature. Please rise and join the  
10 committee in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Martinez.

11  
12 **Salutation**

13  
14 Welcome, once again. Okay, for the record, the committee has not  
15 received any correspondence and we'll go to the next section of the  
16 agenda which is public comments. Do we have any cards, to the  
17 Clerk?

18  
19 **MS. ELLIS:**

20 No, sir.

21  
22 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

23 No cards, okay. Is there anyone present who'd like to address the  
24 Budget Committee this morning? For the record, there is no  
25 response.

26  
27 We do have a presentation, but before we get to that I think I  
28 would like to start with the resolutions that are pending first so  
29 we can get through our resolutions, and then go with Dr. Lipp who  
30 will present with respect to sales tax, where we are, where we've  
31 been and where we're going.

32  
33 So, with that said, let's turn to Section V of the agenda, which  
34 are **Tabled Resolutions** and I'll call the first, which is 1273-2014  
35 -- 2017 rather, excuse me. **(1273-2017) - Adopting Local Law No.**  
36 **-2017, A Charter Law requiring departmental justification of**  
37 **proposed fee increases. (Trotta)** I'm going to offer a motion to  
38 table subject to call.

39  
40 **LEG. MARTINEZ:**

41 Second.

42  
43 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

44 Second by Legislator Martinez. All in favor? Opposed?  
45 Abstentions? Motion carries. **(Tabled Subject to Call -**  
46 **Vote: 6-0-0-0)**

47  
48 Next is Resolution number **1327-2017 - Approving 2017 Funding for a**  
49 **contract agency (Gallery North, Inc.). (Hahn)** At the request of  
50 the sponsor, I'll offer a motion to table.

51  
52 **LEG. STERN:**

53 Second.

54  
55 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

56 Second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

1 Motion carries. (*Tabled - Vote: 6-0-0-0*)

2  
3 Next is Resolution *1476-2017 - Adopting Local Law No. -2017, A*  
4 *Charter Law to increase sewer funding and protect water quality in*  
5 *Suffolk County. (Trotta)* Once again, we've addressed this bill  
6 several times, I'm going to offer a motion to table subject to  
7 call.

8  
9 **LEG. STERN:**

10 Second.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

13 Second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?  
14 Motion carries. (*Tabled Subject to Call - Vote: 6-0-0-0*)

15  
16 ***Introductory Resolutions***

17  
18 Section VI on the agenda are **Introductory Resolutions**, we have only  
19 one this morning, it's number *1541-2017 - To readjust, compromise,*  
20 *and grant refunds and charge-backs on real property correction of*  
21 *errors by: County Legislature (Control No. 1046-2017). (Co. Exec.)*  
22 I'll offer a motion to approve and place on our Consent Calendar.

23  
24 **LEG. STERN:**

25 Second.

26  
27 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

28 Second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?  
29 Motion carries. (*Approved and Placed on the Consent Calendar -*  
30 *Vote: 6-0-0-0*)

31  
32 That is all of the resolutions on our agenda today, so let's go  
33 back to item IV on the agenda, presentations.

34  
35 (*\*P.O. Gregory entered the meeting at 10:39 a.m.\**)

36  
37 Dr. Lipp, as always, is with us this morning and he's going to  
38 discuss an overview of sales tax collections for the first half of  
39 2017. Dr. Lipp, thank you. Please go ahead.

40  
41 **MR. LIPP:**

42 Thank you. Okay, so there are three small tables, I'll call them,  
43 that I'd like to discuss. The first one, what you see on the TV  
44 screen or monitor is what our actual collections were over the last  
45 several years starting in 2008, and you could see the first two  
46 years, 2008 and 2009, were negative growth rates that had to do  
47 with the Great Recession, okay.

48  
49 And then the next year, 2010, was a bounce-back year, so in other  
50 words, the bar was so low that other things being equal, the growth  
51 rate for sales tax, which is 6.5% in 2010, was a bounce-back over a  
52 very low bar that had to be jumped over. So that would explain why  
53 the growth rate was as strong as that.

1 Then if you go down to the next year, 2011, one thing you'll notice  
2 is that in -- prior to the Great Recession, our sales tax revenue  
3 was \$1.177 billion and in the next four years, each successive  
4 year, we actually brought in less revenue than we brought in prior  
5 -- the year prior to the Great Recession. So basically we lost  
6 quite a bit there. And one of many ways of looking at what the  
7 structural deficit is is if you then just compared what we actually  
8 took in in the years afterwards, that is the next four years, 2008  
9 to 2011, compared it to a zero growth scenario, we actually --  
10 we're short then by \$179 million. So it's like sales tax is the  
11 public enemy number one in terms of our deficit problems.  
12

10:41AM

13 Next, once we got back to ground zero, in 2013 we had a nice bump  
14 of over 6% attributed to the Sandy phenomenon. In other words,  
15 after Superstorm Sandy, there was a lot of money injected into the  
16 local economy from insurance companies, rebuilding, that kind of  
17 stuff, so we observed a high growth rate then. If you take out the  
18 year associated with the Sandy bump and you look at what is shown  
19 in yellow, past our structural deficit, those five years, taking  
20 out the Sandy bump, resulted in growth averaging 2% even. Okay.  
21 So one way to look at it, and this is a very simplistic,  
22 descriptive way, is we should expect in the neighborhood of 2%  
23 growth. Okay?  
24

10:42AM

25 Next. So then if you take that information and you look at what we  
26 actually received, well, we had a growth rate in the first half of  
27 this year -- now we're starting to talk about this year, okay. We  
28 had a growth rate in the first half of this year of over 4%. If  
29 you -- feel free to ask questions at any time. If you look at the  
30 first half growth rate and then you make assumptions about  
31 different growth rates in the second half of this year, it will  
32 give us an idea of what we could expect in terms of sales tax  
33 revenue by the end of 2017. So since we have an over 4% growth  
34 rate in 20 -- in the first half of this year that just ended, if we  
35 assumed that in the second half we would have negative growth minus  
36 0.7%, so seven-tenths of 1% negative growth, then we would come in  
37 right on target. This is for all sales tax funds including the  
38 Quarter Cent Program.  
39

10:42AM

40 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

41 So the point is that given the robust growth in the first half of  
42 the year, that we can even go slightly negative for the second half  
43 and meet our budget projection.  
44

10:43AM

45 **MR. LIPP:**

46 Exactly. Okay. And then what we did is put in -- I put in with  
47 the help of TJ, one of our new guys, okay. So then we said okay,  
48 what about if it's zero growth? And you could see here with zero,  
49 growth in the second half of this year, given the strong first  
50 half, we would have a surplus all funds of 5.3 million.  
51

10:43AM

52 If you look at what the -- what the number was that we discussed a  
53 minute ago that is on average, figure about 2% growth over the last  
54 five years -- over the last six years minus or taking out the Sandy  
55 bump year. So if we go with 2%, which is maybe not the most  
56 conservative way of budgeting but in terms of a projection, then we

1 would expect a \$20.5 million surplus at the end of 2017.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

4 Now, define surplus specifically; meaning that revenues exceeded  
5 expenditures by that amount?

6

7 **MR. LIPP:**

8 No, I'm glad you asked that. Okay. So by surplus I mean  
9 forgetting about every part of the budget except for sales tax  
10 revenue, there would be a surplus in terms of what was adopted in  
11 the budget of 20.5 million.

10:44AM

12

13 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

14 Surplus over the projected amount.

15

16 **MR. LIPP:**

17 In -- right. Well, in terms of the adopted amount.

18

19 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

20 Adopted amount.

10:44AM

21

22 **MR. LIPP:**

23 So the only thing that matters in life perhaps is our budget. If  
24 we had 2% growth in the second half we'd wind up experiencing a  
25 \$20.5 million increase in revenue beyond what was budgeted for  
26 sales tax.

27

28 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

29 Right. But is it a fair statement to say if you wind up with a  
30 surplus over what was budgeted, that that surplus then would help  
31 to reduce the structural deficit?

10:45AM

32

33 **MR. LIPP:**

34 Other things being equal --

35

36 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

37 Right.

38

39 **DR. LIPP:**

40 -- depending upon what we do with the other accounts, yes. But if  
41 we only focus on sales tax, keep it simple.

10:45AM

42

43 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

44 Right. Okay.

45

46 **DR. LIPP:**

47 Or as I like to say, the KISS approach; keep it simple stupid.

48

49 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

50 Robert, the cumulative growth (*inaudible*) --

10:45AM

51

52 **DR. LIPP:**

53 Sure. I'm sorry, there's a problem here? Oh, okay.

54

55 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

56 In your memo you indicated the cumulative growth of the first half

1 of 2017 is up 4.16%.

2

3 **DR. LIPP:**

4 Correct.

5

6 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

7 All right. When I take a look at the sales tax distribution as of  
8 July 1st, the year-to-date percent change is 2.033%.

9

10:46AM 10

11 **MR. LIPP:**

12 Okay, so --

13

14 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

15 What are we not including there?

16

17 **MR. LIPP:**

18 Okay. So, I think what you're talking about -- let's make sure  
19 we're talking about the same thing.

10:46AM 20

21 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

22 This sheet I get, we all get every year.

23

24 **MR. LIPP:**

25 You get from Treasurer/Comptroller's Office, right. Okay. So what  
26 you're getting from the Comptroller's Office is a cash basis and  
27 the Comptroller, by definition, looks at everything in terms of  
28 money coming in and going out on a cash basis only, okay. What I'm  
29 looking at here, what we're looking at here, is on a budget basis.  
30 So all of January and about 55% of February is accrued back to the  
31 previous year, so I'm looking at that. Numbers that you're seeing  
32 on a cash basis they use for the cash flow reports for the credit  
33 agencies and all of that, but that's not what actually gets booked  
34 in the budget. So I'm looking at February accruals, all of that  
35 kind of stuff, so it's a bit of an apples and oranges comparison  
36 because of that. Does that help you or not?

10:46AM 30

37 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

38 No, I'm really confused. Who has the real money in-house; is that  
39 the Comptroller's figure or are you projecting --

10:47AM 40

41 **MR. LIPP:**

42 Okay, it's not -- the number -- the number that I talked about in  
43 the e-mail that you're referring to and the numbers that I  
44 crunch -- or we crunch, I should say -- all the time are what's  
45 going to be in the budget. What we're interested -- what you're  
46 interested in and what I'm interested in is what's going to be in  
47 the budget. What the Comptroller's interested in is what the cash  
48 is in on hand and what they have to spend.

10:47AM 50

51 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

52 This percentage is lower than --

53

54 **DR. LIPP:**

55 Right.

56

1 **LEG. BARRAGA:**  
2 -- cash on hand and it puts us \$14 million ahead so far this year  
3 compared to last year, according to his figures. Your figures are  
4 different.

5  
6 **MR. LIPP:**  
7 Correct.

8  
9 **LEG. BARRAGA:**  
10 Okay. I got it.

11  
12 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**  
13 Right. Just to clarify, perhaps it's -- that's a cash basis  
14 accounting. So there may be obligations still due to come in that  
15 are not reflected on there, there may be other expenditures that  
16 are not reflected. That's just a -- that's a snapshot of the cash  
17 on hand on a certain date.

18  
19 **MR. LIPP:**  
20 Right, and the reason why you don't budget that way, or one reason,  
21 I should say, you don't budget that way is if you're only looking  
22 at the cash, you're not going to spend more than you have in terms  
23 of cash because the check would bounce, for argument's sake.

24  
25 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**  
26 Right.

27  
28 **MR. LIPP:**  
29 So if, let's say, we had a large deficit, okay, hypothetically that  
30 is, we would still have a balanced cash budget because we're not  
31 able to make payments.

32  
33 **LEG. BARRAGA:**  
34 I see. Okay, good.

35  
36 **MR. LIPP:**  
37 Okay, right. Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up because those  
38 numbers from the budget point of view have to be converted, okay.  
39  
40 So of the 2% or \$20.5 million surplus, 19.3 million of it is the  
41 General Fund approximation, okay. So you have an idea now of what  
42 it looks like moving forward. If we do get the 2%, we would have a  
43 nice surplus of 20 million and change.

44  
45 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**  
46 Now, Rob, you talk about that 2%; is that -- is that a projection  
47 by your office?

48  
49 **MR. LIPP:**  
50 Unfortunately, no. Whoops. So we used to do the internal  
51 projections before I became the Director; I don't have the time to  
52 do that. I'm training TJ, but the math involved in that kind of  
53 stuff, which is referred to as econometrics, requires a special  
54 skill set that we don't really have in-house now. I mean, I still  
55 have that skill set, but I don't have the time to do that.

1 Okay, so we're just looking at sort of likely or plausible numbers.  
2 And based upon the discussion at the beginning of this  
3 presentation, 2% seems like a reasonable scenario for the second  
4 half and therefore that's, you know, not an actual projection but  
5 would be something that we may come to expect.

6  
7 Okay, there are two other things I'd like to refer to, if you don't  
8 mind, before we finish here. One are factors that are -- factors  
9 that are adversely effecting sales tax revenue. So as you may see  
10 on the board, let's maybe make it a little larger. [*Indicating*]

11  
12 **LEG. KENNEDY:**  
13 For the blind.

14  
15 **MR. LIPP:**  
16 Yeah, it is much better. Okay. I'm sorry, I should have passed  
17 out magnifying glasses and maybe 3D glasses before the  
18 presentation.

19  
20 **LEG. BARRAGA:**  
21 I can just about see you.

22  
23 (*\*Laughter\**)

24  
25 **MR. LIPP:**  
26 Is that a good thing that you can see me or a bad thing? Okay.  
27 So there are several factors that seem to be affecting sales tax  
28 revenue negatively; computer technology, it effects the -- overall  
29 the economy and, therefore, consumer spending; and we produce more  
30 with less labor, so that effects the labor market, that's kind of a  
31 problem area.

32  
33 Another thing is a shift in the labor market towards lower paying  
34 jobs and part-time jobs so that we don't have the consumer spending  
35 that we had prior to this shift over the last few years. We were  
36 always -- our wage rates were always much higher than the nation,  
37 we're pretty close to mirroring the nation now and that's a -- that  
38 advantage has gone.

39  
40 The third is a shift from a goods economy to a service economy,  
41 that's been over a long time. So when the sales tax revenue was  
42 first -- when sales tax was first enacted, I think it was 1965 for  
43 the State and 1969 for us, it was a goods economy and we've slowly  
44 morphed into a service economy and there are several services that  
45 are not taxed, like engineers, architects, lawyers, accountants,  
46 etcetera. So eventually we would hope or need, from a finance  
47 point of view, to include those items as part of the base for the  
48 sales tax. But that's -- that requires State enabling legislation  
49 and there's a big debate on that.

50  
51 And then next are demographics, which I think is a really important  
52 thing, we don't have the data to really see how it's affecting, at  
53 least not yet. So what happens is we're seeing a lot of baby  
54 boomers retire. I don't have data on that, though, it's more like  
55 a concept that makes sense, but what the actual impact is I'm not  
56 sure. So you have a lot of baby boomers starting to retire and to

1 some extent they're -- they're leaving the area or their spending  
2 habits are less so that creates some sort of downward pressure on  
3 growth and sales tax revenue. And then there's the energy crisis  
4 thing. Some of the -- we weren't able to get the complete picture  
5 but some of the explanation for growth in sales tax revenue in the  
6 first half has to do with increases in energy collections. If I  
7 could then show you just one other thing.

8  
9 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

10 Rob, give me that again? What was the --

11  
12 **MR. LIPP:**

13 So --

14  
15 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

16 Growth in energy collection?

17  
18 **MR. LIPP:**

19 Right. So there are two types of prices for energy I'll say that  
20 we could see in the sales tax data. One which is easiest to obtain  
21 is there -- part of the sales tax revenue that we bring in is from  
22 a two-and-a-half percent tax rate on residential energy, which is  
23 maybe like 70% of that is PSEG or LIPA, and that money is  
24 increasing more than what the overall sales tax revenue is going  
25 up. That explains part of the increase in the first half.

26  
27 Another part, which is really important that we haven't been able  
28 to get the numbers yet for a couple of reasons, is the motor fuels  
29 portion of the sales tax we could observe also; that's basically  
30 like when you gas up your car, mostly. So we're not -- I'm not  
31 sure about that part, but as a rule, though, there seems to be an  
32 influence that's working in our favor in the first half related to  
33 energy crisis.

34  
35 Okay. Anything else on that before I do the last piece to the  
36 puzzle? Okay.

37  
38 So here we are and the first half of the sales tax collections are  
39 over, and what you could see is [*Indicating*] -- well, if you look  
40 at what the actual growth rate was, we grew by a little under 3.7%  
41 in the first quarter of this year, and then in the second quarter  
42 we grew by four-and-a-half percent, which accounts for our strong  
43 overall impact. And if you take the total, that's 4.16%, it's not  
44 the average, it's weighted by how much came in the last -- both of  
45 those quarters.

46  
47 One way to look at how good or bad we're doing in terms of sales  
48 tax revenue is not just to look at the cash, 3.7% growth in the  
49 first quarter, 4.5% in the second quarter. There is a way, because  
50 we have some data, to approximate what the actual consumer spending  
51 growth was, and so we take things out like there -- part of the  
52 collections we receive are from assessment penalties, from late  
53 filings, from money that gets moved from one quarter to another.  
54 So if you make those adjustments, you get a number that's more  
55 closely related to consumer spending. And what you'll see, for  
56 instance, let's look at the second quarter, growth was

1 four-and-a-half percent, that's the actual cash collections that we  
2 received, but if you adjust the data for consumer spending, the  
3 best that the data would allow us, then you're talking about a  
4 growth rate, not of four-and-a-half but of 3%. So one question  
5 that's being asked is, okay, well, four-and-a-half percent, how  
6 could that be? Can you please explain it? And the answer is,  
7 well, number one, as we spoke earlier, 2% growth seems like a  
8 plausible long run number, but actually adjusted we're getting 3%  
9 growth in the second quarter. What that means, then, is consumer  
10:56AM 10 spending is up 3%, not four-and-a-half percent, we just were  
11 fortunate with the adjustments that we got more money in than we  
12 did the previous year second quarter because of late files,  
13 assessment penalties and other stuff. So we -- we worked out well.

14  
15 That being said, on average, if you look at all these adjustments,  
16 they sort of average out to close to zero. So we're -- we have  
17 some quarters where we wind up doing better, wind up doing worse.  
18 The problem is that you're talking about over a \$13 million swing  
19 for every 1% that you go up or down. So sales tax is a very large  
10:56AM 20 item, so just a small, very good error of 1% could really do a lot  
21 good or bad to the budget in the end.

22  
23 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

24 So those adjustments accounted for roughly 1.5% of that growth  
25 number.

26  
27 **MR. LIPP:**

28 Exactly.

29  
10:57AM 30 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

31 But averaged over the year, those adjustments will have much less  
32 impact.

33  
34 **MR. LIPP:**

35 Right. So, and actually, if you look at the data that we have on  
36 the board here, we have -- it's 30, there are 30 quarters. You  
37 know, it might not be good to look all the way that far back, but  
38 if you look at those adjustments, you'll see that plus and minuses  
39 there were a plus over a seven-and-a-half year period of 0.1%. So  
10:57AM 40 in the long run we even out, we have some negative years, or low  
41 growth quarters, rather, and positive quarters in part because of  
42 the adjustments. That's it, unless there are more questions.

43  
44 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**

45 I'm good. Any questions?

46  
47 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

48 Now based on what you've said, you know, what are your projections  
49 at this point in terms of the structural deficit? I know in one of  
10:58AM 50 the memos you indicated it's still there to the tune of 100 million  
51 or more, but --

52  
53 **MR. LIPP:**

54 So.

1 **LEG. BARRAGA:**

2 -- can you lock that in a little bit better? I mean, we've heard  
3 figures of like 160, 150; it seems to jump all over the place.  
4

5 **MR. LIPP:**

6 Right. Well, part of the problem is there are different ways of  
7 defining the structural deficit, and one way that relates purely to  
8 what we're talking about here in terms of a structural deficit  
9 related to sales tax revenue is this 179 million that is the loss  
10 in sales tax revenue. When you're looking at the structural  
11 deficit in the actual budget and you're including everything there,  
12 what we have been doing is looking at the current budget, which --  
13 and seeing what one-shots or loans, things like that that we  
14 wouldn't be able to balance the budget if not through those, so  
15 that's what we add up. And I think it was in the introduction to  
16 the review of the 2017 budget, it was 130-something million, 138  
17 perhaps, I think, good to remember. So that number we haven't  
18 updated and the main reason for that is, well, we don't have a new  
19 budget to compare. So when the recommended budget for 2018 comes  
20 out, the third Friday of September, then we could look at that and  
21 say, *okay, here are the loans or the one-shots or stuff like that*  
22 *in that budget.* There's no way -- I'm sure the County Executive  
23 doesn't know at this point, you know, what his budget's going to  
24 look like. They're in the process of putting it together, but it  
25 would be presumptive to say anything right now. So basically  
26 that'll be part of our calculations when we do our review of the  
27 2018 recommended budget.  
28

29 **P.O. GREGORY:**

30 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Robert. So, Robert, are you  
31 able to identify any particular areas of where spending has  
32 increased or is it just kind of general? Is it, you know,  
33 businesses that are, you know, with the new administration, are  
34 they expecting an upturn in the economy and they're, you know,  
35 preparing for expansion or is it just, you know, there's more baby  
36 boomers who are retired, instead of going to Florida during the  
37 winter months maybe they stay locally so they're spending more or  
38 people are doing home repairs. Is there anything that kind of  
39 sticks out? Or --  
40

41 **MR. LIPP:**

42 Well, I mean, from the -- the discussion here is not other areas  
43 but -- where am I here? But, I mean, the closest I've gotten for  
44 this particular presentation was here are the factors that seem to  
45 be dragging on sales tax. And it doesn't look like, you know,  
46 we're going to be able to get out from under just based on sales  
47 tax, we're going to have to do other things. We have a festering  
48 deficit.  
49

50 That being said, we are at your request looking at areas that we  
51 can potentially cut and we'll have -- we'll come out with something  
52 fairly soon to provide for you. But I'm not hopeful that they'll  
53 be too much in terms of items that will be palatable.  
54

55 **P.O. GREGORY:**

56 I mean as it relates to this uptick in sales tax. I mean, those

1 identify the factors that potentially are dragging down the sales  
2 tax.

3  
4 **MR. LIPP:**  
5 Right.

6  
7 **P.O. GREGORY:**  
8 But I think admittedly there is, what, I think you said there's a  
9 base, 3% increase in consumer spending.

11:01AM

10  
11 **MR. LIPP:**  
12 Right.

13  
14 **P.O. GREGORY:**  
15 Right? So are there any particular areas where that stands out?  
16 Is it, you know --

11:02AM

17  
18 **MR. LIPP:**  
19 So the only area that really stands out are the energy crisis right  
20 now, that's a positive. We've tried to look at data for other  
21 types of industries, but the data is not available, basically.  
22 There are only a few items that the State carves out for us to see.  
23 So it would be hard to do that. We do look at economic data for  
24 different industries and see which are improving or not, and part  
25 of the problem, as I said before, is there seems to be a shift in  
26 the types of jobs people are getting towards lower paying on  
27 average than higher paying ones, so that's an adverse thing even  
28 though we're gaining people. Also, what we don't see at the local  
29 level but there is some data at the national level that more jobs  
30 are part-time jobs than used to be. So that's problematic.

11:02AM

31  
32 **P.O. GREGORY:**  
33 But minimum wage is going up, too, so that would have an impact.

34  
35 **MR. LIPP:**  
36 Yeah, that would have somewhat of a factor but it'll just -- it'll  
37 constrain some of the fact that growth is in a lower -- in lower  
38 paying jobs cause there'd be more jobs that would be at minimum  
39 wage in those industries. We'd rather have the high paying jobs  
40 and therefore unemployment -- not unemployment, the minimum wage  
41 argument would be a moot point in those industries.

11:03AM

42  
43 **P.O. GREGORY:**  
44 Okay, thank you.

45  
46 **CHAIRMAN D'AMARO:**  
47 Okay, thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. Are there any other  
48 questions or comments from committee members or anyone else?  
49 Dr. Lipp, as always, thank you for your presentation; concise and  
50 accurate as usual. Appreciate it.

11:03AM

51  
52 And there's no further business before the committee this morning,  
53 so we are adjourned. Thank you for your attendance.

54  
55 *(\*The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 a.m.\*)*  
56

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