

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION & ENERGY COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rosy Y. Caracappa Legislative auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on July 27, 2011 at 2:00 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Wayne R. Horsley, Chairman
Leg. Steven H. Stern, Co-Chair
Leg. Thomas Cilmi
Leg. Ricardo Montano
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel
Gail Vizzini, Director of Budget Review Office
Jill Moss, BRO
Joe Muncey, BRO
Eric A. Kopp, County Executive's Office
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
JP DiMartino, Aide to Leg. Horsley
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano
Jeff Tempera, Suffolk County Community College
Tom Breeden, SCCC
Kevin Peterman, SCCC
Tony Amoroso, SCCC
Lori Taggart, SCCC
Ali Nazir, Aide to Legislator Kennedy
Greg Moran, Aide to Legislator Nowick
Rick Brand, Newsday
Jack Caffey, Aide to Presiding Officer
Yves Michel, Commissioner/Economic Development & Workforce Housing

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:09 PM

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

SALUTATION

Please remain standing for a moment of silence for all of those men and women who protect our freedoms on the battlefield both at home and abroad.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

Good afternoon everybody and welcome to the July 27th, 2011 Committee -- Economic Development, Education and Energy Committee for July 27th. And I wanted to -- first of all, we do have a short agenda, but I would like to discuss some issues relating to the College today.

But I would like to introduce and acknowledge the 19 delegates from China, from what I understand the Great South Province -- I hope I'm saying that correctly -- who are all either industrialists or government officials in China. And they are here not only to audit our Committee, but they are involved with the College of Stony Brook. And I know that they've been working with the Center of Excellence in wireless -- in Information Technology at Stony Brook University. And I'd like to thank Legislator Stern who invited these delegates to the Economic Development Committee. And maybe I can turn this over to Mr. Stern and he can officially welcome the delegates.

LEG. STERN:

Oh, sure. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is, yes, my pleasure, and I'm sure my colleagues agree, our privilege to invite you all to share this afternoon with us as we continue our efforts to learn from each other in how we can continue to best work together in our interest. This is a distinguished group of delegates that join us today. And we will be spending some time with them after the Committee meeting. And, also, just to note, Mr. Chairman, that our Commissioner of Economic Development, Yves Michel, is with us today and he will be joining in on the conversation. I know that I'm looking forward to it and I hope everybody is as well. So thank you.

LEG. NOWICK:

Welcome.

APPLAUSE

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Legislator Stern, is there any member of the delegation that would like to address the Committee?

LEG. STERN:

I suppose we can ask.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Would anybody like to talk? I know I may be catching you off guard. Anybody?

AUDIENCE:

No, I don't think so.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay, we understand. But we are -- and I'm sure we have so many interests of -- a like interest in our looking to grow our economies.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Okay. I'm going to first move to the agenda, which is a very short agenda. **Introductory resolution 1619, authorizing the County Executive to execute an agreement with the Guild of Administrative Officers, Suffolk County Community College, covering the terms and conditions of employment for employees covered under Bargaining Unit No. 4 for the period September 1, 2011 through August 31, 2015. (Co. Exec.)** Would anyone from the College like to speak on this matter? Why don't you guys maybe just give us a briefing. It's good to see both sides here in front of us. This must be good -- good stuff. So why don't you introduce yourselves and give us a little discussion on how the negotiations went.

MR. TEMPERA:

Good afternoon. Jeff Tempera. I am the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. And I hesitate because it's a new role for me after 30 something years up here at the County. So I'm sorry -- some looks of confusion.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Lynne didn't know that you left.

MR. TEMPERA:

Sorry, Lynne.

LEG. NOWICK:

Not that I didn't miss you, but I didn't get the memo.

LAUGHTER

MR. TEMPERA:

We don't send out memos. That's just the way we do things. You'll find out obviously when someone comes before you, but that's 34 years of experience in the County, that's pretty much how things go. I left the beginning of July. I switched July 1st, actually, I switched roles. And they basically made me an offer I couldn't refuse. I think if you spoke to Tom and Ellen and Shaun McKay, the President of the College, it's been a great experience so far. And I think they looked as forward as me coming down there as I've looked to working down there. And we actually settled this agreement before I left, so I don't know if I'm here in my role as the previous Director of Labor Relations or as the representative of the College.

But I will say that I give a lot of credit to Tom Breeden and his membership. They -- we sat down and we've been talking about trying to resolve this agreement probably for over a year. As you know, we settled with the faculty last May. And they entered into, again, a difficult agreement for zero/zero/two/two that recognized the fiscal climate and recognized the hardships that the College was facing. And we got together with Tom and met. And we finally were able to hammer out an agreement through his cooperation and the cooperation of his membership, that from a rate standpoint mirrors the same rate structure that was set up.

The agreement with the Guild calls for a zero percent the first year, zero the second, a zero the third year, but a 4% raise in the fourth year. So the going out rate is the same; 4% rate going out. There's an extra year in there where the College will be able to save on cash. But it mirrors the general terms because the faculty was able to make an agreement where they extended what we call a plus-two agreement that helps the College with its class size. And Tom and his membership were able to agree for that extra year of zero's. They've also agreed to a provision where its membership will help out and they'll be covering the weekend coverage at the College. They gave up their longevity in the same manner that the faculty did.

MR. BREEDEN:

Increases in longevity.

MR. TEMPERA:

I'm sorry. They had a -- you have to push the button if you want to be heard.

MR. BREEDEN:

(Inaudible)

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

We still insist Tom; use the bottom.

MR. BREEDEN:

Yes, sir.

MR. TEMPERA:

The prior agreement called for an increase of \$50 in longevity. And his membership gave up that \$50 increase. So, no, I wasn't trying to imply, Tom, that your membership wouldn't be getting longevity.

MR. BREEDEN:

I was joking.

MR. TEMPERA:

And, again, I think we have a management committee that's been set up to discuss any issues that come up. This passed -- the membership, Tom, by close to 90%, if I remember correctly. So a lot of the credit goes to Tom and to his membership for recognizing the fiscal climate we're in and agreeing to an agreement that, I think, sets the tone and gives us some labor peace for the next four years. So we're available. Tom, you want to say something?

MR. BREEDEN:

Well, I just wanted to thank the Committee for the Legislature's continuous support of the Community College. There was a story recently in the New York Times that suggested a large part of the progress of the United States in the previous 100 years was the commitment to education for everyone. The European countries had a somewhat more elitist point of view that only certain people should go onto college. The United States decided that everyone should. And there's no question that that is one of the reasons that the past century was the American century. The next century, it remains to be seen whose century that will be called. And the commitment to education is very important if the United States wants to be in the running.

My union took three zeros. I have joked several times that for once we defeated the faculty association. They were only able to achieve two zeros where we were able to achieve three. But on a more serious note --

MR. TEMPERA:

You could have gone for four.

MR. BREEDEN:

Yeah, I know. I couldn't win that much, though. The College is bare to the bone. I mean there's really no fat there. We've gone, I believe, Kevin, three years with zeros so far. And unfortunately I will not be at the Legislative meeting next week. I had made plans to go to Hershey Park with my grandchildren. I wanted to come up with a more appropriate reason to miss such an important meeting but my wife said *don't you dare* so I'm telling you the truth.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Just a Hershey Kiss.

LAUGHTER

MR. BREEDEN:

But I'm hoping the Legislature in these times can find some money for the Community College because there is no fat and there is no waste there. Rest assured, I would not have settled for three zeros if I thought there was fat in the budget. So, again, thank you for your previous support. And I'm hoping that you can help us again.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you very much, Tom. Thank you very much, Jeff. We appreciate your update. And, again, this replicates, though, one year more of the zeros, the rest of the College negotiations. So clearly this board appreciates the sacrifice that the professionals at Suffolk County Community College has showed us. And you're certainly beacons of understanding. And I guess that's why you're educators. You care more about the kids than almost anything. And that's a good thing. Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

And not having anything to do with the contract, but I just wanted to say to all of you that may have missed it, Friday morning I was watching the business station. And the opening bell was students from Suffolk County Community College. How good is that?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

What business station?

LEG. NOWICK:

Channel 24, you know.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

CNBC?

LEG. NOWICK:

Yep. And they showed the opening bell.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Up in the box.

LEG. NOWICK:

Channel 24. And we'll leave it at that.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you much, Legislator. I appreciate that.

LEG. NOWICK:

That was a great thing.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Absolutely. And we're very proud of our students. Any other further questions? Okay. Gentlemen, anything else you'd like to add?

MR. TEMPERA:

Thank you.

MR. BREEDEN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

With that, I'll make a motion to approve Introductory Resolution 1619, second by Legislator Stern. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)** Gentlemen, congratulations on behalf of the Legislature to you and continued success.

MR. TEMPERA:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. That concludes -- I'm sorry, Kevin, I didn't realize -- Kevin, did I crush your thunder here? Now that we've already voted on this. Kevin, why don't you come on up? Kevin Peterman.

MR. PETERMAN:

Kevin Peterman from the Faculty Association of Suffolk County Community College. Actually, I filled out a card. Obviously, I support the Guild's agreement, but I'm here just briefly to talk about the College budget, which I believe you'll be dealing with next Tuesday.

And, first of all, I want to thank Budget Review for another fine review of the College budget. But I just want to point out a couple of things. If you look at that document, according to Budget Review, the 2011/12 Operating Budget, 47% of that budget will be paid for by the students; 23% will be paid for by the state; and 22% will be paid for by the County.

The other thing I want to point out, also, in Budget Review's document was the last time that we got an increase from the County was the 2007/2008 year, which was a 2% increase from the year before.

I know you have been doing your best to support us, but we've gotten zeros for three years. And I'm just hoping -- and I know the economy's tough -- but what I'm worried about is us becoming the -- getting the distinction of having the highest tuition in the State of New York for community colleges. I'm hoping that a couple of bucks, that maybe we can keep our tuition down below \$4,000. I know Nassau Community College's tuition for next year is 3990 for the year. That's \$3,990. And I'm hopeful that we can find some revenue to at least stay at that level.

I just think there's a psychological issue with piercing \$4,000 for tuition. I mean students pay more than the four with fees and all those other -- stuff that they have -- add-on's, if you will. But, again, I just want to thank you for your past support. But I just hope that you will help us try to keep the tuition down. Because we've certainly done everything, I believe, that we can do; the zeros, we did the plus-two as Tom mentioned. We have many vacant lines. We have a lot of turnover savings. Our full-time numbers are down to about 470. We were almost at 390 full-time faculty. Our adjunct numbers are pushing over 1500. So I just feel that we need to work together to see what we can do here. And I appreciate your help.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Kevin, thank you very much. Just stay there for one second. Legislator Cilmi has a question.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks, Chairman. How are you, Kevin? The -- I may be catching you off guard here with this question, and if so we can save it for a private conversation or maybe another meeting. And this

question is appropriately asked also to the President of the College, Shaun McKay. But, you know, we have a -- one of the significant expenses that we have in Suffolk County relates to out-of-county tuition. Whether you know it or not, there's a tremendous disparity between the number of Suffolk students attending Nassau Community College and the number of Nassau students attending Suffolk Community College.

If my memory serves me correctly, we receive -- our College receives less than a million dollars for -- in out-of-county tuition reimbursement from other counties; whereas we pay something like \$12 million in out-of-county tuition to other community colleges, much of which goes to Nassau Community College. So can you speak to what our College can do to sort of, you know, maybe balance out that trend a little bit?

MR. PETERMAN:

I won't speak for the College. I'll speak for the union. I'll tell you what, you know, Ellen and I have talked about this over the years. And we want to know -- for many years we felt that the reason that -- especially residents from the western part of the County went to Nassau is because the facilities were better. The Grant Campus, thanks to your help in Capital Projects, we're finally making some progress. In fact, one of the things we're really looking forward to is a new learning resource center, the new library. Those kind of improvements certainly are going to help.

The other thing -- theory that we have, and it's from no research or anything, residents of Suffolk that work in Nassau County, sometimes it's easier right after work to go to Nassau because you can make the six o'clock class and avoid the traffic; take the class and then come out after class. Now, that doesn't speak, you know, for the daytime students. But certainly part-time evening students, non-traditional students, we believe that there is some legitimacy to that theory that if I'm going to sit in traffic, I may as well go to class and then come out at 8:30 and, you know, get a fast ride home. I don't know how much of an impact it has. But I do think facilities is a major component. And I also believe that quite a few of our residents go to FIT, too.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, this is true. We've had that -- we've had that conversation. And, in fact, without going into too much detail, I had a meeting set up with some folks from Nassau County to discuss that very issue very soon. So hopefully there's some light at the end of that tunnel. And, you know, we can address that issue and keep a couple of million in Suffolk County as a result. Thanks.

MR. PETERMAN:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Kevin, can I just quick, sophomore here --

MR. PETERMAN:

I'm all yours.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I agree with you. Coming from the west end of Suffolk, I think proximity is more likely than -- the most obvious reason why students go to Nassau rather than Suffolk. But do you feel that if there is a disparity in costs for a student, whether it's -- you know, even within the range of \$500 or something per year for tuition, that difference, would they go to -- if there was a choice, would they go to Nassau over Suffolk simply because the expense is greater in Suffolk?

MR. PETERMAN:

All I can tell you is, if any of you have ever taken one of your children to look at colleges, the first thing the student looks at is the facilities. They drive on campus. And that has a -- you know, the

first impression is very important.

And the other thing, which I usually talk about, is Nassau Community College's budget is much higher than ours with one campus. They have more resources. And we're spreading our resources with three campuses and a downtown center in Riverhead and a center in Sayville, which is, you know, I think is a great thing for us to do for the downtown centers and to have the three campuses. But we are really, you know, pushing the limit with the resources that we have. When you want to compare us to Nassau, I mean it really is apples and oranges.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

So would you say that if Nassau was less expensive than us, that that would draw more students towards Nassau?

MR. PETERMAN:

Especially in the Babylon and Huntington Towns; I mean, because the commute from Huntington, especially, to Garden City is not a big commute. I know that. And probably in some cases from, again, western Suffolk, it's probably easier to get to Nassau. And again the facilities are in better shape. They really are.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And it would seem that since we have to reimburse or charge back to Nassau County, if a Suffolk student goes to Nassau County, that there would be an additional cost to Suffolk County because of that.

MR. PETERMAN:

There absolutely is. And it's --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

There's a loss -- there's a loss of revenue.

MR. PETERMAN:

-- a lot of millions as Legislator Cilmi has said.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Right. So that should factor into our -- see, I don't want to lead you here but I am.

MR. PETERMAN:

No, no. But I just think the tuition -- the tuition is an important factor. And I think psychologically a \$4,000 number is something that I don't want to pierce that personally.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. But we would lose money by having those students go over to Nassau County.

MR. PETERMAN:

From my perspective, yes.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Which would even warp the dollar difference even more so.

MR. PETERMAN:

The dollars are pretty warped now but --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Just a quick follow-up. And maybe if Kevin doesn't know the answer to this question, maybe, maybe our Budget Review Office does. But it may escape both of you. The percentages of contribution tuition versus county, versus state for Suffolk County, do you have any idea what they are for Nassau Community College?

MR. PETERMAN:

I don't have that pie chart. I'm sorry.

MS. VIZZINI:

No.

MR. PETERMAN:

I can certainly try to find it for you.

LEG. CILMI:

That would be great. I'd be interested to see it. Thanks. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Are there any questions of Kevin? Kevin, thank you very much. We always appreciate you coming.

MR. PETERMAN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Tom, I see you're raising your hand. You couldn't handle the zero's so --

MR. BREEDEN:

A very quick comment --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay.

MR. BREEDEN:

To your question, will going over \$4,000 cause people to go elsewhere? There's all kinds of market researching. Everybody has seen things for 2999, cars for \$9,990. Even though it is completely irrational, the fact that all marketing is done that way makes it appear real that, yes, in fact, if we go over 4,000, you're going to lose more money because more people will go to Nassau. It's not rationale, but everybody sees how pricing is done in every market in America. So I think it's important that we stay under 4,000. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you very much, Tom. This conversation, I'm glad we held Kevin off until after we voted on the Guild budget, because this is more apropos. We have -- we met as a working group, not only this Committee here, but as well as Legislator Anker, who is a member of that committee, and we looked at the finances, we looked at our contribution level and where we're going into the future. And we collectively decided that we couldn't afford to increase the contribution.

Now, the vote is next Tuesday for the full Legislature. We have been in discussion with members of the Legislature including Legislator -- Presiding Officer Lindsay, who said, you know, maybe the fact

now that the issue has come to pass, that Nassau County has come in under \$4,000 as we have heard, 3,990, that we should look at -- look at our contribution level no matter how serious our financial issues are for the County. So what I did is I asked Gail to present to us the basics of the -- of where we are at financially in relation to the College budget and possibly give us some insight so that we can take a look at that issue, if we should review that one more time.

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, the County contribution -- the current County contribution is the County contribution plus the non-mandated college tax levy, which comes to \$34.1 million County contribution plus a \$4.4 million non-mandated tax levy totally \$38.6 million. A \$900,000 increase would be 2.3% of that \$38 million figure.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Want to repeat that one more time? You said 900?

MS. VIZZINI:

\$900,000.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

900,000.

MS. VIZZINI:

2.3% increase of the \$38.6 million. You would then need -- when we adopt a budget with any increase -- 1% increase in the County contribution is equal to \$380,000 in additional revenue for the College.

LEG. MONTANO:

Gail, how long has it been since we've the increased the contribution?

MS. VIZZINI:

2007.

LEG. MONTANO:

From 2007?

MS. VIZZINI:

2007.

LEG. MONTANO:

So it's been three years or four years?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

This will be our fourth year coming.

LEG. MONTANO:

If we don't increase the contribution.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Gail, are you finished?

MS. VIZZINI:

I'm here to answer any questions that you have. The last increase was the 2007/2008 College Fiscal Year. We gave them a 2% increase and brought the -- brought the County contribution up to the dollar amount that it is today, \$38.6 million.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Fourth year, that's what I thought. Okay, so it would be the fourth year. All right. What I'm going to do is, I'm going to complete the questions to Gail. But then I want to put forward those comments that I've been hearing from our Legislators, including the Presiding Officer, also what kind of proposals may be under consideration other than our zero percent. Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Gail, I'm sorry, 900,000 would equate to what percentage increase?

MS. VIZZINI:

2.3.

LEG. STERN:

And 1.8 million increase would be 4.6% total increase.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yes.

LEG. STERN:

And if it was 1.8 million for a 4.6% increase, has anybody done the analysis as to what the tuition amount would be?

MS. VIZZINI:

That would be completely under the College Board of Directors' purview. As I expressed to you in our initial working group, the only discretion we have is to adopt a total budget and a County contribution. What the College does with the additional revenue and what expenditure reductions or increases that they make is completely under the purview of the Board.

So even if I were you to tell you that, you know, a month ago they said that if we gave them a 4% increase in the County contribution, it would only require an increase in the annual tuition of \$190 to 3966; that may no longer be accurate. So I don't have a good comfort level in giving you precise numbers.

As with any budget or any operation, the more expenditure and revenue data you have, you know, the more time you have, the more expenditure and revenue data you have. So I don't know what their true yearend fund balance is, whether it was the seven or eight million that was initially indicated or if it's more. So I would defer to them.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Is there any further questions of Gail at this point in time? Okay, Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Gail, is it fair to -- and, you know, let me say at the onset that certainly our community college has a different identity and should have a different identity than Nassau Community College. But is it fair to compare the two? Is it apples and apples or is it apples and oranges in terms of the two colleges? What I'm getting at is if an analysis of their student population in terms of the numbers, you know, the size and scope of their facilities, if an analysis of their County's contribution versus ours, if that sort of analysis is appropriate or helpful in any way?

MS. VIZZINI:

Typically when we do any kind of analysis of similar entities, it's -- we look to contiguous comparisons. If you're going to do an analysis of Suffolk County, Nassau is a contiguous county. So when we're discerning what our cops are being paid, we look to Nassau County. When we determine what our workforce is being paid, we wouldn't necessarily go to some of the, you know, Upstate counties or some of the other smaller in population or what have you.

So there is some merit to comparing the two largest contiguous counties with the two largest community colleges. There are differences. We differ from Nassau particularly geographically in everything that we do. Many of their county offices are centralized. They're not 80 miles long like Suffolk County is. We have a very different economy. We have a similar economy, but we have a lot more open space, we have a lot more wineries, we have a lot more agriculture. Agriculture is our number one industry. So when you do any kind of comparison, I think you need to look at the important criteria in your comparison.

Consolidating Suffolk to one campus, first of all, would be contrary to how it was established. It works for Nassau because of their geography. So you have to look at a few of the criterias. I think it's definitely a bona fide comparison. And since a lot of the defection of our own residents is to Nassau, because it's so close -- and, you know, ironically some of the schools, if you're a -- there used to be a reputation that Nassau was a better college. Living in Suffolk and knowing Suffolk, I know that's not the case. But there can be -- I have friends who live in Suffolk who opt that their children go to Nassau because their parents told them that when they -- and they told their kids, that Nassau is a better alternative. I tell them that that's not the case. So there's an education involved as well. I think what it really comes down to is location and program.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. Thank you very much, Gail. Is there anything else you'd like to add?

MS. VIZZINI:

I'm good.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

You're good. Okay. Let me -- again, we have one proposal. You know, we're not going to be voting on this as a body here. I think that it's best that we break into our working group and making -- have an opinion that we can hash out between all of us and give it to the full Legislature for a vote on Tuesday.

But I wanted to bring forth a proposal that has been presented to me and others from members of the Legislature that had concerns over the zero percent increase. And one of them was by the Presiding Officer. And the Presiding Officer says, "hey, listen, how do we get this budget in a position where not only -- because we're tit for tat with Nassau, but we have -- we believe that if we're going to increase our economy, if we're going to better our economy, if we are going to get out of this recession -- and how do you do that? The best way to do it is to educate our population and to keep it affordable."

So with that in mind, Mr. Lindsay has been in conversation with Mr. McKay -- Shaun McKay, Dr. McKay. And they said "how could we make up this difference?" And the difference was, to my understanding, and, Gail, correct me if I'm wrong, a million nine. Is that correct? Or a million eight.

MS. VIZZINI:

Initially the College asked for a million five, but I believe the conversation was a million eight.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Million eight, I'm sorry, million eight. So the Presiding Officer says, "well, listen. We don't have money, you know, these are difficult times. We're in fiscal recession. And how do we get out of it? In fact in many ways we are in worse shape financially than the college is."

So -- but with the other counterbalance being that we care about education in this community. So what the Presiding Officer said, "well, you show me that we can split the baby here; that nine million will be made up by cuts in the College, that they can make up -- they can make up the difference, 900,000 rather; and that we would consider increasing our share 900,000 as well to make up the one million eight."

And with that in point, I have been waiting for those figures. I do not have them and how they're going to break that out. But Mr. Amoroso, who's in the back of the room, who is the financial person for the College, maybe he can help us out and give us those recommendations. Even if you don't have an end product as yet approved by the Trustees, at least we will know which way we're going so that we can give guidance to the full Legislature come Tuesday. Welcome.

MR. AMOROSO:

Hi, good afternoon. First, I'd like to say that Dr. McKay wished he could be here but he was summoned up to Albany; otherwise he'd be here. As I explained to you before, I gave Dr. McKay a proposal yesterday on the \$900,000. And essentially what that entailed was deferring some important items that we would be buying next year into the future, including replacement of computers and some instructional materials and some deferment on infrastructure repairs.

Dr. McKay has not gotten back to me yet as far as his approving that, but the proposal right now is he supports anything that the Legislature would like to discuss and we'd like to work closely with you to try to get some increase to offset the tuition increases.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. So when do you think we would have this final document?

MR. AMOROSO:

I can't speak for Dr. McKay. I just tried to call him. He wasn't picking up. He must be in a meeting, but I would hope possibly by tomorrow. That would be optimistic, but we'll try.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Yeah, I know. Because the conversation I understand between Mr. Lindsay and Dr. McKay is that we would have this before we make a decision. And so that would be very helpful. The quicker, the better. As you know, the budget is to be voted on next Tuesday.

MR. AMOROSO:

Right, I understand that.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And finalized.

MR. AMOROSO:

And as Tom and Kevin said, there's no fat in the budget. To identify the \$900,000 wasn't an easy task. We've done it. We're going to defer some things. Some people at the College aren't going to be happy because we're going to be deferring some things they were expecting. But, as we said, we want to offset the tuition as much as we can because we want to at least try to get down to Nassau.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. You know, and, again, we're not in a race with Nassau for the -- but we certainly want to -- we want to show that education matters and that the kids come first. Kids is an improper term. The students come first. Legislator Montano.

LEG. MONTANO:

Since we're talking about this, assuming that the 900,000 is found by the College in terms of being able to trim or postpone items next year, and assuming that the Legislature would also increase the contribution by a like amount, do you have any idea what the tuition will be at that point? And, you know, have those discussions taken place and do we have a commitment as to where it's going to be at assuming those items come together?

MR. AMOROSO:

I have a general idea. The raw number, as Gail, said, you know things will have to be discussed at the College. But our rule of thumb right now is for every 1% increase from the Legislature, from the County, we would be able to reduce tuition by \$15.

LEG. MONTANO:

So we would be talking here about a total of what? Four point something percent?

MR. AMOROSO:

Right.

LEG. MONTANO:

4.6?

MR. AMOROSO:

Right. So, again, the raw numbers would be about \$60 that we'd be able to take out of the 4026 so we'd be down to a little under 3966, something like that. It's \$15 for every 1%.

LEG. MONTANO:

All right. But are you factoring in the 900,000 that the College also is going to trim? That's what I'm getting at. In other words, from what I understand, if we give 1% increase, that's a \$15 reduction. But my understanding of this arrangement is that the College also will trim back some of its expenditures to meet us in the middle so that really would be a 4%. So that would be -- so that's where you get your 60, 15 times four, okay.

MR. AMOROSO:

Right. In other words, when we were expecting the County increase of a million 545, about 3966 would be the tuition at that level. So if the general increase overall is 4%, we're around that range.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Legislator Nowick?

LEG. NOWICK:

Maybe I misunderstood. So if we do all this, then the tuition for the Suffolk Community College students would be 3966?

MR. AMOROSO:

If the total was about a million 545, like I said, it would be 4%. It would be 3966. If it was more

than 4% overall, it would be slightly less.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay. I thought the intent was just to match Nassau.

LEG. MONTANO:

Keep it under --

MR. AMOROSO:

Well, Nassau's at 3990. But with our 4% increase in our budget at that time we were proposing the 4% increase, our proposed tuition was 3966.

LEG. NOWICK:

3966. Nassau's 3990?

MR. AMOROSO:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Again, we're not racing to the bottom here.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes, I think we are.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay, maybe we are. Legislator Montano, you have that perplexed look.

LEG. MONTANO:

You know what? I think what we should do is just have a further discussion when we -- when Dr. McKay gets back so we're very clear on what the numbers are. I'm not sure that that's the number that I initially understood. So I want to be clear on that before we make a final decision. And we have time to do that because we don't have to make this decision 'til Tuesday.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Are there any further questions from the Legislature? Okay. Anything else? Miss Taggart, would you like to weigh in on this?

MS. TAGGART:

No.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

You're good. Gail, anything that you'd like to add to the conversation at this point?

MS. VIZZINI:

No, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. With that in mind, is there anything else that this Committee has to handle? I don't believe so. Motion to adjourn.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:51 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**