

ED/Gov Ops Operating Budget

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, PERSONNEL, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Economic Development & Energy Committee and the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on October 23, 2013 to discuss the Operating Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

P.O. Wayne R. Horsley, Chair of the Economic Development & Energy Committee
Leg. Robert Calarco, Chair of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. Lou D'Amaro, Vice Chair of the Economic Development & Energy Committee
Leg. William Spencer, Vice Chair of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. Thomas Cilmi, member of the Economic Development & Energy Committee/member of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. Kara Hahn, member of the Economic Development & Energy Committee
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, member of the Economic Development & Energy Committee
Leg. Kate Browning, member of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. John M. Kennedy, Jr., member of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. Al Krupski, 1st Legislative District
Leg. Sarah Anker, 6th Legislative District
Robert Lipp, Director/Budget Review Office
Laura Halloran, BRO
Robert Doering, BRO
Craig Freas, BRO
Thomas Vaughn, County Executive's Office
Leg. DuWayne Gregory, 15th Legislative District
Carolyn Fahey, Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator
Samuel Chu, Commissioner/Department of Labor
Paul Margiotta, Executive Director/Traffic & Parking Violations Bureau
Terrence G. Pearsall, Chief of Staff/SC Legislature
Kathy Curran, SC Historical Society
Greg Moran, Aide for Legislator Nowick
Rick Brand, Newsday
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

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THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:42 PM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE

P.O. HORSLEY:

Will all Legislators please come to the horseshoe.

Alright. Good afternoon everybody and welcome to our budget working groups and hearings for Economic Development/Energy, Government Ops/Housing, Consumer Protection Operating Budget Committees. Is Parks -- Lynne, is Parks in this?

LEG. NOWICK:

No.

P.O. HORSLEY:

No, okay. Very good. Alrighty, what we'll do is we'll invite anyone that would like to speak on the Economic Development & Energy Committee issues. Carolyn, you want to come up and represent the cause?

MS. FAHEY:

Good afternoon. Only if there are questions, otherwise we're pretty satisfied with the County Executive's Recommended Budget. If there are specific questions, I'll be more than happy to address them.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Carolyn, I'm sorry. They were whispering in my ear. You said everything was wonderful and you couldn't be happier?

MS. FAHEY:

Happy, peppy, bursting with love, yeah. (Laughter) Just if there's questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okeydoke. Are there any questions of Carolyn concerning Economic Development & Energy? Okay, you guys -- any questions of Carolyn? Okay, yes, Legislator Calarco.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Carolyn, just a quick question. We notice in the budget that there were some positions that were -- I think one within Economic Development that was transferred over to the Hotel/Motel fund. Could you speak to that at all?

MS. FAHEY:

Yes. There was one position -- the Coordinator of Cultural Affairs was transferred out of the General Fund over into the film portion of the Hotel/Motel tax, correct.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Do you know what the reasoning was for that?

MS. FAHEY:

A hundred percent of her job is cultural affairs and focusing on the Hotel/Motel tax.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay.

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P.O. HORSLEY:

Good answer. Alright. Are there any other questions of Carolyn? Okay. Okay, let me -- while Lou is -- Legislator D'Amaro is going to be -- and maybe asking a question -- Carolyn, no, please stay up here just a second.

I just wanted to go over in public, we just had the discussion that there is a movement that we're going to -- that you would like to have the -- the Administration would like to have monies that were going to Cornell Cooperative Extension that was going -- that our Family Health and Wellness that was going -- that you're requesting -- the Administration is requesting and in agreement with BRO, that the Economic Development, that the monies \$63,000 will go back to Health. Does that --

MS. FAHEY:

Okay.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Yeah. Just explain it quickly because -- Robert, this is -- this is for your edification. They apparently agree with you.

MS. FAHEY:

Yes.

P.O. HORSLEY:

On a reimbursement issue involving Cornell Cooperative Extension, so.

MS. FAHEY:

The Family Health and Wellness contract that is currently in the Health Department was recommended by the County Executive to be transferred over from Health into Economic Development at the request of Cornell. And the County Executive acquiesced and he did that, which was fine. But afterwards when we did some more review and BRO highlighted it, that there's State aid associated with that contract, that only can be accessed if it stays underneath the direction of the Commissioner of Health.

So if we transfer that \$173,000 contract over to Economic Development, the Health Department loses the ability to claim it on their Article 6 aid. And I think it's 36%, which is about \$63,000.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Right.

MS. FAHEY:

So we concur with BRO's recommendation that we leave that contract in the Health Department and not transfer it to Economic Development.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay. So it's just another case of the Legislature's BRO leading the way to just and righteousness. Robert, you got that -- any thoughts on that or do you make sure that it's on the agenda?

MR. LIPP:

We'll have to put that in the Omnibus resolution.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay. You'll take care of that?

MR. LIPP:

We will, yes.

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P.O. HORSLEY:

Oh, I mean, the mechanics of it.

MR. LIPP:

Yeah, we'll bring it up at the next meeting.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Right, that's what I was looking for. Okay, thank you very much. Legislator D'Amaro, did you -- are you -- did you have a question?

LEG. D'AMARO:

I wanted to ask you -- thank you for coming down. Since you generally said to us do we have any questions, I want to generally ask you do you have any disagreement with the Budget Review Office's narrative on the Economic Development -- Department of Economic Development? Because it's quite extensive.

MS. FAHEY:

It is quite extensive.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I was wondering if you had any objections to anything that's written there or should we just follow their recommendations?

MS. FAHEY:

I don't believe that there's anything that was major that jumped out, no. I think we're fine with their recommendations.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. There's a chart also upfront in that section that starts on page 151. I don't know if you have that, Carolyn, but it lists personnel. And then it lists expenditures and then revenues. And the very last line says "other income 29,246,337." I was wondering if you could tell me what specifically that is; what income that is.

MS. FAHEY:

I'm sorry, Legislator, where are you? Other income on page 151.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Page 151 at the bottom of that chart. It says "other income."

MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And the third column over.

MS. FAHEY:

The twenty nine two?

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, because that is the 2013 estimate, what we expect to get at the end of the year of 2013. It's almost -- it's 29 million and change. Can you just detail for me what is the bulk of that revenue?

MS. FAHEY:

If you can give me a minute.

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LEG. D'AMARO:

Sure.

MS. FAHEY:

Seventeen million of that is for the sale of Yaphank. I would have to go back and get that for you, Legislator, by division because we have revenue that comes in from the airport, we have revenue that comes in from real property. I know 17 million of that was the sale of the Yaphank property. I would have to be able to break that out for you at a separate time.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. Well, that would leave another -- what do we have, almost 30 or 29 so 17 of that would be the sale.

MS. FAHEY:

Probably another 12 million. I can delineate for you. I can send you that.

MR. LIPP:

Yeah, so on page -- starting on page 154 is a breakdown of the revenues. So, for instance, if you look on the screen, you could see as was just spoken about, 230 acres in Yaphank relates to 2013 for 19.3 million. Of course, there's substantial monies related to the Hotel/Motel tax. And the 2014 recommended amount was 11.35 million. Then, of course, there is the airport.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Rob, just hold on one second.

MR. LIPP:

I'm sorry.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Is it 19 million or 17 million for Yaphank?

MS. FAHEY:

It was 19 million. I'm sorry.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Nineteen?

MS. FAHEY:

Nineteen three.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright, nineteen three. And that left ten million left over on the chart. And what was the second largest item?

MS. FAHEY:

Hotel/Motel probably about 9.3. 9.4 was our estimate.

MR. LIPP:

Yeah, so the 2013 estimated was just a little over nine million. You could see it the screen, the highlighted number over here.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. So the 19 million Yaphank sale is a one-shot.

MR. LIPP:

Sorry. You could also see on the screen if I'm capable of highlighting properly --

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LEG. D'AMARO:

So that's why the large -- one of the reasons for the big jump going into 2014 if you're looking at this chart.

MR. LIPP:

Right. So on the screen, as you could see under "sale of real property for 2014," there is no revenue there. So it drops off the table.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So a majority of what the Economic Development and Planning Department is looking as revenue for 2014 is the Yaphank sale and the Hotel/Motel funds.

MS. FAHEY:

In '13. '13.

MR. LIPP:

For '14, though, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

'14 is the Yaphank sale.

MR. LIPP:

'13 is the Yaphank sale. And '14, the majority of the revenue obviously is the Hotel/Motel and to a lesser extent the airport.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. But it drops off in 2014.

MR. LIPP:

Correct. Right.

LEG. D'AMARO:

In '13 it's the Yaphank sale and the Hotel/Motel; and then in '14 it reflects that you don't have another Yaphank sale.

MR. LIPP:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. Okay. So the Hotel/Motel is estimated at -- the Hotel/Motel tax estimate for 2014 in the Recommended Budget is what amount, Rob?

MR. LIPP:

It's -- you can see over here the '14 number is 11.35 million.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And what was last year's actual or adopted?

MR. LIPP:

You're talking 2012? Or --

LEG. D'AMARO:

No, I'm sorry. The 11.35 is for -- Recommended for 2014.

MR. LIPP:

Correct.

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LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. What was the 2013?

MR. LIPP:

The 2013 number you could see highlighted on the board is an estimate of nine million; just a little over nine million.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So what percent increase is that for 2014?

MR. LIPP:

It's highlighted again on the board now is 25.3% increase.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. So you're estimating -- your department is estimating a 25% increase in the Hotel/Motel tax. Can you explain the rationale behind that amount of increase?

MS. FAHEY:

Well, I think what happens with the Hotel/Motel is that, you know, the department does its estimate in May based upon the information we have. The County Executive does his estimate in August based upon the information he has. And when Budget Review gets around to doing the estimate, because they estimate it a little bit less than that 11 million, they actually have the third quarter in. So everybody's working with different figures.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I understand that. Alright, but nonetheless the Recommended Budget shows a 25% increase. Do you disagree with that at this point now that the third quarter is in?

MS. FAHEY:

Now that the third quarter is in, I would concur with what BRO is recommending.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. Good, that clarifies that. Okay. And I think you stated that with respect to all of the conclusions in the BRO report you would agree with them?

MS. FAHEY:

For the most, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, okay, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

P.O. HORSLEY:

You're welcome, Legislator. Legislator Hahn, do you have questions of Carolyn or do you want to --

LEG. HAHN:

Yeah, I mean I was going to get at the 25% increase because I think that we know -- and I believe part of the strength of this year had to do with Sandy -- hotel night stays after Sandy, etcetera. So, you know, for next year to expect a jump that's that large, I think, it would be -- I don't know that that's safe to expect us to increase over -- what were you at, at full -- almost full capacity?

MR. LIPP:

Yes. I could actually speak -- I shouldn't be speaking on behalf of the Executive's Budget Office, but I know that the way we budget it is they don't change the 2013 number so they could allocate it all in 2014. So they anticipated, I don't know to what extent, a higher number for '13. They put that increase in 2014. So even though it says 25%, they thought that the base would be a lot higher. So I don't know exactly how high they projected an increase, but it really wasn't a 25%

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increase even though it looks that way on the surface. It wasn't that large.

P.O. HORSLEY:

That's the 200,000 that is moving to the new year, right?

MR. LIPP:

No.

P.O. HORSLEY:

From '13.

MR. LIPP:

Oh, I'm not sure what you're talking about.

P.O. HORSLEY:

The \$200,000 residual from last year that -- (inaudible)

MR. LIPP:

Oh, no, this in addition to that.

P.O. HORSLEY:

In addition to it.

MR. LIPP:

Yeah, this is just the tax revenue itself, not the fund balance. So they -- they didn't -- as Carolyn was saying, they didn't have information on how the third quarter would do. And we did before we finished our review. Then we saw that there's no way it was going to be that large. And to be perfectly honest, even the estimate that we have, which is a lower number than them by 1.84 million, is perhaps optimistic even. In fact, it is.

LEG. HAHN:

Okay. So then the next item I wanted to touch on was tourism, Long Island Convention Visitors Bureau. It's been a while since we had them in or we've discussed them at committee. So I want to know where we're at, how we're feeling about what's happening now with that money. Because it's very important money that we invest in promoting Suffolk County and Long Island to the rest of the world really. And I just want to get your sense of -- if you're the right person to ask. I don't know where we are with that and how it's going.

MS. FAHEY:

Well, they will be back in front of the Legislature's Economic Development Committee, I believe, at the end of November, December. They're required to come back twice a year. The law just changed that they come in front of the Economic Development Committee instead of the full Leg. So Moke will give you his half-year report then based upon everything. And then at that time he'll be able to take into account the hotel stays, what happened with the first quarter of the year with Sandy, how it might have been skewed, it might not have been skewed. So he'll have a good handle on that.

LEG. HAHN:

So you have nothing to comment about investing in that organization again or using -- continuing the relationship as is.

MS. FAHEY:

Well, to that point it's a policy decision. The Legislature and the County Executive, we have a contract that runs through this year. We will extend it one more year just so that it runs concurrent with the tax. It doesn't make sense to have one more contractor having to RFP again next year.

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Next year the Legislature should be readdressing the allocation on the Hotel/Motel tax. It sunsets at the end of '15. So you -- end of '14, end of '15. I'll have to confirm which one. But at that point in time the legislative body and the Executive will decide how you want to move forward with that allocation. The State law has to be changed prior to the local law. So I would recommend that sometime next year we start discussions on how you would like to see that allocation changed, if at all.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay, Legislator Hahn, just as a reminder, you know, we did send out a letter that was received by Mr. McGowan that he had suspended the special privileges issue to his membership. So he did come into compliance for those issues in which we were very much concerned about as a Committee. So I think that he is as up-to-date as he's supposed to be for -- at least for our purposes as far as notifying us and conceding to our wishes.

MR. LIPP:

And just as a point of information, as you see on the board there, the contract ones through the end of next year.

P.O. HORSLEY:

End of next year.

MS. FAHEY:

The contract runs through --

MR. LIPP:

Rather, it gets extended until -- 'til the end of next year.

MS. FAHEY:

So it ends at the end of '14. We will extend it for one year so that it ends concurrently with the tax at the end --

MR. LIPP:

Right.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay. Thank you very much, Legislator Hahn. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Hi, Carolyn.

MS. FAHEY:

Hi.

LEG. CILMI:

I wanted to ask you about the deal that we have with enXco and the solar carports and ask you where we're at with that. The last I read about it, there was some debate as to what to do with the carports that were supposed to go on the -- at the Ronkonkoma Train Station. And there was some talk about putting them at the college; and then the college wasn't sure what to do there. And I just wanted to see where we're at and budgetarily if we're seeing the type of -- if we're seeing the agreed upon revenue from enXco that we had anticipated.

MS. FAHEY:

With regards to the Ronkonkoma Railroad, I'll have to get back to you. I'm not sure what the final

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solution was, whether or not we were going to build them somewhere else or not so I would have to get back to you on that. We do have the revenue for the solar for --

LEG. CILMI:

I think the original agreement basically gave us about \$489,000 if I'm correct per year. That was a lease agreement.

MS. FAHEY:

I would have to check on that amount. But we're estimating 320,00 for '14.

LEG. CILMI:

So it sounds like it's the amount -- the lease amount has been reduced because of the change in contract relative to the Ronkonkoma Train Station being eliminated.

MS. FAHEY:

I can get you the specifics on what the contract -- if the contract had been changed or not or if we're still looking at options.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah, if you could let me know, that would be great. Along those same lines -- and I'll give you an out before I ask the question because you may not have seen the e-mail that I sent --

MS. FAHEY:

I didn't.

LEG. CILMI:

Back at the end of last year, I had sponsored a bill which passed, which was co-sponsored by, I believe, Legislators Anker, Muratore and, I think, Legislator Browning, that called for a collaborative study between the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Public Works to find suitable locations in the County for solar arrays so that we could reap some of the benefit -- our taxpayers could reap some of the benefit that presently enXco is reaping as a result of their power purchase agreement with LIPA. The bill called for a -- for a study to be presented within six months of the passage of the bill. And that study was presented to us in June of this year, three months or so ago. And it basically came to the conclusion that there were no suitable locations for solar arrays in Suffolk County.

You can imagine my shock when I saw an RFP two weeks ago or so come across my computer screen for the building of solar arrays at potentially two locations: One of which was Gabreski Airport. I think the other may have been Bowmark, although I'm not sure. And so the e-mail that I sent to Commissioner Minieri and Commissioner Anderson, which has not -- I've not received a reply to yet, basically said what happened in the three months since the report was initially issued that said there were no suitable locations. All of a sudden we found two fairly large locations to potentially put solar panels.

So my question is both from a, you know, from the point of view what happened between the point that -- at which the study was done and two weeks ago that changed? And more importantly for this Committee, at least, with regard to the budget process, are we anticipating any revenue from such an installation in the 2014 budget?

MS. FAHEY:

I could talk to the second question. There's no revenue projected in the 2014 budget for additional solar arrays. That I can tell you. What happened in between, I would have to get back to you on. I don't know the specifics.

LEG. CILMI:

Fair enough. I'm sure at some point either Commissioner Anderson or Commissioner Minieri will

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reply to my e-mail. Thank you.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Thank you very much, Legislator Cilmi. Legislator D'Amaro has another quick question.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, about the airport, the Gabreski Airport, now I was just looking at the notes in the BRO report, the County back in 2009 authorized the execution of a lease agreement with Rechler to develop a 55-acre industrial park, but we haven't realized that lease yet; is that correct?

MS. FAHEY:

That's correct. We have an agreement for a lease. Actually we are in the process of trying to schedule the closing for next November -- for this November. So we're looking to close on that, receive the letter of credits of \$650,000 that was placed as a deposit and then start receiving rent as of November of this year.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So as the divisions requested revenue related to this lease included almost 800,000 in 2013 -- so that's not really -- you expect that to happen in November?

MS. FAHEY:

We expect to have about 725,000 of that amount if we close in November. It'll give us two months of rent plus the \$650,000 in deposit.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So that is moving forward.

MS. FAHEY:

Yes, it is.

LEG. D'AMARO:

In this year. There's also a notation from our report that there is an Enterprise Fund for the airport.

MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So that the fees and revenue generated can help to maintain -- I knowing it's expensive to do that, but it seems to be -- according to this report, the table indicates an estimated 2013 year end deficit of almost 400,000 in that fund. And can you explain the reason for the deficit?

MS. FAHEY:

To the best of my ability I can explain it. When you look at the debt service that's associated with the airport, it gets quite convoluted because we get grants that are 95% funded, but the County then goes and debts out that money. And even though we get reimbursed within a certain amount of time, our debt isn't adjusted to reflect that reimbursement of that revenue. So we're working with the Budget Office now to hopefully come up with a way to analyze that and look at that Enterprise Fund in a different manner. If you see the budget, the status of funds for the airport, you'll see almost \$850,000 worth of debt that we have to carry next year. And that's a lot considering we get a lot of our money reimbursed. So we're looking at ways to better account for that.

LEG. D'AMARO:

How do you carry debt? I don't quite understand that. If you have a fund that has revenue, can you spend more than what the fund takes in?

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MS. FAHEY:

The General Fund would support it. The General Fund carries the balance.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So the General Fund does a transfer into the Enterprise Fund?

MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

For expenses?

MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And so when the balance goes to zero, who's making the decision to go beyond the zero limit and run that fund at a deficit? How is that happening?

MS. FAHEY:

I'm not following the question, Legislator. The County has an obligation to run the airport. There are concern costs associated with that. And the County has obligated to carry the difference --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, let me ask it another way. So if the enterprise fund is insufficient to meet the year's expenses, which it's not, then the General Fund, the operating budget, supports it.

MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Supports the airport. But you show that or book that as a negative in the Enterprise Fund?

MS. FAHEY:

Yes.

MR. LIPP:

Okay, so what happens is, if you look, for instance, in the budget, it's shown as a revenue -- intra fund revenue from the General Fund. And in 2012 it was 976,000. This year it's estimated to be 575,000 and recommended next year to be a little over 700,000. So they are operating at a loss. The anticipation is, among other things, the Rechler lease would be able to make up for that. And it wouldn't operate as a deficit, but we're not at that point in terms of the development of the airport yet.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. So the airport as a whole is operating at a loss, but we're hoping to turn that around with the industrial park. And you're saying that the closing's expected this November.

MS. FAHEY:

Right, in addition to a few other aviation developments that we have going in the pipe.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Alright. So it's been a few years, but we're starting to be hopeful now that we'll start to see the income get generated and that part moving forward.

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MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, okay. That's good. Thank you.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Alright. So that's good news. So, Carolyn, you believe that those dollars that -- are becoming closer at this point in time?

MS. FAHEY:

Coming closer.

P.O. HORSLEY:

How are we doing on the work that the County was going to be doing at the park itself? How are we doing with the -- the street repairs. There was a number of things that -- infrastructure stuff that we had to put in place before --

MS. FAHEY:

The County was putting in a main roadway in the spine of all of the utility work, right.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Right. All that stuff.

MS. FAHEY:

It's all done.

P.O. HORSLEY:

All done? We're good?

MS. FAHEY:

Beautiful.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Nice.

MS. FAHEY:

Yep.

P.O. HORSLEY:

It's out there so we can take a look at that. We love to look at underground infrastructure. Okay. Are there any other questions of Carolyn? We're good? Carolyn, thank you very much.

Now I also have a card here from Kathy Curran. Kathy, you want to come up and address the Committee on the Historical Society? Kathy, is the mic on?

PUBLIC PORTION

MS. CURRAN:

Thank you. I'm Kathy Curran. I'm the Director of the Suffolk County Historical Society and I'm here to thank the Legislature for your support and also for your recent gift of the WPA art of the Foley Nursing Home.

For those of you who don't know the Suffolk County Historical Society, we were founded in 1886. We're the oldest historical society in both Nassau and Suffolk County. And we have over 25,000 objects in our collection and in our archival library. Now this is unusual for me to be here at the

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Economic Development, but I'd like you to review the Suffolk County Historical Society when you consider what we're asking for is an increase in our budget for our active role in the economic development of Suffolk County and specifically downtown Riverhead.

The Suffolk County Historical Society is in a huge growth period. Our exhibition of events have increased fivefold in attendance and we have done more and more collaborations with County parks, with other historical societies, other art councils and also with Stony Brook University. We have a gift of the mobile museum that's bringing education and the history of Suffolk County to schools.

Now, when I say that we're a key player in the economic development of the vitalization of downtown, Riverhead, some of you have already seen this, this is a map of downtown Riverhead (indicating) that links all the historic sites, green spaces and cultural organizations. We're looking to expand the Suffolk County Historical Society with two projects. And the one that I recently asked for an increase in funding was for renovation of a gallery space. The gallery space is in-house. It's just improving the real estate we already have. Our vision is to become one of the tourist attractions of Suffolk County for downtown Riverhead. We plan to bookend Riverhead with Atlantis on one end, become a walking tour.

This map links all the green spaces, all the cultural organizations, all the sites in downtown Riverhead. Now I know each one of you has your own constituency. And we are Hotel/Motel tax funded. So if you think in terms of the 27 historical societies that are in Suffolk County that we represent and now we actively pursue to show the County's role in larger themes of local history, the Suffolk County Historical Society is bringing history to life.

We did a huge exhibit on racism. We pulled out our slave papers, our Klu Klux Klan costume, things that were totally unacceptable to be seen in a museum. That was funded by a grant from New York State on -- a symposium that we gave on diversity of culture: Suffolk County's role in the Civil War, Suffolk County's role in the environment. Our latest exhibit that we just took down, Dennis Puleston was one of the founders of the Environmental Defense Fund, we have 250 pictures. He was Long Island's Audubon. And he was one of the founders of the Environmental Defense Fund, which he convinced along -- to ban DDT. Suffolk County Legislature was the first Legislature in New -- in America to ban the use of DDT. Bravo, you brought back the osprey to Long Island. These are the things that keep history alive for the residents of Suffolk County. And that's our goal.

So if I come to you and ask you for more money, we know we are -- at your largess. We appreciate all that you give to us, the new art for the Foley Nursing Home from WPA Project went into the depression, but we also are links to every individual community in this County. The \$50,000 that I'm asking for in increase, I know is pie in the sky, but it really is going for the greater good of bringing history to all the residents of Suffolk County.

So if you look at us in terms of economic development, we really are at the forefront right now of moving forward with this. We have new signage that's actually going to be going up with a Main Street Grant from the State in downtown Riverhead. And this is a paradigm shift for us. This will bring us the audience that we need to further educate the people of Suffolk County about their history.

And I have a gift for you all. And it's just copies of historic photos from our collection that represent each one of your districts. And just so you can see what your area used to look like and the tremendous growth that you've brought about through the Suffolk County Legislature.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Alright, thank you, Ms. Curran. We appreciate your coming down here today.

Would anyone else like to be heard on Economic Development? Oh, okay, well, Mr. D'Amaro has a question, Ms. Curran. Just hang on a second. Nope, hang on one second. Legislator?

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LEG. D'AMARO:

You're asking for an increase over last year's adopted amount of \$50,000?

MS. CURRAN:

Yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I just don't have it at my fingertips. What was your budget last year? What was the County adopted contribution last --

MS. CURRAN:

\$289,000.

LEG. D'AMARO:

The County -- do you have any other sources of revenue?

MS. CURRAN:

Yes. We have an endowment and we have our -- the endowment is \$970,000 that I keep asking the board to give me another 30 grand to push me over the limit but --

LEG. D'AMARO:

970, but that's generating income. You're not spending that.

MS. CURRAN:

That's not --

LEG. D'AMARO:

So what does that give you in revenue per year roughly?

MS. CURRAN:

About -- Chris? About \$400,000.

LEG. D'AMARO:

970 endowment gives you 400,000 a year?

MS. CURRAN:

No.

LEG. D'AMARO:

No, I don't think so. No, that can't be. Okay. But nonetheless you have a 970 --

MS. CURRAN:

Right.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. And any other sources of revenue?

MS. CURRAN:

No. I'm the new Director since 2011. And it had never been the policy of the Suffolk County Historical Society to go out for gifts. We're private funding.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay.

MS. CURRAN:

So we have instituted that and we've started that. And we have State grants. We actually just got

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a small grant from Cultural Affairs from the County for an exhibition that's currently up. So we're in a growth period as far as the community and outreaching for private funding. I'm looking for private funding for the Winnebago to be sponsored so we can bring it to schools cost-effectively.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And how many employees do you have?

MS. CURRAN:

Well, I'm the only full-time employee. We have a staff of about 12 including -- actually four employees from Suffolk County Social Services.

LEG. D'AMARO:

What do you mean by that, four employees from Suffolk County Social Services?

MS. CURRAN:

Yes. Suffolk County Social Services will call and say "I have so and so and they're wonderfully skilled and we'd like to place them so that they will be -- "

LEG. D'AMARO:

Oh, okay. Alright, I understand that. And so what is your -- you have a total budget -- what's your total budget?

MS. CURRAN:

My total budget is like \$489,000. And I'd like an increase of 50 onto the 289 that we get from you now.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And what percentage of your budget do you put towards salary and administrative costs?

MS. CURRAN:

Way too much. The salary, I would say, is about almost half.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Half. And you're trying to bring that down.

MS. CURRAN:

I'm trying --

LEG. D'AMARO:

You're bringing it down by asking the County for more money.

MS. CURRAN:

No, I'm trying to get -- what I'm trying to do actually is get the board to understand that we have cannot rely on this County money. I'm trying to move off of the County dole, shall we say, to move us into a situation where we're getting funding from grant writing and private resources. It's a new way of thinking for the Suffolk County Historical Society.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And just one more question. And thank you for your patience. What specifically are you targeting the increase to?

MS. CURRAN:

We have a gallery space, a 24 by 30-foot gallery that's really quite grand, that was relegated to storage. And what we're trying to do is bring it back to the gallery space so we could offer the community more exhibitions and more programs. The gallery space would also be climate-controlled. I cannot get grants right now for objects for conservation, because the only

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place that they can be -- the only place that they're secure with climate control, our storage area or our archival library. So I need an area that's climate controlled where I can borrow objects.

When we did the Civil War exhibit, I wanted to borrow a huge flag from the Upstate museum of -- Military Museum in Saratoga. They were ready to bring it. They were ready to give it to me. But I had to say to them, "you have to understand we don't have the climate." And they were terribly disappointed and so were we, because I couldn't give them back a back of silk laying at the bottom of a frame after an entire summer of heat fluctuation. So it would bring the Suffolk County Historical Society into another level of museology and advance the study of history for Suffolk County.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. I understand your request. Thank you.

MS. CURRAN:

You're welcome.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Ms. Curran, just quickly, if I may, and it is kind of -- maybe I shouldn't.

MS. CURRAN:

Go ahead.

P.O. HORSLEY:

When you ask for \$50,000, to say that you're on the County dole, I really find that a little offensive.

MS. CURRAN:

Oh, I'm sorry.

P.O. HORSLEY:

We're very historically -- I am anyway, concerned about our historic artifacts and the like. And I never thought of it as a dole.

MS. CURRAN:

No, when I say that, I mean that I need to educate my new board to the fact that we need to become self-sufficient.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay. And I appreciate that.

MS. CURRAN:

Dole is a bad choice. I should have used gift; or I should have used largess; or I should have used support.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Support would have been --

MS. CURRAN:

I'm sorry.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Concern for our historic artifact and history of Suffolk County. Those are things that we're concerned about. Okay, Legislator -- who was first? Lynne, you want to go? Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

I just wanted to say one thing. Last week when we were in Riverhead at our regular legislative meeting, I took a ride over to the museum. And it's actually a really beautiful museum. And what

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they were doing, and I know what you're talking about, about the upstairs gallery, they were painting it and preparing it for the next show that they were putting on.

MS. CURRAN:

Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

And it really is -- and, Lou, so -- just so you know, it's really a beautiful museum and -- yeah, it's really nice.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Very nice.

LEG. NOWICK:

And they're doing a lot of work now. I did enjoy it. Downstairs is really, really well put together, very professional. You should be very proud of it.

MS. CURRAN:

Thank you.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. Do you have a set of plans or -- the gallery space that your needing to refurbish at this point, has somebody actually -- you're talking about climate control; you're talking about other things. Do you have kind of a set of plans, a scope of work? Items that --

MS. CURRAN:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

-- any of us could be looking at?

MS. CURRAN:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Can you share that with me just because I like to see those things?

MS. CURRAN:

Absolutely.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And there are some people that are associated with other historical societies, in particular there's a master mason with the Yaphank Historical Society who's done a tremendous amount of work there with the -- what the hell is the name -- the teacher's house. What's the teacher's house? The Homan House, yeah.

MS. CURRAN:

Sure.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And that was a collaborative effort that was actually done with a group from the Sheriff's Office -- I'm sorry -- from the Correctional Facility, inmates that have particular skills. So the price was real cheap.

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MS. CURRAN:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

There's many different ways to achieve the particular outcome.

MS. CURRAN:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And I applaud your willingness to educate your board and to think outside of the box. Because you are a realist. And like the Presiding Officer, I'm a fan of history as well. But those who are fans of it need to support it.

MS. CURRAN:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So, if you could make that set of plans available for me, I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

MS. CURRAN:

Thank you. We have that. And it's not only just the climate control, it's lighting, it's museum quality lighting, it's windows, the whole works.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you for coming here and explaining this to all of us. Because it is such a great resource to have, not only for Riverhead, but obviously for all of Suffolk County. Now, you showed me all the items that are stored in the attic. Could you explain how many items are stored up there?

MS. CURRAN:

We have over 250,000 items at the Suffolk County Historical Society. It is literally bursting at the seams. And we also have an offsite secret storage that the County has let us have. It's not so much a secret. It's a bunker at the Gabreski Airport, you know, where the -- missile silos. And that's filled with our farm machinery that we have in the collection. I actually brought a piece of Suffolk County history to pass around. I don't know if I have time or if you're interested. Yes? No?

P.O. HORSLEY:

Sure.

MS. CURRAN:

Yes? I was a former teacher. I'm huge into Show and Tell. This is a piece of a airplane that crashed into my backyard. This is the news -- one of the articles that went with it. Alright. This is a piece of plane (showing) that shows up in my yard every time it rains. So when I do this for historical societies, I say the rain on the terrain brings up the plane.

So, Suffolk County Historical Society now has in their collection this piece of plane. What can I tell you about this piece of stuff? I'm a material culturalist. Suffolk County Historical Society in the collection has the newspaper articles and this piece of plane. 1968, this plane crashed in Bayport in my yard. The pilots were bringing it from California to Gabreski Airport -- or Airforce Base. They were jettisoned over the Great South Bay. They lived. The plane crashed in my yard.

April 19 -- 1974? Anyway, I can't remember the year. I'm very nervous. It was the height of the

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Vietnam War. The plane was a McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom. It was about the same time that Grumman was building the A-6 Intruder. That tells me that this plane not only was involved in a political situation, Lyndon Johnson had escalated the war, and more people were killed in Vietnam in that year than any other time. This plane was part of the economic development of the aerospace industry in -- on Long Island.

The plane crashed in my yard and nothing -- luckily no one was killed because my house is on one of the Great Estates. It was divided up in the turn of the century, in the 1890's. They're a huge tract of land that people came out from Manhattan -- the original Great Estates were on the South Shore of Long Island.

So after the soldiers came home from World War II, all these gigantic parcels of these Great Estates were divided up. So, I have an acre and-a-half. The house behind me has four acres. The plane was lucky enough to land in this vast tract of land that had been developed for the GIs by dividing up all these properties.

So from this piece of junk that I'm handing you that I find in my yard is a story about the politics of America that year, the political situation that was going on, the economic growth in the region, the economic growth in America with the war industry, the aerospace industry and the change in culture on Long Island from the Great Estates to being developed for housing. That you can learn from a hunk of plane that you find in your backyard.

So that's the idea of the Suffolk County Historical Society. We're trying to make those links so people can see that history isn't just about -- I'm so afraid I'm going to offend you again, Wayne --

P.O. HORSLEY:

Oh, no.

MS. CURRAN:

About dead people. It's about -- it's a living thing. It's something that's alive. And each one of your constituents -- you have tremendous historical societies in your areas. And we represent them. We're the umbrella that brings the story altogether.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Well put.

MS. CURRAN:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

Kathy, the authorities have been looking for this piece ever since. I want you to know.

(LAUGHTER)

P.O. HORSLEY:

Legislator Krupski, you done? Okay. Alright. We're good? That's great. Miss Curran, thank you very much for coming down here today and thank you for your request.

Would anyone else like to be heard about -- from the Economic Development Committee? Would anyone else like to be heard? Alright, with that, I'll close Economic Development and I'll turn this over to Legislator Calarco who will be talking about Gov Ops.

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GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, PERSONNEL, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Thank you, Legislator Horsley. Presiding Officer, Horsley. Thank you very much. I guess we'll start -- I see Paul Margiotta out there in the audience. If Paul would like to come up and give us a brief rundown about how the Traffic Violation -- Traffic Parking Violations Agency has been going. We got started this past April. We went live. I hear it's been a -- quite a success. And if you could just go through maybe some of the metrics you've had, what you've seen coming through, what kind of backlog we might have there, if you could.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure. Thank you for having me speak.

LEG. CILMI:

Don't leave without your plane, Kathy.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

I can't dance, though, so I'm not going to be able to do any -- the bureau -- the agency has been doing great. The employees are excellent. And we've gotten a lot of support. We got all your support. We got support from all the employees that -- and the attorneys that were expecting us to open. And they gave us a little break by not coming in the first month.

So the first month in April was very low in revenue, very low in visitors. And everything was perfected in April. In May we began to kick off. We started having plea negotiations. We had judicial hearing officers. And we actually began to do some judicial work.

In the Traffic and Parking area, we brought in about half a million dollars in May. In June we kicked up a little more and we brought in about \$1.2 million. In July I believe it was 1.7. In August it was two. And in September I think it's \$2.2 million. Now, I've been -- everyone who listens to me, I've been trying to tell them this is the result of a backlog. So although the numbers kept going up, and we're doing a lot of volume, we inherited a lot of tickets; because from January to April 1st -- actually to almost the end of April, DMV just held those tickets and did nothing with them. So we were given 30,000 tickets that were not addressed.

Also the DMV had a backlog of tickets; many thousands of tickets that they hadn't addressed, some of them going back to 1984. And they transferred them to me. So what I've been doing between April 1st and now is trying to get rid of all of those old tickets and get to the point where we're running on what we're actually issuing a month. So the revenue keeps going up, but it will level out. And we will get to the point where we will know what we're sustaining by how many tickets are issued by all the agencies in a given month. I do have a plan for enhanced parking enforcement and we are putting together an RFP to generate much more money in parking. Parking has been neglected in Suffolk County for a long time.

When I was appointed by you to this position, there were 12,000 parking tickets in District Court that were not even entered into the computer. They were in a draw. We entered all of those tickets within the first month of us taking over and we continue to enter them, but there's no -- there's no enforcement; there's no attention on it. And parking is a valuable commodity in Suffolk County, anywhere really. And the Towns utilize it. In Babylon we utilized it. And I think we made more in Babylon in the Town than Suffolk County is taking in on parking. So there's a large gap there that we could address. So, although the backlog is what's been bringing up the revenue, I plan on coming in with more parking to bring it up next year so we can continue to go up.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Are you going to require any additional staffing for next year?

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

I don't -- add any staffing other than the ones -- we did ask for some extra ones to have. But because this backlog existed, I don't know what the normal's going to be. So I don't want to hire people and get everybody going based on the volume that I have right now because this is not the real volume. And I don't know the real volume is going to be. So once we level out and I see where we're at, then I'll be more comfortable hiring people. I don't want to hire people and then let them go because the volume drops. So right now we're okay. But I do anticipate, especially if we get the parking going, we will need some more people. And they are in the budget.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay. Thank you. Legislator Cilmi has a question.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Paul, thanks for being here.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

And I have to say I've only gotten one, maybe two complaints about the agency, which you know about. We've e-mailed back and forth. And I think that says a lot about how you're running it because --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, let's face it. It's not -- it's not a pleasant thing.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

No, it's not.

LEG. CILMI:

And so for me only to get one or two people who were upset with the way it went, I think that's pretty good. I don't know if the rest of my colleagues have had the same experience. So kudos to you. You must be doing a really good job over there.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

And I'm happy to hear that the revenue is coming in and doing well, improving.

One of the issues that was brought to my attention, and I'm not sure that you can speak to this issue in your position there, I'm not sure if it has anything to do with you, quite frankly, and I don't even know how best to articulate it, but some of the Villages apparently have experienced a significant drop off in revenue once we came on line with our Traffic and Parking Violations Agency. Two of them that I know specifically about are the Village of Islandia and the Village of Patchogue. Can you speak to that at all?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

The only thing I can say they -- I've heard this and they brought it to us. I can say that we've never told the police to do anything different than they did prior. And that it's our -- my understanding, especially, that they're following what they did when TVB was here and simply writing the TVB tickets to us.

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Now, I looked at some of the numbers that -- only -- I only saw Islandia gave. And there was only one year that the revenues for them went through the roof. I think it was '11. And it was a huge windfall. And I don't know why, I don't know what happened, but, you know, there was -- I'm not going to give you the exact numbers, but say 200,000, 200,000, 1.1 million, 300,000, 450 and now it's down. So I don't know caused that one year to be that way. But other than that, there really wasn't that much difference in revenue.

LEG. CILMI:

From that quick analysis that you made, is it back down to where it was those other years?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

It looked lower. It looked lower this year than it was. And I can't say why.

LEG. CILMI:

I mean there would always be fluctuations.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure, sure. And it -- I think -- they're not complaining. They're not saying on their regular streets -- they believe on the Expressway that that's where they're losing them.

LEG. CILMI:

Why would that be?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

The Expressway runs through the Village.

LEG. CILMI:

I know that. But why would it be that they -- that they may have been receiving certain revenues previously but not receiving those revenues now?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

You want me to speculate? There was a transfer from the Sheriff's Department to the Highway Patrol. If you set up your radar in a particular location that you're comfortable with, it might have been -- the Sheriffs might have done that in the Village part and they were issuing tickets there as they were pulling people over. Maybe Suffolk County is not. I really don't know. I wish I could answer it. I could tell you the tickets I'm getting, I -- it's hard for me to tell but I'm not seeing anything from the Village. As a matter of fact, Judge Wolinski works for me. And he's never, you know, said "hey, this ticket should have been ours. Why is it here?"

So I don't know. I really don't know. You know, I made a lot of speculation and I thought -- the only thing that changed was it went from the Sheriffs to the Police Department at the same time. But I'm not seeing -- and maybe I can't see. You know, maybe I can't look at a ticket and tell that it should be in the Village, but the attorneys can. And only one ticket was brought to me. And they said "this should be in the Village. Can you transfer it?" And I did.

LEG. CILMI:

Other than -- other than something procedurally in terms of law enforcement that could explain the loss of revenue, is there anything in the process that's changed? Is there anything in the process, you know, by which -- prior to TPVA --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure.

LEG. CILMI:

-- the Villages would have gotten a certain portion of revenue that was written in their -- within the geographic boundaries and now they're not because of TPVA? Is that --

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes. I didn't know if that's -- if they were addressing just -- if they were addressing the revenue or the amount of tickets, but there is a change. Because when the Traffic Violations Bureau -- when the State had it, the money was divided up and a little piece of it went to all different municipalities which -- it's a very complicated formula depending on what article the Vehicle and Traffic Law the ticket is written under and pled to. So they did get some money. Everybody got some money including the County. And now that it has changed, that no longer takes place because the State is no longer adjudicating those matters. Now the County is. And it's the County police; basically that's right.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay, so let me just regurgitate what you just said to make sure I understand it. So prior the State would be adjudicating the tickets. And the State would share the revenue from the ticket with the County and with the Villages and with other --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Town.

LEG. CILMI:

-- whichever other municipalities were involved.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Including the Towns?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

I believe so, depending on what Town it is.

LEG. CILMI:

Interesting.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

And what kind of violation was written.

LEG. CILMI:

And now we're getting the money and we share a portion of the money with the State, but that's it.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

That's it.

LEG. CILMI:

Interesting. Now, was that planned? Because I seem to remember -- and I haven't been able to put my fingers on it, honestly, but I seem to remember during the discussion of this agency prior to -- you know, it may have been when -- I don't know, there were two or three different resolutions that Legislator Calarco and I, you know, co-sponsored or whatever in the creation of this, home rule messages, etcetera, but I seem to remember somebody saying that the Villages wouldn't be negatively impacted by -- by the implementation of this new agency.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

I don't know if they're complaining of that because I wouldn't think it's a really significant amount of money.

LEG. CILMI:

I think to the Village of Islandia, it's like 3 or \$400,000, if I'm not mistaken.

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

I think they're saying that -- their tickets are not being returnable to them. And that's the money they're losing. Not that they're not getting the little piece anymore. They're not actually getting the physical ticket, which they would take, they would plea bargain that ticket to a parking ticket and keep all the money. So they're saying they're not getting all of those tickets.

I have no idea why they're not getting them. The police are saying they didn't change anything that they were doing. I don't know if it's just -- if everything's down because we didn't have it the year before for me to be able to look at how many tickets were actually written; if it's because the Sheriff may have -- maybe the Sheriff set up their laser and their thing in the Village and would like to issue tickets there and the highway patrol is not doing that. I don't know.

All I know is we made it very clear to all the Villages, to the Police Department and everyone else that nothing should be changed when we open. All tickets that were written to the Traffic Violations Bureau would be written to us. If the ticket would have been written to the Village, it should be written to the Village. And we did not want to get into any of that. All we wanted was what was going to TB.

LEG. CILMI:

Would it be within your scope of access to be able to tell us in the years prior to TPVA, that small portion that you were talking about that they would get a portion of, is that something that you could -- a number that you could put your fingers on for the past couple of years?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

I could find out. It would be in the State report.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

I don't think we've ever looked it. They were more interested in how much the County got.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

But it's got to be in the State report how much went to each Village and each municipality. So I can get those State reports.

LEG. CILMI:

If you could either do that or just point me in the direction, I would appreciate it.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Absolutely.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks very much, Paul.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

You're welcome.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Thank you. And I didn't hear that about Patchogue. So I'm going to follow up with the Mayor. In fact, our Village Justice is retiring because he can't keep up with the caseload in his own private law practice anymore, but I'll have to ask him about that.

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

He's at our place every day.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

I'm sure that's probably what it is. Probably better money. Legislator Spencer has a question.

LEG. SPENCER:

Hi, Paul. Again, thank you. And I have several questions. And I'll frame them from the standpoint -- first of all, I appreciate what you do. And it's a very difficult job. And I wanted to -- I have had some complaints and I wanted to address those. I think that -- I've got a couple of concerns where you have a department that is designed -- you know, it brings in revenue. And being kind of the Director of that department focusing on the revenue, but ultimately when we talk about traffic violations, whether or not it's red light cameras or speeding or parking, it's ultimately public safety and trying to walk that balance.

So with regards to my constituents, one of the issues was -- and we had this before you took over, too, is with regard to the red light cameras and understanding that the fee had maybe gone from 50 to \$80. And some of my constituents had indicated that when they look at the thing that came in the mail, it was kind of difficult for them to call and to try to figure out what to do and where to go. But then the other concern was that once they made it to the Traffic Violations Bureau, that -- if they were in line, it was set hours on a particular day in an afternoon for a four-hour period. And so one complaint was that they had taken time off from work and they were there and they weren't able to get to everyone by the time it was closing time. And so they were told that they needed to come back.

So I don't know if this is true or not true. But is there a policy that if someone is there to be serviced, that they're not turned away and told to come back another time? Do they take care of everyone that's been put in the queue?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes, we've been amazed at ourselves that -- the volume goes up and down every day, but we finish. And even everyday we think we're not going to finish and we've always finished everyone. I think maybe they mis-communicated to you. They may have -- we may have finished them at five o'clock and the cashier was closed so they weren't able to go into the cashier and pay it, because I've heard that complaint. The cashier was closing at 4:30. Now I have them open until five o'clock. So that -- I've heard those complaints. But red lights are particularly done in the mornings in about two-and-a-half hours, they're in and out.

LEG. SPENCER:

And on the summonses that go out in the mail, is there a clear -- if you wouldn't mind after today if you would go back and just make sure that if someone's getting that summons, that there is clear instructions; and that they're not directed to go to one location that then bounces them to another location; that they can go to the right place to find out how to address the issue.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure. I'm going to -- I'm going to believe that that probably occurred from -- these matters were adjudicated in the District Court. And they changed to us April 1st. So you had to have an overlap of people having old summonses, they would go to District Court and they would be told "we don't do it no more. You gotta go back there."

LEG. SPENCER:

Okay.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

So -- but I will review it anyway just to make sure that it's good. But I'm sure a lot of people went all over the place not knowing where to go.

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LEG. SPENCER:

Okay. Thanks. Then I'll just move on it.

The other, I guess, kind of concern that I had was when you look at with regards to speeding and things of that sort, where someone that may be coming in with going ten miles over the speed limit, another one 30 miles, another one for running a red light; and my understanding was that as they spoke with the adjudicators, that it seemed that there was a high number of people coming out with the same deal: 500 bucks and you're free to go. And I think one of my Aides actually -- which she'll be embarrassed that I'm saying this on the record was, you know, I guess, caught and wound up paying.

But I wanted to talk about a couple of things briefly, and that is I can understand making kind of a deal, but I don't know if it's the philosophy where -- if we're looking at public safety and someone is going 30 miles over the speed limit, where -- no points or no reporting onto your record, is that in a sense -- I don't want to say the wrong word, you know, I don't want to say "bribery," in a sense, but I don't want -- like if it's -- I'm not saying that, but --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Pleas.

LEG. SPENCER:

-- I don't want it to be from a standpoint that they're almost paying not to have the points and not to have it reported; where in some cases, if it's enough of a dangerous situation where there should be points and where it should be reported. And is that typically the kind of the routine that points and reporting is kind of translated into dollars, "you pay this much and it won't get reported"?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

In a general sense, yes; however, honestly, I don't want to talk myself out of a job, but if you put somebody less conservative than me there, you'd probably make more money because I will not jeopardize public safety.

LEG. SPENCER:

Okay.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

And I have even a list of tickets, for example, child in no restraints, passing a stopped school bus, leaving the scene of an accident. I won't even plea them.

LEG. SPENCER:

Excellent.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

It's to the charge. And your speeding tickets, once you hit a six-point speed, which is a significant speed, the six -- it's three, four, six, eight, eleven. When you hit six, there's no more opportunity if you're in there to plead to not get points. Now I'm pleading you to two points, maybe, or I'm giving you some reason not to go to trial. Because if they all went to trial, we'd close, but they're getting points.

LEG. SPENCER:

Good. That's important.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. SPENCER:

I think at the same time public safety has to be served.

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

Absolutely.

LEG. SPENCER:

And I mean just flip that to the other side there, too, is there -- I'm sure that when you look at a population, that -- you're looking at violations, there are a certain number of innocents, too.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure.

LEG. SPENCER:

And in that plea process, is there -- if someone comes in and they have clear and convincing evidence that a mistake was made, is it the kind of situation -- or sometimes an innocent individual is told, "well, if you pay this, then up don't have to go to trial and it's over," are we -- if we see someone that comes in with convincing evidence of innocence, are we able to kind of settle that, you know -- and what's -- I guess I'd like you to get back to me with maybe some numbers. Because there are a certain number of people that are innocent.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure. I could tell you that if they have physical evidence to prove that it wasn't -- they're not guilty or there was a mistake, it would be dismissed.

LEG. SPENCER:

Okay.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

If the evidence is that their testimony is that "I didn't go through the stop sign, and I swear I didn't even though he said I did," we tell them "I'm sure the Police Officer's going to say you did. So you're both going to say opposites and the Judge is going to decide. So if you want to do that, you can do that; or you can take a plea."

LEG. SPENCER:

Well --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

If there is anything -- like they have their insurance when they didn't have it, they got the car inspected after, things like that, we do dismiss quite a bit of tickets.

LEG. SPENCER:

So, good. I think that's important. And so on both sides that we are doing the appropriate things. If someone needs points, but also that it's not just a money-making machine, and that we don't forget our ultimate mission is public safety, that would be the ultimate part. I appreciate the work that you're doing and thank you.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay, Legislator Browning has a question.

LEG. BROWNING:

Hello. How are you?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Good. How are you?

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LEG. BROWNING:

Good. I know Legislator Calarco probably got the same e-mail because I know it's against the law to have those covers on your license plate. Have you seen a lot -- have you had a lot of red light camera pictures come in where you can't read the plate because of those?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

We definitely have them come in. I wouldn't say it's pervasive or, you know, a big thing. It's really when they cover it with the smoked one that you can't -- the camera can't read it. There's -- believe it or not, I don't want to -- there's not a lot of people here but there are certain things that people do like spray their plate with hair spray that gives off a reflection that the camera can't get it either. And we can't tell that. We just realize we can't see the license plate. But that's a small -- very small percent of tickets that I see written. And it's a pretty small percent of red light cameras that we can't prosecute because of that.

LEG. BROWNING:

Have you had a conversation with the Police Department to try and crack down on that problem?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes, actually we did. And I believe since we've opened, they may be taking things a little more serious. The Traffic Violations Bureau really wasn't concerned with red lights because they didn't do it. So if they got one of those tickets, that was nothing to them. Oh, big deal, they had a cover on their license. Where to us not only are we seeing that violation, but we're saying -- and they may be getting away with not getting red light tickets. So this is serious. They're doing it for a reason. Whether or not they've listened to me and gone forward, I can't say.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Well, I hope they are.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Me, too.

LEG. BROWNING:

But one of -- one of the issues that I've heard is you close at lunchtime.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yes?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

Is there a possibility of you opening at lunchtime? Because I know a lot of people with license issues, you know, they take their lunch break, they go to, you know, DMV, you know, to renew their license, their car registration or whatever issue it might be. And I know that there's a lot of people -- I know it's Hauppauge and not necessarily handy for everybody, but, you know, have you looked at possibly -- I think you're talking about evenings?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yeah, we are open now on Thursday nights.

LEG. BROWNING:

Right. And I know it's -- it's the only location for people to go to. And you can pay on line; right?

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. So have you considered maybe doing satellites at some point on the East End, West End?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes, actually we're speaking with the company that does the online payments basically for all the courts for the State that are in this program. And -- well, one, they were charging a very high rate. And we got a lot of complaints about that. So we went and brought them in and they came down from up to 15% down to one dollar and 5%. So that's dropped a lot. So people now --- it's more comfortable to pay online. You're not looking at it saying it's crazy. And we've asked for kiosks. I asked for one out in Riverhead. And even for one by our building so when we're closed, if it's something you're just coming to pay, you can pay it at the kiosk.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah. It's just so they -- Riverhead, you know, for the East End residents. I mean somebody that lives in Montauk or Greenport --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Absolutely.

LEG. BROWNING:

It would be nice for them not to have to drive all the way to Hauppauge. And I think Yaphank is also another location, I think, should be considered.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

I didn't think of that.

LEG. BROWNING:

And it's funny, you know, I don't -- you don't always think about the tickets that are coming in that you do get. And, Legislator Spencer, you know, you were talking about passing a school bus. Having been a school bus driver, I can tell you it's a major problem, people --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Absolutely.

LEG. BROWNING:

-- passing the red lights. And I have been exploring -- there is red light cameras for school buses. And the Longwood School District, I've had a conversation with them saying they'd be interested in being a pilot for red light cameras on a school bus.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

That would be great.

LEG. BROWNING:

Obviously who's going to buy the cameras? But -- and I believe that would require State legislation.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

So I'd like follow-up with you on that.

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MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure.

LEG. BROWNING:

Because I do know that there's certain areas that are really horrendous. I mean, William Floyd Parkway. You know, the school busses stop and -- you're supposed to stop on both sides.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Both sides, yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

Which in a way, I think, it's kind of dangerous.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yeah. They do.

LEG. BROWNING:

But at the same time I really -- you know, I really would like to explore the issue with passing school buses. I mean, people are -- I can tell you when I was a driver, people would, you know, pass. And then they would say "well, you know, I'm trying to get to work," or, know, they have a really sorry excuse to pass. So I definitely think it's something that we should be looking at and -- but anyway, we'll follow up with a conversation on that --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Great.

LEG. BROWNING:

-- to see if we can get our State representatives to work with us.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Okay, awesome.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, thank you.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Thank you. Anybody else? I just have one last question for you, Mr. Margiotta. Clearly we charge a surcharge fee for any case that comes through the bureau, the agency?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes. Parking and moving violations are \$50; red lights \$30.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

I had a situation that came to my office, and quite honestly I don't get too many people coming to our office about the agency in general, which is a good thing. But I had a constituent, she had a taillight out and she got the ticket for the broken taillight. She didn't know her light was out. She immediately went and fixed it, showed up at the bureau, said "here's the proof that I fixed the taillight." And typically that's a dismissed -- I think, in fact, the way it's written is you get the -- so many days to fix it before you can actually be prosecuted for the violation. In those instances should we be charging a surcharge? I mean should we be charging somebody the surcharge when they've, you know, had a violation that they honestly were not aware of and they corrected immediately?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

The way we do it is, if you were not guilty at the time of the incident, there is no surcharge and it would be dismissed. If you were guilty then and did something to remediate it later, whether or not

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you're proving it correctly or not, we're still charging you the \$50; because the fact that -- say you didn't have your license on you, you get pulled over --

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

But not having the licenses -- I know there's certain violations, like that taillight violation, that literally it is -- it is not a violation initially. It's almost like a warning, like you get the ticket saying you have this taillight broken and you have X amount of days to correct the problem; because, quite honestly, it's easy enough for somebody not to know their taillight is out, you know, unless they're going around checking their car everyday before they leave the house.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yeah, they have 24 hours or within one hour of sunset the next day to fix it. But, however, what they've generated, the amount of work, if I showed you that is generated from all the people that are driving around without lights and everything else, it would be a huge expense to the County to -- they're not fined. They don't pay the State surcharge either, which would normally be \$58, just for the surcharge. And the fine could get up to probably 100 bucks. So we do not fine them.

But if their car was defective and it caused a police officer to stop them, write a ticket, that ticket went to the police station, got entered into the computer, came to us, got entered into the computer, they mailed something in, now we gotta send them a letter, all that money, we feel, should be paid by the people that are doing it and not just the general taxpayer that is not getting that ticket.

Somebody's going to pay for it because it's expensive. And there's a -- I can't tell you how many there are. It's not a small thing that we could say, maybe we get 50 a month. No. It's nowhere near that. It's hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of them. And to be honest with you, most of them do not comply correctly and we dismiss it any way and only charge them \$50.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay. I think it's something worth looking at.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Sure.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

I appreciate it. Okay. Anybody else? Legislator Nowick has one last question.

LEG. NOWICK:

I just missed the last thing you said. So you're saying -- you bring up a really good point with that headlight. I mean, so you're saying if you get a ticket for your headlight out, which you probably have no idea most of the time, you have to pay \$50 just for the work that we do in the County.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

That would be State legislation that would change that.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

That's our legislation.

LEG. NOWICK:

Suffolk County?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Yeah, that's the \$50 administrative fee.

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LEG. NOWICK:

But there are no caveats with the fee?

MR. MARGIOTTA:

No. No, the fee is on every --

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Not presently.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

If you're found not guilty --

LEG. NOWICK:

Rob --

MR. MARGIOTTA:

-- you're not guilty.

LEG. NOWICK:

-- I'm leaving December. You go get them.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay. Any other questions? Paul, thank you very much. We appreciate your presentation.

MR. MARGIOTTA:

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

And coming down today.

I see Commissioner Chu in the back there. Commissioner, if you'd like to come up from Labor, Licensing and Consumer Affairs and just let us know what's going in, if there's anything you need, if you have any disagreements with the Budget Review Reports, we'd appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I am both pleased with the recommended budget as well as BRO's recommendation. But I'll be glad to answer any questions.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay. I guess I'll start and that way my colleagues could catch up, but if you can just give us a brief background into the Taxi Limousine Commission that you've put in here, I know you've put in for, I think, one position and you're looking to get that up and running sometime next year.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

We're expecting the Taxi and Limousine Commission to commence operations June of 2014, which, again, as is stated in the narrative, our goal is to use -- incorporate into existing Consumer Affairs' functions so as not to add the additional expense that would come with having a stand-alone unit to handle the function.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

So you would just need one additional person to kind of head-up the division; is that what you're asking for?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

To begin to start and; again, similar to the situation that Mr. Margiotta found himself in, you know, we would assess going forward depending on capacity. And, Legislator, you've been involved with

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the issue. We're very well aware that there's not anyone who has a great handle on how many operators there are out there. And it's going to take -- there's going to be somewhat of a learning process.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

Okay. And I can appreciate that. In fact, I think that our approach through the Traffic Violations Agency was very good and that we've been cautiously upping into it so we don't run into the problems Nassau's had where they were running in the negative for many years.

Does anybody else have any questions for Commissioner Chu? Seeing none, thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Thank you very much.

CO-CHAIR CALARCO:

I don't necessarily see anybody else. Is there anybody else who would like to address the Government Operations Committee? Seeing none, we are adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 3:02 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**