

**EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**  
**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Education & Human Services 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 May 24, 2016.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. Monica Martinez, Chairperson  
Leg. Thomas F. Barraga, Vice Chair  
Leg. Robert Calarco, DPO  
Leg. Kara Hahn  
Leg. Leslie Kennedy

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel/Legislature  
Amy Ellis, Chief Deputy Clerk/Legislature  
Benny Pernice, Budget Review Office  
John O'Neill, Commissioner, Human Services  
Ben Zwirn, Suffolk Community College  
Kevin Peterman, Suffolk Community College  
Lisa Pinkard, Aide to Leg. Martinez  
Seth Squicciarino, Aide to Leg. Hahn  
Ali Nazir, Aide to Leg. Kennedy  
Michael Pitcher, Director of Communications/PO  
Nick Lamorte, appointee/Suffolk County Child Care Commission  
And all other interested parties

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:36 PM**

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Education and Human Services Committee. If we can all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by Legislator Calarco.

**SALUTATION**

Thank you. Madam Clerk, do we have any cards?

**MS. ELLIS:**

No, we do not.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Thank you. Anyone in the audience that would like to speak for the Committee? Seeing none, we're going to continue with our agenda. We do not have any presentations today so we'll continue with Tabled Resolutions.

**TABLED RESOLUTIONS**

We have **1327**, which is **Requiring notification of building permits issued by Suffolk County Community College. (Martinez)**. I will motion to approve.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Second by Legislator Barraga. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

**Tabled Resolution 1337, To appoint member of Suffolk County Youth Board Coordinating Council representing Legislative District No. 6 (John B. MacKay) (Co. Exec.)**. I don't think he is here so I'm going to motion this to be tabled for another cycle.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Second by Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

**INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

**Introductory Resolution 1414, Accepting and appropriating a grant award from the State University of New York (SUNY), in coordination with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL), for a Career Services Grant, 100% reimbursed by State funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)**. I will make a motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Second by Legislator Browning. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

**Resolution 1415, Accepting and appropriating a grant award from the New York State Education Department, the University of the State of New York, for funding of a High School Equivalency Test Administration Program, 100% reimbursed by State funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)** I make same motion, same second, same vote. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

And then **Introductory Resolution number 1429**, this is **To appoint member to the Suffolk County Child Care Commission Nick Lamorte (Martinez)**. I know that Nick is not here so I will make a motion to approve. I think we know Nick pretty well. Are we all okay with that? Second by Legislator Hahn. Oh, he's on his way.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Hold that until he gets here. How much longer is he going to be?

**LEG. HAHN:**

We can take a recess.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Yeah, we'll take a recess until he gets here. If he's on his way, I want him to, you know, at least come and say hello if that's okay with you guys.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Sure.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Okay. So motion to recess.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Second by Legislator Browning. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? We'll be back in little bit.

Commissioner, did you want to speak?

**COMMISSIONER O'NEILL:**

(Shaking head no)

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

I thought you wanted to talk to us, tell us all the good things you're doing.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

By the way, thank you and --

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Thank you, Commissioner.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

I want to say publicly thank you, my constituent, felt she had nowhere to go. You helped her out.

Again. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

You see, we should put that on the record.

**(Meeting recessed from 12:39 PM - 12:51 PM)**

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Okay, ladies and gentlemen, we're back on the record. The man of the hour has arrived. It's Nick Lamorte. How are you?

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Good morning or afternoon I should say. Thank you.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Speak on the mike, even though we hear you just fine.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Oh, okay.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Good afternoon. So we left on approving -- I believe we have a motion and a second for Resolution 1429, is to appoint you to the Suffolk County Child Care Commission. If you could just give us a briefing, a little background of -- obviously of what you do and how you will be, and I know you will be a great asset to this Commission.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Well, thank you very much. I'm absolutely honored and pleased to be nominated to the Commission. My background is I've been the President for CSEA Long Island representing 48,000 members for 22 years. I just got reelected and starting my 23rd year.

My connection with child care besides being also honored to be on the board of the Suffolk County Childcare Council, there's also the issue that CSEA has organized and does represent 350 childcare providers in Suffolk County. I don't know what the number is in Nassau, but we have a statewide organization, it's called VOICE. Honestly I don't exactly know what that acronym stands for but it certainly is union related. And what we do is we advocate for the providers and basically are a conduit for them to the state; you know, they have -- of course you might know they have to be regulated. And we currently are now helping two providers because there were issues with renewing licenses and things that occur when they are inspected by the inspectors to make sure that their rights are being protected. Also to improve their quality of life. We just negotiated a beautiful contract with New York State, which provides added benefits to these providers. And, yeah, we totally am committed to representing all of the workers, not just with childcare but, of course, you know, towns and villages and school districts and, of course, state workers.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Thank you, yes. And we do appreciate everything that you do. And I think there are some questions. Legislator Browning.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Nick, thank you because you said 350 members.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Three hundred and fifty, yes.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

So I know that daycare providers, stay-at-home day-care providers basically, you know, stay-at-home-moms trying to make a living and trying to make an income, how many of those -- are they all stay-at-home, like mom daycare providers are --

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Yes, they're basically individual folks. We haven't broken through to the centers yet, the larger groups, but, you know, we'll get there. I'm sure we will. Just because we want to provide a better quality of work for them and -- but there's some -- I believe there's some 800 in Suffolk County that do this work. And we do represent 350 of them. So, you know, as a union president I have to say we have a ways to go. But I'm not sure if you're familiar with Quin versus Harris Federal Supreme Court decision last year, which says that it's basically, there's no agency fee for this type of worker. So a lot don't have to join the union or pay the agency fee. So we have our work cut out for us and have to prove ourselves as a union that we are good representatives for them.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Right. And I think it's more just a disconnect. They're not connected. They weren't connected as private, at-home day cares -- daycare providers. And I think that what you're doing is to connect them.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Yes.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

So that they can see -- and to give them the voice, because, you know, being a Legislator, getting phone calls from them about their payments and their payments are falling behind and, you know, all the issues that go with them that now they finally have somebody else who can speak up for them and obviously you have a little bit more strength in the state than I do to be honest with you. So that's a good thing.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

As you know, we have a great union on a statewide level. We have a wonderful advocate for us, a staff member named Denise Dowell. We bring her down here. We have met with the Commissioner and former Commissioners. We are advocating for increasing, you know, the level that people can meet, the threshold. But there's also a question of money, you're right. The funding is -- and then I should have Janet Wallerstein here for me because she's the best advocate, I think, ever for childcare. By, yeah, we -- you know, we're trying to make a difference, we're trying to give them a voice exactly -- exactly what you're saying, Kate.

**LEG. BROWNING:**

Strength in numbers. Thank you.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Thank you. Any other questions? Legislator Hahn.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Having served with you on the Childcare Council of Suffolk, I thank you, you know, for your willingness to step forward and work on this with the Legislature and our appointees on this Commission. And really that's all I wanted to say. I don't have any questions.

5/24/2015 Education and Human Services Committee

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Thank you. And thank you for your service, too.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Thank you, Legislator. Anyone else? All right, so, Madam Clerk, we do have a motion and a second; correct?

**MS. ELLIS:**

Correct.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0)** Nick, welcome aboard and thank you.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Thank you very much. I look forward to serving. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Thank you. Also you do not have to come to the General Meeting which is next Tuesday.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

It's a good thing thing.

**MR. LAMORTE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:**

Okay. I believe that's it. So having no other business, this meeting is adjourned. Have a great day.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:58 PM  
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**