

EDUCATION & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Education & Information Technology 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 April 16, 2013.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Sarah S. Anker, Chairwoman
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley, Vice Chair
Leg. Thomas Cilmi
Leg. Jay H. Schneiderman
Leg. John M. Kennedy, Jr.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Deputy Presiding Officer Wayne R. Horsley, 14th Legislative District
Leg. Al Krupski, 1st Legislative District
George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Donald Rodgers, Commissioner/Information Technology
Ben Zwirn, Intergovernmental Office/Suffolk County Community College
Benny Pernice, Budget Review Office
Kevin Peterman, Faculty Associate/Suffolk County Community College
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
Thomas Vaughn, County Executive Assistant III
Marie Berkoski, Aide to County Executive
Terrence G. Pearsall, Chief of Staff
Amy Ellis, Aide to Leg. Anker
Christina DeLisi, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman
Liz Pearsall, SC Department of Labor
Stacey Lesko, SC Department of Labor
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:07 PM

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay, will all the Legislators please come to the horseshoe. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Horsley.

SALUTATION

Please remain standing for a moment of prayer and silent meditation as we think of those who are in need in Suffolk County and across the world.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

PRESENTATION

Thank you. Okay. We have a light agenda today. We have a presentation. Okay. We have representatives from Stony Brook University. We have Arlene Cassidy. She's the Facility Director -- excuse me -- Faculty Director of the Sustainability Studies Major and Amy Milligan. She's the Assistant Dean for Administration, College of Business. And they have a presentation on Stony Brook University Sustainability Department. Welcome, welcome.

MS. CASSIDY:

Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay. Can you hear me?

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Yes.

MS. CASSIDY:

Okay, thank you very much. As you were told, I'm the Faculty Director for Sustainability Studies at Stony Brook University. This program is relatively new. It was actually started in Southampton. And that would have been back in 2007. And we came to the main campus a few years after that.

What I'd like to talk about first is what's it's all about. What is this major all about. Well, first of all, I'm an economist. All right. And I work with geologists, chemists, mathematicians and people in a variety of disciplines. And our idea is to come up with methods -- all right -- methods that our students can assess problems, current problems from a very collaborative approach. All right? So we look at sustainability and we look at not only the economics involved, but also the tradeoffs we have in terms of our environment and our environmental quality.

So, to begin with, it's interdisciplinary. Our students take very broadbased foundation courses. All right? And within that framework, they learn to understand people from other disciplines. A lot of people wonder, well, what does sustainability actually mean? It's a very elusive term. So what I did here is I took a definition that is used by EPA. And it's to satisfy the basic economic, social and security means now and in the future without undermining our natural resources. This is based in thinking about when we use resources. We have a finite stock. All right? And when we take them out of the orison one way or another, we create residuals. Many of those residuals pollute. There have been ties over the years that have been made between, for example, house-related issues and what -- how we produce and consume many of our natural resources.

So, to begin with, let's define something called environmental quality. My students have a hard time with this because it's very, very broad. Here we want to reduce contamination and residuals to what we might call socially acceptable levels. Again, what is socially acceptable? If you talk to one person in Congress, they'll tell you what they think. And if you talk to someone else, they'll tell you something entirely different.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

So right now we are promoting with our students to actually do the research and tie the polluting residuals to effects. All right. What is sustainable development? Here we are looking at something a little bit different, but remember these are all overlapping concepts. And that is how we manage our finite resources, all right, so that in the future when our children are grown and their children are grown, there are resources left for them to produce and consume and maintain some wellbeing in life.

The last part, biodiversity, here we want to look at ensuring a variety of species. Why? They are all important to our ecosystems. Right now we're doing a study about worms. And our students are actually collecting data and looking at the effects of acid rain on worm life and health. They count a lot of worms. But it's important because at the same time they're doing work with an organic and rooftop garden and they're tying the effects of the worms and what they do in order to increase the yields, the things that are planted there. So you can see by the diagram it's not just one discipline. You can see there's the social sciences. There is the environment, which a lot of the colleges, chemists and biologists work with and also economics.

This is just a picture that I find an easy way to explain the way we approach problems. And it's through a systems approach. So, we're not only collaborative, but we're looking at an entire system. An example: We did research last semester in one of our upper level systems courses. And in the course we broke our students into teams of two and we looked at New York State. And they picked out different electric generating plants, a variety from coal to natural gas. And then, of course, some of the alternatives: Wind, solar and so forth.

We challenged them to look at not only one end of burning this fossil fuel to get electricity, but let's go through the entire supply chain. When we extract resources, there are all kinds of health issues and actually death when you start looking at coal. All right. So by taking this information and going to sources, and most of those sources are government sources, all right, they were able to tie in what we call externalities or the social costs as well as the private costs of generating electricity. All right? We're continuing this research. One of our students is presenting his work this week.

(Indicating) Here I talk a little bit more about our curriculum. All right. We have an interdisciplinary curriculum, as I mentioned before, where the students are taking not only things -- Sustainable -- Sustainability Studies courses, but also Economics, the Natural Sciences, Political Science, Ethics, Math and many more.

Sample curriculum, our foundation courses, which is what I mentioned previously, is about 33 or 34 credits. And that usually has to do with the level of math the students come to us with. They are required to take Calculus. So some of them have to take pre-Calc before they can get into the Calculus. All right.

They also take something unique to our program called Career Leadership Skills. It's six credits, but it emphasizes not only collaboration, but communication skills, where they not only learn to write and do research and actually it appropriately, but they also learn how to get together with other students in their group and present their information.

We have two courses that are unique to the Sustainability Studies Program and that is Environmental Ethics and Integrated Assessment models. I happen to teach the integrated assessment models. And it's based on a book called Limits to Grow. I don't know how many people are familiar with it, but that is based on a very complicated stellar model our students take. Modeling is part of their curriculum. And they are now in the process of looking at variables from different countries -- they all have different countries and they look at the variables and try to assess what variables could be changed for a more sustainable future for different societies.

We then have what's known as the advanced courses. They come in five groups and they touch

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

upon ecology, human population, physical environment and renewable and non-renewables. They also -- we also go into economics and a group that's basically about policy.

The last thing that we do is what's called a systems course. And this is either a 400 or 300 level course. We actually have students who take it for graduate credit, too. One is the sustainability of the Pine Barrens. And it's a field orientated with research components, where we have a minimum of three professors and guest speakers that come and present also, where they actually do research about different criteria. For instance, I sponsor the students that look at the economic components of development. And other faculty members may look at the ecological component or the water geological.

Here are some of the features: Our program provides students with this interdisciplinary approach and why to tackle and solve current, very important problems that are related to human development. You can see here there are some of the courses that the students are involved with in the bottom corner, like the Pine Barrens course. And we're actually looking at different measures for water. The students are learning how to measure -- as I said, I'm an economist. This is where the geologist comes in. They're taking water quality measurements in different areas and also they're taking samples -- soil samples and various kinds of samples that include ecological variables.

We do team teach. Many of our courses are taught in several other departments in a collaborative manner. And we do have several different field trips and guest speakers. As you can see here we have Assemblyman Englebright and -- oh, Fred {Peale}, who have come and spoken many times.

Along with our major, we have what's known as a minor. I probably have 50 students from different disciplines taking a Sustainable Studies Minor. All right. And they tend to be very successful going out into the world. One student is now being considered for Renaissance. He's a business major with a Sustainable Study Minor. And when they called me to talk about him, they said they were very, very excited with his collaborative and research component of his education. He was able to speak very well and had -- he had -- because they do that research component, he had something that he could talk about in depth.

This requires 18 credits. They can overlap two courses and many do. Outcomes: We really do try to prepare our students to assess alternatives and be able to communicate with people from different disciplines with enough understanding that they actually know what questions to ask or who to go to. I frequently have to go to someone in Chemistry or Ecology, have them explain to me the different polluting components and the stocks versus the flows of these kinds of residuals. So that I, as an economist, can then attach numerical values.

The degree can lead to careers in both the private and public sector. We have some students working in each of them now. I won't go into all of them, but I have -- I told Amy I have one student I'm very proud of. He will be working for the Federal Reserve in Washington for the FMOC Committee. It's something where you're chosen out of millions of applicants. Very proud of him. We also have students in many graduate programs, Chapel Hill and so forth. Some are going into law. Others are very interested in bringing sustainable practices to businesses.

As I mentioned, I'm the Faculty Director for Sustainability Studies, which is part of a Sustainability Studies Program. Say it a few times, it gets tough. We have five majors. Our newest is Coastal, but we also have Ecosystems and Human Impact. We have Environmental Design Policy and Planning. We have an Environmental Humanities component. And as I -- as you know, the Sustainable Studies Program itself. We have six minors. Most of them I've already mentioned, but we also have a Geo-Spatial Science Program that is looking -- basically it's surrounded around GIF.

Lastly, and this is where Amy's going to pick up where I'm leaving off, is we designed a number of years what we call an SUFBA with an MBA Fast Track. And we're able to do this because there are

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

courses that overlap between the business department and our department. Along with that, students generally get to take some electives. So what we do is we have them take electives that transfer into an MBA. So if they go to school for two summers, they can complete the whole program, the Fast Track in five years.

These are my contacts -- information. Anyone would like to contact us or visit our program, be happy to have you. I also have some brochures if you're interested in a little bit more about the majors and minors. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Thank you. We appreciate your input. Okay now we have Amy. She's making her way to the mic. Welcome.

MS. MILLIGAN:

Thank you. I'm going to be mindful of your agenda. I know you have to be out at two o'clock so I'm going to skip the Power Point and just speak to you. I think it'll be more beneficial.

So as Arlene said, there's the Fast Track MBA Program. And this program is very, very close to my heart. And the reason for that is I worked out of the Southampton Campus and I got to see the students who were extremely passionate about the environment in Sustainability Studies, in Marine Biology, Marine Vertebrate Biology. And I'm embarrassed to say that at the time I did not know what Sustainability Studies was. I had no idea what that term meant. And the students really educated me on the process.

So when Professor Cassidy and Professor Camille {Aproscato} said we need a path for these students for the Fast Track MBA Program and they decided to write the proposal, I thought, wow, this is a great fit for students. Because now we can bring them into the MBA Program and we can teach them the business side. And why do students need the business side? Well, these students were so hands-on and they were so practical, that they would not necessarily be able to bring to market some of the things that they were thinking about. So, for example, maybe they wanted to start up a business, but they didn't even know how to write a business plan or marketing plan or even how to brand themselves because they were so focused on that one aspect.

So with the Fast Track MBA Program, it really does allow students to complete both an undergraduate and an MBA in five years. And the even better part is that they get the ability to take graduate courses for undergraduate tuition. So not only do they have the savings of Stony Brook University overall for tuition, but they also get savings for taking graduate credits for undergraduate tuition. So, there's only one year that they're paying graduate tuition for.

So at this time we realized there were so many students overall that wanted this Fast Track option, we now have 51 majors on campus that we work with for this Fast Track MBA program. The reason why it doesn't work with every major is because there does need to be flexibility in the major as far as electives. Basically students have the opportunity to double dip. They have 15 credits that they can use towards their MBA and also towards their undergraduate degree. So not every degree lends itself to that opportunity. There are programs such as engineering -- various different engineering programs that are very, very proscribed, that would not allow students necessarily to go to school during the summer. And so that would be a hindrance for them.

We had such an overwhelming response from students that we were admitting them only in their junior year. And now we have started as of last year admitting them in their sophomore year. Because students really, believe it or not, know what they want to do. I can't believe that actually now I'm speaking to students who are freshmen, who are 18, 19-years-old and they know that an MBA is what they want to do. And I kind of look at them and go "can you tell me what I should do when I grow up?" Because it's just amazing that they know this.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

And what's really terrific is that in the classroom, because I also teach in the MBA program, is that having 51 majors that we work with, the diversity in the classroom as far as the backgrounds that people come from and the conversations that we're able to have and the perspective that they bring is amazing. So I can be teaching a class on Leadership and have students who are from Sustainability Studies, Cinema, Biology, Astronomy, Psychology, Sociology all in the same class. And they all bring a different perspective to the program. So don't tell people, but they're my favorite students in the MBA Program. And not only for the diversity that they bring, but because they're high-achieving students.

So the admissions criteria for the program is that they must have at least a 3.2 GPA, which at Stony Brook is a very, very difficult thing to achieve because they are taking classes such as Calculus, they are taking some upper level science classes as well. So it's very, very demanding. They also have to have strong letters of recommendation from faculty members. So we're looking at two to three strong letters of recommendation. And we also require an interview. And people say, "well, why do you require an interview?" We are dealing with sophomores. We are dealing with juniors. And they're going into a graduate program. So the maturity level does need to be there; you know, making sure that we truly have the right student is extremely important to us. And so we go through an entire interview process where students interview with the faculty members. And we want to make sure the commitment is there. Because they do have to go to school over the summer. That is a requirement for the program.

So if students enter in their sophomore year, they only have to take classes during one summer session. So, that's two classes. If they enter during their junior year, they take four classes, two classes in each summer session. We designed the program so they only go to school on Tuesdays and Thursdays to allow for them to do research with a faculty member, have an internship, have a part-time job. Because many of the students who do attend Stony Brook are attending for a financial need and so we don't want to limit that ability for them. And then they will return to their regular undergraduate programming in the fall and in the spring. They'll take summer classes again. And in their fifth year they'll slowly be taking MBA classes.

So during the summer we kind of isolate those students in that Fast Track Program to get their feet wet. Because we don't want to put them in with MBA students who have a foundation in business because we have to teach the classes at a different level. And many of them have a background where it hasn't allowed them to give presentations. It hasn't allowed them to maybe work in teams. And our whole MBA program is very, very, team-oriented. They have to have presentation skills. And so we want to be mindful of that when we're introducing them to the MBA program.

What I find that's interesting is that students who are maybe in Sustainability Studies think about a different path that they can take when they partner with business. So I see students who are more now interested in environmental consulting work because now they understand, "wow, I can do what it is that I want to do, but I can also build a business." You know, when you're working in consulting, you know, you're building a client base and you're going out there and you're hustling and you're getting that work, but you still get to do what it is that you love. And I think it's opening many, many more doors for students. And I think seeing where the economy is and being realistic about where job opportunities are, students know that they have to make themselves more marketable. And this is something, having that MBA along with Sustainability Studies, along with various other degrees, is going to give them that leg up. And I don't know about you, but as an employer, if I have somebody coming to me that in five years got an undergraduate degree and an MBA, I'm pretty impressed. That says to me that that person can hustle, that person can really do it. And they all graduate with very high GPA's as well. As I said these are the cream of the crop. These are the high-achieving students at Stony Brook University overall.

So we are very, very pleased with the program. We are so happy that Sustainability Studies has joined into the Fast Track Program. We have a lot of information for you here. And please do

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

spread the word that Stony Brook has a College of Business. Because the other piece is that many people don't realize that there is a College of Business at Stony Brook University. We are in our infancy. We started in 2004. The first MBA program started in 2004. And the first graduating class from the Fast Track MBA program was in 2008. Well, we all know what happened in 2008. And those students did get employed. So that's very, very important to remember. It did take them a few months but those students did find employment. So please do spread the word and we're growing every single day. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Thank you so much. Again, you know, people think of the word sustainability -- when I think of it, it's sort of -- it's the cycle. It's starting from here, going through something and ending up almost at the same place. And we have to think about that especially with our environment and also economics. You know, it's -- you know, our environment is finite. There's only so much of it. We think, you know, years ago, you know, 10, 100, 1000 years ago "there's plenty of natural resources." Well, not so much any more. You know, you go to places and -- whether it's, you know, the sand mining or the pollution issue or water pollution, we need to be more educated. And I think that is so vital and that is exactly what you're doing. And you're integrating it in our economic ideals. Because we do need to see both of -- you know, both of them together.

Legislator Cilmi has a question.

LEG. CILMI:

I do. Thank you for being here and for your presentation, both of you. I have a question for Arlene. Given that you're an economist, within your program, do you teach a course in the economics sustainability of Long Island to the extent that, you know, from a tax and regulatory point of view, it's becoming ever more apparent that it may not be sustainable?

MS. CASSIDY:

Yes, yes. Is it on? Hi. Actually they take the college Economics course first. So they come to us with basic Economics Micro Macro. Then they take a course in Sustainability Economics where they actually take tools and they do research. And I won't say specifically on Long Island, that is covered with the Pine Barrens course where they actually look at the trade-offs between -- should the development happen in the compatible growth area or should it not, what are the trade-offs? We know in Riverhead, Riverhead wants the tax monies for their school system, they want jobs so forth and so on.

Where as the other side of that picture is what about our water, what about the aquifer, what about the traffic and the infrastructure? So students actually do projects and do research and put these things together. And maybe, you know, the 200 level course, it may not be as broad and reaching as the 3 or 400, but it gives them that idea that there's no free ride. There's a trade-off. And when you look at environmental quality, in order to increase at a point in time, you have to consider the costs. And there is a cost in terms of economic growth. You can't have both at the same time.

LEG. CILMI:

Right, but there's also a cost to preventing --

MS. CASSIDY:

Oh, absolutely.

LEG. CILMI:

-- economic growth.

MS. CASSIDY:

Yes.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. CILMI:

And so what I'm hearing from you, it sounds to me -- and, listen, let's face it, you know, everybody has their own -- their own mentality and their own beliefs. And that, you know -- that is espoused in your teaching, I'm sure. And I'm not --

MS. CASSIDY:

No. What we try to do --

LEG. CILMI:

Well, you may not say that it is but --

MS. CASSIDY:

My students don't think I'm an environmentalist.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

MS. CASSIDY:

They think I'm a business person. They want -- I want them to understand, when you spend your dollars, you are voting for things. So if you say one thing with your mouth -- in other words you don't want your jobs going to China, then don't buy goods and services from them.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MS. CASSIDY:

You know. And if you want to have a higher environmental quality, you have to understand where the maximum residuals that pollute come from.

LEG. CILMI:

Right. But my point is that while there's a cost associated with development --

MS. CASSIDY:

Right.

LEG. CILMI:

-- there's also a cost associated with the prevention of development.

MS. CASSIDY:

Absolutely.

LEG. CILMI:

And so I hope that the school, not you personally, you know, but I hope that the school is teaching that in a balanced way and encouraging students to truly see both sides of the issue. Because while it's important to preserve open space, and I've supported open space purchases here at the Legislature, and certainly the County's been at the vanguard of open space preservation, which is good, the fact is that with the tax structure that we have in place here on Long Island and in New York State, and with the regulatory priorities and structure that we have in place and the bureaucracy that we have in place, it becomes very, very difficult for people to live here. And the consequence of that is that fewer people live here. And the consequence of that is that government's received less tax revenue. And the consequence of that is that governments have less resources to protect the natural resources that we all want to protect.

So I hope that message comes through in your teachings. And, you know, the -- I actually happen

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

to know somebody, a young lady, who's a senior in your program now.

MS. CASSIDY:

Oh, really.

LEG. CILMI:

And she went through two-and-a-half years of school at Stony Brook, sort of floundering and not really knowing what she wanted to do with herself. And she found your program. And now she's absolutely immersed in it and loves it. So my congratulations to you for that. And I think you're right, that this does give students, you know, an -- a different path to follow that they may not have had previously. So I admire that. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Thank you. And I just wanted to mention, as far as, you know, Suffolk County relies so much on tourism. And if we didn't have our open space, if we didn't have our clean water, our clean air, people wouldn't be coming here and spending tax dollars. And that is so vital.

I also want to mention my staff member, Kim Tucker, graduated from your University with Sustainability major. And also Political Science. So she's making sure we keep aware of what's out there, which is -- it's a wonderful -- you know, wonderful to have her expertise.

I think Legislator Horsley had something -- had a question for you.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. Let's start, first of all, I think the concepts are terrific. It is who we are. This is our life, is dealing with sustainability with the entire argument that Legislator Cilmi just laid on the table, that both -- balancing economics with the environment. And that is what we do in a nutshell. That's pretty much, that's it, and figuring out our budget, which is economics, too.

I wanted to, you know, we -- in Suffolk County we have a terrific Community College. And we are -- and because of our interest in sustainability, we have been working with our college to grow their course of work in sustainability, where we're looking at this year an energy building dealing with solar panels and things like that, how to maintain, create, grow, build and stuff like that the marketplace for solar panels.

I just learned this -- this college word today - "articulation," is there any articulation between the programs between -- that we can have between the Community College and your program in sustainability? Because there seems to be so many synergies between the two. Have you guys got together?

MS. CASSIDY:

Right now I have hired someone as an adjunct from Suffolk. But let me just tell you, I worked at Suffolk Community College as an adjunct for 20 years in their Economics Department and also I taught a lot of math courses. I'm particularly fond of statistics.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Ooh, I've taken that.

MS. CASSIDY:

Oh, yeah, you should have taken it with me.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Ooh, I should have.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

MS. CASSIDY:

Yes, I've actually spoken to -- gosh, what's his name, Chairperson of the Economics Department? John? But we should get together. Things -- you know, things get busy sometimes.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Because we are -- we are emphasizing this particularly on the Grant Campus as our growth -- our growth issues. And we -- we absolutely would think that this would be right up your alley.

MS. CASSIDY:

Would you -- if you have one of these, just pass my name. Have someone --

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

The gentleman right behind you who knew who the -- he's the head of the Faculty Association. (Referring to Kevin Peterman).

MS. CASSIDY:

(Inaudible - off mic)

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

But that's who we are. And so I think that, you know, whether it's interns or things like that, we have to take a look at that, you know, working with you guys. That is our core values here at the Legislature.

MS. CASSIDY:

That's wonderful. Thank you.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. And, Dr. Cassidy, thank you for being here. Actually I graduated Stony Brook back in 1979. And I went on and got my MBA at Adelphi, so I kind of wish you had the program back then. And I'm glad to hear you talk about some of the modeling and the praise that you give the students. Because, just as Legislator Cilmi has spoken about and so has Legislator Horsley, ultimately the students who graduate will go out there into the work world. And quite frankly, some of them, you know, may go to work for the Pine Barrens Society that advocates for protection; and some of them may go to work for Acme Builders, who has to put as many units as possible onto a one-square acre. And ultimately the students, I guess, need to be armed with the tools necessary in order to fulfill the requirements of whom they go to work for. That's the personal choice. Ultimately I think it comes down to the degree of instruction and preparation that you provide them with.

As you spoke about, business stat, I mean a T test is a T test is a T test. And how the students get to utilize it and actually demonstrate applicability with it is ultimately what's the measure of how well we do with public education. Or for us, you know, in government.

So I'm pleased to hear about the internship opportunities. My office works with Stony Brook interns all the time. Masters in Public Policy Program, as a matter of fact, two of my staff members came to me from that program. So I'm hoping that you actually do give credit for the internships that your students will be doing either at the undergrad or the grad level. And certainly, you know, I'd welcome contact with you. And thank you. Thank you for coming.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Thank you so much for coming. We're probably going to have to wrap things up a little bit. We have just a couple of resolutions we have to go through. But we appreciate your time and the information that you've given us. And we look forward to maybe having you guys back and hearing about some of the programs that you're going to be working on in the future. So, again, thank you.

MS. CASSIDY:

Thank you.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay, we're going to move on with the agenda. Okay. We have some -- a Tabled Resolution. It is **IR 1116, Establishing the Jobs Opportunity Board ("JOB") to centralize career advancement and educational opportunities in the County of Suffolk. (Anker)** I'd like to make a motion to approve.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

All in favor?

LEG. CILMI:

On the motion?

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

On the motion, Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

So, I guess to the sponsor, can you just explain exactly what this is?

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Sure. Do you have a copy of the actual resolution?

LEG. CILMI:

I have a copy.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay, I just wanted to make sure. Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

I read the resolution. I'd just like to hear from you what your --

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Well --

LEG. CILMI:

-- take is here.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. So, the big problem, again, with kids graduating from College, they're -- you know, they leave their graduation, they have maybe up to a hundred, maybe \$200,000 of student loans to deal with. And they're going out and they're looking for a job and they can't find a job. It's a nightmare

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

scenario. It's -- again, I -- you know, that was going through my mind when I was working on this bill.

So what I would like to do is see how Suffolk County can help our students find jobs even before they graduate. So with that in mind, internships, mentorships, something connecting the students with the jobs, building up their resume, you know, acquiring skills to help with the profession that they're going to go into.

So -- again, with that mind, this resolution basically it directs the -- it's working in coordination with -- um, let me see the name -- it's the Department of Labor -- Suffolk County Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Board Youth Council. And they're going to identify and facilitate the mentorship programs and internship opportunities to -- and also possibly identify funding available. So, you know, getting all the people, the important stakeholders to try to facilitate our, you know, young people, our students to get the jobs -- and even most important, stay local. You know, I have a daughter. She goes to Hunter College in the City. She just turned 21. I don't know if she's going to come back to Long Island, but it would be really nice. So if we could try to help, you know, our kids stay local so we can continue to have a strong family unit -- you know, I know our world's changing, you know, as we heard from the sustainability professors, things aren't like they were, you know, 10, 50 years ago, whatever. But if we can try to, you know, do what we can for our kids to get jobs, that is so -- I think that's just ultimately important.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So, thank you for that explanation. And I'm completely empathetic to your desire to help kids get jobs. I have two children in college myself. One is graduating this year; and another's a freshman. And I completely understand the stress, not only as a student but as a parent of a student, who's looking very much forward to not paying tuition.

So -- but here's my thing: Colleges have extensive career placement, job placement programs. In fact, as recently as this weekend, I -- as an alum, I sat on a panel at New York Institute of Technology talking to accepted students about how my education at New York Institute of Technology prepared me for my career. That was run by the Career Services Department at the College. So the colleges are spending an awful lot of time and money on this service. And they are quite successful. I know that Suffolk Community College has a program to that extent.

Similarly, we have our Department of Labor, which has job fairs and other sorts of job related outreach and resources available for people. And on yet another front we have employment agencies and, you know, a variety of other services that are in the private sector that are devoted to the types of things that you envision for this -- for this board.

So my question is in light of all of that, how much can Suffolk County really do to supplement, first of all; and given the limited resources that Suffolk County has and that our employees have in terms of their own time, which is becoming ever more challenged because of the challenges we have with, you know, our workforce, is it realistic to envision, you know, a program that's robust enough and successful enough to actually make a difference in this area?

So I have big concerns that this is an overreach and that it's unnecessary given the other resources that are available. And so unless you have some good answers to that, I'm not sure that I can support it today.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Well, I understand your concerns. And that's a really good question to find -- you know, can Suffolk County do anything to help our kids find jobs? Can Suffolk County do anything to help our businesses find, you know, help to find internships. And that's exactly what this board will do. It's the JOBS Opportunity Board, J-0-B. And, again, it's the centralized career advancement and

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

educational opportunities in this County. And it's focusing. So you're taking all those components and you're going to sit all those stakeholders around the table and they're going to brainstorm and they're going to think out of the box creatively and come up with some ideas. And then they're going to report back. And hopefully with that synergy, we'll have some good programs, we'll have direction. And I think we'll have -- you know, we'll have options. Because right now, from what I'm seeing, our kids are not finding those jobs.

And even, you know, locally at least we can build their resume. And I'm a very strong proponent of trying to help, you know, with the internships. I have interns, you know, in my office, which, you know, it's great. And it will also inspire them. I mean, there are mentorship programs out there. And I want to find out more about them. So, this is going to focus and direct, again, the end goal of getting our kids jobs hopefully locally.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Well, I'm not -- you know, I don't want to belabor the point. I think I've made -- I've made my point. The fact that all of these things are available out there now, to me, is the overriding factor. And I just don't know -- in fact, I do know. It's not that I don't know. I know that we just don't have the resources to do this. And the resources are already out there. And the overriding problem in terms of our kids finding jobs is the lack of jobs. It's not that -- it's not that -- it's not, you know, we have to find a way to connect. You know, when I was looking for a job, I went and knocked on doors. That's not -- the problem is not helping kids find the jobs. The problem is having jobs available. And that goes actually to my last question that I asked of the good Doctor from Stony Brook University. But the fact is we should be spending our time figuring out ways to support job creation here in Suffolk County and the rest of it will take care of itself.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes. My questions go to a little bit more of the specifics. Like you, I've actually had over 40 interns in my office. So I am a big proponent of working with interns. And in my academic career, I myself have done a number of internships. And, quite frankly, I think that our academic institutions should, in fact, incorporate more of that, particularly with my MBA and actually with the JD. I learned a lot more from practitioners. Not to put a knock on academics, but, you know, real life experience helps a lot when you're dealing with it, you know, in trying to learn.

My specifics go to just a couple of items on the list of participants. Individual member five. Who is the chairperson at the Suffolk County Workforce Investment Board Youth Council? Who is that?

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Stacy, come on up and introduce yourself, please.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Who is he, Liz? Is he in the building? I don't think I've ever met him, have I?

MS. PEARSALL:

(Inaudible - not on mic)

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

That's Elizabeth. You have to come up to the mic.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Is he one of our employees or is he a volunteer?

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

MS. PEARSALL:

He is a volunteer. He is an employer on Long Island. And he is one of the WIB members.

LEG. KENNEDY:

What does he do, though?

MS. PEARSALL:

He owns, I believe, a printing company. Oh, drafting and technical.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Drafting and technical. Okay. Where does WIA (sic) meet these days? Is it over there in the building? Is that where the -- I'm sorry, I'm mispronouncing it. The WIB, I guess.

MS. PEARSALL:

The WIB: Workforce Investment Board.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes.

MS. PEARSALL:

We meet usually at Farmingdale University. And we meet every quarter.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. We had a member of the Smithtown School District that was involved, I think, with the WIB. I'm trying to remember her name. She -- I dealt with her with some internships, but neither here nor there. Okay. So we have an individual who's the chair and this group meets quarterly and they meet over in Farmingdale.

MS. PEARSALL:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And do they have representative from the Towns? Who makes up the WIB?

MS. PEARSALL:

According to the Federal Law, the WIBs majority must be made up of private enterprise. And then there would be representation from the government and some union representation as well.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And so what does WIB do? How does WIB interface with this group that Legislator Anker is proposing to create?

MS. PEARSALL:

There is a sub-committee of the WIB that is the Youth Council. And they help give direction on the funding and where to spend the funding that we receive every year from the Federal Government.

LEG. KENNEDY:

For instruction purposes? In other words, to encourage kids what kind of careers to pursue? Or for kids to be trained? I'm just curious. I see this in here. And actually you know me, I'm going to start asking questions.

MS. PEARSALL:

I know you. I'd like to introduce Stacey Lesko. She is the Director of the Youth Program for the Suffolk County Department of Labor.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sure. Hi, Stacey, how are you? Nice to see you again.

MS. LESKO:

The funds that we receive are Workforce Investment Act Funds from the Federal Government. We run youth programs. We have a work experience program where we place kids at various non-profits organizations in school districts to get work experience.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Is that some of the kids that I get in my office?

MS. LESKO:

Yeah.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Oh, okay. That's what I thought. All right.

MS. LESKO:

And then the Youth Council is our governing body, which is a subset of the Workforce Investment Board, which is the governing body.

LEG. KENNEDY:

(Inaudible) You know what? I need work to do. Okay. So -- all right -- so that group, then, that you have is going to work with all these other folks to talk about, I guess, some other things that kids that are coming to the Labor Department might do; is that it?

MS. LESKO:

Well, most of the kids that we work with are high school drop-outs, recent high school grads.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The whole gamut, yeah. Yes, we have seen them. And it's admirable the efforts that you take in order to try and work with young people who have encountered some difficult circumstances. No doubt about it.

MS. LESKO:

We don't necessarily get a lot of college level students.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So like the students that were in Dr. Cassidy's program, they're not coming to you?

MS. LESKO:

Not usually.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Oh, okay.

MS. LESKO:

We have an income eligibility for our program. So a lot of times we're working with a lower income population.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Referred by SWEP? Is that the program?

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

MS. LESKO:

Sometimes. But they're usually referred by their local school districts.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MS. LESKO:

Perhaps they're in an alternative high school setting and they refer them to us.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right. So your group is going to have some types of recommendations for kids from some economic range. And then, I guess, we're going to talk about a different range with some of these other folks. Okay. All right. Thank you. I appreciate that.

To the balance of it, and I guess this goes to you, Madam Chair, or to Counsel, who's actually going to appoint the 11 people that we're talking about 9, 10 and 11? Because it's -- is this -- so there's 11 appointments of the Presiding Officer? I mean, when we don't identify, the default generally is the PO? Is that your intention?

MS. SIMPSON:

It specifically states that they're to be selected by the County Legislature. So any member of the Legislature could put a name forward for consideration and approval.

LEG. CILMI:

We have to vote on it.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Yes.

MS. SIMPSON:

Yeah, we've done that before. It's like when we've -- it's very similar to any other board that we have legislative -- you know, County Legislature appointments to.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right. And what's the timeframe that we're contemplating with this? And how will the recommendations be implemented?

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay, the timeframe is -- so, the first meeting will take place no later than 90 days after the oath of office of the members. So you got 90 days. There's a 10-member -- again, do you have the legislation?

LEG. KENNEDY:

I do.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

So that's RESOLVED number three. I believe there's 100 -- the TENTH RESOLVED 180 days they will -- this group will present in front of the Legislature and the County Exec their written report on their findings with recommendations for action.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Can I go -- one more question, then, for Ms. Pearsall, Madam Chair. What's your -- does the Department have any position regarding this resolution?

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

MS. PEARSALL:

Yes. The Commissioner supports this Introductory Resolution. He believes that this support from the Legislature would be most welcomed.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And I take it that some of this appears like it will be activity that the Department will be undertaking in support of this as far as compiling the recommendations and things such as that? Does the Department have the ability to assist with that?

MS. PEARSALL:

We would be assisting in the board -- with the board and any help that they would need.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right, Liz. Thank you. All right, Madam Chair.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Good to go. Okay.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I'd like to make a motion. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Abstentions? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 4-1-0-0)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

We are going to go to -- we have three Introductory Resolutions. This is **IR 1235, Appropriating funds in connection with the acquisition of an IFMS Release 3 (CP 1782). (Co. Exec.)** Do we have Commissioner Rodgers? Would you like to come and speak? Actually, it's on the three bills. And they're all basically appropriating funds for computers or technology equipment. So, if you could speak on that, yes, please.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Is this on? Now it's on. Thank you.

Resolution 1235 is for the upgrade to the IFMS financial system. This is the group of applications that run the County's financial programs. Release 3.9 is the most current release of the software. We are required to keep current in order to maintain our support agreement with them and basically we support these systems on behalf of the Comptroller's Office. And what I can say to you is this: The most current release fortunately does provide enhanced capability for the extraction and manipulation of data, which is significant to us. Given some of the workforce reductions that we've seen, this should allow staff to provide information with significantly reduced effort.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. You want to go ahead, ask any questions as far as this particular resolution? Legislator Schneiderman.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I mean, you basically said, to keep our support agreement going, we need to do this. This is \$380,000, if I'm correct. That sounds like an awful lot of money for an upgrade in software. Why so much? And is this something that's a nicety or a necessity? And can we get away with -- can we get away with the old system? We don't have the money. If I had \$380,000, there's lots of folks, I think, we could hire who we laid off. So why is this so necessary?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

It's -- this handles all the financial systems for the County. Financial systems.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

We have a system that already does that, though, right?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yes. But in order to be able to stay current, we are required to upgrade with the latest releases. So we would lose our support if we don't stay current on the releases.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

How much is it to buy a new support package? Or is it just not available?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

This is the support package.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

How often do we use the support? I mean, I don't upgrade my Microsoft Office every time they come up with a new update. The old one works fine.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I would agree with you, Legislator Schneiderman. But, again, this is -- this is the package that we have in place for the Comptroller's Office to manage the County's fiscal environment.

LEG. CILMI:

Through the Chair to Legislator Schneiderman's question, if I could, my understanding is that this -- what we have now is three generations old.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

It's -- it came in, I think, in '96.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Does it make it obsolete, though, that it's three generations old? I mean, this is a tough time right now.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Tom, did you want to comment on that pertaining to this particular resolution?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I mean, believe me, I want Don to have all the tools he needs. These are difficult decisions. You know, we're sitting here closing nursing homes and laying off employees. You know, I want to make sure this is absolutely necessary, not just something that would be convenient.

MR. VAUGHN:

Well, a couple of questions first. Did I want to comment? No, I actually just wanted a closer seat up -- to make sure I wasn't missing anything.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

To Legislator Schneiderman's comment about -- with \$380,000 we could hire a lot of staff. Yes, I agree except for this is capital funding and it's included in the Capital Budget and we can't hire staff with capital funding, although we might like to .

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I understand that; still we're going to have to pay the debt service. We don't have money.

MR. VAUGHN:

Yes, we have to pay the debt service and -- yeah, this is a --

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

It's not free money.

MR. VAUGHN:

It is absolutely not free money, but it's also absolutely not money that we could use to hire staff either.

I would add that, you know, without this program, we can't run our payrolls, we can't pay our -- we can't pay our contract agencies. We really can't do anything in terms of financial stuff -- financial -- financial payments and processing. The program that we are currently having -- is -- has been outdated and obsolete. And if we don't move forward with this, we won't have support. If we don't have the support, if something breaks down and we are unable to make those payments, we will have no one to fix that. And that is a great concern. It's my understanding --

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

That's the clarification I need. Is the current program obsolete, as you just said, Tom? Or is it just not the newest versions with all the bells and whistles?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

It's not the newest version with all the bells and whistles. Are there more current packages out there? The answer is yes. Are we in a position to address that? No.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

So the only thing we're losing besides not getting some of the newer bells and whistles is we may lose the support agreement?

MR. VAUGHN:

Legislator Schneiderman, just to clarify what the Commissioner just said was that we're not buying the most current version -- not the version that we're currently is not the most current version. What he was saying was we're not buying the most current version. So we're buying like version 3.9 and -- what's the latest version, Don? Like a -- like a version 7. We're on a version that's like generations away from the most current version. We're buying what we can afford. We're buying what we need to keep the County operating. There are many, many other versions of this that we could upgrade to? We're just not in a position to do that right now. And to your point this is -- this is the financially responsible thing to do. We're not going to the version that, you know, exploding --

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is this -- this is in the Capital -- this is for BRO. This is in the Capital Budget for this year?

MR. PERNICE:

(Nodding head in the affirmative)

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

So we have already figured in debt the service, so to speak.

MR. PERNICE:

(Nodding head in the affirmative)

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

And the County Executive, I know he's wrestling with the County's financial picture, understanding that we have to take more drastic measures. He is supporting this expenditure?

MR. VAUGHN:

We absolutely support this expenditure.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Who do I got to go to first? I saw Robert floating around so I was going to -- I'd like to hear from BRO about your assessment regarding the usability of IFMS at this point.

MR. PERNICE:

BRO usually uses IFMS on a -- sort of a query basis where we'll look at it and we'll abstract information from it. But there's other departments that the Comptroller, the Treasurer, the -- you know, the Budget Office that uses it much more as a tool for managing and running the County on daily operations, so --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, what have they said? Have we heard from them? Have we heard from the Treasurer or the Comptroller?

MR. PERNICE:

Not specifically on this bill.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Thank you. So, Don, let me go to you. We're talking about an upgrade now -- which is the first upgrade since we -- I hate to say this, but I remember when IFMS was going in. As a matter of fact, and people have been using that as a somewhat cross acronym for the last 14, 15 years. How did we go for 14 or 15 years without any upgrade?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

No, no, we've had upgrades.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Oh, we have. Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yes. This is -- this is the latest release --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. So who owns -- so who owns the software? Who is the vendor? Is it Xerox, is it Grumman?

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

American Management Systems.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. They're the vendor, they're the owner of the software.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The upgrade will -- what is the duration of the upgrade?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

They -- generally you will see upgrades on a yearly basis.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So -- but you also mentioned that we'll lose support. So when was the last time we upgraded?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I believe it was a year ago.

LEG. KENNEDY:

We upgraded a year ago?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

We had a release a year ago, I believe. I'd have to check that for you, Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

At what price? What did we pay for the last upgrade?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I don't have that number for you. I'd have to get back to you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. I'm not prepared to vote for this until we get some of that information. And I want to know what the duration is. BRO wants to know what the Treasurer and the Comptroller have to say about it and see, like Legislator Schneiderman has mentioned, yeah, we could be putting people to work, we could be plugging a lot of other holes. I know I hear all the time when I ask for any kind of number, the next thing I hear about is how IFMS doesn't work. So if it needs a hammer taken to it, I'm not opposed to spending some money. But if we upgraded last year and the thing's still not working, throw it out; get a new system.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I wouldn't say it doesn't work.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Don, you wouldn't. You're being kind. But as I said, 14 or 15 years I've been hearing IFMS and people still say that the thing is lousy. So at some point maybe what has to happen is, is you say to yourself, you know, we got sold a pig in a poke 15 years ago. And maybe it's time to go ahead and let it set sail. I'm not prepared to vote for it until we hear some of that other stuff.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. Legislator Cilmi had a comment. Yeah?

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to table.

LEG. CILMI:

Commissioner, the -- who do we pay? Do we pay American Management Systems?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

They provided the support, yes.

LEG. CILMI:

So that's the -- so the \$380,000 check goes to them?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I will -- I will double check on that for you, Legislator Cilmi. But I believe it goes directly to the vendor, yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And then -- and then they do the installation of the upgrade or we have the resources to be able to do that ourselves?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

They provide the support for the upgrade to us. They bring in the upgrade. They put it in. We work with them on it.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. I think what you're -- what you're hearing is a certain level of disbelief at the cost of this upgrade, especially since we upgraded last year.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Not to interrupt you, but I think we have to keep in mind that these are multimillion dollar systems.

LEG. CILMI:

I understand. I'm not -- I'm not -- I'm just saying that, you know, to the average person \$380,000 to upgrade a piece of software that you upgraded a year ago just seems like an awful lot of money. So the questions that Legislator Kennedy articulated, I think, are important ones. And I don't have the history that Legislator Kennedy does. So as far as the viability of IFMS as a system and whether or not it actually does what we expect it to do and does so in an efficient, effective way, is something that, I think, needs to be answered by the people who actually use that system. So, I'll offer my support for the tabling motion for the time being as well until we can get those answers.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Horsley.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Yeah, I just have a couple quick questions. When we say the next release, that means the next rendition of their software? Is that what the next release means?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

It would be the next improvement to the --

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Next improvement to the -- let me ask you, does -- in this next improvement to the software, does this give us any greater security utilization? I mean -- you know, I'm always worried about that our system is -- could be easily hacked or whatever. Is that something that the thinking behind this is

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

-- is security reasons? Or is it just simply because it seems to be more -- faster or efficient or whatever?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

With regard to this, we wouldn't really be discussing the security. The security is our issue at the network level.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

So that's not -- that's not -- that doesn't deal with this.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Clearly it's something we're concerned about, but it doesn't deal with this particular enhancement, no.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

All right. I appreciate your candidness. Then the last -- well, I think we're going to have to table it.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I make a motion to table.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I will withdraw my motion to approve. And have a motion to table. I'll second that motion to table. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, motion to table. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Okay, we have **IR 1236, Appropriating funds in connection with the acquisition of a Disaster Recovery Project (CP 1729). (Co. Exec.)** And, again, this is related to our current -- the current storms that we've had. Commissioner, would you like to give us some information about this resolution?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Sure. This is -- this is also part of an ongoing Capital Project. It is funding to further enhance the data centers here and in Riverhead. Currently we are looking to move equipment that is located outside of the data centers into the data centers so that we can assure the functionality of the overall County network during any kind of environmental, physical disaster that we may encounter.

This project has been ongoing. It is imperative. What we're looking to do here is add additional switches and power that's necessary in order for us to bring the equipment into place. The data centers are not manned 24/7. We are looking for implementation, certainly, of an automated failover so that when -- when we do have an issue, the one -- if one center goes down, the other one will ultimately come up. And clearly the recent storms in the past year have indicated to us where we have an absolute need to ensure this.

Now, we've implemented the two data centers to ensure continued operation of the County. This funding is to allow us to go ahead and complete that process.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. I'm also looking at some of the notes; looks like the savings -- there will also be savings with this -- implementation of this.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Some of the equipment that we will put in place is more efficient. And we expect to be able to retire equipment that is out in the field right now at various locations. And rather than repurchase servers, we have equipment in place that can provide the same or better functionality. And we have done some of this in the last year since I've been here. It is, as I said, ongoing. And what we have

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

been able to do is provide departments with the equivalent or greater functionality without replacing their equipment by purchasing anything new, because we have equipment that is in place and we have implemented technology that allows us to take on that load.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. I think, too, though, again, when we're focussing on disaster recovery, I mean, this could actually save lives in coordination with the emergency services and --

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

You have a number of issues here. Obviously we want to maintain the continuity of the environment. When we look at the recent storms, the County was up. We were operational. We were able to run things like payroll. We were able to run the IFMS system. But we were also able to ensure that the public safety and health systems were operational at the same time. And the importance here is that if one of the locations goes down, the other one will take the burden from it. And we will continue to remain up.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks, Madam Chair. Number of questions for you, Commissioner. So you said this is part of an ongoing Capital Project. How much of a part of that ongoing Capital Project is it? It's \$500,000. This appropriation is \$500,000. How much is the overall project and what would be left after this appropriation?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I'll get you the numbers right now.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Second question is you mention that -- that we were able to sustain operations throughout the course of the last storm that hit, Sandy. How close were we to not being able to sustain operation? Or were we totally secure?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Well, we lost power intermittently in Hauppauge here. The support generator at the Hauppauge building 50 was on for a number of hours. We had intermittent outages that were largely related to Verizon.

LEG. CILMI:

Those are uncontrollable.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Those are uncontrollable.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

But it did failover to Riverhead for a period of time, number of hours, and then switch back.

LEG. CILMI:

As a result of power outages?

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

As a result of power outages, correct.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So we have a redundancy already in place to deal with power outages to an extent.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

To an extent, correct. We do not have it to the extent that we are covering all the departments or, I think, all the departments that we really wanted to make sure we're covering. Some departments are not in that grid. And we're looking to move them into the grid to ensure their functionality.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So that takes me nicely into my next question which is exactly where does this money go? Half a million dollars we're spending, is it all being spent in one place? Are we writing one check? Are we writing multiple checks?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

It's multiple checks. It will go into power upgrades, into data centers. It will go into the purchase of switches and routers in order to ensure that we can support the equipment and make sure that we have the capability. And, as I said, we don't have 24-hour service in the data centers. So we want to automate as much of it as possible so that if we have an issue and they're not manned, they will kick in on their own.

LEG. CILMI:

So is there any one significant expense among the realm of expenses that you envision this paying for? It's half a million dollars --

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Your switches are probably your primary expense here.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

They can be 50 or \$60,000 a piece.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And so if -- if-- whenever you're ready with -- it looks like you might be ready.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

The cost of this Capital Project 1729 was 4.6 million total. We've spent 2 million --

LEG. CILMI:

I'm sorry. Did you say 4.16?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

4.6.

LEG. CILMI:

4.6, okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

We've spent two million so far.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Inclusive or exclusive of this?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Exclusive of this.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So you'll have -- you'll have --

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

There's a million allocated in 2014 and 500,000 allocated in 2015.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Commissioner, I just -- I just want to make sure that I understand between here and Riverhead, without getting too technical, how are you going to achieve the redundancy that you had kind of alluded to? Is that what you're saying this half million gets you, that ability to deliver service for critical departments if either one of these two data centers go down?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

The redundancy that we're talking about, if I can just back up a little bit.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sure.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Okay. The initial phase of establishing that redundancy was to create the two data centers.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

One here; one in Riverhead.

LEG. KENNEDY:

All right.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

That's in place.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Both with the capacity to operate all of those core departments for all of the County?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

If we were running a traditional disaster recovery environment, yes, that would be what the case is.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

One would strictly be a backup to the other.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

What we have done, because of the size and the structure of the County, is most -- most of your ongoing operation runs out of Hauppauge.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Okay. With a redundant environment in Riverhead. Because of the location of some of the departments in the County being in Riverhead, they primarily run out of Riverhead with their redundancy here.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I see. Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Those are backed up every night.

LEG. KENNEDY:

All right.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Okay. Excuse me. This -- that initial implementation that was started a number of years ago addressed the larger agencies and the more core operational programs like payroll, like your financial systems.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

All right. Now, just as an example, Social Services, was not within this environment. Okay. This is one of the agencies we want to make sure we move into this environment. Okay. In addition to that, we have had departments that have come to me since I've been here that have said "I need new servers" and "my servers are starting to age out."

Because of other software that we have purchased, we are able to say to them "we're going to give you more current technology. We are going to replace your servers, but we're not buying any new servers."

LEG. KENNEDY:

Bravo.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Okay. That's able to be done because of what's been established in these two data centers in that the technology that's gone into the data centers allows us to do that; and then also provides these departments with a failover situation so that were Hauppauge to take a hit, they'd be running out of Riverhead.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. KENNEDY:

Is that inclusive of the Yaphank facilities also?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yaphank is included in this as well. Yaphank is largely within the public safety realm, but Yaphank is part of this, yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'm inclined to support you on this. I think you've done an excellent job in looking at this. And having lived through the aftermath, you were the only place that was operational up here after Sandy.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But is it your opinion that we would be compromised in our safety if we you were to not do this?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yes, it is my opinion.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Great. Fine. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Schneiderman.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Don, the Long Island region got quite a bit of money after Hurricane Sandy or Super Storm Sandy. I think \$3 billion. Some of it -- a lot of it's gone to repair. Some of it is going to storm mitigation prevention. This -- this capital item seems to deal specifically with disaster recovery. Is it eligible for funding either through that source or another source where we wouldn't have to bond the money but we might actually be able to apply for a grant to do this?

MR. VAUGHN:

Legislator Schneiderman, that's a really excellent question. And we've looked into that as well. What I would ask is this: So far from what I've been told, this is not eligible for FEMA funding. But we would appreciate if this could get out of Committee today, I'd be more than happy to confirm that answer for you on the floor of the General Meeting on Tuesday. But we have been told at this point in time it is not eligible for that type of funding.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Discharge without recommendation.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is it -- it's in a hurry? This one in particular can't wait a cycle to get the answer to that question? Because if it is eligible, why on earth would we borrow half a million dollars?

MR. VAUGHN:

Legislator Schneiderman, as I said, we have been told that it's not. And what I'm simply telling you is that I would be more than happy to reconfirm that answer for you. Because I asked the same question prior to us ever laying this bill on the table whether or not -- and as did Commissioner Rogers. And we've been told multiple times that it's not.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

How was that determination made? Somebody went to Congressman Bishop or one of our congressional delegates and --

MR. VAUGHN:

We had the people that we have working on FEMA run it up the -- run it up whatever the --

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

It was fully vetted as a project?

MR. VAUGHN:

I promise you, I would not have laid it on the table if I could have gotten somebody else to pay for it.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I'd like to make a motion to approve. Oh, we have another. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

I think -- just part of the problem, I think, is that some of the information that we're getting from FEMA and from HUD, it's just been so slow to come. And I don't think they know exactly what they're going to be paying for yet. So maybe that we approve this -- and then, maybe they tell us afterwards that -- and we can get reimbursed.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. I've made a motion. Motion to approve.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Second. All in favor? Opposed? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)** Okay, so we're onto the third one.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Tom, if you could get that information before we actually vote on the floor. Thank you. Hardy thumbs up there, so.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

We have the third **IR 1237, Appropriating funds in connection with the acquisition of Fiber Cabling Network and WAN Technology Upgrades (CP 1726). (Co. Exec.)** Commissioner, could you give us some information about this resolution?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Sure. This does tie in with the disaster recovery component of things. This is the backbone to the network that we're talking about here. So when we talked about disaster recovery, we're talking about two physical buildings: Riverhead and Hauppauge. When we're talking about the fiber cabling network and land technology upgrades, we're talking about the actual components outside of the buildings that make those items up.

So this is also Phase III of an ongoing project. We are doing network and switch replacement in various locations on this. We have approximately 350 switches in the County. These are located

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

throughout the County in numerous buildings. Basically any building that we are servicing has a switch in it. The life span on these switches is approximately five years. And then they go end of life. That means they stop working, period. It's not like we can keep using them. We can't. They shut down.

This is the third phase for replacement of those devices. And we replace a section of them each year so that we don't get hit with this all at once. Riverhead was completed last year. This is to address Yaphank and Hauppauge.

Now part of this is also to ensure what we call redundant "d" marks so that we have access into buildings for more than one direction. We recently scoped this out for Yaphank so that if we had damage from any particular direction going in, we would still be able to access it. And that means both environmental or physical damage. So this also funds our ability to be able to respond to problems when the new offices are created or things are moved so that we have cash to be able to physically implement some of the pieces of equipment that we need to put into place throughout the year.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. We have a couple of questions. Legislator Kennedy, you had a question?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Again, I'm not going to pretend to know computers. You know them pretty well and switches are what switches are. So if they have a five-year life, so be it. If we have 350 switches throughout the County, and you just estimated before that switches are about 50 grand a piece, you're only getting ten switches with this.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Well, they're not all -- they're not all 50 grand.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Oh.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

What I was talking about for the data center --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Those are --

LEG. KENNEDY:

High end?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Much higher end, yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I see.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Because in the situation of the data center, you're handling a lot more input --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

-- at one time. Okay.

LEG. KENNEDY:

All right. How many do you get for this? How many switches do you get for 500 grand?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I'd have to look at the breakdown on this. I really would.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, then, let's go the other way. If -- will this amount give us -- will you do a 100 percent replacement of the switches you talked about here in Hauppauge and -- what is it, Hauppauge and Yaphank?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

And Yaphank. This is the third phase. We expect to complete it, but this is ongoing. I mean we constantly --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Obviously something's going to age out, right. We're going to be talking about switches again next year.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yes, we are.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Do these things -- does their shelf life improve? I mean, you know, I get -- thing here now -- first one I had was a leading edge with two floppies. Do they last any longer or is a switch is a switch is a switch?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Right now five years is the life span we're going to get --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

-- on most of these, yeah.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right. Thanks.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

My only question was you talked about -- in the last resolution, you talked about switches being the most significant expense. And now we're talking about switches again. So I just wanted to make sure that we're not duplicating and that they're different switches.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Absolutely. As with the disaster recovery component, we are largely discussing the physical buildings themselves in terms of what's inside of them and what is the equipment that's there for the building 50 in Hauppauge and the Riverhead data center and the Yaphank data center. On this we are largely talking about outside of that. We're talking also infrastructure in terms of cabling, fiber cable. And we're also talking about any of the other departments that may need to either upgrade or their equipment has reached end of life.

LEG. CILMI:

So is this like -- like resolution -- like IR 1236 wherein you said that you -- that this is multiple checks?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yes, absolutely.

LEG. CILMI:

So just out of curiosity, what sort of oversight is there when we're doing -- I mean we're appropriating, you know, in these two resolutions a million -- you know, \$1.1 million. And you've indicated that there are multiple checks that get written with each of these resolutions. What sort of oversight does the County have, does the Legislature have in looking at those disbursements?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

This goes through a standard purchasing procedure, which has got to be approved by the Budget Office, got to be approved by the Comptroller's Office. We don't just write a purchase order and say "here you go."

LEG. CILMI:

So is there bidding that's involved or is this all off a state contract or --

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Yes, absolutely.

MR. VAUGHN:

Legislator Cilmi, many of these -- if not all of these, and the Commissioner will jump in and correct me if I'm wrong, but all of these go through the RFP process, which is a Committee that has formed. The Legislature has a representative that sits on that committee. All the -- all of the proposals that we would have received on this would be graded individually. It's pretty extensive.

So what will happen is a company who wishes to bid on the project will submit a large packet. The members of the RFP Committee are responsible for reviewing and grading those packets based on a set of criteria developed by the department with a score sheet. All that information's all public information. The scores are all public information. It's part of the purchasing process. So it's a pretty -- to having done it, sat on a number of them myself, it's a pretty extensive process that you would go through in order to select -- in order to select whatever it is that you're going to be purchasing.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And what's -- what's the monetary threshold by which -- or under which you don't have to go through that process?

MR. VAUGHN:

I'm going to defer to Counsel on that one, but I believe -- I want to tell you it's \$25,000.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

MR. NOLAN:

Twenty-five.

LEG. CILMI:

\$25,000 Counsel is saying. So you would anticipate that this money predominantly would be disbursed in increments greater than \$25,000?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I can't comment to that. My answer to you would be in some cases, yes and some cases no. Again, if we are looking at -- that we need to replace a single switch, okay, it could be a \$5,000 switch; it could be a \$35,000 switch. No purchase is made unless we are purchasing it off of an approved vendor or off of a New York State contract or through an RFP. That's always the case. All right. We don't ever go out and just buy anything.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I also -- I'm looking at my notes. It looks like this program will have a positive operation budget impact. It will proactively upgrade the County's WAN, allowing us to add site and users to manage -- to manage it rather than ad hoc fashion, right?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I think -- and again my apologies -- I think what we have to keep in mind here is because it is newer equipment that we are putting into place, it gives us greater capability with regard to managing the ever changing, as Legislator Kennedy said, the ever changing pieces of equipment, whether they're mobile, whether it's Blackberries, whether it's tablets, so that County personnel have access to the County network from pretty much any location. And it's secured access, it's controlled access, and it's consistent access.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Right. And again --

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Security is a part of this.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

And nothing -- the Committee here is just to make sure -- we really, really, really need this. I mean that's the bottom line. We have no money. We're beyond having no money. In fact, we owe money. So, again, when we look at the bonding, we just want to make sure this is absolutely necessary and we're doing our due diligence to make sure that's true.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

We really, really, really need this.

LEG. KENNEDY:

My last question, if I can, Madam Chair, to the Commissioner then is, just so we can beat this dead horse a little bit more, do we -- do we put this out and a vendor actually obtains the switches and installs them? Or are our own County IT folks getting the material and then doing the installation?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Our staff does the installation in most cases.

4/16/13 Education/IT Committee

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And so these switches, when they get get them, must be warranted?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Absolutely.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. So -- and our County folks are trained and certified so that the warranty is valid because they install it under whoever it is, you know, Dell or whoever manufacturers them?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Absolutely. And if we have an issue with it, the switch is replaced or a component of it would be replaced. And staff does this on a regular basis.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Our staff. Our County staff.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Even at two o'clock in the morning doing it.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And one more -- but you know what? I think we got enough. Yeah, you need the switches. Okay.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

We're good.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I'd like to make a motion.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Second.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Yeah, go ahead. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

It looks like we're done. Again, if you could just make sure we have more information -- it's approved, it's approved. More information on 1235, that would be great. And thanks everybody for coming.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

We're adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:37 PM
{ } DENOTE SPELLED PHONETICALLY**