

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 September 3, 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:

Leg. DuWayne Gregory, 15th Legislative District
Leg. Steven H. Stern, 16th Legislative District
Leg. Al Krupski, 1st Legislative District
George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
William Shilling, Legislative Aide
Ben Zwirn, Suffolk County Community College
Paul Perillie, Aide to Leg. Gregory
Chris DeLuca, Aide to Leg. Cilmi
Benny Pernice, Budget Review Office
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
Christina Delisi, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman
Jason Hann, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman
Christopher Nolan, J. Kings Food Service
Joel Panagakos, J. Kings Food Service
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:06 PM

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay, we're going to start our Committee meeting. Legislators, please come forward.

Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Cilmi.

SALUTATION

Please remain standing for a moment of silent meditation and prayer as we think of the service men and women protecting our country.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

Thank you.

Okay, I don't see any correspondence for today's Committee meeting. Or cards, no public comments.

SLIDESHOW PRESENTATION

We have a presentation for you today, for our Legislators. We have Christopher Nolan of J. Kings Food Service Professionals. He will provide a presentation on local produce programs for our school districts. And we also have a representative Joel Panagakos -- is that good? Okay. Please come forward. And we'd love to see your presentation.

MR. NOLAN:

Good afternoon everyone. Like Sarah said, my name is Chris Nolan. Joel and myself work for J. Kings Food Service right over in Holtsville, New York. Just a little bit about the company. We're \$180 million food service distributor. We have about 400 employees. And produce is, out of the 180 million that we do, it's probably about 40 to 50 million of the overall products that we distribute. So produce is more important to us than any other product.

One of the things we've been working on, and it was -- we appreciate Sarah having us here today -- is the local produce. And what I'm going to do at this point just turn it over to Joel. And he'll talk a little bit about getting the local produce into the school systems.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

And also let me just give the reason why I'm having you here and connecting this with education. I had visited my school -- my son's school, Mt. Sinai High School. And I was in the cafeteria and there was a poster. And basically it mentioned local produce for our local schools. And that's what this is about today.

And you will give us a little bit of history behind, you know, how we're getting our local farm produce into our schools and some of the obstacles. Because there are obstacles. And, again, it's providing the services and supporting our economy while helping our kids really eat nutritious meals. So, again, thank you for coming out today.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Thank you very much, Sarah. In regard to what you spoke about, the local program that we have -- the local program that we have in place has developed over the past 23 years. And the relationships with the particular farms that we have are longstanding. The slide that you're looking at right now is a slide that depicts Grapes & Greens in Riverhead. This is a building that we bought about two years

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ago. And when the Long Island Farm Bureau put in for a grant, a large grant that was \$500,000 over three years, they needed a partner from the private sector to partner with them to bypass the trial stages of going through years and years of trying to find a place at Grumman's or wherever else it might have been.

So we had the building in place. And we became their partner for the particular grant. We've invested over a million and-a-half dollars in the building, retrofitted this building. It's 108,000 square feet and retrofitted it with about 30,000 square feet of refrigerated space, which is needed for these perishable types of products.

Currently at that building we are -- members of the Long Island Farm Bureau, which are all of the farmers basically that grow in Long Island, plus the vineyards, the wineries and so forth, currently the vineyards are storing the wine that they produce at -- I didn't know this, but once wine is produced after it leaves the barrels and gets bottled, the wine has to remain at a particular temperature. And for the vineyards that we have, it's between 51 for some types and 61 degrees for others.

So there are separate coolers for these vineyards where they're storing the product. And there's a very inexpensive charge based upon the grant with the Long Island Farm Bureau that they're involved with for an in charge and an out charge. I believe it's \$29 for a three or four month period per pallet. So this allows them to store the wine so that they get the full body of the wine to the people who are drinking the wine.

More importantly, in the produce side of it, on some of the other slides that Chris is going to forward, you'll get an idea of -- just produce vendors, Crown One Enterprises is our company in Bay Shore, Long Island. Kitchen Cuts is a facility along with two other facilities there that do meat processing -- USDA meat processing and USDA whole meal replacements. Those whole meal replacements currently are being sold to supermarkets: Shoprite Supermarket, Stop and Shop Supermarket and so forth under their own label. So these are products that are being produced in Long Island.

At Kitchen Cuts we're using vegetables that are grown all around the country and producing fruit platters, sliced and diced vegetables. And during the summer months we specifically use local vegetables for whole foods and a few other supermarkets who want Long Island vegetables diced and sliced. That facility ultimately will be moved out to Riverhead in the Grapes & Greens building.

The next slides that you're going to see are going to be other vendors from Upstate New York Red Jacket Orchards with different products. And Chris will go through these, but these are some of our local growing partners. If you've ever had a pie at Briermier Farms up in -- on Sound Avenue, it's a delicious, delicious pie. So these are some local vendors.

Chris, if you could just whip through them quickly, there's about 22 of them. Each one of these farms are farms that we've been dealing with for years. And each one of these farms we have GAP or Good Agricultural Practice Documents on file. If the farmers are not willing to participate in that and have us audit them and so forth, then they can't be part of the program. Because we need to know that the food is being grown under safe conditions.

That being said, with all of these partners, we now think about what do we do with all this produce that we buy? Well, we do have customers that are looking for it all the time. And those are restaurants and Stop and Shop Supermarkets, Whole Foods, Shoprite; weekly they buy thousands and thousands of cases of product. But the schools are a unique group. The unique part of it really is the time of the year that most of the local vegetables are available and in great supply are usually the couple of months that the schools are closed for regular classes. But that doesn't mean that between April and the end of June that there aren't any products. And it doesn't mean that from

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September 1 until the end of October or beginning of October there are other products. And Al knows what I'm talking about when it comes to growing these vegetables, okay.

So the bottom line is that there's a host of vegetables that are available for consumption at the schools. And how do we -- what are the challenges really? Well, on the farmers' side of things, they like to be able to devote their attention to growing, to making sure that they're using the right pesticides and doing this and doing that and following all the regulations that today they have to follow that they didn't years ago.

So they don't any more have the transportation that they used to have or don't want to have that expensive transportation with a truck that gets five miles to the gallon. They also don't have the staff. They don't have the office staff to do some of the work that's needed to move these vegetables from the ground to the facility where they're going to be sold and then ultimately to the facility that's going to be using them. They don't have that. And they also don't have the farm workers at the beck and call that they've had for all the years. So they have a lot of challenges.

What do we think -- where do we come into this picture? Well, I was approached by a gentleman from the Westbury School system six months ago. His name was Charlie Bevington. And he is working with the -- do you know Charlie? Okay. So I had never met him.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Yes, I know him quite well.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

I'm sorry?

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

He's the Rocky Point Civic President.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Yes.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Has a wonderful farmers market Sunday, so I invite everybody to visit but --

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Okay. Well, Charlie called us. And Charlie asked if we would be interested in being part of his presentation for a grant for the farm-to-school monies that could allow local vegetables getting to the Westbury school system. And what he had in mind was for us to be the conduit of getting the vegetables from the farm to Grapes & Greens where they all go to get pre-cooled. And then ultimately they usually come back to Kings; and from J. Kings in Holtsville, we distribute to over 3,000 customers in a 250-mile radius. So that's what he had in mind, that we could help him with his distribution to his schools.

What a lot of schools have, they have their own food service companies. Whitsons Food Service is a company that we directly deal with. We supply Whitsons with 99% of what they sell to all the schools. And the schools in Suffolk County that they sell, and there are quite a few, Chris --

MR. NOLAN:

Yes.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

We send out a list of what's available on a weekly and monthly basis to them. And they try to develop their menus based upon that list of product. So that particular company is able to -- and we

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sent out the list of everything that's September and October already, and we give them "begin" dates and "start dates" where they anticipate a start date so that they're able to manage.

So those folks we directly deliver those products, our office staff take the orders daily, we fulfill the orders and deliver to the locations. A lot of other schools are self-operated or they're run by or supplied by other food service distributors. Take Landmark Food Service, for instance, or DiCarlo, whoever it might be, what I proposed to Charlie Bevington would be, Grapes & Greens could be the hub for all of this produce. We use a tremendous amount. But in addition to what we use, we could have as much as can be grown locally. They're at the beck and call of the other food service companies who want to sell local and have trouble getting it. And they could have it there to be picked up there. They're out there delivering anyway.

So, you know -- and we publish -- for those companies we publish on a weekly basis what a picked-up price of Grapes & Greens would be as opposed to what a delivered price to school number one in Mt. Sinai would be. And so those are the things that we think could have, you know, an impact going forward and probably solve a lot of the problems with the schools.

I also serve on a group, a board that's going to be presenting up in Syracuse, an agricultural board, for these companies and different types of businesses like ours that have gotten grants for different things. And the last time I was up in Albany, it seemed to me that everything was, like, dragging, dragging, so slowly; like some of the companies that had gotten the grants didn't have the building in which to put the products. Some of the companies didn't have the trucks and everything else. And rather than have this go on for another ten years and worry about where could we put the building, this was our, you know, this was our basic idea of how we could help the situation.

So, certainly open for any questions, if there might any questions regarding that.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I think what's most important here is that you're helping facilitate the process. You know, you just said how slow government can work. And you're making it easier for local schools or school districts to be able to have that fresh produce. So, again, I just want to thank you for coming here and for your services.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

You're welcome. You're welcome.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Kennedy has a question.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I do, yes. And thank you for being here and thank you, Madam Chairwoman. One of the things that you spoke about -- let's see, how best to put this -- we fund a whole variety of different types of things. One of the things that we do is, is we provide funding for preschools, day-care operations and things like that. Many of these are small operators who are making meals for kids, 10, 20 30, maybe 50, maybe 100. You spoke about an intermediary service that's acquiring the produce from you, which then ultimately goes to who the users are, whether it's restaurants, this, that or the other thing.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

The intermediate service that I was speaking of in the school realm was a company called Whitsons Food Service. They supply hundreds of schools in the metropolitan area in Long Island, Upstate, New York.

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LEG. KENNEDY:

Can a consumer come to your consortium to acquire produce?

MR. PANAGAKOS:

We have a cash and carry pick-up where they can pick up the produce at J. Kings in Holtsville.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

We also have a pickup service where products -- produce could be picked up at the source at Grapes & Greens so that -- out at Grapes & Greens, if you're a wholesaler --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

And/or a customer and want to come and pick up, you can pick up out there. Some of the accounts that you're speaking of are relatively small.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

In that case -- in that case, I'm not sure how they're currently getting their produce, but if it's a small distributor, that distributor could certainly use the facility at Grapes & Greens to pick up this local produce. And for the month of September and October, if they want to provide cucumbers and a salad for the children, or if you want particular lettuce products, they can purchase that lettuce and then they can -- that food service -- small food service distributor can pick it up at that one place instead of going to 10 farms and then bring it back to their facility and get it to the schools; or the schools could come directly there.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Your location in Holtsville --

MR. PANAGAKOS:

In Holtsville is on Furrows Road right at exit 62 on the LIE.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sure.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

And the building on Sound Avenue in Riverhead is the Old Blackman building.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Next to Warner Nursery.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Do you have the same scope or range of produce and products at both locations?

MR. PANAGAKOS:

No. In Grapes & Greens, it's strictly local produce, locally grown Long Island produce. There could be 50 SKUs at different types of produce. In the produce at Holtsville --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right. Obviously you're a wholesale vendor, so you --

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

(Inaudible)

MR. PANAGAKOS:

But if it's local produce that you're thinking of, all of the local produce that's available at Kings is available at -- J. Kings in Holtsville is available at Grapes & Greens.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Perfect. That's what I wanted to know.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

But, you know, through the course of all these years, and I've been doing it for a longtime, the schools primarily buy 5 or 6 produce items, the way the menus are set up today. It's tomatoes. It's usually processed lettuce products. It might be some cucumbers for the salad and so on and so forth. At some point in time if we could make it interesting for the children -- and through the course of the years we've taken the customers out, whether it's St. John's University -- flip through this a little further -- so St. Johns with (inaudible) yeah -- you see the picture up there?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sure.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

You see the good looking guy on the top in the right?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Go figure, look at that. That's my alma mater. There you go.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

St. John's --

LEG. KENNEDY:

I should have been eating that local produce.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Yeah, that's what happened to me over -- so the bottom line is these were sustainability students from St. John's University. On the top picture, we took him to Deer Run Farms. In the middle it's Fox Hollow Farms, at Jeffrey {Rodcamp}. And on the bottom that's another picture with Bob Nolan. So these folks got a feel for what's happening. But if we can get kids interested, even if it's showing them videos, if we did some videos, and we do that for our customers, and they show the videos in the -- at the food service area where there could be videos of their food service directors out in the fields, it really creates and spurs the interest.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

You're welcome.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

And, again, it's important that we create the interest because, you know, kids are basically, you know, they go to school, this is what they're going to eat. And these are their choices. We need to make sure those choices are the good choices. And we need to also create a situation where the local produce is always part of those choices. It helps. The child with the nutrients -- because when you eat local produce, you have more nutrients, of course, in that, food product. But also you're supporting our farmers. And, you know, as part of the EPA Committee, and the Soil & Water Committee, and former FAA member, Future Farmers of America, we need to make sure that Long Island stays sustainable, especially with our farming.

I know I have Legislator Krupski here. Would you like to comment on this?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I would just like to thank you for, you know, bringing this up to the forefront and all the work that J. Kings does. It's hard -- and you're right -- when you're the producer, you know, you worry about the weather, you worry about the labor, you worry about the seed and the fertilizer and all of that. It's hard to be the distributor. We need that -- that link between the field, and in this case, the school. It's very important. And to make it important to the schools. That's really -- that's really hard -- it's been hard to do in the past.

So it's great that that link's being made. Because without that, they -- you know, there's just -- there's indifference. And then to make it important to the children, that's -- that's really good, too, because then they know that it's local food, they're going to take an interest in it, they're not going to have a candy bar, maybe the salad will have some appeal to it. They'll say, "oh, look, it came from a farm, look at that," you know. So you got to make that connection. Thank you.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Yes. And to Mr. Kennedy's point, when he did talk about the orders being small, from the distribution side of things, when J. Kings has to send an order out, in order to be -- in order to make any kind of profit or break even, there is a limit to how small an order we can send out. So at some point in time that threshold has got to be met. And usually through the years what we've found is, in a school system, they might have four elementaries, a junior high and a high school. And if it's up in the middle of nowhere, not in Long Island, but if it's way out of town and there's only a few students here and there, we might distribute all of the produce to one location. And they then, you know, truck it to the various locations. So there's always a solution. You just have to look at it with a good business sense.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Right. I also wanted to thank Joe Gergela from Long Island Farmers Bureau. He basically introduced myself to you and your company. And it's just amazing of the type of work that you're doing to really help Long Island.

Legislator Horsley has a question for you.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Thank you, Legislator.

Good afternoon. It's a pleasure. I'm just curious, obviously you haven't reached this point yet, but if this takes off -- and I'm a major advocate for not only grow local, but shop local and improve our local Long Island economy, how much -- how far could you go to supply the school systems of Suffolk and Nassau Counties? Do you have enough product to -- if everyone started to get on

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board, "let's get into a movement here," and that's -- and I think it's feasible, how much do we grow in comparison to that kind of, you know, outreach?

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Great question. Currently the amount of product -- between J. Kings and one other gentleman who supplies another supermarket chain, between the two of us, we probably purchase around 70 to 80% of what is grown in Long Island. Every one of my farmers, if you take Lyle Wells for instance, Lyle Wells owns just X number of acres of his own, but he leases a certain number of acres. And those acres are available pretty much to anybody. They're always looking for additional business. They always want to increase the volume of what they're going to sell.

So to answer your question is, I think the key to it is to figure out which products really would be able to be products that can fit the menus without a tremendous amount of additional labor. Kale is a very healthy product. Kale chips are easy to make and they're delicious. The kids would probably love the kale chips. But who at the school system is going to be standing there make the kale chips? So those are the kind of things -- so to the selection -- Jay?

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Wayne.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Wayne? I'm sorry. I'm mixed up. Oh, come on, guys, sit behind the right thing here -- Wayne, in order -- I'm an old man -- where was I? Okay, the bottom line is we've got to figure out with the dieticians, the nutrition people and the people who create the menus, what items actually could they use? I know they all use tomatoes. So they use a six by six tomato, every school. So can we ask the tomatoes and -- the tomato growers, {Rodcamp} and Anderson and this guy and that guy, I need double the amount, sure, for next year. We tell them what to grow. We need 8,000 bags of corn a week because of the supermarkets. I have eight different corn growers that are growing corn for us with allotments that, you know, that we tell them "this will be what I take per week if I take 10%."

So we can increase or decrease those numbers. And for a farmer, that's kind of great to be able to hopefully be able to put the seed in the ground and watch it nurture itself and come up and everything. This years was a horror story. An absolute horror story.

So a few guys were lucky, they had some product when it was, you know, not available and they made good money with it. But for the farming community to continue to succeed in Long Island and for the kids to want to follow in their parents' footsteps, you got to make it profitable.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

So what you're saying, though -- then is if you have the orders and their orders are timely before the growing season, that you would be able to supply just -- as many as -- that could come on board.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Yes.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

And that's what you think.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

That's what I'm saying, yes. The bottom line is, though, the best thing to do is really spend the time with the people that create the menus, because they -- they're not going to buy a head of romaine from Daron Farms. They're not going to sit there and chop it. They're so used to buying processed

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food, processed chopped lettuce that they, I don't think, have the staff to do that.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

And maybe that's something that we can do; again, I work with quite a few of the school districts. And, you know, there's a -- public safety is very important, but also public, you know, the health, the health of our kids. And this is why, again, you're here today.

And Legislator Krupski has a question, but, you know, our farming community is number one in produce producing -- costs profit -- what is it? Profit producing --

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Suffolk County is number one in the State of New York as far as production.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

For production.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Yes.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

And that surprises so many people. And if we are, you know, which we are, we should be taking that and bringing it to our schools. And that's why, you know -- -

MR. PANAGAKOS:

I agree.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

That's why I think it answers -- kind of answers Wayne's question. If farmers knew that they had a market for it, then you could change -- you change your production. You know, next year if -- you know, if there was a market for -- the schools needed tomatoes, a certain variety, that's -- you know -- you know seed is so expensive, fertilizer is so expensive, you know, the land cost, all your fixed costs. You're not just going to take a chance and say, "you know, I should plant an acre of pumpkins or pickles or corn every week to have a supply." You know you have to have a market for that before you plant it. So this is where this -- this communication is so important. And then -- and then farmers can take advantage of that and say, "okay, I'm going to ramp up my production for that end and for that market."

MR. PANAGAKOS:

This is -- this is the question of the day, and I'm going to pick on Jay because he had his name mixed up with Wayne: Jay, it takes a farmer 90 days to plant a seed of corn, one corn seed and create that giant 8-foot stalk that produces all the corn that grows on that stalk. Ninety days later he harvests the corn from that stalk. So at 4 o'clock in the morning, they start the harvesting process and for 90 days he's watched the seed grow, he's watered it, he's weeded it and everything else and then he harvests the number of ears of corn that come off of that stalk. It takes 50 or 55 years to fill up a bag. And usually if the farmers gets 13 to \$14, he's fairly happy and he can maybe turn a little bit of a profit.

With that being said, how many ears of corn do you think that are harvested from each one of those 8-foot stalks? Just give me a number.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Five.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

And John M. Kennedy -- you have a very prominent name from -- I love it -- how many?

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'd say eight to nine.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

One. One ear of corn. The second one is a dud or a blank. That means the farmer gets 28 cents for 90 days' worth of growing one ear of corn on one stalk; 55 of them to fill a bag. Guy's riding around on a tractor in the morning getting it done. I sold it to Stop and Shop this week for a profit. They lost \$10 a bag when you went into Stop and Shop and bought it for ten for \$2, or 20 cents an ear.

So my point is to save Long Island farms, it's going to take a joint effort of all these different factors, you know, the growing, and the harvesting, the teaching of the kids. I have five sons. I still have a couple of young ones that still, you know, not that young, 18 and 22, but it's fairly young for an old bird, but the bottom line is the young kids are finally starting to eat healthy. Chris, you told me -- Chris has something very important to add to this.

MR. NOLAN:

I didn't think I was ever going to get you to stop talking.

No, just -- actually just to expand on some of the comments that were made, I was in -- about a month ago, I went out to the National School Show out in Kansas City. And I got to tell you the organization is massive. There had to be 10,000 people at this show that went for three days. And the USDA was a big part of it and everything else. And just like Joel kind of said, you know, when you get the commitment and everything from the schools and all -- or whether it's schools or anything else, the farmers can grow it and we can distribute it. And we got -- with the new building out there, with the cooling and everything else, we've really gotten a lot of things into place.

The big piece that they're finding is now we could get it to the schools, but then what do they do with it? And the problem is it's really an education on that end. The whole USDA, they're actually trying to figure out the new rules and regulations in the last couple of years. They keep changing it every six months; because they're finding now that kids went from eating very unhealthy to -- now that they're giving them all the healthy food, they're not eating it at all and it's going in the trash. And now they're trying to figure out how does the food get from the tray into the child? Because it's not nutrition unless it's goes into their mouth. So now they're almost thinking of scrapping that whole program and starting over again.

So it really comes down to -- I mean, you know, we could take care of certain pieces, but it really comes down to the education in the schools and the commitments. You know, it's a commitment from the school; it's a commitment from administration; it's a commitment from the -- even the teachers that -- it needs to be taught in the classrooms right down to the food service people. And to get this program -- and I mean everybody has the grandeur and it's great and it should be, and all that produce that's being grown on Long Island should be going into the Long Island schools. I mean it's in our backyard and, you know, and it just doesn't make sense.

But there is a big piece on the education part, that it does need to be taken -- take it a little further and make it, you know, to the point where the kids -- you can't just select every product. Because you can put it on the tray and if they don't eat it, it doesn't do anybody any good. And especially the reason we're here is, it doesn't do the children any good. And we got to figure out, and that's

the main piece, of what can we produce with that fresh produce that the kids are going to enjoy and they're going to eat and not just walk over to the garbage and just throw it out. And it's a serious, serious problem. And I listen to -- I don't how many conferences I went to within those three days, and that was their number one focus, is how do we stop producing all this great and healthy food, stop it from going into the garbage.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Well, you know I love challenges. And I'll make a connection and networking here, we have Ben Zwirn from Suffolk Community College right behind you. And I'll introduce you. Now there's the Culinary Institute located in Riverhead. And that's the college where, you know, people learn to cook. So I think that might be a nice place to start and connecting our County resources with what you need and trying to get our main goal, as you said, is to get healthy food in our kids, local healthy foods. So, again, I'm just networking in my mind right now, but I have people for you to speak to. And I'm looking forward to connecting you guys together. But, again, thank you. Would you like to finish your presentation and --

MR. PANAGAKOS:

I'd like to tell you that Richard {Froehlich} up at that school, Suffolk -- in Riverhead, he's the head of that. And he asked me to come on his committee or whatever. I think that would be a great place to start. My wife is a professor at Suffolk Community College. So the bottom line very simply is, if you start over there, if it filters down to the colleges, if it gets to the high schools, if it gets to the grade schools, like I'm saying, there's got to be four or five delectable finished products that would be tasty for the kids -- and they are tasty -- if you give a child a local tomato this time of the year versus what cardboard they've been eating all year, their mouth waters.

So there are ways of doing it. It's just doing it right from the beginning, not, you know, testing, to figure out what's going to work. And you take a cross section of kids. I asked Chris when he made that comment here in New York, are there that many kids -- I know there's a lot of kids that are starving in New York City and they're happy to get a morning meal because they have no food. I'm sorry I'm taking too long.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Cilmi has a question.

LEG. CILMI:

So you said that -- first of all, thank you for being here. You said that 70% of the local produce is basically sold to local businesses from you and one other individual, or one other company.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

It is purchased. Approximately 70% of the product that's grown --

LEG. CILMI:

-- it's available, is purchased by --

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Is purchased by --

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

-- these two entities. The additional product is sold to the trade, like the yard trade.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Farm stands comes in for years. So to Jeff {Rodcamp} he's got 25 customers in Nassau County -- I used to be one of them in Oceanside -- that would come out every day to Calverton to get the corn.

LEG. CILMI:

So what percent of the produce that's sold in our supermarkets comes from local farmers?

MR. PANAGAKOS:

I could say in Stop and Shop they have 32 SKUs or 32 individual items that when they're available from Long Island, they switch from wherever they're getting them from, whether it's from down south this time of the year, you know, earlier in the Spring. When they become available locally, they buy them locally. But the problems that we have for the supermarkets are when we go into gaps, when we have weather events that create shortages, it puts -- we have to notify them everyday what's available and what's not, as opposed to a larger growing area.

LEG. CILMI:

And do you use Stop and Shop as an example because they're -- you know firsthand that they do?

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Oh, yeah, because we've done it with them for the past five years.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

We're now doing it with Whole Foods on a limited basis. And also with a handful of Shoprites.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Great. Thank you.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

You're welcome.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. Well, again, thank you for coming out here. We appreciate your interest and, you know, of course, you as a business are inspired to make sure the business stays strong. We as Legislators want to see our Long Island stay strong. And you have your -- you're linked to so many vital resources and places, that we need to make sure that that succeeds. And basically it's child nutrition in my mind. And I appreciate your awareness programs. I'm looking forward to working with you and maybe the Community College and the Institute -- Food Institute. If you have ideas, feel free to share them. But, again, thank you. Legislators, are we done with the questions? Okay. I think we're good. Thank you.

MR. PANAGAKOS:

Thank you.

MR. NOLAN:

Thank you everyone.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay, we're going to continue with the agenda. We have a couple of introductory resolutions.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Okay, we have **IR 1609, Accepting and appropriating a grant award amendment from the New York State Urban Development Corporation D/B/A Empire State Development for an Entrepreneurial Assistance Program Center 50% reimbursed by State funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)** I'll make a motion to approve.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

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

Okay, we have **IR 1637, Accepting and appropriating year two of a five-year grant sub-award from the National Institutes of Health passed through the Research Foundation of SUNY Stony Brook for a project entitled "IRACDA - the New York Consortium for the Advancement of Postdoctoral Scholars (CAPS)" 100% reimbursed by Federal Funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)** All in favor? I make a motion.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second, and place on the consent calendar.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

And place on the consent calendar. Second?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

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

Okay, that's it. We're adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:42 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**