

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 October 1, 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:

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, Suffolk County Community College
Chris DeLuca, Aide to Leg. Cilmi
Benny Pernice, Budget Review Office
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
Amy Ellis, Aide to Leg. Anker
John Stype, Aide to Leg. Krupski
Paul Perillie, Aide to Leg. Gregory
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

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THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:03 PM

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislators for the Education Committee, please come to the horseshoe.

Okay. Welcome to the Education and Information Technology Committee meeting. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Kennedy.

SALUTATION

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Please remain standing for a moment of silent meditation and prayer as we think of the men and women overseas protecting our country. And, in addition, please remember the families. This is the Education Committee, a lot has to do with our children. There are many children without their parents because they have dedicated their lives for -- in protecting our country. Thank you.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Thank you.

Okay. We are going to continue with our agenda. We have -- we do not have correspondence or public comments. We do not have a presentation. We have -- we do not have Tabled Resolutions. We will go right to the Introductory Resolution.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTION

Introductory Resolution 1784 - Authorizing execution of an Intermunicipal Agreement pursuant to §103 with the Town of Islip. (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion. Second? All in favor?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Explanation.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. Could we have an explanation, please?

MR. NOLAN:

All this is is the Town the Islip has \$3,000 worth of telephone equipment they've declared surplus. This authorizes the County Executive to enter into agreement with the Town whereby the County would purchase the equipment for, I believe, the \$3,000.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

I believe these are phones. Don, would you like to speak very quickly on the -- on this resolution? Yeah, it looks like there -- again, there's leftover phones, telephones that actually can be adapted to our phone system at a cost of \$3,000. It looks like it's almost a \$20,000 value and it looks like we could put these phones to good use.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Good afternoon. Donald Rodgers, Commissioner of IT. Yes, that's exactly what these are. The Town of Islip has purchased a new phone system. And we are looking to purchase these phones as they are the same phones that we use. And we have a difficult time actually getting phones for replacement now. And, in most cases, we end up putting our phones out to be refurbished. So

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these would certainly replenish our supply and be put to good use. And there is an existing system with it as well that we could use.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Do we have any questions? Legislator Schneiderman.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

No, I mean, our phone system seems fairly antiquated. I could understand this. They're hard to get those bulky desk phones, right?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

You are correct on both statements.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

So, I mean, do we have a long range plan?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

We currently have a capital project in place where we are looking at our next generation phone system. Our phone contract expires, I believe, in 2015. So we're working on that now.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. So this just basically bridges the gap between when we have a new system in place -- by basically providing parts?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Well, replacement -- replacement units, yes.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

And parts.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

We actually have a hard time finding phones to purchase. We generally purchase refurbs.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Sometimes on mine the dial gets stuck, you know. (Laughter) just kidding.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

We'll get you a new dial.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Krupski has a question for you.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. I just thank you for doing this because I -- just keep it -- keep it moving forward and it was good that you found these. I heard that there was a problem where the old system like -- like Jay said, the dial gets stuck but unstick it and keep moving. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

You're welcome.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. Okay. **Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**
It looks like there is nothing else on the agenda. Legislators, any questions? Any questions from the audience?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I want to say one thing, Don. I just wanted to thank you for -- we, you know, we had a -- and I think Legislator Kennedy may be interested in this. We had a productive meeting with you and some of the disabled community regarding the County websites and making them accessible to the visually impaired. And I wanted to thank you for your participation at that meeting. And I think it was -- it was productive and do we have a sense of how that's proceeding?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Well, first of all, you're welcome. As I indicated to you in that meeting, this is of significant importance to me that we make sure we're in compliance with regard to ADA requirements on this. We have been moving along. We just had a meeting yesterday with Miss Valerie Lewis from the Suffolk County library and she is working with us. She is a visually-impaired individual. Has she agreed to work with us to ensure that we are compliant with ADA rules. And yesterday's session was very productive. And I have a number of staff that are assigned to this task and they're moving forward with it as we speak.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Madam Chair.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. That's the lady in particular that I had spoken to when your bill was first up. So I am very pleased to hear that she was able to become part of the dialogue. She had some questions, concerns or what have you, but certainly, you know, being connected with you directly ultimately we should get, I guess, the best measure and degree of access out there, you know, for -- for a large range of information. So, thank you, and thank you.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

If I may, you know, one of the concerns that some of the advocates for the visually-impaired community brought forward was whether we -- whether the County itself, the Information Technology Office had the expertise to actually do this or whether we needed to go outside. So what the Commissioner agreed to do is, you know -- 'cause he would like to do this, if I could speak for him for a second, in-house, if possible and believes that they do have the expertise to take some -- to develop just a few webpages using the best practices and allow, then, the disabled community to look at that and to, you know, comment on it and see if it's -- you're meeting their expectations. And then we'll, you know, take it from there. Is that correct, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

That's correct. We're in the process of getting those pages out now.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Which is an excellent way to go. I had among the many interns this past summer, I had a gentleman that's a Hofstra student who is completely blind. And he had a couple of different pieces of software that he worked with, not only for communication purposes, but specifically to access our County Legislative webpage and to pull up resolutions, to help do some of the different research that needed to be done and it worked well.

I'm not going to pretend to know the difference between ReadSpeaker or some of the other products, software products that are out there. You guys, the IT guys, I guess, ultimately you'll get to the point where you found whatever's the best product to do it. But, you know, to the point where absolutely anything and everything that we do should be accessible to anybody whether it's visually impaired, hearing impaired or any other type of impairment: It's not just nice for us to do;

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that's what the ADA says we have to do.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

I completely agree. And as I expressed when we met with Legislator Schneiderman and various other individuals, the ReadSpeaker represents a piece of the solution, not the solution in and of itself.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

And we will be pursuing this. And again, Miss Lewis is an enthusiastic advocate not only for the disabled community, but also as a participant in this process with us, and has made herself available at no cost to us. And, you know, she gets lots of accolades for that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Glad to hear it's going along well.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I left that meeting not only, you know, feeling that the Commissioner was doing this because he's been directed to, but actually really believes in the cause and wants to see this done. So, you know, I'm very encouraged. And, you know, I think we're fortunate to have somebody with your expertise and with, you know, your dedication to making our County information as accessible to the entire County as possible.

COMMISSIONER RODGERS:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:

Okay. Any more questions? No. Okay, it looks like we fulfilled our agenda and this meeting is adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:12 PM
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