

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 1, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Sarah S. Anker, Chairperson
Leg. Monica Martinez, Vice Chair
Leg. Thomas Cilmi
Leg. Lou D'Amaro
Leg. Robert Trotta

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel/Legislature
Jason Richberg, Chief Deputy Clerk/Legislature
Vincent Mezzanotte, Commissioner/IT
Ben Zwirn, Suffolk Community College
Benny Pernice, Budget Review Office
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office
Amy Ellis, Aide to Leg. Anker
Maria Barbara, Aide to Leg. Cilmi
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Trotta
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
William Shilling, Aide to Leg. Calarco
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 11:46 AM

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay, we're going to begin the Education and Information Technology Committee meeting. Legislators, please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Martinez.

SALUTATION

Please remain standing for a moment of silent meditation and prayer as we think of those in our military service serving for our country.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Thank you. Okay, we have no correspondence, no public comment, no presentation and no Tabled Resolutions today. We will begin with the Introductory Resolutions.

IR 1571, Appropriating funds in connection with the Renewable Energy and Stem Center - Grant Campus (CP 2141) (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1572, Appropriating funds in connection with the Master Plan Update - College Wide (CP 2186) (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstention?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed.

LEG. TROTTA:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We have one -- we have two opposed. Motion carries. **(VOTE: 3-2-0-0)**

We have -- we have **IR 1589, Accepting and appropriating a Grant Sub-Award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)/National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) for the technical development of an Internet-Based Program entitled "Virtual Chicken: The Digestive System". It is 100% reimbursed by Federal funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)** I will make a motion to approve.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

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CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

And place on the Consent Calendar. We have -- we have a second.

LEG. CILMI:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

On the motion, Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Somebody's got to explain to me what a virtual chicken is. I know it's -- I know it's 100% grant-funded, but that money's coming from somewhere, right?

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay, we have Ben Zwirn from the College here to enlighten us about a virtual chicken.

LEG. CILMI:

It is -- is the grant funding coming from -- let's see, it's awarded from the US Department of Agriculture. Okay, so it's -- so it's federal tax money basically.

MR. ZWIRN:

That's correct. It's running -- it's a program that's run through Alban University in Alabama. And it is a -- I know I had to look at this a couple times myself because it's -- but it goes to the study of Biology, Physiology for the students and it's through the Biology Department --

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

MR. ZWIRN:

And it just helps with the study of --

LEG. CILMI:

Okay, so it's in the Biology Department and you said it helps in the study.

MR. ZWIRN:

It just has -- they could have picked a better name, I agree.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah. Okay, thanks, Ben. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay. We have a motion; we have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0/CONSENT CALENDAR)**

IR 1620, Authorizing transfer of surplus County equipment to Selden Centereach Youth Association. (Muratore) I'll make a motion.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1626, Authorizing transfer of surplus County Equipment to Bellport Hagerman East Patchogue Alliance. (Browning) Can I do same motion, same second, same vote. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

1627, Authorizing transfer of surplus County Equipment to Central Islip Community Patrol. (Martinez) Same motion, same second, same vote. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1629, Authorizing transfer of surplus County equipment to RSVP. (Kennedy)

LEG. D'AMARO:

Motion.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We have a motion; we have a second. Great. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1630, Authorizing transfer of surplus County equipment to Tri Community and Youth Agency (TRI-CYA) (Spencer)

LEG. D'AMARO:

Motion.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We have a motion; we have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1636, Amending the 2015 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with Countywide Replacement of Computer Equipment/Infrastructure (CP 1816) (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We have a second.

LEG. D'AMARO:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

On the motion.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I had a question about why this is an amendment to the Capital Budget as opposed to just appropriating funds; if there's anyone here that could address that.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay, we have Vincent from -- Mezzanotte, there you go. He's our Commissioner of our IT

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Department. Welcome, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Thank you. It became an amendment when 355,000 was added to the DAs Office.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So what we're doing here is -- it's a program in our Capital Budget to replace computers on an ongoing basis.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. And what was -- what was the original amount included in that Capital Budget? I think it was one million.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

It was one million, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

All right. So, did you -- so when you decided to appropriate the one million, what became the need for the additional funding? What was the purpose?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

The DA's Office required 355,000 based on the life span of their equipment and the critical need to replace that equipment.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Commissioner, why wasn't that included in the initial budget request?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I'm not sure if it just missed the deadline, Legislator, or why it wasn't included. But the bottom line is it was not. It was not part of the original one million.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So that's 355,000 more that is now being appropriated. So in order to get that 355, we need to do some offsets; correct?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Yeah, which was already handled through the Budget Office.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. So do you know what the offsets are?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Offhand, I don't recall.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Do you know? Go ahead.

MR. PERNICE:

I'll look up the amounts in just a second. But the Capital Projects that were used to offset it were 17 -- it was -- actually let me pull the resolution up because it was a few. It'll take about five

seconds.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Sure.

MR. PERNICE:

1740 Upgrade to Payroll System Database, 1136 District Attorney Case Management System, 1758 Real Property Integrated Land Information System. That's it.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Not the County Attorney Case Management System, 50,000?

MR. PERNICE:

I'm sorry. I did miss that one, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. So we have four offsets. I was a little surprised \$135,000 coming from the Upgrade of the Payroll System Database. Is that the same payroll system that we've discussed here that -- with the Comptroller present, talking about how antiquated it is and how it needs to be replaced and -- who makes the decision to pull that funding out of that Capital Project, put it into a budget request that we weren't -- wasn't known at the time that we passed the Capital Budget? And it begs the question what's going with upgrading the payroll system. So where are all of those decisions --

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I might be able to answer.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Sure. Go ahead, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

So as part of the IFMS replacement, the overall Financial Management System --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

That will include within that scope payroll system as well. It really is an all-encompassing financial management system which covers payroll functionality as well.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Oh, I see. So then the funds are not needed in this particular Capital Project because it's encompassed by the larger project.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Exactly.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay, well, that's good. And the -- I see there's also \$150,000 coming out of the District Attorney's Case Management System. Do you know if that system was ever implemented?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I'm sorry. I don't know. I'm not sure.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I feel like we budget for it every year and then we just use it as an offset.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I'm not as familiar with the --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Same thing with the County Attorney Case Management, do you know if that was ever implemented?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Not sure.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I know, Mr. Brown, our County Attorney's been here on numerous occasions telling us how vitally important it was to have that system in place. I don't know if these or surplus funds, if they came in under budget or if the system was just never put into place.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I would need to look into that and get back to you on that.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Does your -- does your department monitor and oversee and implement those case management systems? Or is that done by the departments themselves?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Well, it depends on the department. For our Law Department, we would be involved with that for the DA. It would be handled through -- within the DA's Office.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So the DA's Office does their own IT work when it comes --

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

We provide them with the support on the infrastructure side.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

But the actual implementation of the application, we would collaborate and coordinate between the two departments. But, yes, it would be handled within the DA --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. And then how about the County Attorney Case Management System?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

County Attorney we would support.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. So do you know if that was ever put in place?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I need to find out. I'm not sure. I do recall having conversation about it, but I don't remember the

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details.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, my question is, then, how -- are you confident in taking \$50,000 out of that particular line item without knowing if there's a need to keep it in there?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Well, at some point we did discuss it. And it was determined that there was -- there was really no exposure as far as moving that money. I'm not -- I don't remember the exact details so I apologize.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

But I'm comfortable that --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Oh, I see. So it was brought up and you did review it.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

But you just don't recall today.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I just don't recall the details, exactly.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Fair enough. Okay. Well, that makes me feel better. I appreciate that. And then there's \$20,000 from Capital Project 1758, Real Property Integrated Land Information System. Again, was that something that was implemented, this was surplus, or was it not implemented, do you know?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

My feeling on that was it was surplus. I don't recall exactly the details again, but we did -- when we did the appropriate -- the re-appropriation of funds, we looked into each one of those.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And tell me again what was the -- what's going on in the DA's Office with the 355; 355,000?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

It's very much in line with what we're doing on a countywide basis. It's to replace equipment that's at end-of-life, really obsolete, in dire need of replacement. Most of this equipment is seven to ten years old. The average life span on equipment based on industry research is like three-and-a-half to four years.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

So we need to stay current, not just in terms of reliability, but also for our our software functionality --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

So we can support the software.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So is it fair to say, then, that you believe that there is a need to do all of these -- all of this updating now; and that the offsets are acceptable to your office?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Yes, I do.

LEG. D'AMARO:

You do. Okay. Thank you. I appreciate that. Thank you. Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay, Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Hey, Commissioner how are you?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Good. How are you doing?

LEG. CILMI:

Good. Thanks. Mine is more of a general comment. I'm happy to -- to vote in favor of this authorization today, but I would ask you in light of the County's fiscal situation, which is, I would say dire, we had -- I had sponsored or cosponsor a bill back when we did the Capital Budget a couple months ago to request that we reduce a number of different Capital Projects by 10% in recognition of the value of each of those Capital Projects, but -- and not removing them totally but rather, you know, asking our vendors and the people we do business with to sharpen their pencils, maybe we can live without some bells and whistles and, therefore, reduce costs by roughly 10% in some of those items. So I would ask you -- your Department is responsible for overseeing the purchase of this equipment; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Yes. In fact, all the purchases go through a steering committee prior to the actual procurement.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And so I would ask you, and really I would extend this request to every department within the County at this point, to try and find 10% savings in this money that we're appropriating for you so that at some point later down the road you come back to us and say to us, you know what, you appropriated 1.3 -- 1.3 million, but we were able to do it for less and so we have \$130,000 left over that we might be able to then transfer to another Capital Project that's necessary. If you could -- if you could try and find those savings whether it's through, you know, aggressive negotiations with whoever our vendor is, whether it's through, you know, the elimination of some unnecessary bells and whistles that may exist, however you do it, you know, please take that back with you and see what you can do.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

That's a fair request.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTTA:

Is there any -- can you use asset forfeiture money from the DA's Office?

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I'm sorry?

LEG. TROTTA:

Can you use asset forfeiture money through the DA's Office to buy this? I mean --

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

I believe they -- in cases where we can, they do. But, again, somewhat being new to the process here, I was under the impression that it was coming out of either the Operating or the Capital Budget. I'm not aware of any --

LEG. TROTTA:

There are -- I mean, I don't know. It's just a very vague term but I think of as a new system. I think the -- I used to know the criteria cold. You could use asset forfeiture money --

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Yeah, but these aren't new systems. These are -- these are replacement systems. These are hardware replace existing equipment.

LEG. TROTTA:

Like screens and stuff.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Desktops, CPUs, laptops, video displays, printers; you know, all the equipment associated with desktop computers.

LEG. TROTTA:

They might have to be for something new. All right.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay. We have a motion. We have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MEZZANOTTE:

Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay, I see no further business, this meeting is adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:03 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**