

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 November 10, 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:

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel/Legislature
Jason Richberg, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Ben Zwirn, Suffolk Community College
Kevin Peterman, 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
Rick Brand, Newsday
Kathy Malloy, AME
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 11:34 AM

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Welcome to the Information -- Education, Information Technology Committee meeting. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator D'Amato.

SALUTATION

Please remain standing for a moment of silent meditation prayer as we think of those in our military protecting our freedom.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

Thank you. I do not see correspondence. We do not have cards for the public comment. We do not have a presentation so we will go right into the Table Resolutions.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

We have **IR 1748, To establish a Community College Budget Committee to develop a Long-Term Budget Plan. (Gregory)**. I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. CILMI:

I'll make a -- what is --

LEG. D'AMARO:

I would second.

LEG. CILMI:

Could -- on the motion, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

On the motion.

LEG. CILMI:

So this -- this establishes a separate committee from our normal committee structure?

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Yes, it does. George, would you like to explain?

MR. NOLAN:

Yeah. It has three representatives from the Executive's branch, three reps from here and three Community College representatives. It's a nine-member committee.

LEG. CILMI:

And what's the purpose?

MR. NOLAN:

It's long-term budget planning that's advisory and non -- it's not binding, but it's to put out a long-term plan.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

So basically, you know, the County has invested heavily into the college. And we need to make

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sure that we can provide the funds necessary for future needs. And that's what this committee will look into, you know, we have a new library, a new health and wellness --

LEG. CILMI:

U-hum.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

New technology. There's a lot of new structures there. So this will focus on those --

LEG. CILMI:

So I'm guessing, then, that the resolution that I've proposed that calls for long-term budget planning in the overall County will be something that we'll all embrace. Because, after all, if we're looking to plan long-term for our community college, our community college is one component of the County's overall financial obligation. And so it probably makes sense if we're going to accept long-term planning for our college, that we first have to make sure that we plan long-term at the County as a whole; right?

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Well, again, I think we need to prioritize, especially in here, the Education Committee, some of our goals here as committee members. And one of our goals, of course -- our most important goal is that we sustain and support our community college. I cannot speak for the entire realm of Suffolk County. I think it's a good idea to, of course, plan long-term. But this particular resolution focuses solely on the community college.

MR. NOLAN:

It's a one-time plan. The committee will terminate when they submit their plan in 180 days. It's not an ongoing committee.

LEG. CILMI:

And do we know for how long the plan that they propose will last; how many years out?

MR. NOLAN:

We're looking five years out.

LEG. CILMI:

Five years out. And is the committee going to look to establish some benchmarks or goals in terms of how the County funds the college over the next five years?

MR. NOLAN:

The resolution only addresses that.

LEG. CILMI:

It doesn't. Okay. And what's the reporting requirement of the committee back to the full Legislature or to this Committee?

MR. NOLAN:

The County Executive and to the Legislature, it's going to report to them. And it's supposed to be submitted within 180 days of the effective date of the resolution.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So the idea of the Committee, then, is to develop a long-term plan, to submit it to the Legislature and to the County Executive. And will we then be asked to adopt that plan? Or is it --

MR. NOLAN:

It's just advisory.

LEG. CILMI:

It's just an advisory document.

MR. NOLAN:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

We're good? Okay, Legislator D'Amaro.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I apologize. Who are the members the committee, George?

MR. NOLAN:

It's going to be the County Executive or his designee, another representative appointed by him, the Budget Director, Presiding Officer or designee, Chairman of this Committee or designee, President of the Community College or designee, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Community College or designee, a representative of the student government and the Director of the Budget Review Office -- our Budget Review Office.

LEG. D'AMARO:

All right. Thank you. Thank you. That's fine.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay, we're good to go. All right. So I made a motion. We have --

LEG. TROTТА:

I have a question. There's no one from the minority on this committee. There's no one from the minority. There's no minority caucus.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, I guess, there's nothing precluding the -- the Presiding Officer from appointing from the minority, right?

MR. NOLAN:

That's true.

LEG. TROTТА:

Except that they won't.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, let's see.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay. We have a motion. We have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention?

LEG. TROTТА:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Motion carries. (VOTE: 4-1-0-0)

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTION

Okay. We have **Introductory Resolution 1844, accepting and appropriating a grant award from the Empire State Development Corporation for the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program (EAP) to develop a Veteran Business Assistance Center, 100% reimbursed by State Funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.)** I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. CILMI:

Second.

LEG. ANKER:

And put on the Consent Calendar. Can I have a second?

LEG. CILMI:

Sure. Second.

LEG. ANKER:

Thank you. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0/CONSENT CALENDAR)

IR 1872, Amending Resolution No. 427-2013, Infrastructure College Wide (CP 2149). (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

I have a second. All in favor?

LEG. CILMI:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

On the motion.

LEG. CILMI:

Just -- can we get an explanation, please.

MR. ZWIRN:

Good morning. This is -- this is taking money from design and infrastructure to go to an infrastructure. We have infrastructure money coming in the Capital Budget for next year, but this is to get us through the winter, the boilers going on. There's always some problems. So we're taking money from design and putting it into construction. So we're just going to do more design inhouse or do less of it, but we really need this money short-term. It's not any additional money that we had in the Capital Budget. It's just using it for a different purpose and advancing it.

LEG. CILMI:

So, we had a certain amount of money allocated in the Capital Budget for design, which was acceptable to the college. I would imagine even requested by the college. And how much was that

exactly, Ben, in total?

MR. ZWIRN:

For infrastructure? Overall it's about, I think --

LEG. CILMI:

For the design portion of it.

MR. ZWIRN:

For the design portion, I don't know -- Ben, do you have it? Seven hundred thousand.

LEG. CILMI:

And you're taking the full amount?

MR. ZWIRN:

We're taking the full amount.

LEG. CILMI:

What was the design money for exactly? Or was it just a general --

MR. ZWIRN:

It's general for all three campuses. If something needs to be done, that money is available. It's sort of in a pot that if we need it, we use. If we don't, we don't use it. We had asked for additional infrastructure money for this year. And the County Executive for budgetary purposes moved it over to next year and said we're going to try to slip through, if we can this year, without having to use additional funds. But it doesn't appear that we're going to make it. So we're just going to have this money available in case we need it for the winter months.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So I'm just -- it's a little confusing to me because if we approved \$700,000 for design, and you're just saying -- your statement here today is that you just don't need it.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, we do need it, but we need it more for this particular purpose. We need it for -- to have actual funds for construction if we need it. That's much more serious than the design part right now. We would have liked to have both. And we may struggle --

LEG. CILMI:

And this is, again, in the 2015 budget; right?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Now, what about -- what do we have allocated for design in next year's budget?

MR. ZWIRN:

I don't know what the design portion is. I know -- I think we have five million. I think five million in infrastructure coming. And the one thing that the State has been good on is infrastructure, supporting existing buildings and making sure that they -- so we get matching grants. Half of this money comes from the State because they fund half our Capital Program. So it's \$350,000 from the County and \$350,000 from the State, but I have to check. I don't have the budget in front of me. I may have -- I have to -- if we can't get it right away, I'll have to get back to you, Legislator

Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

All right. I'm looking at Ben -- Benny has a very intense look on his face.

MR. ZWIRN:

We go the two Bens --

LEG. CILMI:

Looking it up. What -- do you know, Ben, what the college had in mind to spend this design money on that didn't, I guess, happen?

MR. ZWIRN:

It's general things. I mean we've had roofs that have collapsed, that had to be redone. You know, we've had loading docks that had to be releveled, you know, day-to-day, you know, wear and tear on buildings that have to be -- you know, some of those buildings are going back to the original days of the college, back in the 1950s. And some of the buildings are even older than that, that were existing. So sometimes we don't know where -- where we're going to need the money next.

LEG. CILMI:

That's sort of just in case?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah, it's windows, it's doors, it's boilers. I know we had a problem earlier this year on the eastern campus, we had -- the first cold weather, the boilers didn't turn on and we had, you know, kids were -- students were cold and we had to get that done right away. You know, it's just the nature of all the facilities that we have, that they just have to keep them going.

LEG. CILMI:

And is it those sorts of improvements that you're going to end up making with this -- with this money?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Ben?

MR. PERNICE:

The adopted funding for planning design in 2016 is 300,000.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Would 2015 have shown as 700 or would it have shown as 350, which is our --

MR. PERNICE:

There's no money in 2015.

MR. NOLAN:

This is actually 2013 money.

LEG. CILMI:

Oh.

MR. NOLAN:

Thirteen money.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay, 2013 money.

MR. ZWIRN:

We knew it was going to be a problem and -- but, you know, we want to work with the County Executive, the Legislature so if they wanted to put it off so not to have a -- you know, an impact on the General Fund.

LEG. CILMI:

So really if you didn't need this money in 2013 or 2014 and now you're saying you don't need it for design and planning in 2015 but rather you want it for construction, what happened that we -- and how much did we have in construction for 2015?

MR. PERNICE:

Nothing.

LEG. CILMI:

Nothing.

MR. ZWIRN:

We had asked for some of it to be put in 2015 and 2016. But for budgetary purposes they put it in 2016. So this is why we're here.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

This is why we need long-term planning for the college.

LEG. CILMI:

No doubt. This is why we need long-term planning all along. I mean we approved a budget in -- for the whole county. We approved a budget in 2013 that contained \$700,000 in it apparently for design, that was never utilized; never utilized in 2014; hasn't been utilized yet in 2015. And -- but we didn't allocate any money for construction?

MR. ZWIRN:

We did. We have projects that -- infrastructure projects that we have put on hold because we didn't have the money to do it. I know there's \$170,000 in projects that are on hold right now, which include things like catch basins, windows, doors, seating and other general stuff that has to be done. And if we have to put it off, we put it off. But if we had the money to fix everything, it would be fixed.

MR. NOLAN:

Legislator Cilmi, there was \$4.8 million for construction. And this is bumping it up to 5.1 moving the money from design into construction. So there were millions of dollars for construction in the 2013 Capital Budget.

LEG. CILMI:

In 2013.

MR. NOLAN:

Right.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So there was 4.8 allocated in 2013 for construction, twenty -- and was any of that used, do we know?

MR. NOLAN:

I don't know. They have five years to use it.

MR. ZWIRN:

Right. And we don't --

MR. NOLAN:

And then it sunsets. So they have five years from when they borrow to actually expend the money.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

MR. ZWIRN:

We don't borrow it until we need it. So it's -- if we don't need it, we don't use it. We don't borrow it.

LEG. CILMI:

And is that -- has that money all been exhausted at this point, then?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

It has. Which is why you're asking for this additional 700,000.

MR. ZWIRN:

Correct.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And it was exhausted on very general improvements --

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah --

LEG. CILMI:

Sort of what you --

MR. ZWIRN:

I actually -- I don't have it with me, but I can provide you with a list of the things that it went toward.

LEG. CILMI:

If you could before our General Meeting, that would be helpful. Thanks.

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

Okay. Ready to move forward? I believe we have a motion and a second. All in favor?

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Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1876, Authorizing Suffolk County Community College to request state appropriation and matching state reimbursement for College Stormwater Initiatives Capital Project. (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion to approve. I have a second over here.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON ANKER:

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

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

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:51 AM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**