

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture 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 August 31, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Kara Hahn - Chairperson
Legislator Al Krupski - Vice Chair
Legislator Sarah S. Anker
Legislator Thomas F. Barraga
Legislator Thomas Muratore

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George M. Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Tim Laube - Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Katie Horst - County Executive's Office
Laura Halloran - Budget Review Office
Sarah Lansdale - Director/Department of Planning
Lauretta Fischer - Suffolk County Department of Planning
DeWitt Davies - Suffolk County Department of Planning
Dr. Will Bowman - Land Use Ecological Services
Frank P. Castelli - Economic Development & Planning
Alyssa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn
John Stype - Aide to Legislator Krupski
Amy Ellis - Aide to Legislator Anker
Nick Caracappa - Suffolk County Water Authority
Philip Spranz - Suffolk County Water Authority
James J. Harrington - Suffolk County Water Authority
Louis de Gonzague - Suffolk County Water Authority
Rose Tullo - Suffolk County Water Authority
Derek McLane - Suffolk County Water Authority
Tom Reichel - Suffolk County Water Authority
Michael Collins - Suffolk County Water Authority
Doris R. Hladik - Suffolk County Water Authority
Catherine O'Brien - Suffolk County Water Authority
Norman Melcher - Suffolk County Water Authority
Ronnie Brooks - Suffolk County Water Authority

James Fallon - Suffolk County Water Authority
Mark Paulicelli - Suffolk County Water Authority
Barbara Ash - Suffolk County Water Authority
Roger V. Healy, III - Suffolk County Water Authority
Eileen Rowe - Suffolk County Water Authority
Nicole Cantore - Suffolk County Water Authority
Loren Paulicelli - Suffolk County Water Authority
Oscar Montalvo - Suffolk County Water Authority
Michael L. DeLuca - Suffolk County Water Authority
Phil Malone - Suffolk County Water Authority
James Walsh - Suffolk County Water Authority
Jeremy Terhune - Suffolk County Water Authority
Michael A. Walls - Suffolk County Water Authority
Chris Reardon - Suffolk County Water Authority
Ernest Wessborg - Suffolk County Water Authority
Brian T. Culhane - Appointee, SC Soil and Water Conservation District
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher - Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary

*(*The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.*)*

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Welcome, everyone, to the Legislature's Environment, Planning and Agriculture Committee. We will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag led by Legislator Anker.

Salutation

Okay. Welcome. We have a number of cards today. Just so everyone knows, you have three minutes. I'll read off a name and then I'll read off the person on deck, and you come up to the podium and you don't need to mess around with the microphone unless the green light is off. The first speaker is Nick Caracappa, and on deck is Derek McLane. Legislator Muratore.

LEG. MURATORE:

I see we have a lot of cards.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We do.

LEG. MURATORE:

And I know Nick Caracappa is here from the union. Can we give Nick additional time and then maybe do away with the rest of those cards if the other speakers are willing? I mean, we've got like an hour and a half's worth of cards there.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No, but we are allowed to ask questions of the speaker. We can't give a bulk amount of time that's longer.

LEG. MURATORE:

Oh, we can't ask questions?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We can ask questions as a committee.

LEG. MURATORE:

Oh, okay. That's great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

So you can go on up to the podium.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Can I hand these out?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Of course, I'm sorry. The Clerk will help you with that. Good morning, Nick.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

How are you?

MR. CARACAPPA:

I'm very good. And yourself?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Very good. Nice to see you here. So you can take a look at your time as it counts down.

MR. CARACAPPA:

All right. I appreciate you guys giving me the time here. Since I only have three minutes I hope that you do allow me to answer some questions. That will alleviate a lot of my members from coming up here, and hopefully we can get ourselves through this.

But just to cut to it, we are the bargaining unit members of the Suffolk County Water Authority, and we're here today to discuss some of the deficiencies and mismanagement issues, including but not limited to, cuts in customer service, letting water leaks and main breaks go without repair for multiple hours and days, allowing fire hydrants to go unrepaired for multiple hours and days, cutting corners on standard and emergency work, skipping pump station runs -- that's where the operators treat the drinking water that goes into your homes and your constituent's homes. And the list goes on and on.

We had no other choice but to bring our concerns forward to the Suffolk County Board of Health Office of Water Services recently. We contacted Mr. Jason Hime via e-mail and addressed our concerns, and after receiving a reply to our inquiries we felt compelled to file official complaints against Suffolk County Water Authority.

To me, the answers we received from Mr. Hime justified our complaints against the Authority's procedures and practices. Mr. Hime did indicate that he forwarded many of our complaints to New York State Board of Health, and that neither he nor the State had ever heard of such practices or complaints by any other water agencies before, and would have to review the information before administering a filing determination. And although the Authority has revised some of their standard operating procedures due to what we brought forward and the responses from the Suffolk County Board of Health, they still continue to perform many, if not all, of the same practices we brought forward.

I have no explanation for this. I would ask that this committee look into and perform an investigation as to why these procedures and practices are being done, why the Water Authority has raised rates for five consecutive years, raised fees across the board, making it difficult for new homeowners and small businesses to get hooked up to water and obtain necessary permits, is in great financial shape yet continues to gamble with the employees and the public's health, safety and well being, which I have before you very detailed things that are going on that you should know about. This directly affects you, your families, your constituents, their families, across Suffolk County.

I'm quite positive the Authority's response would be par for the course, saying that we're only here today because we're without a contract and we're angry about that. And we are, but this has nothing do with that. This is separate and above. This has to do with mismanagement. This has to do with the practices and procedures of the Authority.

The Suffolk County Water Authority appoints those board members. Those board members then administer daily day operations of the Authority. It's beholden upon this Legislature to accept some responsibility for what's going on. The Water Authority serves your constituents and it should be further looked into. And I have a lot more. I would like to go over everything in that book for you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Sure. So I know we have questions. Legislature Muratore was first on the list.

LEG. MURATORE:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning, Nick.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Good morning, Legislator Muratore.

LEG. MURATORE:

You put a lot into three minutes there, so I took a few notes as quick as I could write. You talked about fire hydrants going unrepaired for days and hours at a time. I have spoken to fire departments in my district, and they've told me the same thing. Why -- I mean, that is probably our first line of defense for house fires, for forest fires, and why is this happening and how is it happening?

MR. CARACAPPA:

Well, the fire hydrants -- this has been a pet peeve of mine for quite some time now, probably dating back to when I first took office of the presidency. The policy of the Authority is to let fire hydrants go unrepaired, hit hydrants, out of service hydrants, hydrants that are leaking for 24 hours, but in most cases it's much longer than that. Their policy is if it's in front of a school or a hospital it will be repaired quicker. But why not if it's in front of your home, my home. I have five children in my home. Why is that less important? The fire departments pay for these fire hydrants and their services. They should be repaired immediately.

In your packets, you can turn to -- I could show you, that's all numbered there. If you were to turn to P8 through 12, these are some -- a few of the blaring examples, folks, that you need to know about. Actually, eight is a house to hose hookup which can bypass for now, but it's another -- that's another thing that you guys should know about what's going on there. But if you look at P10, that there's a hit hydrant that went for a couple of days. It was allowed to run because the supervisor who felt it was unnecessary to repair it, felt it was good to let go for a day or two. He wound up only shutting down three of the four valves and let one valve just run, and you see what happened there. Meanwhile, that hydrant's out of service. Any emergency came up, that hydrant is unavailable. And a lot of times these hydrants are far and few between, well over 1,000 feet apart. Well over in some instances.

If you look at P11, there's a bunch of pictures there representing a practice that's new to us, and that's laying plywood in the roadway over -- the first two pictures are the plywood, the third picture, that's running water. The copy of the pictures don't do it justice. And there's water running down the roadways. As you can see, just thousands of gallons of water, treated drinking water, being wasted.

I really would like you to pay attention to P12. This is really going to send the message home. This hydrant was hit, knocked out of service, was leaking for a couple days over a weekend. This hydrant should have been fixed off regular hours, but they chose to hold it. And if you go to the second picture in that pack, it affected a food supermarket. So that whole supermarket was shut down the whole morning when they had to shut down for the repairs instead of doing it off hours.

The third picture is really representative of what this is all about. You see a woman and a child walking in the roadway. If you can for a moment take a look. You see all that mud. To the right the sidewalk was put out of commission with the cones. That's where the hydrant was. If you see where all the mud and the water -- first of all, that mud represents sand that came out from underneath the roadway. Okay. That sand and mud came from underneath that hole that used to

support that roadway and that sidewalk. Now you have people walking on there. That's a danger. That's a potential risk for cave-in and collapses and sinkholes.

Not only that, when that puddle was there, you can see the width of it, it goes right to the edge of the white line, forcing these people who depend on that supermarket to walk into the traffic, walk into the roadway. Do you see that? Do you see that white line? If our guys didn't get there and shut that down and reduce the water, that whole night, the two days that that was there, those people were walking out into that roadway. It's unnecessary. It's unnecessary. We can do a better job. All right. So that's just a couple of issues we have with fire hydrants, and we have been fighting this for years.

We had an issue in one of the complexes a few years ago where a fire hydrant that was inspected by a contractor did not work, it failed, and a young lady lost her life. That was in your area, Legislator Muratore. That was up in one of the condos up on Mooney Pond Road.

LEG. MURATORE:

I remember that.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Yes, you remember that. So, again, that's the hydrants. That's only touching the surface. Is there any other questions you have, Tom?

LEG. MURATORE:

And that young lady lost her life because the hydrant wasn't working or they didn't get -- the hydrant was not working at the time.

MR. CARACAPPA:

It wasn't working properly.

LEG. MURATORE:

It was in Selden?

MR. CARACAPPA:

In the Selden district.

LEG. MURATORE:

Madam Chairman, I have a question -- or someone else? Keep going? Okay. You talk about cuts in customer service --

MR. CARACAPPA:

Yes.

LEG. MURATORE:

-- that have been made by the Water Authority. Can you just -- a few. I mean, I'm sure you have a litany of reasons, of things they're doing, but just give us a few -- the more important ones, what they're cutting.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Absolutely.

LEG. MURATORE:

Thank you, Nick.

MR. CARACAPPA:

I'll try sending it right home for you. If you look at A1, A1 is just a list, a short list of some of the leaks that were let go. What's significant, I'll only pay attention to the significant ones. Ocean Avenue on January 10th of '15, you actually have a picture that's P1. All right. There's a bunch of pictures there of how it looked. This actually started in the evening. There is one shot in the evening, and you look at the rest of the pictures, the next day is when my guys went back to repair it. The condition of the roadway, they shut down a lane. It's a busy road. This is on the intersection of Veterans Highway and Ocean Avenue. It's a very busy road. All right. After my guys got in there -- you'll see a picture of one of our guys holding a shovel. That's a long lane shovel, it's a four foot shovel. That's the undermining, you see that he's holding it underneath the sidewalk. That's some of the risks involved when you hold these leaks too long.

You've all got a thumb drive. I don't know if you can put it into your computers and take a look at the video that shows not only cutting corners when it comes to customer service, but it shows you the actual mud that they took out of there. That mud is supposed to be carted away and replaced with fresh fill, solid fill. But because they're in a hurry they are allowing, they are telling our guys to push that wet fill back into those holes. What happens with that, especially in the wintertime, in the summer that water dissipates, it evaporates, it goes away, causing sink holes. That means that's another danger to pedestrians, motorists. We have to go back, dig it up again, replace the roadway. It's nonsense. It's a safety issue. And for our guys to pull up on these jobs when these things are undermined, we are pulling up with heavy equipment. We pull up and there's a sink hole, forget about it. There are school buses that drive on these roadways. There's people who walk on these sidewalks. In that video on that thumb drive shows me taking a taking picture in the exact spot where this undermining was. I had no idea it was there. That could have went in on me at any moment.

The amount of leaks that they got there, and this -- one of these will hit very close to home. If you go down to June 13th, you'll see a bunch of leaks there, one, two, three, four, five. That was a Saturday later on in the day. They let that go and you'll see if you go across, to the dates across, they were held for two days. Three days in one instance. And look at all the homes it affected. One is a major traffic control, 15 homes, 20 homes, 7 homes, 35 homes. You want to talk about cuts to customer service.

Another huge one is Autumn Drive. Autumn Drive, 22 homes affected. All right. And there's pictures of Autumn Drive there, too, that's P2. That's in the middle of the road, folks. That's what's on your block. That's what they leave there. In the middle of the night, cars going down the roadway, it's unnecessary. Possible sink holes, there's no sidewalks. These should be repaired.

The most blaring one, and I hope you guys can use your thumb drives on this, and I'll end it with this one, but there's many more as you can see. But if you go to July fourth, that's a holiday obviously, July fourth, and that's Goodrich Avenue, P3. The picture alone speaks a thousand words. The picture alone -- you see the water bubbling up out of the roadway. You see the mud coming up? That used to be under the surface supporting the surface of that roadway. There are no sidewalks, so people walking their dogs, riding their bikes, driving down the road use these roadways, no sidewalks. This is a holiday weekend, folks. If you can use your thumb drives and turn to that you'll see the water that's running, tens of thousands of gallons of treated drinking water, going down the roadway with this mud in front of your homes, and then you listen to the way that water is running. That's no minor leak. Inexcusable. But, again, the list compared to what we have, and I wish I could have more time to show you, it's inexcusable. It's unacceptable.

LEG. MURATORE:

You said before about repairing a hole with fill and they're not using it. Are supervisors instructing the men and women to violate protocol, to change procedure? I mean, if it calls for clean fill and

they're supposed to put clean fill in, if that's the rule, are they being instructed not to do that?

MR. CARACAPPA:

Absolutely, 100% that is what they're being instructed to do. Our guys are trained to do it the other way, to do it the correct way. For years that's the way we've done it. And now because they're in a hurry they push our guys in and say we want to get them in before a certain amount of time, push it back in the hole and get going.

LEG. MURATORE:

Does the Water Authority have rules and procedures, I mean, that, you know, like section 183 says that if an incident occurs A, B, and C are supposed to be done? Do you have rules and regulations like that?

MR. CARACAPPA:

Yes. It's called a standard operating procedure. I FOI'd the standard operating procedures and they do mention about pushing -- replacing wet fill with clean fill. In Joe Pokorny's response, from the Suffolk County Water Authority, he's one of the Directors there, and we can get to that, too. That's in one of your displays. In A6 through 10 you'll see the minutes that we've brought forward to the Board of Health, the responses, and the Water Authority's response. He actually mentions in his response that they're creating new SOPs, and it deals with -- and he just blows it off as a minor thing, that it's done, it's the exception, not the rule. But it's become the exception. Any one of these people out here, any one of these guys on the crews, can you tell you that's what they're being told to do, for no reason. It's a safety hazard, guys. It's bad management. It's a risk to the public.

LEG. MURATORE:

See, my concern is, and my colleagues, we appoint these people to run this operation, and if they're instructing people to violate rules and procedure, I mean, I don't want those kind of people supervising or running this operation. I mean, we have to look -- I guess we are going to have to look at the oversight on to this organization.

You talked about -- you brought some information to Mr. Himes, H-I-M-E-S, is that the right spelling? What happened with that? I don't remember hearing you say what happened with the information you brought to him.

MR. CARACAPPA:

As I mentioned earlier, Jason Hime, great guy, at the Office of Water Services out in Yaphank. This was all new to him, and he's been there for quite a while. They're overburdened, as you said, they're understaffed as most departments are, but he did get right on it. He sent them a letter and that would be in Exhibits A6 through 10. You'll see A7, those should be the minutes. And if you turn to page four or five of the minutes, it should be highlighted for you. If you looked at just some of the things, some of the replies from Jason Hime, and this is from the Suffolk County Office of Water Services. Number one on that, on page four or five, Board of the Health Department regulations regarding letting service in leaks, main breaks, run for extended periods of time, if you go to one of the final -- it's highlighted for you. *It's in the best interest of water suppliers to minimize the amount of time of detecting leaks present and decrease loss and associated cost of pump station treatment water.* It's all in there.

It says in there, he names the sections, it states *that interruption of service or leak repair and other damage to public water system shall be corrected immediately after the scurry of the damage, unless extraordinary circumstances are accounted.* There are not extraordinary circumstances, ladies and gentlemen. What they're doing is on paper they're saying they're cutting overtime costs. It's smoke and mirrors, ladies and gentlemen. In their own report, which is A5, this is a report done

by the Director of Construction and Maintenance, in where they show they cut off 5,000 hours of overtime, which sounds good on paper, again, but our overtime is derived from emergencies. They are not cutting the amount of emergencies, ladies and gentlemen. They are cutting the amount of customer service.

In their most recent Newsday article they mention they service over 3,000 -- I'm sorry -- 381,000. Over 381,000 customers. One-hundred and thirteen is the exact number, I believe. And they saved \$346,000 approximately. It's in their report, you have it. So what you're telling me is every one of these leaks, every one of these potential hazardous situations, every one of these issues of overtime could have been repaired for under one dollar per ratepayer. But yet the Water Authority wants to pat themselves on the back. This is good management, that they saved everybody about 75 cents, but yet put their livelihoods, their risk, the water quality, the roadways, the infrastructure, in jeopardy. We can do a better job, and I say we because we're part of that team, although we're not made to feel like it. We are cast aside, and it should be noted that we have brought these concerns forward to the Suffolk County Water Authority Board multiple times, only to be dismissed.

We have hundreds of years over, well over, thousands of years of experience combined dealing with the Water Authority from collecting water samples to treating drinking water, to installs, repairs, customer service, our clerical department. We hear it, we see it, we face it every single day. The Water Authority wants to turn a blind eye to it. They're more apt for a headline about CNG natural gas vehicles, which we have a few of, but yet they want to put an \$800,000 fueling station into our yard instead of using shared services with the town, the County and the school districts, that I served on Middle Country School District in your area, Mr. Muratore. That shared services, that's what we should be looking at, not spending another \$800,000. Some of it would be done with grant money, I understand, but still, it's an unnecessary cost.

And if you look at the rest of these things it's all on there, folks. This is stuff that deals with your -- that deals with your constituents. By letting a leak go, and this actually should hit home with every one of you. If there is, God forbid, a fire in that neighborhood where there is a leak coming out of your main on your block, or any block for that matter, and a fire department hooks up to a hydrant and starts using that water, that leak no longer is pushing out, it's sucking in. It is sucking in bacteria, contaminates, into that water system. Okay? That is not necessary, and that's going systemwide. Anywhere in your area where that water main is hooked up to, you're consuming that product. Unnecessary. We deserve better. We can do better.

The Water Authority has, and you guys have been a part of this not too long ago. As you know, every business in Suffolk County is required to have an RBZ. Every large irrigation is required to have an RBZ. That prevents back siphonage. You are having every small business having to put this in. They are actually exploring contractors to put them in the homes, in your residential homes, small ones when you replace the meters. We actually started doing that to prevent back siphonage from your home, your little tiny home, but yet they want to let leaks go, they want to let main breaks go. You don't even need to have a hydrant hooked up for that. It causes a vortex. Sometimes when it's pushed in it creates a little cyclone and it sucks right back in. For 75 cents per ratepayer, folks, we can do better. We should be doing better.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislature Muratore, we do have other Legislators with questions.

LEG. MURATORE:

By all means, yes, go ahead. I can wait if I have any more.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Do you have more questions?

LEG. MURATORE:

Maybe some more.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

It was sort of one sided. Okay. Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Thank you, Nick, for coming here, and I know we had spoken about some of the issues. So the main issue seems to be is overtime. Why isn't the Suffolk County Water Authority paying overtime for some of these repairs, because what happens is if you don't fix a leak, and we all know this as homeowners, the problem gets worse. And I'm looking at the article that came out of Newsday recently and you are right, 386,000 accounts, but that's 1.2 million residents that Suffolk Water Authority serves.

Now, they had a \$9.8 million amount in extra revenue. And, again, I'm just throwing these numbers out there so we can think productively how we can fix this problem, because it is a problem no matter what. It is a problem. Twelve point three million dollars in extra revenue just due to the heavy drought, and that, again, the season. You know, people are using water. It shows you, again, we're using more water so there'll be more repairs, so we need to invest in that. On a 1.76, excuse me, \$176.3 million budget.

So I have to commend you for coming here, and your union, for making us aware of this issue, of these many issues. I was in my neighborhoods in Rocky Point and a woman had a problem with a fire hydrant and it flooded her basement. She is working trying to get financial help from the Water Authority. It's not her fault the fire hydrant broke, but I think because it took so long to get some folks over there, and I'm assuming because the Water Authority won't pay for the overtime to get there to fix the leak. That could eventually become a severe problem, which proved itself in Rocky Point.

So, again, I am very concerned about what you're bringing up, and I look forward to hearing to the Water Authority to see how they will address this, because they have to address this. This is inexcusable.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Legislator Anker, I need only to point you to P6 in your -- and I thank you for those words. P6, your colleague, William Spencer, this is his block. He is the one who called in the initial leak. It was determined by a supervisor, you'll see it, it's Lloyd Harbor Road, picture P6. A supervisor determined it was a minor leak and let it go. This is what happens when you let a minor leak go; it turns into a major leak. This is his block. He was outraged by it. Again, you see the mud. You see no sidewalks, you see where the cars have to drive around all through it. It's inexcusable, it's reprehensible. And if you would, and you mentioned it, if you go to A2, right behind it, this is just a Facebook posting by someone who sent it to. It's just from a family, I probably should have blocked out the name, but I want to show that it's real. It says, *"Anyone work or know someone at Suffolk County Water Authority!!! Very likely a water main break at my property and cannot get them to be responsive at all. I have been warned that this is a potential sink hole situation. The town is involved but I feel it is a water company's department. Getting desperate."* This is on social media, folks. This is people responding to the lack of customer service and the concerns they have when they see water running down their roadways. When they see water building up in their driveways. When they see water going into their basements, Legislator Anker, 100% correct.

And you talk about the abundance of operating for the surplus. That's because, yes, we use a lot of

water. We had a mini-drought. And I think people in California see these tens of thousands of gallons of treatable drinking water going down the drain. But there is also additional revenue coming in and you should look into that. The oversight committee should look at the additional revenues coming in from the rentals. We're talking about over \$60 million in the last couple of years with a projected rate of even higher than that. They're selling off properties. Why are we selling off properties that we had and owned by the Suffolk County Water Authority for 50 years? What if we need to put another well station in those areas. They are selling of prime real estate and below market value for what reason. Oversight. We need oversight. Why is this happening?

There is a whole range of areas of extra revenue coming into the Authority, power, and they keep raising the rates and they keep cutting the service. I have to keep hammering that home, folks. We've worked there for many, many years. I don't want to be up here griping about overtime, but that definitely affects our families and our ways of life, too. When we got hired here, one of the requirements was you have to work overtime. You have to be able to have the ability to work overtime. And we swore to that, we committed to that. But yet that's gone now. But anyway, let's get back into this matter.

LEG. ANKER:

And I also wanted to mention, too, though, I mentioned the repairs, but the health issues.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Yes.

LEG. ANKER:

You know, when I was working on the cancer issues and the cancer cluster, people were concerned that their water was contaminated. Pesticides, whatever chemicals, run-off, and it's the men and women on the frontline that are protecting us, because they're maintaining these water filtration systems. So, again, I think that Suffolk County Water Authority needs to look at this. And again, I just want to thank you for bringing this to our attention.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Thank you, Legislator Anker. And just to be sure, I want to let you know that we take great pride in our product. We use our product every single day to cook, clean, our children use it. We have a great product at the Suffolk County Water Authority, but we should not be taking the risks we're taking. They should not be taking the risks they're taking to do any damage to that, to risk that quality, to risk that necessity of life that we all use every single day. The chances and the risks they're taking, the management that they are proposing upon our members, our crews, our clerical, it's -- we can do better. I'll saw it again; we should be doing better. I got plenty more if anybody has any questions. I would love to get to it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Can you tell me a little bit about the hydrants. Do you have statistics of numbers and locations of hydrants?

MR. CARACAPPA:

We can. We can get all that information for you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I think that would be very helpful. I'd like to know the extent of that. You know, my father is a volunteer firefighter, and, you know, I already put in an e-mail to the Chiefs and Commissioners trying to find out what they're seeing in our neighborhoods. But, you know, that's very concerning to me. If there are hydrants out of service, you know, the numbers and where they are and the kind of problem that that is and how extensive it is.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Legislator Hahn, I applaud you for that. As a matter of fact, I've been considering going in front of the Commissioner's meeting, because it's just not come down to the out of service hydrants, it's the inspections as well, another thing I have been fighting for the last six years. Our hydrant inspectors are required to inspect a hydrant, which takes approximately a minimum of seven to ten minutes per hydrant, yet I have video of the contractors they hired, they spend anywhere from a minute to a minute and a half per hydrant inspecting. That's a full inspection. They don't do a complete inspection. That's putting our members, our families, it's putting your constituents and the ratepayers at risk. Many times we go back, fire departments go to hook up to these hydrants that have been so-called inspected by these outside contractors, they don't drain, they don't work. When they don't drain in the winter they freeze. There's no water coming out of that barrel. It's another issue with the Water Authority hiring outside contractors to do a very poor job. And, again, it's putting all of us at risk. That's a great question. I have a wealth of information I can bring forward to you, Legislator Hahn, if you ever need that.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes, I would like that.

MR. CARACAPPA:

I would be more than happy to sit down with you and go over all that stuff.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you very much. Legislator Anker, you have another question?

LEG. ANKER:

Right, commenting to what you just spoke about. Again, the headline in Newsday, Long Island Drought Conditions. We are in a drought. We need our fire hydrants.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Yes, ma'am. We don't need to let that water run down the roadways for days on end.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Any other questions from the committee? Okay. So, you know, I think that our committee has, I mean, I was just reviewing these pictures and this is a very complete package that you've provided for us. And I think that we're all, you know, concerned here. So I look forward to hearing back from you and meeting with you, Nick, separately to hear more about some of these concerns. So thank you for bringing this to our attention.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Absolutely. If you will just allow me one more minute.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oh, Legislator Barraga.

LEG. BARRAGA:

I have a couple of questions.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I'm sorry.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Yes, sir.

LEG. BARRAGA:

I certainly can understand your point of view with reference to coming before this committee and this forum to delineate some of the challenges that the Water Authority faces and some of the problems they have. By the same token, you're in the process of negotiating or have been negotiating a contract. How long has it been since you -- since your last contract, or how long has it been since you've been negotiating?

MR. CARACAPPA:

We are currently two years without a contract, three years without a wage increase. And it should be noted that all the management has received their increases.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Because realistically anybody looking at this, they would say, well, there's a possibility that because they don't have a contract we now have this, complaints. And the question is whether or not if you had a contract would the same complaints still exist, would you be still going down that road very aggressively.

My other concern is this. Yes, we appoint the members of the Suffolk County Water Authority, but is it a public authority. There are over 600 public authorities in the State of New York. LIPA is a good example, the New York State Dormitory Authority, and hundreds of others. They're usually put together because Legislative bodies don't want to deal with the issue, they'd rather put together an authority. Once that authority is established, it's like an independent quasi level of government. We have very little control over them. We can bring them before us and ask certain questions, but in essence, they're running their own show. So, I mean, I understand the public forum aspect of coming before us, but in terms of really doing anything aggressively against an authority, it's very, very difficult.

I mean, LIPA is a good example and others are a good example, because they're put there -- and a number of years ago, the State of New York had serious issues with the number of those authorities, even what they put in place is not sufficient to really deal with them, because they are independent. It's like in Nassau and Suffolk County, they're like anomaly counties compared to the rest of the State. We have 900 quasi levels of government in two counties. Most of them run completely independent one from the other as this authority does.

I remember a number of years ago, and my colleagues can correct me. There was a finalization of some funds coming, were awarded based on a carcinogen coming from local gas stations. Suffolk County got a million dollars, and the Suffolk County Water Authority got I believe close to 100 million. And some of us suggested can we get any of that money, because four or five years ago, as it is today, we were really in tough financial straits, and the answer was *No, we are not going to give you a penny*. That came from the Authority. We just couldn't get a dime out of them because they're separate, they're independent. That's the problem you face here, all right.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Well, it is a problem, and I'll address -- you asked some questions and you made some statements. The number one question is would we still be pursuing this if we didn't have a contract. One-hundred percent. I've been pursuing these issues for over six years now, Legislator Barraga. These are issues that are just compounding and getting worse and worse and worse. I mentioned earlier that that's going to Legislators -- I'm sorry -- that's going to be the Water Authority's response, we are here today because we don't have a contract. It's baloney. We're here today because we're being made, we're being forced to cut corners. It jeopardizes our safety, it jeopardizes the public safety, it jeopardizes the quality of the product that we put out there, which is

drinking water, clean, fresh, dependable drinking water.

You see, the pictures don't lie. Those videos don't lie. Take a look at them. The answers from Jason Hime do not lie. Those are codes, Sanitary Codes, which of course we brought forward, Legislator Barraga. They were cited for two, not one, but two Sanitary Code violations which they had to a public announcement -- which is another issue we have. They're supposed to, they had to by law put out a public announcement. What they did is they buried it on their website. You, the public will have no way -- a real public announcement, put it in *Newsday*. Say we were in violation of Sanitary Code because we did not visit these stations, and because we did not visit these stations, we let the chemicals go dry and possible contaminants ran into your water system.

Now, the Authority claims that none of that happened because of what we brought forward. It happened because the Board of Health, who does annual inspections of these pump stations, and they look at the logbooks, daily logbooks. If there is not a name there, that station isn't visited. When we brought this attention to both parties, they pointed fingers at each other. The Board of Health said, also Water Services said, *Well, we assume that when we don't see a name that station did not run, because that's Sanitary Code. If it does not run you don't need to have a daily grab sample.* The Water Authority said, *No, you've been inspecting these stations for the last how many years, you're full aware of what's been going on in the practices and the policies and procedures of the Water Authority.* So now they're pointing fingers and we're stuck in the middle. When I say we, we are all stuck in the middle. We're all ratepayers. We all consume this product. So there is an issue there that needs to be looked at.

And because you appoint these executive members to the Authority, Legislator Barraga, what you can do is appoint members that have some kind of background in water distribution, in infrastructure, in finance, in water sampling, engineering, chemistry, anything but public service. That's what every one of these are. You're talking about Pat Halpin, ex-County Executive. James Gaughran used to sit up here. Jane Devine, used to sit up here. Errol Toulon, used to sit up here. That qualifies them to run an Authority that puts clean, dependable, safe drinking water into our households? Or are they playing politics, and I mean no offense on that because my brother's on this wall, my mother's name is on this auditorium. They took great pride in serving their constituents.

I take great pride in serving my members and being involved in my community as I am. Coach, civic leader, you name it. Tom -- Mr. Muratore, you can vouch for that. If it's happening in my community, I'm involved. This affects every community. This affects every one of my members. I'm here today, Legislator Barraga, this affects you. I'm looking out for your best interest, and your family's and your grandchildren, whoever else may consumer Suffolk County Water Authority product, which is the clean, safe, drinking water.

So if you ask me what can you do, why don't you start looking inward and appoint members to that Board who actually have an idea of what they're doing and not just looking to grab a headline about certain things. They put out a false report about overtime saving \$346,000 and pat themselves on the back and put down on paper saying, *Look, we are doing our job.* No, you're not doing your job. For 75 cents or 77 cents per household you are putting us at risk. I would gladly pay the 76 cents to make sure that my hydrants are fixed in front of my house, my water is quality safe for kids, my roadways are safe to walk on, and my sidewalks are safe for my kids to ride their bicycles on. Gladly pay the 77 cents.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Smoke and mirrors, ladies and gentlemen. That's all it is. At your leisure, A10 is the minutes from one of their meetings when they approved the expenditure of a \$19,000 model to sit in the Education Center in Hauppauge that used to be a customer service representative center where people could actually go and get questions answered and pay their bills. It's now an Education Center with a \$20,000 model in it sitting empty, sitting empty, with a full-time employee in there who actually ran for the Suffolk County Legislature last year unsuccessfully. A full-time employee, instead of being out there and fixing mains or dealing with the public, because every one of our clerical and customer service sites are understaffed, they have someone sitting in there.

Also on here is one of their motions to accept the ratepayers increase. If you want to look in there, the Newsday article is in there for the \$19,000 expenditure and the e-mail from one of the public that read that who said you know what, in an Educational Center no one is going to visit, \$20,000 is a lot of money to spend. Rethink it. Rethink it. And maybe not give out \$8,000 worth of water bottles. Eight thousand dollars worth of water bottles this year alone.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you, Nick.

MR. CARACAPPA:

You're welcome. Thank you for your time. I appreciate it. I know you guys allowed us --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We do have to get to our agenda.

LEG. MURATORE:

I know. I just want to kind of make a statement. You know, we sit here and we spend lots of money buying land to protect our water, and yet why are we doing that? They're not delivering a good product to the citizens of Suffolk County. Millions of dollars on land to protect water and we can't deliver a good product, so I really think we need to look into this.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

It's an excellent product. I understand the concern. The product, you know, it's an excellent product. I don't want anyone to be worried about the quality of the product. We all know it's an excellent product. I understand the concern about potential contamination, but it's a very excellent product.

MR. CARACAPPA:

I stand by that. It is.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes, yes. So -- but thank you. You have raised a ton of concerns. I appreciate Legislator Barraga's point that we have very limited capacity to address them, but this is a very public forum and we will, you know, do our part. I will meet with you, especially on the statistics that I requested and I look forward to talking with you about that separately. And so seeing no further questions, we'll move on to -- was everyone here wanting to -- still wanting to speak? Is that your understanding or did we -- do you think we --

MR. CARACAPPA:

Everybody filled out a card. You can exercise your right if you still want to speak.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. I'll read the names off and you can stand up and let me know. If you want to come forward, you certainly have the right to come forward for your three minutes, but if you would like to just

echo what he said you can stand up and raise your hand and say, you know, we can move on. The person that was on deck was Derek McLane. Come forward, please, and on deck, Philip Sprano.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Thank you all very much. I appreciate it.

MR. McLANE:

I'll speak.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Go ahead. You have three minutes.

MR. McLANE:

My name is Derek McLane. I'm the CM Department, Westhampton. I share Nick's concerns. I am fixing these leaks in the wintertime. We work when there's rain, snow. I worked in an ice storm this past winter where if they call us they expect us to be there. They stack these main breaks. We could do three or four a night. I do find concern. We have to push the slop in. I have questioned it because if someone gets hurt, that falls on me obviously, and I'm being told by my supervisor and it bothers me a lot. But during the day, Monday through Friday, eight to four-thirty, when we're working if I'm not wearing a hard hat they can suspend me or take a day's pay away from me for doing something as silly as I forgot to put my hard hat on. But during the nighttime when they want to save money or whatever they got to do, or get us to another main break, they have us push soup in and put cones on it, and I am putting it in residential neighborhoods all over Suffolk County.

That is a scary thing because what if my family or your family was driving and they fall in that. Whose name is on the ticket? My name. What's the Water Authority going to do? They're probably going to say I never told you to do it. So on my tickets I always usually put my supervisor's name and try to protect me, because I'm being ordered to do this even though it isn't safe. When I was hired I was told if it's not safe you call your supervisor to make sure it's done correct. They are cutting corners.

The other thing is when they are holding leaks, we're doing leaks now sometimes after they have been leaking for three days. It's so unfair the wall's falling in on you. I have been caved in before, knocked to the bottom of the hole because it's slop. The water's running out of these walls. You know, I'm a paying ratepayer also. I live out by Legislator Krupski and we have a lot of clay and stuff out there. The clay oozes out the water and you'll have a two foot section of wall drop out on top of you. So in a sense they're holding it at the risk of my safety and the safety of my crew and I don't think that's fair. I'm paid to do a job. I would rather do a job correctly and safety and only fix it once, because to me if you have to go back two and three times you're not getting your money's worth. I was self-employed before I went to the Water Authority. I was always told do the job correctly the first time to save money. We're not doing it the first time. I'm going back to some jobs two or three times because they are sinking or the road is cracking.

I don't get it. I don't understand what's going on with the Water Authority. It's a great job, but when I'm being told to cut corners and then when it comes down to there's a problem, they're so quick to say well you're getting a day off or you're getting a letter. It's not fair. Why are you putting all the burden on me. I don't want to lose my job. I have a family to survive for. I don't think I should be put in that predicament to have to jeopardize my job to make somebody else look good. And if that's a problem, sorry, but that's just the way I feel. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Philip Spranz, followed by on deck, James Harrington.

MR. SPRANZ:

Hi, how are you doing? I'm Phil Spranz. I've been with the Authority for 12 years. When I first got the job it was probably one of the best days of my life that I found out I'm working there, and over the years it hasn't been up to standard that I feel. The phone rings at three in the morning, I have no problem getting up and coming to work. And they keep holding leaks on us and I guess that doesn't really matter anymore. I took that oath. I have no problem getting up and coming to your house working, you know, trying to make things right. But I guess they don't feel that way anymore. It's a little disheartening, it really is. That's all I can say is, you know, if we got invaded by people, I'm sure you want the army there firsthand, you know, right on the spot, and not *Oh, we'll get back to it eight o'clock in the morning*. I don't think that's the right way to run a company, I really don't.

I have no problem, I have always done the right thing. That's how I've been raised, but what I see there with pushing stuff in, like they said before, pushing stuff in, slop, it makes me wonder, why do I got to do this for. It's not the right thing. I wouldn't want my daughter riding over it in her car, you know, why would you have to ride over it? So you save a couple of bucks? I'll work all night, I don't care, as long as it's done right. I wish they would feel the same way. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you for your service. James Harrington, followed on deck by Louis deGonzague.

MR. HARRINGTON:

Good morning. James Harrington. I've been with the Water Authority almost 10 years. I am out of Oakdale C and M. I'm a pipe fitter. And, you know, we go to main breaks and just a few weeks ago a guy goes, *I called last night at nine o'clock. Why are you here at 8:30 in the morning?* I said *It's not my call*. He goes *They left a cone and left*. The block was flooded. The people that live south of Montauk are sick of water. Why are we leaving water main -- I have video of it blowing out of the road three feet in the air. Three feet in the air. It's just not right and I don't think that, you know, it's just push in, get in. Why? For another hour we could do the job the right way.

We have the supplies in the yard to get the job done right. Why not topsoil the lawn we just ripped up? Why come back tomorrow and spend three hours now when we could do it now when we have the supplies in the yard. We could send someone back to the yard to get it done and put these main breaks back together the way they're supposed to be, not push it in and -- we left a main break in front of a school.

I reach out to people. I'm from a political family, and it's not right that your kids and my kids are going to these schools and you left a hole open in front of the Deer Park School. Why? On Washington Avenue I think it was. Why is it left open? Push it in, we'll come back tomorrow, because they didn't want it to run into overtime. So now we put plywood in front of a school with cones around it.

We are the Water Authority; we're not a joke. You know, we all work hard. We get up at three in the morning. My phone rings at three in the morning, *Do you want to come into work?* I'm laying in bed with my wife and I got two kids in the other room. Yeah, I got to come in. I have to support my family. But that don't happen anymore, because they'll fix it tomorrow morning, and that's not right.

And we all raised our right hand when we got interviewed. *Jim, on Superbowl Sunday, would you come in? Yes, I would.* And we all have. We all have worked holidays away from our families. Christmas Eve, New Year's, Thanksgiving, we've all done it. But tomorrow's another day. Tomorrow may not come. I may not wake up.

So we all need to get on the same page and work like men and women for the Water Authority and continue giving that product that we supply every day and we'll think that we do a great job. And I got eight minutes in a deli too long. I got a letter. They step -- they go over the procedure that you're supposed to get a verbal first. No, they said it was excessive. I was in a deli for 18 minutes. That's excessive. It's like I robbed the kid's candy jar. I got my breakfast, I got to the job, we shut down a road, we got the leak still fixed. Eight minutes you are going to give me a letter in my file that says it could lead up to suspension or termination. It's not right for eight minutes. I mean, come on. What are my kids going to have in 30 years from now. Nothing. That's it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Louis deGonzague and then followed by Rose Tullo.

MR. DeGONZAQUE:

Good morning. My name is Lou deGonzague. I have been working for the Suffolk Water Authority for 26 years. I'm a senior electrician. I'm also Vice President of Local 393. Legislator Barraga, you brought up why we brought -- chose to bring these items forward. When we went to the Suffolk County Board of Health we brought questions forward about them skipping pump stations, letting chemicals run dry. The breaking point was when we saw their presentation saying how much overtime they had cut by allowing main breaks to run. Every time you let a main break run, you run a chance of contaminating that water system if there's a fire. On top of that, if you're skipping pump stations and the water is not being treated at that time, you're also taking an additional risk that you have untreated water flowing through a main that may be contaminated.

When we brought it forward, they had never heard of such a thing. They were at a loss. Gray areas. Nobody in the Water Authority ever asked those questions to the Suffolk County Board of Health. That's who should have been asking questions, not us. We shouldn't have had to bring that forward. They should have known this. But since there is gray areas, they felt it was their right to take advantage of those gray areas for their own -- I don't know why, to risk the water system.

That's my job. I deal with the chemical control systems, analyzers, and the telemetry systems that cover the Suffolk County Water Authority. When we brought these things forward we still had not gotten all the answers that we've asked, because they need guidance from New York State, because these issues have never been brought forward by anyone before.

So if you are saying that you have a limited voice in what goes at the Suffolk County Water Authority, believe me, our voice has been even more limited. We have been dismissed. We brought all these issues forward to the Board themselves multiple times and we were dismissed. Just as you said, disgruntled employees complaining. No. We take pride in what we do. We take pride in our product that we produce.

A contaminated water system -- I will tell you why a contaminated water system strikes me so hard. I have a daughter with an immunosuppressant disease. So when you hear about these places that have to do a water boil, that's my worst nightmare. And I know that there's people -- Sarah, she lives in your district. I know there's a lot of other people out there with the same issues. So if you're asking why, that's why. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Rose Tullo followed by approximately Phil Malone.

MS. TULLO:

Hi. Good morning. My name is Rose Tullo. I'm a 33 year employee for Suffolk County Water. I also currently serve on the Executive Board as Secretary for 10 years. I'm touching base on

something a little different than the rest of them, because I do feel it's an obligation. The Water Authority Board is appointed by you, and you should really know what is happening within the Authority.

I currently serve on the Labor Management Committee, lack of, and I currently serve on the Grievance Committee. We've gone through five labor management people in the last ten years. No one wants to stay at the Authority because they have no say in anything that they do. It's being run by two people, that's it. Our labor management person currently is general counsel.

Where is the fairness in our 360 employees? What chance do they have in settling their gripes or settling a situation that's occurring to them? They don't get their due justice because the general counsel is running everything now. How can we have an Authority with over not only 360 bargaining members, but 200 non-bargaining members. How can the Authority run without a labor management person? Because we're being dismissed and they don't care.

As President Caracappa said and Vice President deGonzague said, we have gone to the Executive Board for Suffolk County Water. We have stood in front of them and we have had discussions with them. Instead of listening to us, as they say they are listening to us, they go through their papers and they dismiss us. And this is why -- part of we're here today. I want to work in an environment when I come to work where I'm happy, our employees are being cared for, they're safe, in a harmonious environment. We currently do not have that, and that is not the way that we should be coming to work every day. Thank you for listening.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Phil Malone and on deck, James Walsh. If the person who's next wants to come forward you can do that as well.

MR. MALONE:

Good morning. My name is Phil Malone. I work in construction and maintenance out of Oakdale. When I first started I was very proud to have a job there, like stated before by other employees. Nowadays the morale at our job is at an all time low. There's people there now that really don't have a care what happens. You know, I'm not here to complain about overtime or a contract. I want to be treated fairly. They look at us as we're pieces of garbage, yesterday's newspapers thrown to the curb.

I mean, there was a couple of times myself, as many other people, were actually threatened with our jobs if we didn't want to do something that we were told to do. There are certain job details there that don't pertain to me, another gentleman is supposed to do. I'm told if I don't do it, don't bother coming to work tomorrow. How can I go to a job everyday knowing that I'm being threatened that I'm not going to have a job tomorrow? I've worked in other companies in the private sector where, yes, that fear was there. But I took this job for security and comfort and to better my life and my family's life, not to be harassed, not to be looked at as a piece of garbage, not to be degraded, okay?

I was brought into the office and reprimanded for six minutes over my ten minute break. This so-called day it was 90 degrees out with 100% humidity. This was recently, about two or three weeks ago. I have no air-conditioning in my vehicle. There's a few vehicles still at the company that don't have air-conditioning, therefore I have no reprieve of cooling down. It's been brought to the Safety Committee numerous times. I was told *Go find a cool down center. As per OSHA you guys are permitted to cool down and hydrate.* I brought this to their attention as I was being reprimanded. *That's not an excuse. If it happens again, you will be suspended. If it happens again after that, you'll be terminated.*

I don't feel as though I should be looked at as a piece of garbage or expendable just to make room for somebody else who will come in to act as a whipping boy. Nobody here wants to work uncomfortable. Nobody here wants to put their health at safety risk while working. I feel as though the people that run the Suffolk County Water Authority now view as garbage and expendable people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

James Walsh, followed by Jeremy Terhune.

MR. WALSH:

How are you doing? I'm James Walsh. I work out of Oakdale. I've been with the Authority for like ten years. I'll just reiterate on what a few of the other fellows said with the letting the leaks run for days on end. When we pull up and get in that hole there's a good chance of the walls caving in, and I'm not only responsible for myself, I'm responsible for my utility men. And we all have children. I want to go home same.

And I'll give you an example. I gave it to Nick during the summer. A customer had his water service ruptured. He had no water to his house. He called and called and called. And then at one o'clock in the morning they said they were going to be there, be there. He called them back at one o'clock in the morning and they told him we'll fix it tomorrow. He took his family to a hotel. I showed up on a Saturday morning at ten o'clock and he comes out, a big guy cursing, what the F is going on, this that and the other thing. I shouldn't have to deal with that situation. I had to defuse it, and it's just -- it's not right. That's their job to get it fixed. I shouldn't have to be threatened and get involved in a hostile situation. That's all I have to say.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you very much. Jeremy Terhune followed by Ernest Wessberg.

MR. TERHUNE:

Good morning. I have a few things. I'm not a public speaker so I'm not going to sound as good as Nick. But I want to bring a couple of things to you guys. I know we keep bringing home to you the main breaks being let go, service leaks, the pump stations running low on chemicals. Something else you might want to think about is we sample our water constantly. I work in the Production Control Department. We do the water treatment. We sample our water constantly. We don't sample the water four feet below the ground. When you have a leak and something like a hydrant gets opened up for a fire down the street, that's going to pull off contaminants in from right below the surface, which we all know there's plenty of contaminants at the surface. That's one problem. The other issue you're talking about, Legislator Barraga, you know, you do appoint the members of our Board, and they run it like a business, because that's what they are, they're businessmen. You know, we're not selling bicycles, yo-yo's, something like that. This is public health we're talking about. That's important. We need somebody in there who knows about water distribution, something, not just business. Yeah, they're cutting a lot of money, but they're putting all of our health in danger.

You know, just the morale around, I mean, I've been there 16 years now. When I started I loved it and told everybody I worked for the Water Authority, I love it. I don't brag about it anymore. It's not the place that it used to be. We used to do volunteers days, union and management working together helping the community. We'd do that, we'd do barbecues, just to kind of get the morale up. They don't care, it just costs money. We're going to save money on that.

Now, the main breaks. You've got a main break and you are going to let it go, and the next day you have the guys go there. Now it's all mud. Now you are breaking their backs even more. Now this guy's going to go out on Workers Comp because he hurt his back. Are you saving money now? Now

you're paying for this guy to be on Workers Comp and you don't have him out there to do the work, you have to pay somebody else.

The same thing with the pump stations. You know, they're splitting runs so that -- they can only do -- they do two runs with one person. You do half of this run and half of that run. Well, instead of doing 3,000 pounds of lime, which is 60 bags, 60 50 pound bags, now you are doing 6,000. That's twice as much. You are going to break that guy's back. Then he's going to be out on Workers Comp. It doesn't make a lot of sense. I mean, you're talking about trying to save money, but you are just breaking down the workforce.

You know, they kind of lead by intimidation these days, and that's what it is. And it's not a really comfortable place to come to work and nobody's bragging about working at the Water Authority these days. You know, we're not proud. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Next is Ernest Wessberg followed by Mark Paulicelli.

MR. WESSBERG:

How are you doing?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Hello.

MR. WESSBERG:

My name is Ernest Wessberg. I have been working at the Suffolk County Water for a little over six years, but I also worked at another water company, which is also an authority, for 14 years, where I was the President of the local and I was also on the Safety Committee over there. The safety at this company -- I have never seen anything so egregious, the conditions that we're made to work in. I work -- I'm a field operator. I work overnights, you know, at the pump stations, delivering chemicals, dumping the bags of lime, and then we fix the chemical leaks down in these pipe galleys, which are supposed to be, you know, permit confined spaces. Which like there are water companies that had to redo these pipe galleys 25 years ago, and these are so outdated it's ridiculous. I don't understand how OSHA and NYOSH don't get involved in this, because all these other companies had to do this years ago. I don't know if it's the political pull that the company has or what, but I don't know. It's people are getting put at risk, you know, just to go into work. I work overnight so they don't want to call in somebody else to do the work so they have you doing work that you're not supposed to be doing down in these dangerous conditions. And, you know, it's not right. So hopefully somebody will get a hold of NYOSH or OSHA to do some inspections on these hazards. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Mark Paulicelli followed by Barbara Ash.

MR. PAULICELLI:

I don't need to speak.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oh, thank you, Mark. Thank you for your service. Barbara Ash followed by Roger Healy.

MS. ASH:

Hi. Good morning. My name is Barbara Ash. I'm an employee of the Suffolk County Water Authority for 16 years and I'm the Treasurer of Local 393. I currently work in the New Construction

Department. I've worked there my 16 years at the Water Authority, which means I'm part of the clerical staff that helps the customers who are on well water convert to public water, or commercial properties that are adding public water maybe for fire protection, things like that.

In the last five years since New York State did their big retirement back in 2010, my staff has been cut in half. There are half the amount of clerks helping the customers. But yet the amount of work coming in is still happening. So we're very shorthanded and it does hurt the customers and the customer service that we're able to provide.

In the last year, the Water Authority has made changes in how they handle some of the new construction coming in, and residents that need an inspection of their water service now sometimes have to wait up to two weeks to have an inspection of a newly installed water line. So if you're a homeowner and you've made the important decision to convert from your well to public water, you are under -- you have to incur the expense of hiring not only the plumber to do the work, but expense of the Authority to do the tap. Now you're waiting up to two weeks sometimes to get an inspection of that water line. And then once that's done, you may be waiting up to another four weeks to have your line actually tapped into the Suffolk County Water Authority main. So that's a long process for a homeowner who wants to get off their private well. It could be because of contamination, it could be because of health concerns, it could be because the well is failing, but that's a long wait that they're incurring.

Something else I want to bring forward is that sometimes it is a game of smoke and mirrors with the Water Authority, because at the end of this past May, we were told to hold jobs until June first because they had run out of money in the budget in May. We were told to hold jobs that needed work to be done until June first. So some customers that had to wait four weeks to begin with to get their tap, now had to wait even longer. Not that the customers were made aware of it, but we were told to do that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you very much. Roger Healy, and on deck is Eileen Rowe.

MR. HEALY:

Good morning, everyone. I have been with the Water Authority for seven years now, and I used to work for a contractor before I worked for the Water Authority drilling the wells and I really enjoyed that and I always wanted to work for the Water Authority, so I can say I was very excited when I got a job with the Water Authority. And now it's not so much anymore. I have never worked for a company who has treated their employees so poorly. It's almost heartbreaking at the end of the day to know all the colleagues I work with, and including management, because there's a lot of very nice people in management also. I don't want to leave them out, who I feel are being threatened with their jobs and forced to do things to make us do things that we're not supposed to. Even though they know it's wrong, they're so scared for their livelihood that they make us do it anyway when they do not feel that it's right. And I think that's company-wide at the Water Authority and they're putting people in jeopardy, everyone.

They came up with a policy. We had a pole holding policy. This one really struck me, really hurt me, because it always was we needed a pole holder, a piece of equipment to hold the telephone pole if we were working in a hole within five feet of the pole. What happened was there was an issue where they forget to schedule a pole holder, the pole holder could not get on-site, whatever the case may be. So they forced the people, threatened the people with their jobs to do this. So now we've got to get a policy for this, because at the time it must have been an unwritten rule that five feet was what it was and everyone abided by that.

So now the new policy is on regular time it's still five feet, but on overtime the policy states it's

within three feet or conditions depending. So now -- I don't want to harp on overtime, I'm not even an overtime person at all. I've worked zero for my career. But now you're putting me in jeopardy because you want to save man-hours, and that to me is disgraceful to put human life in jeopardy over dollars and cents at the Water Authority. It's pennies.

And that's something that I really feel strongly about, is putting people in jeopardy to save nothing in the grand scheme of things, and force people to do it and threaten them with their careers on doing it. Because when I came to the Water Authority this was a career for me. This is what I wanted to do. My father ran a commercial contracting business, I've done it my whole life, I enjoy it very much so. And now I come to a job where you can be the best in the world at your job, you're just a number, they have no appreciation for you, and you hear things said about you behind your back and you go, I really went to bat for that person, I worked really hard. I have been injured many times, and not that I'm faulting anyone for it as negligence, just from working hard and giving the Water Authority as hard work as I could every day. And I am just very saddened by how they treat me at the Water Authority. So thank you very much for your time, everyone.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you for your service. Eileen Rowe, followed by Nicole Cantore.

MS. ROWE:

Good morning. My name is Eileen Rowe and I've been working for the Water Authority for almost 21 years. I wanted to touch on something Nick mentioned earlier about the hose to hose. What that is, if somebody has a service leak and they don't want to repair it in the evening, they will hook-up a hose from one house to the next, open up the taps on the hoses to pressurize both houses, and they do it with businesses as well if they're near each other. But the hoses that they use are hoses that lay around in our trucks, which are trucks. They are full of dirt. They lay around on the floor in our warehouses. There's no standard operating procedure regarding the safety of these, or even if it's a new hose, like a \$5 new hose. So a lot of customers refuse them, so they go without water. And when we refuse to do it, because this was a practice they started to do a few years ago, I refused to do it one night. I knew the hose was filthy. So the supervisor, who doesn't work for the company anymore, did it himself. They really have very little regard for individual safety.

In the new SOP that they want to write I'm very leery of it, because they have employees who are part of the Safety Committees, non-bargaining unit employees who are part of the Safety Committee, and they have a Safety Department with a few employees. They are totally disregarded if they come up with a proposition, if they make a suggestion. They basically discard them. They have no respect for them. People who went to college for that, who have done that for 20 years, they don't respect anyone's opinion.

The head of the company and the attorneys make every decision at every level. All the management in between are just names holding a place and collecting a salary. If you ask your boss a question he goes *I have to push it up the chain*, and it goes all the way to the top and back for something simple.

My hardhat, that I can get fired for not wearing, is not as well made as a Halloween costume. It's a joke. But they want us to look safe, they don't care if we are safe, and that's been the way for six or seven years.

Another thing that I wanted to mention, you asked what are you supposed to do because we're a separate entity, we're not part of the County. Answer that question for me, what are we supposed to do? Who is supposed to stop the madness and say somebody has to look at this company, the way they are spending their money. They're hiring practices are ridiculous. Our union workforce, the people who actually put the shovels in the ground and get the water in the house is shrinking,

but the management end is tremendous. We have people sitting behind desks, staring at screens, collecting paychecks because they're friend or because they're associates. They have no background in the business world. Half of them are very young. But nobody cares because nobody's watching.

I don't feel the Board runs it like a business. They run it like it's their own business that they can do whatever they want and ha ha ha because nobody's watching us. We need an oversight committee from the County to look at them and hold them accountable and make them answer questions and explain why they spend money the way they do.

(Beeper sounded)

MS. ROWE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you very much for your service. Nicole Cantore followed by Loren Paulicelli.

MS. CANTORE:

I would like to pass.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Loren Paulicelli.

MS. PAULICELLI:

I'll pass.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Thank you for your service. Oscar Montalvo followed by Michael DeLuca.

MR. MONTALVO:

Good morning. My name is Oscar Montalvo. I work for the Water Authority for 31 years. I'm considered one of the old dogs now. I'm CNM. A lot of these guys work under me, too. I have a couple of issues, that it's a shame that I lost a lot of heart from this place considering I've been here 31 years. It's been the last couple of years when they started with the videotaping and they said they weren't going to use a GPS for discipline and they're doing that. They videotape us guys. And the guy who they got videotape don't even know our work, and yet whatever he says, they go by. It's a shame that I've been working there for the CNM Department, it's a big crew, for so many years, and I used to have, I felt, respect. Now I got a target on my back because I am a shop steward and Executive Board member. And because I speak out and I say what I have to say, they don't like it.

One of the issues is, believe it or not, is H and R. If we have a complaint, we can't even go to them because there's nobody there -- I always had the understanding, maybe I'm wrong, H and R is supposed to be a liaison between management and union, and it's not. The minute you get in trouble, the first thing they do when I go in there as a shop steward, they already got a letter written out for these individuals not even asking what happened. They don't do no investigation, they just go *You got a day here, you're suspended, you might be terminated next time.* That's how they treat our guys. So for us to have somewhere to go to, to talk to, doesn't exist and that's a shame.

As far as being on the big crew, they make us do -- we dig up a job, and because they already have a certain amount of hours, we have to come back the next day, they say *Backfill the whole hole again. We'll come back and we'll dig it up again.* Right there is a waste of time and we can finish

the job in maybe let's say two hours overtime. No. Backfill it and we'll start again. Tomorrow we got another eight hours.

It's a shame because all these years working, regardless they made it real clear that we need you to work overtime. Now people here are looking for second jobs because they want you to work, but at the same time, they don't want you to work. They want you to come in and leave, get it in and get out. Push the slop in, get in. Like Roger said about the pole holders, it's always been practiced all the years I've been there. All of sudden, overtime comes, who decided it's safe or not safe. If it's overtime and if it's wet how are you going to say it's not safe. During the day is okay. This is the stuff they do.

They intimidate guys here. They send certain guys over there that they know they're not going to talk back to them, they'll do the stuff that's unsafe. They know who it is, and it's a shame that we can't go somewhere and have somebody listen to us. Our President does the best that he can. We try to do the best that we can, and they don't give us any choices. The attitude, it's a shame it's bad. I just want to let you know how bad it is and thank you for the time.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oscar, thank you for your 31 years. Michael DeLuca followed by Tom Reichel.

MR. DE LUCA:

Hello, everyone. I'm Mike DeLuca. I have worked for the Water Authority for 30 years. When I first started it was a great job. At this point right now it's at its all time low. It's an embarrassment for us, for all the guys that work in CNM, Bay Shore, everywhere. They go to work every day. Every day is a new day. What are they going to do today, suspend us, fire us, what are they going to do?

So I'm going to give you an example. On Jericho Turnpike, in the middle of winter, ten degrees out. Jericho Turnpike going westbound by Cornell Drive. A car hits an arrow board, it rams right into it. We're right in the middle of the road, Jericho Turnpike. So we got the road closed, blah, blah, blah. Our supervisor tells us push all the concrete on top of the water main. Push in and get in. We're being watched by the upper echelon. Okay. So we proceed to do what we do. Twenty-five days later five guys get suspended. Not a question, what happened, what did you do, what happened. Nothing. The foreman got five days off, I got two days off, and the rest of the guys got two days off for doing our job. This is what's going on here. Not even being talked to after ten degree weather. Ice on the road. We had the State blocking the road. This is what it comes down to.

I'm here all these years, I have never seen this place this bad, ever. It's an embarrassment. Customer service is down big time. Suffolk County PD comes over, *What are you guys doing letting main breaks on sidewalks just blowing ice everywhere people are walking.* I says don't tell me, tell the Water Authority. The big bosses, that's what they want, that's what they're going to do. Do you know how much time we get yelled at by customers? How many times we get yelled at? That's not even our position. We just come here to do the job, you know?

Even with like Oscar Montalvo said about videotaping and stuff like that. That put an all time low on us, and guess what? Forty-nine of us got suspended and were interrogated by management. What were you doing, this and that. They had nothing on us. We were all working.

And for another thing I wanted to tell you, we take a 15, 20 minute break, this guy is filming us. Five days later we're getting suspended for staying in the truck for 20 minutes. How about it's nine degrees out, eight degrees out. How about give us a little slack. You know what I'm saying? I've been doing it for 30 years. I've got a broken back. I get up even morning, they call me in the morning to come here to go to work, in the middle of the night, all crazy hours. Same thing with all these guys here. They break their butts to come here to support the Water Authority do our job.

That's all I'm saying here. It's really gone down since I been there.

When I went to that Board meeting with Nick Caracappa, I say I saw the true colors of that Board. They really didn't care. I shouldn't say -- Mario listened. Mario who is on our Board there, he shook our hand like a gentleman. He was a gentleman, that guy. And Errol, I know people that know Errol and he seems like a straightforward guy, too. But I guess you got to put your head down and turn your back sometimes, I guess. I don't know.

But you got a lot of good people working at the Water Authority and we want to be taken care of here. All you people put the legislation in. My cousin Nicole works for the County Clerk's Office. I know Ed Romaine and John Kennedy. I know them all, I speak to them all. I let them know what's going on there, you know what I'm saying? That's all I got to say. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you for your 30 years, Mike. Tom Reichel followed by Michael Collins.

MR. REICHEL:

Hi. My name is Tom Reichel. I work in the Westhampton office. I've been with the Water Authority for 33 years. Like everybody said, morale is at an all time low. It's crazy. I see a lot of question marks up there when somebody mentions somebody videotaping. Yeah, the Water Authority has somebody full-time, that's all he does. Videotapes, takes pictures, keeps an eye on -- that's how they keep an eye on everybody out there working. It's ridiculous.

If we didn't have the union behind us our this board to come to, I don't know where else we would have gone, because they don't, they really actually don't care about what we have to say. Like Oscar had said about human resources. You always think that that would be for all the employees, but it doesn't seem like it is. So I hope you listen to everybody up here and, you know, make some changes. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Michael Collins, and on deck is Doris Hladik.

MR. COLLINS:

Good morning. My name is Michael Collins. I have worked for the Water Authority for 12 1/2 years. The first six years were great. The other six years, not good. Morale really stinks. We work all winter, and on Memorial Day they call a contractor in to do a main break. That's not right. I mean, I know it's a business. They have the right to do what they want to do, but the guys coming in in the middle of the night, 10 degrees, 20 degrees below zero with the wind chill, and they call a contractor out on a holiday? They don't respect us. They really don't. I worked for Fortune 500 companies, more respect than what the Water Authority gives us workers.

And the hit hydrants -- when a hydrant used to have been hit we used to go there, either fix it or we took up the hydrant and bring it back to the yard. Now they just let it go and people are stealing them. Now they're new thing is put a plastic bag over them so no one takes them. They are \$3,000 hydrants. I don't understand how they can do that.

And the videotaping, I don't get that either. Like Mr. DeLuca said, guys work in nine degree weather, warming up, they're hands are cold, they're in the water because the water keeps on coming in from the sides of the roads. That's not right. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you, Michael. Doris Hladik followed by Catherine O'Brien.

MS. HLADIK:

I'll pass.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you, Doris. Catherine O'Brien followed by Norman Melchor.

MS. O'BRIEN:

Good morning. My name is Catherine O'Brien. I have worked for the Suffolk County Water Authority for 26 years. Mainly I've worked with customer service. I also worked in the Stores Department, which gives the equipment out to the main breaks and all the other emergencies.

Just so you know, the company itself has been great, has seen me raise my three children, a company I have always been very proud to work for. Lately, not so much. The past few years, you know, seeing how my other union brothers and sisters have been treated and the unfair policies the company has taken, such as videotaping and suspending people unfairly. A lot of things have gone on, you know, that have not been fair. The people that I work with are very good people. They all do their job when they come to work. They do what they're asked to do and they put their whole self in. And just to let you know that the Water Authority is a very good company. We all appreciate our jobs, but we just would like a little more respect from the higher ups. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Thank you for your service, Catherine. Norman Melchor, followed by Ronnie Brooks.

MR. MELCHOR:

Hello. My name is Norman Melchor. I've worked for the Suffolk Water Authority for 27 years. What I do there now is I'm a hydrant mechanic, which means I'm one of the gentlemen that repair the hydrants when they break or get hit. As some of the other members have stated, they're not repairing them now. If it requires overtime, they are going to let them go. If one gets hit on a Saturday and the Saturday guy is not in, it will stay out of service until Monday. If Monday is a holiday, you're looking at Tuesday.

What they do now besides putting bags on them, they will have a gentleman go out and stand it up. So now you drive down the road, you see this hydrant standing there, you think it works. If a fire department went to use that hydrant, the minute they wrap that hose around it, it's going down the street with that truck. That is not safe.

I know it was stated earlier that the Authority is considered a quasi governmental agency and that you have no real jurisdiction over them, but you do have a Public Safety Committee, which I believe must have the ability to put some kind of pressure on the Board who you folks appoint to do the right thing. Madam Chairman, you said your father was a volunteer fireman. Has he been one a long time?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Forty-eight years I think.

MR. MELCHER:

Was he ever a Chief?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No, ex-Captain.

MR. MELCHER:

I'm also a volunteer fireman. I'm a Fire Commissioner. I'm also an ex-Chief, and I can tell you from experience there are two things a Chief does not want for hear while he is standing in front of a fully engulfed house. The first is that there's somebody trapped inside. The second, that the hydrant does not work. That is unacceptable. That they take the theory that there is another hydrant down the road is inexcusable, not in this day and age. Fire districts pay a lot of money for maintenance and repair, and for this to happen is unacceptable. You folks here, it should be unacceptable to you. As I said, you have a Public Safety Committee. They should be in an uproar about that. That's all I have. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you, Norman, for your 27 years. Ronnie Brooks, followed by Michael Walls.

MR. BROOKS:

Hello. I have been with the Water Authority for almost 20 years now. Morale is way down. You even have managers running scared besides the employees. It's just a problem of the way they treat everybody.

Skipping stations. We had a station go down and they didn't want to pay overtime, but we ran a generator for three days at \$700 a pop. So that's \$2100 just for fuel oil instead of having guys finish the job, plus sending various crews there where you could have had a four man crew work through the night and finish it, but they don't want to give out overtime. They can do it, it's their company to run, but it's not cost effective. It's just a shame the way the Water Authority has gone down. That's basically it. And it just seems to be -- there need to be changes there. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you for your 20 years, Ronnie. Michael Walls, followed by Chris Reardon.

MR. WALLS:

Good morning. I have worked for the Suffolk County Water Authority for now 30 years and morale is just down. There can definitely be some improvements. I'd like to see some improvements. As far as HR is concerned, there is no HR. There is no one you can go to on any matter to talk to. They just -- they don't -- they just disregard you all the time. I think I've been dealing with this problem for over 15 years at the water company. Some of our coworkers now have just seen it for six years. But for me, it seems like it's been ten. That's all I have to say.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you, Michael, for your 30 years. Chris Reardon, followed by James -- okay. James Fallen.

MR. FALLEN:

Hello. My name is James Fallen. I've been with the Water Authority for 18 years. Thank you for this time. First off, I'd like to thank the union board and my President, Nick, for always standing up for us, the men and women I have trained with of this union who takes pride and very proudful. I'm a hydrant mechanic as well for the Authority. I don't have enough time for three minutes to tell you what's been going on with just fire hydrant safety alone, along with other issues of men and women out there with main breaks and customer service mishaps and miscommunications. And I'm not here about -- specifically about the money or anything like that without a contract. It's more about respect. And just as a whole, when I did come here 18 years ago I felt like a lot of my coworkers, too, were proud to get this job, and we still are, so don't get that point wrong or misrepresented.

It's just been -- fire safety. I can roll up to a house and they see me going out with the crane and boom to pick it up when it's on an eight to 4:30 shift and they said *What are you doing?* I said *Hi, ma'am, I'm picking up the fire hydrant. It will be repaired as soon as possible, maybe possibly hopefully for you, the next day. That's unacceptable.* I said pretty much it is. But, you know, I

can't say that and I don't call the shots. So, you know, if it goes past 4:30 I haven't had my phone ring I'd say in a very long time.

Fire safety, main breaks, and just the disrespect out there as far as, you know, the heat and the cold. As my coworker Phil stated before, I am one of those lucky ones, too, without air-conditioning. The heat's been unbearable at times and, you know, we have to have a spy down the block that disrespects us, is arrogant, is obnoxious and cocky and doesn't know a thing about the authority of how we work or what our job really is or entails. And we have someone that would come up to us and say we're sitting in our truck for two minutes over a 10 minute break or -- you know, there's a lot of petty issues that are going on. But I won't go on too much about that.

The other point that I would like to get across is HR is supposed to be the work between the worker and the Authority, and even if you're wrong or right, but we can work out and iron out issues. And we used to have a gentleman there who was a union labor relations manager. He is hired by them, don't get me wrong, but he'd have an open ear and an open door policy for us, for all of us. And as Rose stated, you know, that title has changed hands several times now over the past few years. There's a lot of, you know, they almost make you hostile, which should never be like that because we're out there for the safety of the people and us, because we're ratepayers as well. We respect our jobs, we appreciate our jobs, and we take pride in our jobs, all the men and women here. They've trained me as well and I've become very well rounded and I'm happy to be here, but I'm happy that you heard my voice. And thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you for your 18 years and your comments and thank you to everyone who had comments today for us. That was the last card we had. Was there anyone else who did not fill out a card but would like to speak? Okay. Seeing none, we're going to close the Public Portion but, Nick, I look forward to talking to you separately and other, you know, if you want to bring some fire hydrant mechanics on that issue. I do sit on the Public Safety Committee so I will bring this to their attention later this week. So thank you very much for all of your comments, and we will move on to the agenda.

MR. CARACAPPA:

Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. We have a presentation on the agenda, but we do have someone who has been waiting for an appointment. I think we might just want to take them out of order if that's okay with those waiting for the presentation. What number is that?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

1611.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. So we have a motion from Legislator Krupski to take IR 1611 out of order. I will second that. All those in favor of taking 1611 out of order? Opposed? Abstentions? 1611 is before us.

Introductory Resolution 1611 - Appointing Brian T. Culhane as a member of the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District (Krupski).

If Mr. Culhane would like to come forward. Thank you for your patience.

MR. CULHANE:

No problem.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you for your willingness to serve as well on this committee. It's an important committee to our committee here present, but to our County as well. So if you'd like to tell us a little bit about yourself and why you'd like to serve on it.

MR. CULHANE:

Well, I think one of the things I can tell you is I started out many years ago working at a water company myself, and so this was a real eye opener this morning. I didn't mind the wait because at that time Suffolk County Water Authority for a guy like me was the place to go to work. So I thought this was all very interesting. But I started at Suffolk County Water Authority, then I got hired by Senator Cesar Trunzo to be his -- eventually I became the Director of the Commission on Water Resource Needs of Long Island. I worked on groundwater and drinking water issues. And worked for State Senator Owen Johnson on fisheries issues. And my background, my educational background, is in agriculture. I got into environmental issues because I was interested in how pesticides move through groundwater. So that's what got me into this whole business.

And so I've had the opportunity -- George Proios called me back last winter and told me that he was going to be leaving soon. I was interested in putting some time into -- I was looking for a board appointment someplace where I could put my time and expertise to use. And so George suggested that I start coming to the meetings of the Soil and Water Conservation District. I've been going to those meetings since late winter, early spring, and so now I look forward to the opportunity to become a member of the Board and hopefully I'll have something to contribute.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Excellent. So you have been attending them and you still want to be a part of the Board. That's a good sign. Legislator Krupski, do you have a question?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. Thank you. It is good -- refreshing to see someone like Brian come and show that interest. He does bring a lot of experience to the, you know, the business of Suffolk County Soil and Water and I'm sure he will make a great addition, and he's got a lot to contribute. I thank him for his interest.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. We have a motion from Legislator Anker, second from Legislator Barraga. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**
You do not need to attend the General Meeting.

MR. CULHANE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. The other appointment -- oh, it's a reappointment. Okay. All right. So, presentations.

Presentations

Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning, Division of Planning and Environment, along with Dr. Will Bowman of Land Use Ecological Services, Inc., will provide an overview presentation on the proposed Mud Creek Watershed Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project in the Town of Brookhaven. Welcome.

If you can turn on the microphone, make sure that's working for both of you. Make sure the green light is on. You may have to keep the button pressed. One of those microphones you don't have to, but it's always a challenge to figure out which one that is.

MR. DAVIES:
DeWitt Davies.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:
And you know the drill. And identify yourself. You did, DeWitt. Okay. Great.

MR. DAVIES:
Yes, I would like to introduce Will Bowman from Land Use Ecological Services. My name is DeWitt Davies. I'm with the Department of Economic Development and Planning. We're here today to brief the committee on the progress made in the Mud Creek Watershed Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study. It's a long title, but it's a very ambitious project that has been underway for several years now. Suffice it to say that we are looking at a site in East Patchogue between Sunrise Highway and Montauk Highway in East Patchogue, the former Gallo Duck Farm site, which is part of the Mud Creek County Park.

Over 16 million ducks were raised at this particular facility over about a 65 year period. This site is -- has been disturbed to a great extent. And without further ado, I'd like to turn it over to Will Bowman, who will describe what has been done and where we're heading with this project. Will.

DR. BOWMAN:
Thank you to the Legislators and thank you for the opportunity to present the objectives of the Mud Creek County Park restoration. This work has been completed for Suffolk County Planning and Suffolk County Parks by Land Use Ecological Services, H2M Architects + Engineers, and Inter-Fluve Incorporated.

DeWitt gave a brief rundown of the location of the site. It's in East Patchogue and I don't -- nope, that does not work. It's situated -- the road at the bottom is Montauk Highway. You can see the former Gallo Duck Farm 45 acre site outlined in yellow. And it's just to the south of County Route 101, Patchogue/Yaphank Road. Everything in blue there, shaded light blue, is lands that are currently controlled by Suffolk County. The duck farm property itself is shown largely in yellow. It was acquired by tax lien. Suffolk County has also acquired other large blocks in the vicinity of the duck farm to the extent that the County now controls 100 acres at the headwaters of Mud Creek, which is one of the coastal plain streams on the south shore that eventually drains down into the Great South Bay. So there's a great ecological potential for restoration here and to preserve and restore woodlands and wetlands in the entire headwaters of Mud Creek.

You'll see some kind of green shading that runs diagonally across that slide from northeast to southwest. That's the east branch of Mud Creek. It drains through the former duck farm. And then there's also the west branch of Mud Creek, which is on the west -- left side of the slide. They both converge at the bottom right near Montauk Highway. And then the Mud Creek drains down into Robinson Pond and then eventually down south into the Great South Bay.

In the upper right of the slide you see the Gallo Duck Farm in 1950. So you see the extensive disturbance that's occurred. You can see large amounts of clearing to create the former duck feed lots. You can see the duck farm buildings as they were constructed. And the stream indicates lots of examples of manipulations and disturbance, it had been converted into kind of duck swim water areas.

So the purpose of this project is to develop a plan of action to improve the wetland and stream and surrounding forest habitats on the former duck farm to develop construction plans. We've currently gotten to 90% construction plans, we'll be finalizing those, obtained regulatory permits, and estimate construction costs, so at the end of this there will be a shovel ready project to perform this restoration project.

The objectives of the Mud Creek restoration have some unique and Island-wide significance. First, the stream restoration on the former duck farm will be intended to provide brook trout habitat. Brook trout is a New York State species, the greatest conservation need. It's also New York State's state freshwater fish. And interestingly, there is a small population of brook trout downstream of the former duck farm that has never been stocked. It's naturally reproducing. It's a heritage stream. So the stream restoration on the former duck farm will serve to provide additional stream and flood plain habitat for this important species.

Second, Long Island's south shore streams have been extensively disturbed over the course of development and colonization. We had dozens of small streams that flowed from across the south shore down into the Great South Bay, and these had been extensively manipulated, mostly by damming. The Colonial Grist Mills or pictures of this -- of the Lace and Carpet Mill in Patchogue at Patchogue Lake around the 1900's are shown in that postcard on the upper right, converted many of our small, coastal plain streams into shallow lakes and ponds. So extensive loss of stream habitat has occurred on Long Island's south shore.

Then driving along kind of Montauk Highway through Patchogue and through East Patchogue, every -- nearly every creek as you move on the lower slide, on the picture on the lower right. As you move across Hedges Creek, you see Dunton Lake and then Mud Creek is also impounded. At Swan River, there's Swan Lake. At Patchogue River, there's Patchogue Lake and Canaan Lake. At Tuthill's Creek in Patchogue there's West Lake. So all of these lakes that we -- and ponds that we see are, you know, formerly streams that were destroyed by a dam of some sort over our development.

The south shore streams have also been extensively excavated or channelized to either improve drainage or -- and that channelization has wrecked our natural stream channels, has often disrupted flood plains and natural hydrology of these streams. On the lower left you can see what a kind of a typical coastal plain stream should look like. That's Hedges Creek in East Patchogue. It's a small stream. With a running jump you could hop across it. It's a small stream that meanders its way through a forested flood plain well.

On the upper right, you'll see a photo that was from I believe the 50's that Planning had provided that kind of shows an example of what was done to our streams. The wetlands and vegetation were cleared around it. They were widened out to improve drainage. So this project would serve to create -- restore 2300 linear feet of natural meandering stream channel in a forested flood plain at the former Gallo Duck Farm.

So duck farm operations at the Gallo Duck Farm ceased in the mid-1980's, so there's been 30 years of time since the cessation of duck farming. Despite that passage of time, the ecosystems at the former duck farm and Mud Creek County Park have not reverted back or are not on the path towards reverting back to the normal natural ecosystems, such as a red maple hardwood swamp or an oak forest. Instead, the ecosystems at Mud Creek are kind of in a state of arrested development. I'm still showing the impacts of the duck farm.

On the lower left you can see this kind of shallow, nutrient rich, funky pond. That's an old duck swim water area. These ponds are present on the duck farm. They're certainly not native stream habitat that would support a cool water fish like brook trout. These earthen berms and ponds still remain on the former duck farm site.

Also, many of the former duck feed lots are colonized by invasive weed called mugwort shown in the upper right. Many of the former -- much of the former flood plain and the swim waters areas of degraded stream is dominated by invasive phragmites reed, shown on the lower right. And these invasive plants have colonized and they have choked out and prevented native vegetation from getting a foothold and trying to reestablish itself on the site. So these kind of invasive plants have stopped a kind of natural ecological recovery of the site.

There is also stormwater impacts on Gazzola Drive. My apologies, I don't have a pointer that works. There's two sites where stormwater discharge directly into Mud Creek, one on the former duck farm site, on Gazzola Drive, and then another downstream where Mud Creek crosses Montauk Highway.

There is also many remnants of the former duck farming building activities. There's dilapidated duck buildings with and without asbestos. There's out of service cesspools and other basins. There are lots of abandoned equipment, like you can see that pickup truck in the weeds on the lower left. There's various piles of old garbage, those two slides -- those two pictures in the middle, and so there's a lot of material, several hundred pieces of old equipment and debris that need to be removed.

We're in the process of developing, finalizing, construction plans. I show you just a concept plan that we, on the upper -- on the right here, that had been developed prior to initiating construction plans, but just want to go through the general outcomes of this project. To create 2300 linear feet of groundwater stream habitat suitable for brook trout; restore six acres of forested wetlands; remove 16,000 cubic yards of organic sediments and phragmites rye zones; create 12 acres of upland oak forest; and store stormwater controls at Gazzola Drive and Montauk Highway; provide 1.25 miles of nature trail and interpretive signage through the restored habitats; enhance 12 acres of kind of degraded forest; and remove all the dilapidated buildings and equipment remaining from the duck farm activities.

Some ecological benefits. As I mentioned, we try -- our target ecological conditions are something shown in that photo on the left, a red maple hardwood swamp with a stream meandering through it. In contrast, you have the nutrient rich algae covered shallow pond on the right hand side. So ecological goals of creating brook trout habitat, removing those accumulated sediments, which are a source of nutrients, especially nitrogen to the Great South Bay, and removing the earthen dams that disrupt the hydrologic functioning of the site.

In our places of our old duck feed lots, where you have invasive mugwort weeds, try to reestablish or set the site -- set the stage for development of an oak forest, typical to that shown in the photo on the left, and provide the wildlife and songbird habitat that our native oak forest provide. Also connect with existing oak forest to both the south, west and east of the project.

In stormwater controls, on both Gazzola Drive in the form of catch basins and a stormwater separator on Montauk Highway to remove road pollutants from -- prevent road pollutants from getting into the stream and to prevent pulses of stormwater from getting into Mud Creek.

Recreational. Those are kind of some of the ecological and environmental benefits. After these habitats are restored, it's envisioned that there will be public parking and a 1.25 mile nature trail, packed earth nature trail kind of shown at the bottom left, with interpretative exhibits like a kiosk on the upper right, a timber boardwalk through the wetland areas on the right center, and interpretive signage kind of shown on the lower right.

So at this stage we've developed 90% construction plans. Other kind of next steps to fulfill, the County SEQRA requirements, why we're here today to present the information about the project. It's supporting the resolution that you'll vote on later today. Finalize our construction plans and

specifications; finalize construction costs; complete the regulatory permitting. Applications have already been submitted to the DEC and Army Corp of Engineers. Complete monitoring programs and complete our final restoration report with the intention of being complete in early 2016. And so we'd be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Any questions. Legislator Krupski?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. So you're removing all the impoundments and how far down then would this water flow? Would it flow all the way directly to the bay? Would this provide like alwife habitat for spawning or there is still impediments further to the south.

DR. BOWMAN:

There's a dam at the downstream end of Robinson Pond that is a fish barrier for kind of upstream migration of alwives, but this will create more connection in the upper headwaters.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Who controls that dam?

DR. BOWMAN:

I believe that's --

MR. DAVIES:

South Country Road is a County road.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So would that be something that we would look at to either put a fish ladder in there or else remove that impediment?

MR. DAVIES:

I don't want to talk out of hand here, but I believe that there was a capital project involving some State funds that perhaps are still active. I'm not quite sure, but I don't want to talk about that. I'm not that familiar. Frank Castelli may have more information on that.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

It just seems like if you're going to go through this extent you might as well complete the habitat.

MR. CASTELLI:

Yeah. Frank Castelli, Economic Development and Planning. There is a DEC WQIP grant that was -- that was given to us years ago for a fish ladder at this -- at Robinson's Pond. It's just in the preliminary phase. Never has anything been done on it.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So, I mean, I'm not familiar with the area, so would this be -- if that were done, would this open up significant alwife spawning habitat? Because, I mean, it seems like if you did that one and you didn't do this, it would kind of -- it probably wouldn't be meaningful, but if you are going to go through this whole extent.

DR. BOWMAN:

Well, alwife is not a target species for this, but the point is correct. Improving fish passage at the downstream end of Robinson's Pond would open up some alwife spawning sites at the north end of Robinson's Pond. The -- I think the ecological merits of this can stand on their own independent of

whether or not alwives can also use Mud Creek, but getting alwife into the system would also be a good improvement to the entire function.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

You mentioned a hydrodynamic separator to filter the water as it comes off of Montauk Highway and some other road there.

DR. BOWMAN:

Yes.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

What kind of -- I'm not familiar with that. What kind of maintenance is that and what kind of water volumes can you handle with that?

DR. BOWMAN:

Well, it's been sized appropriately for the -- for the road surface area. One of the -- there's about a 45 acre kind of stormwater shed that drains -- at this point drains directly into Mud Creek. The stormwater vortex separator would filter out floatables, petroleum products, sediments, but it would not be able to -- it would not prevent -- we don't have enough space to collect and infiltrate all stormwater at the site before it gets into Mud Creek at Montauk Highway, so this -- the vortex separator will serve to improve the stormwater that's being discharged into Mud Creek, but it would not prevent that from happening. And it's been appropriately sized for that.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

This is in Brookhaven Town?

DR. BOWMAN:

Yes.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So there's a -- and just looking at the aerial map shows a lot of intense development, obviously you said 45 acre watershed, but there's got to be other contributing overland, you know, upland sources of stormwater that flow into this whole system.

DR. BOWMAN:

Yes. The 45 acre is shown here, so that's -- well, those are the lands that -- there are some impervious -- pervious -- outside lands that can also get into that area. Like this is addressing the drainage from the impervious surface.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Is there going to be like -- is there a comprehensive approach working with the town? I mean, they're an MS4 town, working with them to either throughout their own local code, and I don't know if they have one or not, or through their MS4 obligations, to take better care of their road runoff so it doesn't become contamination from an upland source.

MR. DE WITT:

Yes. Gazzola Boulevard, which bisects the site, Gazzola Drive I should say, is a town road had. It bisects the County Park. We've had presentations before the Town Board and town staff and the public, and it was indicated to us recently that a capital project for the stormwater improvements on Gazzola Drive would be included in their budget this year.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Okay. Thank you. I only have one more question. Why would the Army Corp of Engineers be a

permitting agency?

DR. BOWMAN:

Because we would be excavating out the organic sediments within the wetlands and around the flood plain. So once we're kind of working within the wetland boundary of a wetland that drains into a traditionally navigable water, we are in the jurisdiction of the Army Corp of Engineers. It's possible that this could be covered under one of the nationwide permits for stream and wetland restoration activities, but that's their discretion.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

It sounds like a stretch of their jurisdiction, though, where you would consider this navigable waters.

DR. BOWMAN:

No, this is not navigable, but there's certainly a significant ecological nexus, Supreme Court Justice's words, not mine. Because this drains into a traditional navigable waterway, the Army Corp jurisdiction follows upstream.

LEG. ALDEN:

Okay. Well, I just find that problematic. But, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Well, this looks like an exciting project, you know, especially to environmental advocates. For years I've been going to East Patchogue and would travel down the road and you'd see the remaining duck farms, which created quite a bit of pollution, you know, for that area and that community. And this will be a great project for revitalization for the area, you know, recreating nature is what's happening. I'm looking at a Google map and I'm looking at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge, and I can see it just complimenting the work that has been done there. So, you know, as far as the investment, the financial investment, I think it's going to be great for Patchogue, great for Bellport and, you know, working with environmentalists and trying to get those invasives, the phragmites and the mugwort. I'm just curious. What are some of the ways they're going to be working to remove those species?

DR. BOWMAN:

Well, both of them will be addressed through a combination of excavation, physical removal and then herbicide applications. So with this amount of -- with between 15 and 20 acres of invasives, herbicide application is a necessity. Although by removing the phragmites roots we hope to definitely minimize the use of the herbicides.

LEG. ANKER:

Yeah, and that's what Brookhaven National Lab had done to remove some of their phragmites that has been fairly invasive on their properties. And I do want to highly recommend, I recently worked with Long Island Native Plant Initiative, and thanks to grants that we provide for them, they create the native plant species for not-for-profits. So again, maybe they could possibly work with this restoration project, but I know they were very beneficial in an education program that I put together. Actually, we did a pilot garden this past week. So thank you for your work. I'm looking forward to the end product of this. Actually, there probably will be no end product because it will just keep evolving I'm hoping. So, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Any other questions from the committee? Okay. Seeing none, thank you very much.

DR. BOWMAN:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We can continue on the agenda, Tabled Resolutions.

Tabled Resolutions

Introductory Resolution 1403 - Authorizing the acquisition of land under the New Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program (effective December 1, 2007) - open space component - for the Tuccio property - Peconic River Greenbelt addition - Town of Riverhead - (SCTM No. 0600-128.00-03.00-049.000) (Co. Exec.). Hello, Laretta. Did you want to tell us about a CN? Do you want to do that before we go to this resolution?

MS. FISCHER:

Either way is fine. Whatever you wish to do.

MR. NOLAN:

You're mike is not on, Laretta.

MS. FISCHER:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Well, we called this one, so let's finish this one and then I'll let you tell us about that.

MS. FISCHER:

Okay. Fine. We would like to request that this acquisition, proposed acquisition, be tabled. I'll just give you a little background. The results of the Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment Reports, completed on June 22nd, stated that soils in the vicinity of the former underground storage tank were sampled and the test results revealed that elevated concentrations of certain hydrocarbons known as MPs, zylenes and 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene, were above the guidance values for these constituents. DEC was contacted to determine the proper course of action to remediate the site, and the owner of the property was notified of the situation and it was explained that they would be responsible for any required clean up of the site.

According to conversations held by the Suffolk County Division of Real Property and Acquisition and Management and the administrator of the estate of Pat Tuccio, Patricia Tuccio, the owner has been directed by DEC to conduct a soil and groundwater investigation. It is estimated that it will take two to three months before we have an answer to how much contamination exists and what remediation is required, if any, and the owner is in the process of waiting for proposals from companies to conduct the investigation.

It will take a certain amount of time to complete the investigation, and the sampling and analysis, as well as the DEC review and response, and this will more than likely add several month's more time until completed and reviewed again by DEC. So at this point we're just in a holding pattern waiting for information regarding the soil analysis and remediation work that would be completed by the owner.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. So, you know, I've been following this because this would -- this parcel would certainly provide really good access to Peconic River on West Main Street. It's a grass parcel. It's not environmentally sensitive in that it's been developed. It's certainly in the middle of a heavily developed area. It would provide safe waterfront access. So I thought it was interesting that the, and I took a look at the Phase I and the Phase II report, that they relied -- they relied on a fuel tank removal from back in the 40's as something that they should be investigating. I was wondering if, you know, if you know how the DEC currently conducts these investigations and how lengthy and intensive this investigation is going to be.

MS. FISCHER:

No, I don't know what the extent of their investigation will be. We are waiting to find out whether the owner, in fact, will -- when they will be conducting what they're required from DEC on the soil analysis. So, you know, we're waiting for their review of that information and then we can make a better determination as to what the extent of the soil contamination is and what will be required by them to remediate, if anything.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

If after that determination has been made and if remediation is necessary or not, so we would be still interested in acquiring this for waterfront access; correct?

MS. FISCHER:

Yes. Once they clean it up and all's good with DEC it should be, you know, remediated to their standards, and obviously that would be our standards, and we would like to pursue this, continue to pursue this acquisition being that it's on the Peconic River and it's in an area -- an important area for, you know, groundwater and surface water protection. So in acquiring the property we're acquiring it for passive recreational use or minimal additional use and we, you know, want to see those kinds of uses along the riverfront as well for access to an important river corridor in the County.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

That's encouraging, because this an ideal place for part of a green or blue trail system. Access to the water for the public is always important and so we'd hope we'd keep pursuing this.

MS. FISCHER:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I agree. I have noted in the past the importance of this parcel, you know, from my perspective as well. Of course rely on the Legislator from the district, but it really looks like a key connector for the public and that's very important. So we look forward to a speedy conclusion. But we will -- I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Seconded by Legislator Krupski. I'm sorry. Legislator Anker had a quick question.

LEG. ANKER:

I guess as far as remediation, can -- say the former owner didn't know there is contamination and he's willing to sell it to the County, can he go back to the former owner to address that issue, or is it up to the current owner to address the issue of remediation.

MS. FISCHER:

My understanding is that the current owner would be responsible. However, he may take legal means to, you know, go back to the former owner, but that's his discretion.

LEG. ANKER:

Because there's so many problems with past remediation, whether it's illegal dumping or like the Cohen from Lawrence Aviation that just did what he did and didn't think much about it. And I know we deal with this every day, you know, in trying to address this. And we had the Water Authority talking about, you know, preserving our water. But I was just curious how far back an owner can go to demand restoration, to -- again, I don't know what the legal situation would be, but has the County done that on former contaminated sites, gave funds to clean up?

MS. FISCHER:

We can look into that. I know that we're involved in the Lawrence Aviation site, but I don't know where it is.

LEG. ANKER:

And that's been going on for decades.

MS. FISCHER:

Yes.

LEG. ANKER:

I testified probably ten years ago at their public hearing, and it's still going on. And, you know, again, this is what's frustrating with these sites. We need to get them cleaned up. And, again, like our Legislators have said, this is another asset to the Town of Riverhead, just like the Mud Creek River Project that will increase the value and the benefit for East Patchogue, this, again, will help Riverhead. As I was driving through Riverhead recently in the past day or two, there's a lot of vacant sites along the river. Is the County looking to acquire some of those sites?

MS. FISCHER:

Yes, absolutely. A number of them are on our Master List and we are continuing to move forward in trying to get those acquired.

LEG. ANKER:

Great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Excellent. So we have a motion to table and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1403 is tabled. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1510 - Amending the Adopted 2015 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Fund 477 Water Quality Protection, amending the 2015 Capital Budget and Program, and appropriating funds in connection with the Village of Babylon Street Sweeping Program (CP 8710.516)(McCaffrey). I will make a motion to table. Seconded by Legislator Anker. All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. BARRAGA:

Opposed.

LEG. MURATORE:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Abstentions? It is tabled. *(VOTE: 3-2-0-0 - Opposed: Legislators Muratore and Barraga)*.
On to Introductory Resolutions.

MS. FISCHER:

Kara?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes. I'm sorry, Laretta. Oh, yes, the CN. Go ahead. Can you push the button one more time?

MS. FISCHER:

Got it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you.

MS. FISCHER:

Thank you. There will be a resolution coming before you as a CN to request accepting and appropriating funds from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This funding is approximately 1.156 million, which will cover the cost of acquiring 62 parcels in the Mastic/Shirley Conservation Area. The way we are structuring these acquisitions is NRCS will be buying the conservation to these -- conservation easement to these properties. The County will be buying the residual fee title, underlying fee title, and therefore the properties will become publicly owned.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

To remind everyone, we had been tabling for quite a long time a number of resolutions --

MS. FISCHER:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

-- put forward by Legislator Browning waiting for the National --

MS. FISCHER:

Natural Resource Conservation Service.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Their ruling on whether or not they would pay for these parcels, so we have an agreement where it's a large portion that they cover?

MS. FISCHER:

What they're covering is conservation easement.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay.

MS. FISCHER:

Separate from this. We're buying the underlying fee. They will also be paying for the soft cost of all these acquisitions, as well as the time spent for staff towards these acquisitions. We have requested \$1.156 million, about half for soft cost, half for staff cost. And we would like to move forward on these as soon as possible. We have a cooperative agreement in place with NRCS as we speak, and we'd like to start the process as soon as we can.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

So how much is for the acquisition of the land?

MS. FISCHER:

That will be separate and that will -- the cost of that is not determined yet. The appraisals will start once --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

The appraisals are part of the soft cost.

MS. FISCHER:

Exactly. And once we have that information together, we will be back for your final approvals.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Excellent. And do we have -- the landowners are aware of all this?

MS. FISCHER:

Yes. We've been in contact with them for over a year. We've reached out to them, and we will be in touch with them again to let them know in the next few weeks that we do have the ability to move forward and that's why we're requesting the CN.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Do you have a map of all the parcels, the 62 parcels for the -- when we address the CN at the General Meeting?

MS. FISCHER:

We can have that for you available.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. I see we have a question from Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So the proposal, you said 62 parcels?

MS. FISCHER:

Yes.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So we could buy one or we could buy 61 or we could buy 62, it's still the same program.

MS. FISCHER:

Correct.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Any other questions about the upcoming CN? Thank you for giving us a heads-up on that.

MS. FISCHER:

Thank you. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And I'm thrilled that we have a positive outcome after all that wait and time. I'm sure Legislator Browning will be happy as well.

MS. FISCHER:

Yes, I'm sure she will be.

Introductory Resolutions

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Introductory Resolution 1570 - Amending the Adopted 2015 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Fund 477 Water Quality Protection, amending the 2015 Capital Budget and Program, and appropriating funds in connection with Aquatic Habitat Restoration of Various Shellfish Species and Eelgrass in Bellport Bay (CP 8710.416)(Co. Exec.).

Motion by Legislator Anker. Seconded by myself. Do we have anyone who wants to come forward on this one? This was -- hi, Frank. The committee approved this?

MR. CASTELLI:

Frank Castelli, Economic Development and Planning. This is a project that was applied, water funding application was made by the Town of Brookhaven. This project was recommended by the Water Quality Review Committee during our meeting held on March 13th of this year. This is \$56,710 that is going to be fully matched by the Town of Brookhaven, and it's for aquatic restoration in Eastern Bellport Bay, oysters, scallops, hard clams and also eelgrass component, too. There will be some eelgrass restoration.

This is an exciting project in that it's going to be utilizing an area that has been recently open to seawater due to the breach in Fire Island caused by Super Storm Sandy. There is the new inlet at the location of Old Pikes Inlet, and there apparently has been some improvements in water quality in that region and the town is interested in trying to do some aquatic restorations there to take advantage of the improved water quality and also to see if there will be any benefits to that.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Thank you. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1577 - Amending the Adopted 2015 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Fund 477 Water Quality Protection, amending the 2015 Capital Budget and Program, and appropriating funds in connection with the Town of Shelter Island Legion Hall and Recreation Center On-Site Sanitary Waste Disposal System Project (CP 8710.329). (Co. Exec.).

I'll make a motion. Seconded by Legislator Anker. If you would like to give us a quick summary, Frank? Thank you.

MR. CASTELLI:

Sure. This is a project that was brought to us, to the Water Quality Committee, by the Town of Shelter Island. It's for a \$49,500 477 grant that will also be fully matched by the Town of Shelter Island. It's for an improved demonstration project, a wastewater -- an on-site wastewater treatment project at the Shelter Island's Legion Hall and Recreation Center. This is located near the center of Shelter Island. It's in an area where there is deep recharge to the groundwater and this project will be to install and improve -- to replace the existing on-site septic system with a more modern and environmentally friendly wastewater treatment, on-site wastewater treatment system.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Any questions? We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1577 is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1607 - Making a SEORA determination in connection with the proposed Mud Creek Watershed Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project, Town of Brookhaven(Pres. Off.).

I'll make a motion. Seconded by Legislator Anker. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1607 is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Oh, can I change that to make a motion to -- I'll make a motion to reconsider. Seconded by Legislator Anker. All those in favor of reconsidering? Opposed? Abstentions? It's now before us again. ***Introductory Resolution 1607***, I'm going to make a motion to approve and put on the Consent Calendar, ***Making a SEORA determination in connection with the proposed Mud Creek Watershed Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project, Town of Brookhaven(Pres. Off.).***

LEG. MURATORE:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Seconded by Legislator Muratore. All those in favor of approving and putting on the Consent Calendar? All those opposed? Abstentions? 1607 is approved and put on the Consent Calendar. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1608 - Making a SEORA determination in connection with the proposed Old Field Farm County Park Equestrian Sand Ring Construction Project, Town of Brookhaven (Pres. Off.). Same motion, same second, same vote. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1609 - Making a SEORA determination in connection with the proposed improvements to County Road 12, Oak Street from CR 1, County Line Road to Garfield Avenue, Town of Babylon, Village of Amityville(Pres. Off.).

Same motion, same second, same vote. 1609 is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**. Approved and placed on the consent calendar.

Introductory Resolution 1610 - Reappointing Philip Schmitt as a member of the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District(Krupski).

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Motion by Legislator Krupski for 1610. Seconded by Legislator Muratore. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1610 is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**. We already approved 1611 earlier.

Introductory Resolution 1637 - Amending the Adopted 2015 Operating Budget to transfer funds from Fund 477 Water Quality Protection, amending the 2015 Capital Budget and Program, and appropriating funds in connection with Hook Pond Watershed Stormwater Improvements (CP 8240.125/.336)(Co. Exec.).

I'll make a motion. Seconded by Legislator Anker. On the motion, Frank, if you want to give us just a quick review.

MR. CASTELLI:

Yeah. This is another one of our 2015 water quality grants. This is for \$46,375 that's going to be

fully matched by the Village of East Hampton. And this project will basically be various stormwater improvements for stormwater that's currently running into the Hook Pond in the Village of East Hampton. And there are several proposed -- several proposed remediation projects that will be put in as part of this project to treat the stormwater before it enters Hook Pond and ultimately gets discharged into the ocean. The pollutants to be remediated or to be addressed are phosphorus, nitrogen and also pathogens. They are proposing to put in several filtration devices on some of the stormwater drains and also to utilize bioswales areas where the stormwater has a chance to be --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Excellent. Good, good. Okay. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1642 - Adopting Local Law No. -2015, A Local Law to amend County regulation of nonnative invasive plant species. (Hahn).

This has to be tabled for a public hearing. I'll make a motion to table. Seconded by Legislator Muratore. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1642 is tabled. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Introductory Resolution 1659 - Establishing the Suffolk County Regional Planning Alliance Program(Lindsay).

I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Seconded by Legislator Krupski. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Any other business? There's no other business before us, then we will stand adjourned. Thank you.

(*The meeting concluded at 12:26 p.m. *)