

**GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, PERSONNEL, HOUSING
& CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

MINUTES

A meeting of the Government Operations, Personnel, Housing & Consumer Protection 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 May 3, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Robert Calarco, Chairman
Leg. William Spencer, Vice Chair
Leg. Kate M. Browning
Leg. Thomas Cilmi
Leg. Edward P. Romaine

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Robert Lipp, Deputy Director/Budget Review Office
Jill Moss, BRO
Joe Muncey, BRO
Benny Pernice, BRO
Samuel Chu, Commissioner/Labor Department
Ben Zwirn, County Executive's Office
Tom Vaughn, County Executive's Office
Richard Meyer, AME
Chris DeLuca, Aide to Leg. Cilmi
Paul Perillie, Aide to Leg. Gregory
Lora Gellerstein, Aide to Leg. Spencer
Amy Keys, Aide to Leg. Calarco
Kish J. Wright, Community Development Director
Roy Gross
Stephen Laton
Paul Llobell
Peter W. McClinchy
Tracy Fontana
Anne Astarita
Anne Spooner
Joanne Sassone
Thomas McCrone
Scott Stocker
Barbara Reuschle
Rena Walker

(CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE)

Michelle Curtin
Eileen McGraw
Jennifer Sano
Heidi Gaumet
Amanda Ericksen
Kimberly Anderson-Hansson
Gina Ciccone
Bonnie B-And
Maureen Hessian Fenekos
Gayle Bassi
Allen Fritz
Michael Watt
Owen Durney
Valerie Vericella-Cavuoto
Jenine Yannucciello
Raymond Moxo
Frank P. Castelli
Kathleen Malloy

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

Verbatim Transcript Prepared By:

Diana Flesher & Alison Mahoney, Court Stenographers

*(*The following testimony was taken & transcribed by
Diana Flesher - Court Reporter*)*

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:03 PM

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Good afternoon. We're going to get started in just a minute, as soon as we have everyone. If we could all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Kennedy.

SALUTATION

Nice to see a packed room for our Committee today. Thank you all for coming out. I know we have a lot of important issues on our agenda so I do appreciate it.

PUBLIC PORTION

We have a number of speakers who would like to speak. And I think that it would be best to start with them. So, we're going to go right into the Public Portion. My name first speaker is Roy Gross.

MR. GROSS:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I'm here to talk about the IR 1340. I would like to clarify some factual issues about the SPCA that was brought up at the last meeting April 19. It was represented to the Committee through the Committee as a fact that the Town Animal Control would investigate cruelty complaints. The Towns refer cruelty complaints to the SPCA. In order for them to have the power to bring criminal charges for acts of animal abuse, State legislation would have to be introduced for each jurisdiction to empower them as Peace Officers. Then they have to go through a minimum of 180-hour mandated training, which put a serious financial burden on the cash strapped Towns, who already are short personnel for fully staffed animal shelters.

Animal Control Officers work Monday through Friday, nine to five, and are generally not available after normal business hours to assist when called by the SPCA or the Police. To reiterate a point that was made, the only time indemnification would cover SPCA Peace Officers is when they are acting pursuant to their special duties. This is not a 24-hour blanket coverage. The control you have over the indemnification is that it could be revoked at any time with due notice given.

Information was given to you that the County gave SPCA a gift of \$175,000 mobile hospital in 2001. The SPCA had a contract, which I have with me, with the County to pick up dead birds throughout the County for three years and deliver them to the Health Department to be tested for the West Nile Virus. Besides volunteers, we had to hire a full-time employee to complete the enormous task.

The contract also required us to perform free Rabies clinics throughout the County, which we happily did, and continue to provide thousands of inoculations each year. These services were in kind to the mobile hospital.

On Tuesday April 24th, I was contacted by a freelance reporter, who said that an unnamed Legislator contacted him to advise him that the SPCA mislead the County by telling them that we were broke and needed money to pay for insurance. Nothing could be further from the truth. The SPCA was having a very difficult time obtaining liability insurance. At the last minute we were able to secure coverage, which cost us over \$40,000.

To clarify, I was personally contacted by then County Attorney Christine Malafi inquiring if \$25,000 would help pay for insurance in lieu of indemnification. We did not ask the County for money. It was offered and gratefully accepted. Legislator Cilmi can confirm this.

Our officers without indemnification are reluctant to make arrests or issue appearance tickets because they are fearful of losing their homes and savings. Not being indemnified puts them in a dangerous situation when they have to choose between making an arrest or protecting their assets.

I ask you to please consider these important points and vote in favor of granting us indemnification. Remember, we are the voice of the animals that cannot speak for themselves. A society that does not support its animal cruelty investigators supports animal abuse. Look at our record for 28 years. I'm proud to be part of the Suffolk County SPCA. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Gregory, you have a question.

LEG. GREGORY:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not a member of the Committee so thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. Gross, there was an article recently about a current lawsuit. I won't ask you about the specifics of it. I would just ask you in general, it's my knowledge that the County was not made aware of that lawsuit. Would that be the case? And if not -- and if so, are there any other pending legal matters that the County should be aware of that, as we go further to litigate or discuss this issue of indemnification?

MR. GROSS:

Well, obviously I can't discuss any matters about this current lawsuit, which we still have not seen or know about. It was presented to the attorneys. However, in the past, we've never in 28 years had to pay out a dime to any of the lawsuits that were brought against --

LEG. GREGORY:

Sir.

MR. GROSS:

This does not -- again, any lawsuits that we presently have do not have anything to do with any indemnification that you would go forward with at this time, of course.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. Thank you for not answering my question. My question was, are there any matters, legal, current lawsuits besides this one that was in Newsday the other day that we should be considering? I mean, you're coming to the County to say "we want you to indemnify us" but you're not fully disclosing potential matters, legal matters that can affect a decision pending that indemnification.

MR. GROSS:

Okay. I believe there is one other -- on a case.

LEG. GREGORY:

And I don't mean that we have to do this publicly. I think the word that I got was that the County was not made aware of it -- the County Attorney's Office was not made aware of it. I would suggest that those discussions be made so that everything is disclosed. We have to do it as a municipality. At any time we go out to our investors, I suspect that we want the same type of disclosure in this type of situation.

MR. GROSS:

Okay. Until we brought -- we did bring one to your attention, the one in 2009 when the Suffolk County Police executed a search warrant, I believe, it was a drug-related search warrant. And they came across a cock-fighting ring at that location. They made the arrest. They called us in, the

Suffolk SPCA only to remove the birds -- the fighting birds from that location. They were sued and we were sued along with them. And all we did -- had nothing to do with the arrest. All we did was remove the birds.

At that time we thought we had indemnification for the County. That's what brought this up. We have had indemnification -- in fact, we get a certificate every year saying that we are indemnified. What we didn't know was there's two separate indemnifications: One was to indemnify, which we're asking for again to get it back; the other one is when we're on County property, if we were doing anything like rabies clinics or any presentations or any shows, that that was a separate certificate. We got that certificate every year, assuming that was the same certificate for the full indemnification that we're asking for.

So, there is another reason why -- it's something that we didn't even have any action with other than taking the birds for the police that we were -- that we presently are being sued for. There is one other matter. I'm just -- do we have another lawsuit?

LEG. GREGORY:

Again --

MR. GROSS:

I don't think there's any other current lawsuits. I can check. I don't believe there are.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. All right. Thank you. There's a lot of speakers so I won't prolong this, but thank you.

MR. GROSS:

And I have copies of any of the -- you know, the background of what the SPCA has done, proclamations, certificates from Legislators. I have a copy of the contract. Anything that you would like to see, I'll be happy to show it to you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Our next speaker is Stephen Laton.

MR. GROSS: (Speaking off the mic)

We did contact you when we got the lawsuits. The County was contacted.

MR. LATON:

Good afternoon. I'm here to speak about resolution 1340. On May 4th, 1998 the Suffolk County SPCA arrested a man who was making grudge videos in which small animals were stomped to death. And the films were sold on the internet. Representative {Eaton Gallig} sponsored a bill after contacting us about our arrest. President Clinton then signed the federal law that targeted the sale of tapes depicting animal cruelty.

In 2010 President Obama revised and signed the law, the Animal Crush Video Prohibition Act. We have rescued hundreds of farm animals on several occasions, rescued animals from the homes of animal collectors, removed a black bear from a residential home, rescued a cougar that required extensive veterinary care. We removed leopards from a Dix Hills home which were endangering children.

We were at Ground Zero in 2001 for almost two months. We are instrumental in Busters Law for a teen who burned his own parakeet in 2003. Many cock and dog fighting cases are successfully prosecuted.

I might add that this morning at nine o'clock, we were contacted by Suffolk County Police to respond to a location in Port Jefferson Station where there were ten bloody pit bulls. That matter is under investigation now.

We've assisted police K-9 units in New York City during the Republican National Convention at the request of Suffolk Police. We prosecuted successfully Maximus, the dog that was burned alive. We've removed snakes, alligators, other dangerous --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Excuse me one moment. I'm being told our Fire Code, we need to have the doorways cleared. So you can either -- try to file in and please find a seat if it's available. I know this is an important day for a lot of people, but, please, we need to have the fire ways open. Thank you. Continue, Mr. Laton. Sorry.

MR. LATON:

We've removed snakes, alligators and other dangerous reptiles from locations in Suffolk County. We were in place, the K-9 units at the US Open in 2008, 2009. We successfully prosecuted with the District Attorney's Office the Sharon McDonough case where dogs were buried in the backyard at her home in Selden.

Our officers are required to take an Oath of Office by the State of New York. We have a seat at the Suffolk County Emergency Operation Center. We have a seat on the Suffolk County Terrorism Response Task Force.

We are always available for emergencies; and have responded to the gas leak in Shirley, wildfires in 1995 and 2012, Flight 587 crash in Belle Harbor. We maintain the animal abuser and dog bite registries for the County of Suffolk. I ask you to support this resolution, please.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Our next speaker is Peter McClinchy. Peter McClinchy? And following Peter is Tracy Fontana.

MR. McCLINCHY:

Good afternoon. My name is Pete McClinchy. I'm here to speak about resolution 271. To the Legislators who voted no for the resolution, 271, I thank you. To the Legislators who voted yes to the resolution, I ask you to please reconsider.

I have been an employee in Sanitation Engineering Department in the Suffolk County Department of Public Works for nearly 15 years as a draftsman. I am not an original -- I was not an original person on the layoff list. I was informed by -- I was informed my position was swapped out. My position was fully funded in the 2012 budget. My salary is 100 percent paid out of Sewer Fund 261 and not the General Fund. I am the only draftsman in the Division. A draftsman is a support position to the engineers in the Department. The duties I perform are a necessary function of the Division. I have spoken to Commissioner Anderson and he was in agreement with that -- in agreement that it would cost the County more to contract out my position.

In the past retirement incentives, August 2010, fund 61 was rescinded. The reason stated was the General Fund money was not used to pay salaries or operational costs. In laying off any members of Sewer Fund 61, the County would continue to draw in the same amount of tax dollars to that fund, but at a detriment in the form of service reduction to the taxpayer. This is a detriment without the added benefit of reducing costs to the General Fund.

I ask you, again, to please reconsider this budget cut. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

LEG. ROMAINE:

Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Yes, Legislator Romaine. Mr. McClinchy, Legislator Romaine has a question for you.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Peter, I have a question for you; a couple questions. You're paid out of Sewer District funds; is that correct?

MR. McCLINCHY:

Yes, that's correct.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Eliminating your position will not save the General Fund or this County one cent; is that correct?

MR. McCLINCHY:

You are correct.

LEG. ROMAINE:

The only thing that it's going to do is affect the sewer districts that you serve?

MR. McCLINCHY:

Absolutely.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Are you the only draftsman for the sewer districts?

MR. McCLINCHY:

Yes, I am.

LEG. ROMAINE:

So, this layoff will not save the County one penny. I want to make that point because there were a number of layoffs in the proposed layoff list, of which I have yet to receive a copy as of today.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Romaine, I believe a copy is attached to the resolution that we voted on.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I understand that list is changing as we speak. My question is, are you aware that there are a number of people that work for the sewer districts, a separate taxing municipality, that were laid off that will not save this County one penny of which you are one. Are you aware of that?

MR. McCLINCHY:

Yes.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Tracy Fontana. And the next speaker is Anne Astarita.

MS. FONTANA:

Good afternoon. My name is Tracy Fontana. I'm currently a Police Operations Aide assigned to both Marine Bureau and Emergency Services. I am one of the four PO Aides whose jobs are on the recently approved layoff list. Although PO Aides have been working within precincts for years, my job was created two years ago as part of civilianization with the sole purpose to remove a Police Officer from a desk and have him or her be back on patrol for better street presence.

With these projected layoffs, it defeats that entire purpose. Now my job is being replaced by an officer making minimum three times my salary to man the desk rather than be patrolling the beach on a busy summer afternoon or the roadways during rush hour traffic when accidents most occur.

The recent retirement incentive given by the PBA surpassed the number of retirements need to save the 38 rookies in the Police Academy. Just one salary of an officer that retired equals the salary of us four newer PO Aides. Our Police Department is already short staffed attempting to do so much more with less. With an estimated 80 cops now retired, only 38 are being brought on. And with the removal of my job amongst the other three positions, it takes additional officers off the patrol. That doesn't leave many to do the job of protecting and serving the citizens of Suffolk County. With the abolishment of my position within these two specialized commands, overtime will definitely be generated. And what police officers will be paid on overtime for both tours, it will total more than that of my two weeks pay.

I believe like the PBA, we need an incentive, an incentive to have those who have worked hard for many years and are ready for retirement make their own choice to retire now. Although those of us who have been -- allowing those of us who have been working with the County for such a small amount of time with much lower salaries the chance to make a career for ourselves. At 28-years-old, not only am I a Suffolk County employee but a Suffolk County resident and a Suffolk County taxpayer. My generation is the future of Suffolk County. And now my future includes unemployment. Thank you for your time.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Anne Astarita.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Excuse me, Mr. Chairperson. I have a question for the last speaker.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

You have a question or a statement?

LEG. ROMAINE:

A question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay, please keep it to a question. Miss Fontana.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Are you aware that Legislator Kennedy and other Legislators, myself included, are sponsoring the resolution entitled 1453 to offer the same retirement incentive benefits that were offered to the PBA,

the Detectives and the Superior Officers to everyone else?

(APPLAUSE)

Which will be voted on today. Which will be voted on today.

(APPLAUSE)

MS. FONTANA:

I have heard that there was a possible incentive, but nothing that has been approved yet. I heard there's been back and forth, battles about it. But I think it would be a great idea, you know, allow somebody who's ready to go after working hard for 30 years to have the option to leave and leave on their own accord; and let someone like me who's trying to establish themselves stay around.

(APPLAUSE)

LEG. ROMAINE:

Thank you very much. That vote will be taken today.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Anne Astarita.

MS. ASTARITA:

My name is Anne Astarita. I'm a Police Operation Aide for the Police Department Marine Bureau. First, I believe that when I was hired two years ago, it was to benefit the County and save money at my pay rate compared to a police officer. This job is my livelihood. I support myself and my home. Honestly, if I lost my job right now, I would probably lose my home. I was one of the 315 to be played off. And my job prospects would look bleak and my future would be bleak.

I have two thoughts on the issue. I know there's a bill right now regarding the early retirement incentive for our union. I am in full support of that bill. And it would benefit those who are ready to retire and also benefit those who want to continue to work.

Secondly, I would be willing to also participate, if it was needed, in a lag pay scenario, that the whole Suffolk County collectively shared, would participate to save the jobs. And I hope that this incentive program or the lag pay would help us all keep our jobs. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Anne Spooner followed by Thomas McCrone.

MS. SPOONER:

Chairman Calarco and members of the Committee, good afternoon.

May I submit to you a copy of my testimony? My name is Anne Spooner. And I am a Safety Officer in the Department of Public Works Sanitation Division. My title is one that is listed to be eliminated at the end of June. I work primarily out of the Bergen Point Sewage Treatment facility, which is entirely paid for through sewer district funds.

But I help service all Suffolk County's other wastewater treatment facilities in over 20 other districts. I am currently the only instructor certified to train Public Works Sanitation employees in CPR, AED use and First Aid. It took a year-and-a-half before I could attend the training program necessary to acquire this certification. With my new certification in hand, our office has spent many thousands of dollars in training equipment and additional AED devices for facility buildings. I can now teach all employees on the proper use of these devices. This insures the safety of our fellow workers as well

as a number of general public who often visit our facilities. Some of these visitors also include students on field trips. We are a safer place because of the work that I do. For sure these AED devices are useless without the properly trained personnel to use them.

Since becoming Safety Officer, I have become an instructor of classes such as hazard communication, also known as the right to Noah, control of hazardous energy, known as lock out/tag out and confined space entry. Employees are required to be trained yearly basis according to OSHA standards on the hazards of their workplace. These trainings are simply not optional. And with my experience in teaching, I was a certified teacher before I joined the County, the personnel receives excellent and comprehensive instruction.

Scheduled this summer at Bergen Point are a number of upgrades to its facility. These upgrades are significant enough to require safety personnel to be on-site at all times. If my position is abolished, that leaves only two possible Safety personnel to be on-site. Combined with the scores of additional safety needs, including training, this will be safety dangerously understaffed. I've made this case to others and I'm often told that these layoffs do, indeed, hurt the affected departments badly. But understaffing the Safety Office doesn't so much hurt the remaining employees as it does have the great potential of hurting the personnel who are under-trained and the larger community the facility is within if a preventable on-site accidents occurs. It should also be noted that the sewage treatment industry is one of the most dangerous in the Country next to coal mining.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.
I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

*(*The following testimony was taken by Diana Flesher &
Transcribed by Alison Mahoney - Court Reporters*)*

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:
Thank you, Ms. Spooner.

Applause

Next up is Thomas McCrone. And Mr. McCrone is followed by Scott Stocker.

MR. McCRONE:

Good afternoon. My name is Tom McCrone, I work as a courier for the Department of Public Works. When I was hired four years ago we had six couriers; as of today we have three. The County is already getting twice the work for half the pay, and two of us are being laid off on June 30th. I don't think you or the County Executive realizes the impact this will have on you or the citizens of Suffolk County.

DPW couriers are unique in the respect that we don't just service DPW, we services 90 County offices daily. Three of us cover over 500 square miles a day. We pick up incoming U.S. Mail from four U.S. Post Offices every single day; this includes but is not limited to every County office in the H. Lee Dennison Building, the North County Complex, the Cohalan Court Building, the Riverhead County Center and the Yaphank Complex. We deliver over one million pieces of incoming United States Postal mail a year. We pick up and post over 750,000 pieces of outgoing mail a year. This is not including the inner departmental mail that we pick up, sort and deliver; those numbers would easily double. We also deliver almost all of the County Print shop -- print jobs done by the County Print Shop.

Let me ask you a few questions. What will you tell the senior citizens who have no heat because they did not get their HEAP application, or how the parent of a disabled child who is waiting for services?

Applause

We are broke, yet how will the County pay fines for late payments and legal actions? How will the attorneys waiting for over nighted paper work proceed to court without it? How will the Sheriff's Department comply with 24-hour mandatory notifications on evictions and incoming executions if we have no one to pick up and process their mail on time? How will Civil Service notify people taking exams where to go if those letters don't get out on time, or maybe how will you notify more County employees that they are being laid off without us to post those letters on time?

Applause

Three DPW couriers do all this and then some? We are already doing much more with much less; you cannot expect even more with even less. I have a wife and an eight-year old son. I own a home in Mastic. My County line taxes are approximately \$50 a year. If you raise them 100%, I could still manage.

Applause

Cutting my job will not make a dent in the \$500 million budget gap, yet it will devastate my family and quite possibly cripple many offices in this County. My job includes every aspect of this County's mail system. I come to work every day and proud to say that I do a good job. Part of your job includes balancing the budget; you have failed and I have lost my job. What is the answer to that?

Applause & Cheers

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Scott Stocker. And Mr. Stocker is followed by Barbara Reuschle.

MR. STOCKER:

Hello. My name is Scott Stocker and I work for the Parks Department as an auditor. My position is included among those to be abolished on June 30th. My position was never in the Parks Department budget prior to 2005. It was created in response to a scathing Comptroller's audit released in 2004 indicating a complete lack of fiscal controls in oversight, over \$10 million in revenues generated by the Parks Department. Then Commissioner Ron Foley was the perfect man to address these massive problems. He was a former New York State Regional Parks Director who had implemented strict fiscal oversight for New York State when they encountered massive fraud in their Parks Department. Commissioner Foley complimented the Suffolk County Comptroller's Department for their exhaustive and thorough audit and was in complete agreement with their findings, of which there were over 85.

The Parks Department, to address the need for separation of duties and fiscal oversight, created three Auditor and one Accountant positions in June, 2005. The Comptroller's department accepted these hirings as an acceptable measure to address the complete lack of controls within the department. These positions were create through legislation authorized by the Suffolk County Legislature, as they, too, saw the obvious need for Parks to get their house in order.

Over the last two years, concluding with the abolishment of the two audit positions, this June 30th Parks will have eliminated all four of the financial positions created for fiscal oversight. The department will have reverted back to the State of no fiscal oversight and no separation of duties. I understand that there is a fiscal crisis, but is it prudent to take every single lock off the hen house to tempt employees, patrons and concessionaires? This certainly seems to be penny-wise and

pound-foolish.

Applause

In the long run, this exposes the Parks Department and the County to massive fraud and the loss of valuable revenues. I do not believe that neither the Legislature nor the Comptroller's Department were advised that the Parks Department was eliminating the last of these positions designed for fiscal oversight. Would the Legislature or the Comptroller's Department have agreed to place \$10 million of revenue at risk if asked by Parks prior to their complying their layoff list? I think not.

This is why I believe this whole process needs to be redone and redone correctly. Legislating the abolishment of jobs is probably the most painful job the Legislature has. But why was this done with so little Legislative oversight? As we see the stories unfold after only one week, jobs funded by State and Federal monies, we see a multitude of unforeseen consequences caused by this layoff list. Even the County Executive's secretary ended up on this list. However --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Mr. Stocker, your time is up. If you could please wrap up.

MR. STOCKER:

My biggest question here, though, was why the layoffs are the first and only option considered. I know for a fact many employees would take early retirements, we would consider furloughs, another lag, mandatory furloughs, and I know employees would take voluntary four-day work weeks for a year to save the jobs of their fellow employees. Why weren't these measures considered?

Applause & Cheers

The financial -- to conclude, the financial impact of all of the above are certainly greater than the savings incurred by abolishing 315 positions, and you can avoid the personal and community destruction that comes with these layoffs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Mr. Stocker. Next speaker is Barbara Reuschle; I'm sorry, Barbara, if I'm mispronouncing your name. Followed by Rena Walker.

MS. REUSCHLE:

Hello. My name is Barbara Reuschle, I'm currently the Senior Auditor in the Parks Department. I'm one of the two remaining titles that are slated for layoffs at this -- in June.

Nine years ago, in 2003, there were no accountants or auditors in the Parks Department. A cashier supervisor at a popular beach-front park was able to steal hundreds of thousands of dollars without detection. During the investigation of this supervisor, an additional thief was uncovered. The Comptroller's Office stepped in and conducted several audits; the results of just two of these audits included 106 findings and recommendations. The Commissioner at the time, a former Regional Director of New York State Parks System, spoke to the Parks & Cultural Affairs Committee. The committee wanted to know what changes would be implemented to prevent further misappropriation in the department.

The Commissioner had a two-pronged approach. Part one included a significant upgrade from recording revenue on paper receipts to the installation of a computer-based point-of-sale system. Part two was the department needed to add auditors and accountants to the staff. Both the staff and the point-of-sale were added.

There were two major themes in the Comptroller's audit reports. One was a lack of written

procedures in the Parks Department that would provide internal control guidance. The second theme was the lack of segregation of duties in the West Sayville operations in the accounting unit and out in the parks. The point-of-sale, while a significant improvement over paper receipts, can only partially address these two issues. An auditor is needed to address point-of-sale system control weaknesses of which there are many, and to provide oversight and compensating controls for the lack of segregation of duties as well as to constantly assess areas of high risk to be audited and to carry out those audits.

Earlier this year, both vacant and filled positions were abolished in the department. One vacant position was an Auditor title; one filled position was that of Accountant. The current layoff list includes the two remaining Auditor titles. The Parks Department will no longer have an Auditor on staff, and it will have only one Accountant who's responsible for the incompatible duties of custody of cash, which means wire transfers; will be preparing the documents to record the cash and revenue in the accounting system and will perform the bank reconciliation which is an oversight function, the oversight on themselves.

I have two questions. Does the Legislature really want to eliminate the audit function in the Parks Department, turning the clock back to 2003 when the thefts occurred? And do you really want to reverse the positive steps taken to provide oversight of the ten million in revenue taken in by the Parks Department? That's it.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Next speaker is Rena Walker. And Ms. Walker is followed by Michelle Curtin.

MS. WALKER:

Hi. My name is Rena Walker and I've been a Nurse Practitioner at the Riverhead jail for five years. I work the three to PM -- 3 PM to 11 PM shift five nights a week, and my fellow practitioner, Alice, works the other two nights, 3 PM to 11 PM, and both our positions have been abolished.

I want to know -- I want to let you know how this is going to impact the jail medical care, medical population. Every evening during the week we receive all the new patients from central booking and every single precinct around Long Island. We get anywhere from 25 to 65 new inmates a night. Many of them come in with very serious medical needs. We get cardiac patients, diabetics, we get patients who are amputees, HIV+, Hepatitis, not to mention the patients who are alcohol and drug addicted and who are withdrawing, which can be deadly.

Our patients are a very sick part of the population. Many of them have not gotten adequate medical care on the outside, either due to lack of insurance or lack of the no-how and psychosocial problems that they have. More than once we've diagnosed patients early and prevented further illness, further injury and further money spent on them. If you diagnose hypertension early and treat it, you prevent heart attacks, cardiac disease, stroke. If you diagnose diabetes and treat it early, you prevent dialysis patients in the future and strokes and heart attacks. When we bring these patients in that are incarcerated, we are mandated to care for them medically. You cannot incarcerate someone and then tell them they cannot get ample medical care. Without nurse practitioners, practitioners on the 3-11 shift, we cannot amply take care of these patients. I see myself at least sometimes 30 patients a night, if not more. And then the injuries, the traumas, patients with seizures, accidents that happen during night at the jail. There will be no practitioner on that shift. Lately, our Medical Director has decided that we need even more than one in the evening and they've actually hired a per diem to come and help out in the evening because we're inundated.

I'm not saying I'm not replaceable, I know I am, and I'm really not even here to advocate for my particular job; I will survive, I've survived worse in the past. But I am advocating for the position of

a 3 to 11 Practitioner every night at the jail. It is a necessary part of the treatment there. If we do not have treatment, early intervention and care of these patients, it's going to lead to injury, death and lawsuits for the County. And it will happen, it will happen, mark my words.

Applause

I know that many people may say, "Well, these are inmates, they've been locked up." Any of us here could have a family member, a friend or ourselves could be locked up at some time or another for DUI, for domestic altercations. They're not all murderers and rapists that are in the jail, okay? They are human beings and they are allowed to have their rights.

The Eighth Amendment of the Constitution reads, "*Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment.*" You lock somebody up and then you tell them he or she cannot get adequate medical care, that is cruel and unusual punishment. And if you don't think that people are going to pick up on it, they are and it's going to lead to many -- much injury, much death and County lawsuits.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Ms. Walker, your time is up. If you could please wrap up.

MS. WALKER:

Excuse me?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Your time is up. Thank you very much.

Applause

Michele Curtin followed by Eileen McGaw.

MS. CURTIN:

My name is Michele Curtin, I'm one of the Directors of Second Chance Wildlife Rescue here in Suffolk County. We're an animal rescue organization that's here to support the Suffolk County SPCA. And we have many, many organizations, animal rescue organizations here that serve Suffolk County, but none of them are at all like your SPCA.

They are the only animal organization that has the authority and the training to investigate animal cruelty crimes and to facilitate arrests for the people that are horribly neglecting and abusing the animals that we then rehabilitate and rehome.

We, for one, work with them on a very regular basis, sometime due to our special licensing. We are State and Federally licensed to deal with exotic animals and to deal with wild life. So the alligators and the bulls and the snakes and the things that you hear on TV and see in the press that are being confiscated that have been obtained illegally or that have been abused often come to our rescue for rehabilitation. The indemnification is so important for their agents so that they can operate and they're instrumental in operating in allowing that agency to perform in the way it was organized to help prevent, stop and prosecute people that are doing horrible, horrible things. And our organization for one would be very affected if they could not operate in the capacity that they do.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Eileen McGaw, and she is followed by Jennifer Sano.

MS. McGAW:

Good afternoon. I am here to speak about -- good afternoon. I'm here to speak in terms of early

intervention services. I'm here because we have a staff of four people who will be leaving as well as revenue. I have --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Ms. McGaw, if you could just hold one second for me. Again, I'm sorry, but I have to ask that you clear the doorways. It's a fire code, we must have the doorways clear. Thank you. Please continue.

MS. McGAW:

I had been involved in early intervention services for 40 years, and I think I wanted to share with you how early intervention services came to the Health Department. Originally, back in the early 70's and 80's, Suffolk County was fitting big bills and services were being decided upon by outside agencies who would save families and children, they would decide upon the services and the bill went to Suffolk County.

In the late 80's, as a parent, I served on an advisory board with both agency, physicians and psychologists, and it was decided that those children who were coming from hospitals and those parents who were stressed because they had children with special needs, they belonged in the Health Department. So the Health Department then hired people, Service Coordinators who came from the outside agencies who had the knowledge and the expertise to know what services would be appropriate, what services would be financially okay for that child and that family and for the County.

In addition to looking at their expertise, we wanted to serve and empower and teach our parents so that down the road the school districts, the 3-5 Program, which is also paid for by Suffolk County, would have less of a financial burden. In 1995, we had 2,392 referrals with a staff of 40 Early Intervention Experts. In 2011, we had 3,695 referrals with a staff of 24. We were a revenue-making agency, the Health Department and Early Intervention, because we had the ability, when we were a staff of 30, to be able to bill many of the mandated services that were required by New York State, as well as by Medicaid. We at one point were bringing in a half of million dollars of revenue. However, as the staff diminished and as the pediatricians -- and Dr. Spencer, I love the fact that you are very involved taking care of many of the children on my caseload, and we are now seeing pediatricians and doctors, we are seeing babies who are surviving at a pound and a half. So we are looking --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Ms. McGaw, your time is up. If you could wrap up, please

MS. McGAW:

I will. So in response, I just want to say that we received an e-mail from our County Executive saying how important early intervention was, and I think that you need to be aware of how important it is to the children of Suffolk County.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Jennifer Sano. Ms. Sano, you're followed by Heidi Gaumet.

MS. SANO:

Hi. My name is Jennifer Sano, I'm a credentialed alcohol and substance abuse counselor for New York. I work at the methadone clinic next door. On Friday I found out that I was getting laid off. Actually, my job is being replaced by a person who has been with the County longer than me but isn't even credential or licensed to do my job.

I know that you guys are aware of the epidemic that is going on in the County and nationwide with

heroin, prescription pills. You know, you're not just taking away my job from me, you're taking away the stability that I have worked with with my 46 patients, with the 250 that attend that clinic next door. You know, we have a face. You know, we're providing a service to the people who probably most don't want anything to do with. Little do maybe some of you know that some of the people who attend over at that clinic, they're taxpayers, too. They work, they contribute to society because of the service that I and my coworkers who came here today with me provide to them. You're ripping --

Applause

The justification that I'm being told to leave my job because of the amount of years I have in I think is just completely ridiculous. I have never seen any single person sitting at this board come into my office and see the work that I and my coworkers do. You need us. You need me.

Applause

It's kind of funny, I actually wrote my speech here on my exit letter notice.

*(*Laughter*)*

Just please, if not for myself but maybe for the other seven drug counselors that have gotten layoff letters as well, what happens to the patients? What happens when we're not there to take care of them? Where do they go, back on the streets? In jail? That's no contribution to this County. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Heidi Gaumet. Heidi? Ms. Gaumet? Followed by Amanda Ericksen. And if you could, just please make sure you speak right into the microphone so that the people out in the lobby can hear you as well.

MS. GAUMET:

Good afternoon. My name is Heidi Gaumet and I'm speaking in support of the SPCA on behalf of the Kent Animal Shelter in Calverton.

When we were made aware of this issue, we were told that the County was going to rely on shelters in Suffolk County for cruelty cases. We are a private, non-profit shelter and if included in this, we do not have the manpower or the money or the training to handle these types of calls. We rely on the SPCA to report cruelty cases we've become aware of and refer people to them several times each week. I personally, and I know all the people I work with, admire the officers who answer these calls. They see the worst of the worst, things you and I cannot ever imagine, and do it for no other reason than being a voice for those who have no voice, the animals, and to think they do this voluntarily makes me admire them even more. It would be a terrible disservice to the animals of Suffolk County to not renew the SPCA's indemnification. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Amanda Ericksen, followed by Kimberly Anderson-Hansson.

MS. ERICKSEN:

Good afternoon. Am I doing this right? Sorry, a little nervous. My name is Amanda Ericksen and both my husband and I will be laid off from the Health Department as of July 1st. I presently work

as a Clerk Typist for Preventive Medicine, even though I possess a Master's Degree in School Counseling.

While my job is very important to my family unit, I came here today to fight for my husband who's presently at this moment drilling a water well in Bohemia as a Heavy Equipment Operator in the Environmental Quality Well Drilling Division helping keep Suffolk County's water safe for our residents. My message is brief and I'm here to ask you to save my husband's job, as it will save my family unit and also protect the drilling water of Suffolk County.

As previously stated before, I'm also 28-years old and I'm the future of Suffolk County, but only if you let me. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Kimberly Anderson-Hansson followed by Gina Ciccone.

MS. ANDERSON-HANSSON:

My name is kimberly Anderson-Hansson and I currently live in Manorville. As a lifelong Suffolk County resident, I am well aware of the current financial difficulties facing the County. I am deeply concerned about the help the Legislators are contemplating giving the Suffolk County SPCA; this help is in the form of indemnification.

In my opinion, this is too risky a proposition for the County to contemplate.

Recently I have read about several lawsuits facing the Suffolk County SPCA; one is for \$25 million. To my knowledge, the SPCA only has insurance coverage of two million. I do not want my tax dollars to be used to bail out a private company with significant legal problems. I think that there are better ways to use Suffolk County's money than to help a private company that may have overstepped their bounds.

Early this week I read in Newsday and saw on TV that the Suffolk County SPCA was served with a Federal Civil Rights lawsuit in which they are accused of abusing their Police power on private citizens. I am not only a taxpaying citizen of Suffolk County, but I am an animal owner. I would not like the SPCA playing cop with me or my family. This alleged abuse of power, if true, is very, very scary.

I also know that Suffolk County recently purchased a \$175,000 MASH Unit for the SPCA. This leads me to wonder why a company with nearly \$1 million in the bank should have a nearly bankrupt County use taxpayer money to not only pay their insurance but also buy them an expensive vehicle. I believe that Suffolk County does not need to take on this risk and simply cannot afford to take on this risk. My question for the Legislature today is why should my tax dollars be used to help a private company with looming legal issues that present them with the possibility of a payout far greater than their insurance policy provides. Suffolk County does not need this risk and, quite frankly, cannot afford this risk. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Gina Ciccone. Gina is followed by -- the name I have here looks like Band. Gina, please, go on.

MS. CICCONE:

Yes. Good afternoon. I don't have a speech prepared today and I am going to speak from the heart. I'm a Psychiatric Social Worker, I work for the Department of Health, Community -- Division

of Community Mental Hygiene. I am one of the five Psychiatric Social Workers that works for the division that is going to be laid off on June 30th.

I want to just inform all of you, because I can really only speak about my daily activities and what my job consists of on a daily basis. Four years ago I was hired as a Psychiatric Social Worker and I was honored to be placed in the Suffolk County Drug Treatment Court Program located in the Cohalan Court Complex. On a daily basis, I am responsible, with my coworkers, for providing vital services to the community.

The Psychiatric Social Workers that work in our division, as well as all of the staff at the Suffolk County Drug Treatment Program, are in the business of protecting the community. Every day we work with the addicted populations of individuals in Suffolk County. As you know, the heroin and opiate addiction has negatively impacted our community in more ways that we can discuss in this forum. I am responsible for making the initial contact with a participant who is being considered for either the Criminal Drug Court in District Court or the Family Treatment Court Program. And what that entails is the District Attorney and the Judge, they identify people who are good candidates for the Drug Court Program, and it is my responsibility to perform the initial evaluation to determine whether these people can be considered for the Drug Court Program. I provide that service. It's a psychosocial assessment.

I have a license by the State of New York. I am a clinical -- a license Clinical Social Worker and we do an assessment to determine eligibility, clinical eligibility for the program. I provide that service to Family Treatment Court who work with people who have been -- who have an active CPS case, they are -- they have substance abuse issues, and we determine whether or not they can participate in the program and what the treatment recommendations are for them. We prepare a report and we provide that to the court, and in that report is a life history; we detail their substance abuse and addiction issues and we make treatment recommendations to the Court.

I want to say that this service is vital to the future of the Suffolk County Drug Court, and also to the community. I think it's important before, you know, you -- you really make -- you really consider the fact that if the services that I provide and those that my fellow Psychiatric Social Workers provide in the Division of Community Mental Hygiene are no longer available, what will happen to the most vulnerable and at-risk members of our community? Most of the participants that we serve on a daily basis are approximately 18 to 26 year opiate addicts in this community. We prevent, if they come in --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Ms. Ciccone, your time is up. If you could please wrap up.

MS. CICCONE:

Okay. I just want to say it costs \$250 a day to incarcerate a person in Suffolk County. If we can prevent even ten people from being incarcerated on a monthly basis because they come into the Suffolk County Drug Treatment Court Program, if you do the math, you can see that we are not burdening the County by paying our salaries. We are saving the County money. We are --

Applause

Psychiatric Social Workers, also their services are billable in the County clinics. So we generate revenue for the County. We save lives. We are in the business is of public safety by doing the work that we do. Thank you very much.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Band, B-And from Shirley?

BONNIE:

Oh, that's me, Bonnie.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Bonnie.

BONNIE:

Hello again.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Thank you, Bonnie. After Bonnie is Maureen Hesskin Fenekos.

BONNIE:

Okay, now I have it. Can you hear me? Okay. Hello, everybody.

I'd like to ask once again for your attention. The word *layoff* kind of just gets put out there and I just want to give you a little bit of insight to what that actually means to people. I'd like to address this also to Steve Bellone, I hope he's listening. I hope word gets back to him.

My husband spent three years trying to secure steady employment; he was employed as an electrician. He retrained and tried to find steady work as a medical assistant. Cutbacks, once again, put him back in unemployment. He is certified and volunteers as an EMT and tried to find work in that field, but once again, the applicants are countless and the positions are few. For years we woke up in the morning, if we were lucky enough to sleep, came out of that groggy state and realized he doesn't have a job. The panic overtakes your mind and your body, and then soon after that the haze of the day begins.

The ramifications of his unemployment persist in our lives today. His attempts at finding employment were tireless. He spent three hours on a line with hundreds of other unemployed men to try and get -- secure the one position available as a grave digger. He spent days in Home Depot and Lowe's parking lot handing out resumes to sympathetic contractors who explain that they had cut back their force and they were the ones that were working with maybe two helpers. Hours were spent on the computer scanning the various employment sites filling out applications which could take hours per position. He put up a good face for me because I was falling apart, but I knew inside he was crumbling.

I was lucky enough to remain employed for Suffolk County. Going to work every day pretending everything was fine was quite a challenge.

I shared my situation with close friends, but the people I work with didn't know what was going on. I've heard about post-traumatic stress disorder; now I live it. He has finally found a job making much less than he used to; no medical benefits, no retirement benefits, long hours of work for very little pay. He continues tirelessly seven days a week working and continuing his education for critical care certification. He turns 55 this year; possibly the clock is running out.

Now we are faced with a County Executive and Legislature whose idea of leadership is to send hundreds of people out into this economy. As we lose our jobs and become part of the nation's exorbitant unemployment statistics, we become part of our nation's medically uninsured. We add to the foreclosure statistics and we visit the depleted soup kitchens. We tell our children they cannot further their education, nor can they go to the doctor because we just cannot afford it anymore. We, the taxpayers, American citizens, cannot survive in our own country; this is tyranny, not democracy. Irresponsible leadership cannot be tolerated anymore, not in any branch of our government. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Bonnie. The next speaker is Maureen Hesskin-Fenekos; I'm sorry if I mispronounced your name. And she is followed by Gayle Bassi.

MS. HESSION-FENEKOS:

Hi. My name is Maureen-Hession Fenekos. I work at the North County Methadone Clinic. The proposal to sell methadone to a privatization -- to privatize methadone is a mistake. In the wake of an opiate heroin prescription drug epidemic, we are doing a disservice to the patients we serve. Not only do we address their addiction issues, but their health of HIV and Hepatitis C. The services we provide are invaluable. If you think to yourself somebody in your family or somebody you know has a heroin or a prescription drug problem, we're the best bet for treatment services. We do maintenance to short-term to detox; it's individualized up to the needs of our patients. Privatization results in staff turnover; staff turnover results in a decrease in services provided. The County's efforts to get out of health all together does a disservice to the addiction problem that's engulfing not only our County but our nation. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Gayle Bassi, and she is followed by Allen Fritz.

MS. BASSI:

My name is Gayle Bassi, I'm a Suffolk County employee, a taxpayer and an AME member. I was happy to get the job with Suffolk County Department of Public Works after being on unemployment for a year.

I'm currently working out of title, I was hired in the Print Shop, but, as many others, I am working doing -- filling in in areas that are very short-handed, I'm working in financing, purchasing and operating accounting departments, helping out in all those departments. So as you can see, our departments are already lean due to early retirements that occurred after I was hired two-and-a-half years ago and vacancies that were not filled also after I was hired two-and-a-half year ago.

Our operating accounting department is down to three people, that I heard at one time that department was about 20 employees. You're looking to sacrifice quality and you will not be able to replace the loyalty and dedication of your County employees, it's going to cost you more money to contract out our jobs. The Legislator (sic) is not taking into account the money that the County employees are saving you.

Why are other alternatives not being investigated first? For example, I work in the area, we pay all the rentals to the landlords, we pay for your Legislative offices rentals; why are the town taxes being paid by the County for the landlords? Why are we reimbursing the landlords for taxes; why is that written into their leases? Why are they getting other reimbursements, like for insurance in some of the leases, when we are already self-insured for general liability?

The other issue I would like to bring up is that about taxes and the perceptions of most County residents. Most people don't realize how small that County tax increase would be, and we all know that you're ultimately going to have to raise the taxes anyway if you're talking about a \$500 million deficit.

Applause

Taxpayers confuse the County tax with the town taxes and the property taxes that they are paying to pay for their children's education. Since I first started with Suffolk County, I've been threatened with a layoff by Mr. Steve Levy, and I was told by the union that he could not legally do so, that only

the Legislature could do that. I was threatened that if I did not support the closure of John J. Foley Nursing Home, that my job would be terminated as of January. As a taxpayer and a registered voter, and as a parent who has raised two children in Suffolk County, I'm outraged that a \$60 million deficit was allowed to be hidden and go undetected, and that the quick fix --

Applause

And that the quick fix to this deficit is to make the County employees pay with their jobs. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Allen Fritz. And Mr. Fritz, you're followed by Michael Watt.

MR. FRITZ:

Hello. This is Allen Fritz. I am a County resident, I live in the County 70 years. My folks go back over 100 years, my grandfather came to Huntington in 1907. And I'm actually outraged by what I'm seeing with the Society for the Cruelty Prevention to Animals.

For one thing, I don't know why they have to have guns. We have a Police Department that carries guns. Do these people have background checks? I know everybody can get a permit to carry a gun, it's not a problem, but do you have a background check, psychological testing? That's number one.

Also, why should we indemnify them, meaning this society who is not -- they're not governed by anybody. Who governs these people? What has the right to go into somebody's property and just step all over things and do whatever they want? We have rights. We the taxpayers don't need to indemnify them for their improprieties, and that's the bottom line.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Michael Watt, followed by Owen Durney.

Michael Watt from LIGRA; Michael, are you out there? Okay. Owen Durney? And Owen is followed by Joan Schweitzer.

MR. DURNEY:

I also didn't prepare a speech. I'm obviously new to this, I haven't spoken here in a while. My name is Owen Durney, I'm a resident of East Patchogue, I work in the Health Department. I, too, am on the layoff list. I was a later starter, I guess, on the layoff list; I got -- was one of the 25 positions that was added in, but I'm not even here to talk about myself.

I work in the Division of Preventive Medicine. The one thing I want to do is I actually want to thank the Legislature and the County Executive for restoring the Office of Health Education. In all of this that we've talked about, with everything that's going out, I'm glad that there was some wisdom in terms of restoring some programs in that program, and Tobacco Cessation.

I also work with the Bureau of Public Health Nursing, and I just want to mention that this Legislature -- I'm sorry. Can I -- I just want the attention of the group. I apologize.

Applause

I work -- you know, I know very hard for the department. And I appreciate what you do for the Legislature, but I also would like you to appreciate what we do. You were all presented, the entire Legislature was presented with a list of the top ten zip codes in Suffolk County that were served by the Bureau of Public Health Nursing. Those zip codes include Brentwood, Bay Shore, Central Islip, Wyandanch and Amityville, which are two areas that are in the County Executive's hometown, Patchogue, Medford, Riverhead, Mastic and Mastic Beach. These people -- we have laid off ten

Public Health Nurses; these people are no longer going to serve those communities.

And I just -- the last time I spoke to the Legislature I spoke about legacy, and I'm going to speak about it again. What kind of Health Department do you want to leave behind? What do you want for this County? And now we're hearing that well drillers, the Well Drilling Unit is going to be abolished. These are the people who test our water to make sure it's safe for our residents. When I was a kid, I grew up in wading River, I grew up in Mr. Romaine's district, that's all we talked about was the Pine Barrens and well drilling and protecting our aquifer for our residents. And I just want to know, you know, has the this Legislature -- I don't think this list was put together or thought about very carefully in terms of its impact on our residents.

Just to go back to the nurses, the nurses actually generate revenue to this County. Has that been considered in the deficit? In other words, when you lay off ten nurses, you're not going to have ten nurses that are going to bring in revenue to our County, to our General Fund. Has that been considered.

Applause

Has that money been considered in terms of your overall cost to the County? Because the last time I was here, and I haven't spoken to the Legislature in as much in a week as I have in the last five years. Has that been considered? I know that Mrs. Nowick was asking for two extra weeks; two weeks to consider the lives and futures of 315 people, sixteen of which work in my own division, one of which spoke -- my own secretary spoke today, her and her husband are both being laid off today. So two extra weeks. Have we considered the offset of revenue that we're going to lose because we don't have revenue people in the revenue division that are billing for services. We don't have people that are in the field that are billing for services. So has the cost of revenue been considered and has the cost to public health, has that been considered? The fact that we're laying off Well Drillers and that staff, have we considered the cost, overall cost to public health? And I appreciate your time, I hear the beep. So, thank you very much.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Mr. Durney. The next speaker is Joan Schweitzer. Joan's followed by Jacqueline {Muscatrillo}.

MS. SCHWEITZER:

Excuse me, I just have a question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

We are still in the Government Operation's Committee.

MS. SCHWEITZER:

We are here for the Health Committee.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. So, were you Ms. Schweitzer?

MS. SCHWEITZER:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. So we'll hold you over for the next committee. The next speaker is Jacqueline {Muscatrillo}. Jacqueline? Okay. The next speaker is Valerie Vericella-Cavuoto. Following Valerie is Jenine Yannucciello.

MS. VERICELLA-CAVUOTO:

Good afternoon. Six years ago a group of part-time Special Education Aides having coffee together decided to take a Civil Service test, knowing the pay would not make us millionaires, but knowing benefits would make up for far below average salaries compared to the corporate world. I took the Clerk Typist test and accepted a position with the Health Department Division of Pollution Control. After a short time, I was asked to take over data entry responsibilities and quality control for my entire office. This includes toxic and hazardous material storage facilities, environmental pollution clean-up and remediation, State Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems, Brownfields which all represent a threat to our groundwater. I help the Legal Department, swimming pool, public swimming pools and tank testing. I trained for over a year so I could perform all of the duties and input for quality assurance and quality control in our database. This training required me to gain a working understanding of how all aspects of the Office of Pollution Control function and what all the data means; all of that will be lost.

Who will be responsible for entering data into our system? You need to have an individual independent from those preparing the information to ensure information is entered correctly. Failure to do so can result in inaccurate data, inaccurate invoices, inaccurate permits and regulatory violations. If you proceed with the layoff, what measures do you have to immediately put into place to address exposure and risks? The work will not disappear. My work will not disappear. It will have to be absorbed by highly paid engineers and sanitarians, subsequently generating a backlog in planned reviews and facility inspections.

I never thought my job would be in jeopardy, but I have been laid off. I am one of 315. There are faces and families that go without titles.

Applause

I would like to know if the list makers saw my name and not just the word "Clerk Typist". I would like to know if my supervisors were asked about my work ethics, my job performance, about how my absence would affect my office by doing an efficiency assessment, something done in the corporate world. Yes, I say my office, my work family who have nicknamed me Data-Mama". Do the list makers know my husband just returned to the workforce after a 22 month lay off? Do the list makers know our 401K and retirement savings are gone so we could survive during this time? Do the list makers know my high school junior asked me last night if he to change his college plans? Do the list makers know how this affects us mentally? First Dad, now Mom.

Applause

I ask all Suffolk County residents to pull out your tax bill, look at your County taxes. I will try to be as fast as I can. It is the smallest portion, many times less than even your garbage and library taxes. It is not in the headlines, just the political mantra of, "I will not raise taxes." I am a taxpayer, along with my fellow 314 layoff colleagues. I will not be spending any money, but I will be looking for all services, any services and support which will cost more for Suffolk County.

Applause

I was told by Civil Service that I am one of Clerks tied --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Valerie --

MS. VERICELLA-CAVUOTO:

Two seconds.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Valerie, your time is up. If you could please wrap it up.

MS. VAERICELLA-CAVOUTO:

I shall. I was told by Civil Service that I am one Clerk tied in the third position of our preferred list, because of the last minute 25 people laid off. Our positions will save entire families. It won't take much to save mine or my fellow colleagues. But I want you to remember one thing today; my name is Valerie Vericella-Cavouto, a.k.a. Data-Mama, and not just the word "Clerk Typist".

Applause & Cheers

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Jenine Yannucciolo; Jenine from Setauket. No Jenine? Jenine from East Setauket? Okay, the next speaker is Paul Llobell.

MR. LLOBELL:

Good afternoon, Gentlemen and Ladies. I'm sure you all know me, I'm Paul Llobell, I'm with the Suffolk SPCA. I've been in all your offices, I've been in your predecessor offices and I know you know what I do.

I'm here to read a note from one of our board members, Dr. Gerry Lauber. He unfortunately had a family emergency this afternoon, so I've got the dubious distinction of having to speak for him. So I'll speak in his words.

"I am here today to understand why I am here today. I have asked myself, "Why is the SPCA having such a hard time getting support from the County when all we are trying to do is work for the County and for the County residents and provide a no-cost service? I asked myself, "What are the road blocks that are preventing the County from granting the Suffolk County SPCA volunteers full indemnification? One word that I continually hear is control. Who actually controls the SPCA? To be specific, I don't think you're asking who controls our spay/neuter clinics, our free rabies programs. I don't think you're seeking control over our education and humane programs. I think the real issue is our law enforcement status, a status that is given to us by the State of New York and regulated by the State of New York.

So to refine the question, who is in control of our law enforcement operations, the SPCA typically receives over 3,000 calls a year for assistance from our County residents. Over 28 years, that adds up to over 84,000 calls on an average. The vast majority of those calls are cleared by one of our officers or agents by a site visit where we provide education to the subject or to the person complaining about the complaint. Appropriate steps are taken and we try to rectify the problems then and there, through education. Am I correct in assuming that there's a liability producing arrests that you're concerned about? Oh, I wouldn't be too concerned about that; in our 28 year history of enforcing the law, we have not fired one shot or physically hurt anyone in effecting an arrest. The SPCA has not been directed to pay one cent in any lawsuit, civil liability case that has ever been brought against us. Why have we never lost a lawsuit? The answer, believe it or not, is that we have strong control over our organization.

Before we make any arrest, we review the facts of the case. If we find that there is probable cause to sustain the charge of animal cruelty, neglect or abuse, we then go to the District Attorney's Office who reviews the fact of the case. We discuss it with an ADA. The District Attorney's office will give us the authority or authorize us to make the arrest. The District Attorney prosecutes the case with our support. Is this adequate control over who you consider adequate control over the SPCA? When we need a search warrant, we have to go to the District Attorney's Office, speak to an ADA. It has

to be approved by a Supervising ADA, and then it has to go before a Judge. We have to explain the case to the Judge and present all the facts, and when the Judge signs a search warrant and we execute it, it's executed with the Suffolk County Police Department, along with one of our SPCA peace officers, or a couple of peace officers. Is that enough for control? Many of our felony arrest end up going before a Grand Jury. If a Grand Jury hands up an indictment, is that strong enough to say we have some control?

Considering these facts, I would say that control is not the issue.

So the question comes about, why not renew the County indemnification that our agency has enjoyed? If the control is not an issue, I ask why are we standing in the way of a unanimous yes vote? And the next question is if not us, who? If the SPCA did not worry about indemnification, where we were the only SPCA in the nation to respond to Ground Zero, we did not ask for indemnification, we responded to a major airline crash, we did not ask for indemnification, when we operate our pet-friendly shelters for the County, we did not seek indemnification when we responded to numerous emergency calls from the County.

I'm not telling you that if you fail to provide us with indemnification, the SPCA will continue -- will stop to continue to function. I am saying as the Director, and I'm speaking for Gerry Lauber, that was personally just served and named in a lawsuit, the one you just read about and spoke about earlier, it was in Newsday the other day, he wants to personally rethink his exposure that he's facing if he's forced to operate without County indemnification. When the facts are on the table, there are no real issues preventing us -- or preventing you from approving the proposed legislation. If I missed any questions, I'm standing here and you can ask them.

And I would like to say very quickly, because I know time is limited and I appreciate it, I would hope the Legislature would move forward to provide full indemnification for the SPCA officers for any claims that may be leveled against them while performing and acting within their scope of authority and performance of their duties that's given to them by the State of New York.

A professional run organization, the SPCA, is where the Police command structure and place. All SPCA offices are certified by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice. All SPCA officers and Police Officers must attend either the Police Academy, the Sheriff's Academy, or a DCJS approved law enforcement training course for a minimum amount of prescribed hours and an approved syllabus. Background checks and psychological examinations are provided by the County of Suffolk, the Suffolk County Police Department or the Sheriff's Department, the same requirements every Police Officer, Deputy Sheriffs or Correction Officer would be subject to. Firearms --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Mr. Llobell, your time is up. If you could wrap up, please.

MR. LLOBELL:

Okay. If you give me one more second, I'm just about finished. Firearms, baton, OC and other deadly force training are administered by the Suffolk Sheriff's Office at the Westhampton Range, along with other law enforcement agencies. All Police Officers, peace officers in the State of New York are required to requalify annually for firearms, baton, OC and use of deadly force. One more paragraph.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

If you could just --

MR. LLOBELL:

Physical force and they attend classroom and live-fire training, and the results are transmitted back to the New York State Department of Criminal Justice. Many peace officers in the Suffolk County SPCA are also active or current or retired Police and law enforcement officers, many of them are

Suffolk County Police Officers. It would not be unusual for an SPCA officer to be assisting a County Police Officer, a Deputy Sheriff in an emergency situation, nor would it be visa versa. The Suffolk County SPCA provides a valuable service to this County and should receive the full indemnification. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you.

Applause

The next speaker is Raymond Muxo, followed by Frank Castelli.

***(*The following testimony was taken & transcribed by
Diana Flesher - Court Reporter*)***

MR. MUXO:

Good afternoon. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak before you. Some of you I have worked with. My name is Ray Muxo and I work as an Associate Mechanical Engineer in DPW's Buildings, Design & Construction group. I was hired seven years ago to assist while some of the DPW staff helped construct the new Yaphank Jail, which, as a bar, I might add, having come from the Shoreham Nuclear Power Station where cost overruns were about on the order of a thousand percent, this job has come in dead-on, right-on, and that's a tribute to the people in the County who participated in this, from the Sheriff's Office to DPW.

(APPLAUSE)

I'd like to think that I bring integrity and -- some integrity and some respect to wherever I work. I'll leave that for the folks that I work with.

(APPLAUSE)

A quality that, unfortunately, the public perceives government is seriously lacking in. I was involved directly in the \$30 million renovation of the Riverhead County Center, which included your new Legislative meeting room, I hope you enjoy it -- the room. I worked very hard to give you a nice room.

I'm also currently involved in working on energy conservation projects that will save in the order of a million to a million and a half dollars a year, which was supposed to help in savings some jobs. Unfortunately, not mine. I am one of 315. I am also one of about 6,000 to 6500. And having recently been with the County for the past seven years, I have to say that the quality of the people here from top to bottom is amazing. It is truly amazing.

(APPLAUSE)

During my tenure, on my level, working in my group, our communications have improved. And I work on Capital Projects, some Operating. And in the Capital Programs and the Projects, you can't see those direct savings. We have improved our processes where we are saving money on Capital Programs, that those Programs -- and those savings aren't seen. This is Operating. I understand that.

This all said, you've heard from many people here. I'm just one of them. The impact on the County's operations will certainly suffer as a result of these layoffs, put you back decades in its ability to provide services. But it doesn't have to be this way. There are other ways to address the deficit. It's your job to find them. You shoulder this responsibility. That will become your legacy.

Thank you very much have a nice afternoon.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Our next speaker is Frank Castelli, followed by Joanne Sassone.

MR. CASTELLI:

I thank you for the opportunity to speak before the Committee today. My name is Frank Castelli. I am the Director of the Suffolk County Water Quality Improvement Division, part of the new Department of Economic Development and Planning. Unfortunately, my position under the Civil Service title, Environmental Project Coordinator, has been included on the new layoff list. I was totally shocked to say the least to find myself on this list, as this position is 100% funded by the Quarter Percent Sales Tax Water Quality Fund.

This fund was approved by the public through a referendum back in 2007. In fact, the public thought that it was important enough to approve this Quarter Percent Sales Tax for water quality funds. They thought that it was important enough that they approve it right through November 2030.

This program provides funding for water quality protection and restoration projects throughout Suffolk County. We are currently administering through my Division more than 50 ongoing projects. Many of these projects are being done in conjunction with other municipalities throughout the County. The Towns, Villages, also environmental groups. Under a 50/50 cost share basis, they are bi-leveraging whatever funding the County provides.

I want to be brief but I really do not know how the program is going to continue efficiently without a director managing the day-to-day activities of the program. I urge the County Executive's Office and the Legislature to reinstate my position so that I can continue to help protect and restore water quality of Suffolk County pursuant to the wishes of the voters of Suffolk County. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

LEG. ROMAINE:

Quick question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Mr. Castelli. Legislator Romaine has a quick question for you, if you could stay at the podium.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Frank. You're totally paid out of the 477 Fund; is that correct?

MR. CASTELLI:

Yes, sir, one hundred percent.

LEG. ROMAINE:

That's the Quarter Percent?

MR. CASTELLI:

Yes.

LEG. ROMAINE:

That was approved by seven -- eight separate referendums by the voters of Suffolk County?

MR. CASTELLI:

Right, most recently during November 2007 and approved right through November 2030.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. Next question? Your layoff will save this County General Fund exactly how much money?

MR. CASTELLI:

Exactly zero.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Zero. Thank you.

MR. CASTELLI:

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The next speaker is Joanne Sassone. And Joanne is followed by Kathleen Malloy, who will be our last speaker, we think.

MS. SASSONE:

Hi. I'm Joanne Sassone. I am a Special Education Coordinator for the Services for Children with Special Needs. I have been in the field of early intervention and preschool school for 21 years. I was hired by Suffolk County to wear two hats: One as a Service Coordinator in the EIOD and another to be a student teacher of a special education itinerary for preschool. But that's it. I see one child in a year; brings the County \$1.6 million. And I am now on the layoffs list. I have two other colleagues who are service coordinators. They're also on the layoff list and they have been on here -- they've been with the County for a lot longer than I have.

I just want to tell you that in the years past, the Service Coordinators generated income for the County by doing ongoing service coordination. As my colleague, Ilene McGaw told you, there were 3695 referrals for early intervention last year.

Every time we see a family for an initial visit, we can bill for that, for the initial visit. Also, ongoing Service Coordinators are the liaison between the families and the EIOD's, which is what we do. We had to give those away. We generated \$568,000 a year in ongoing services. Now, 261,000 of that is given away. The average billing and ongoing does to Suffolk County is \$2500 a month. And that's money that we cannot bill for anymore.

We have four people in our revenue department that bill for third party insurance. They are also being laid off. So, now we're not going to have a revenue department. I think we'll have one or two people left for that.

So, those are the points that I want to make for you today. And I just want to say that's really sad to be here listening to all of these stories, because I thought it was bad for me and my colleagues, but, you know, it's bad for everybody. And I really hope that you all consider coming up with some other ideas instead of putting all of us out of work who work for so hard for you and who vote for you.

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

LEG. MURATORE:

Mr. Chairman, may I request a question, please?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Miss Sassone, if you will stay a moment, Legislator Muratore has a quick question, please. Let's keep it quick.

LEG. MURATORE:

When you say that your position -- over here, young lady -- did you say your position generates 1.6 million per year?

MS. SASSONE:

It does. And I was told that they're not -- that they told the school districts not to ask for any Seed cases next year because they're not going to have a Special Ed teacher to fill them, so they're not going to get their money, no.

LEG. MURATORE:

So, we're going to lose 1.6 million. When you're out the door in July 1st, we'll lose 1.6 million.

MS. SASSONE:

Yes, you will.

LEG. MURATORE:

Okay. Thank you.

MS. SASSONE:

Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. The last card I have here is for Kathleen Malloy.

MR. MALLOY:

Thank you for again providing me this opportunity to provide you with information. My name is Kathleen Malloy. I am a 30-year County retiree and a very proud member of Suffolk County AME. I attended the Long Island Workers Annual Memorial Service on Saturday April 28th, at the New York State Building. This Memorial is always held on the 28th of April because that is the anniversary of the creation of OSHA, promoting safety at the workplace. No worker, either public or private, ever fear death just by going to work. And yet each year I attend these Worker Memorial Services; more names have been added to the list.

Gentlemen and Ladies, we are moving backward in providing safety at the by laying off 315 County workers, which by the way, is another 5% of our workforce, many of whom not only provide public services, but as the 30 security guards also on the layoff list, put their lives on the line to protect their coworkers together with the public who has business in County buildings. I am afraid the answer is yes.

Severely understaffing all of your County offices will most surely not only place the remaining County workers in jeopardy but also every Suffolk County resident who seeks services provided by County workers. Let us remember the important words of our esteemed former Legislator John J. Foley, Senior, who said "government's business is to provide public service."

(APPLAUSE)

And very, very simply put and well done today, that is what every single person in this room does and asks to be allowed to continue to do so; because we, gentlemen and ladies, fully recognize the County's responsibility to its taxpayers. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. I have no other cards at this time. Is there anybody else who would like to speak? I have another individual in the back there. Cheryl, I'll call you up after. Come on up, sir.

MR. FITZPATRICK:

My name is Shane Fitzpatrick. I am 23-years-old and I have a seven month old at home and a fiance that I'm responsible to take care of. I'm a laborer for DPW Highway and Maintenance. Myself and six others are slated to be laid off. We are the -- we are some of the few responsible for maintaining the 1500 miles of roadway, keeping them clean and cleared so they're safe for the public as well as yourselves.

With us being laid off, it would result in seven less drivers to plow during the winter resulting in the drivers who are left, who are already responsible for several roads in a storm, to do more with less. Now the County has to call in more contractors who get paid more than we do anyway, which would result in more of a payout than currently is. I feel our jobs are just as important as the County Executive's secretary. So, in my closing statement, if you're going to save that position, you should save all 315 of us.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Are there any other speakers in the audience, anybody else who would like to address this Committee? Seeing none, Cheryl Felice, President of the Union and Dan Farrell President-Elect would like to come up and address the Committee quickly.

(APPLAUSE)

Before they speak, I'm do -- I'm just going to take a point of preference, and I want to make sure something is clear to everyone. The layoff list and those individuals who are being laid off, and I do apologize that we had to put you in that position, but there were 464 layoffs that were in the budget, that were outside of the control of this current Legislature. And those could have very well gone forward and the County Executive did not need action by us to do that. I just want to make sure that's clear to everyone. I know it's got no consolation to anyone being laid off, especially if you were not on the previous list. But that list has come down to the 315 because we asked them to revise it. It's not perfect, but no layoff list will ever be perfect and I do want to apologize for that.

THE AUDIENCE:

It should be zero.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I do not dispute that we would like it to be a lower number, and a lower number down to zero. But it is what it is and this is the hand we were dealt that we had to work with. So, Miss Felice and Mr. Farrell, if you please.

MS. FELICE:

Thank you, Chairman Calarco, and thank you to all the Legislators being present, especially the Legislators that are not part of the Government Operations Committee. I definitely do want to thank

you for the time that you have taken out of your day to come and hear the pleas of the County employees. Myself, Cheryl Felice, and Dan Farrell, have been before you many times to talk about the budget and the structure of this budget over the last nine years. And we very much appreciate the time and the patience that you have taken today to listen to each one of the members who chose to spoke. As you know, it's very courageous. It's a very courageous act to speak publicly and many people cannot do it. So I really do want to thank all the members that are here today, and especially those who spoke and expressed from the heart about their stories. They deserve your attention. And I thank you very much for giving it to them.

As I move on, I also want to thank Deputy Presiding Officer Wayne Horsley for reaching out to me and agreeing to be at this meeting today as well to hear the cries that are so necessary to hear today. We have a number of issues that we'd like to address. And while with all due respect we do appreciate that if a list had to be created, it had to be reduced, one layoff from a labor standpoint is one too many.

(APPLAUSE)

So many people spoke so well about the security issues that are now at risk because of these cuts. There are job titles and job functions that I know many of you didn't even know were out there. But now you do. So if anything, if anything can be said about the crisis that's happening right now, it's the fact that now an awareness has been created that has never been there before.

This situation that Suffolk County found itself in because of the structural imbalance of its budget has been no secret. Left unattended and left unaddressed, it created the crisis that is here today. There is no mistaking that sewage district and the points that were made about the sewage district funding not coming from the General Fund, is a sewer district tax and district that has an automatic 3% raise built into it each and every year, which is why that fund is kept healthy. It is the same thing that should have happened to the General Fund for the last nine years.

(APPLAUSE)

I have a few more comments to make, but at this time I'd like you to please address President-Elect Dan Farrell for further comment.

MR. FARRELL:

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing us this time to speak to you. As you know, I am AME's current treasurer right now and President-Elect, and I'm proud to say that I've been a nine-year officer on the board with Cheryl. I've been very proud to say that we've come here and provided all of you with an extensive budget analysis. And as Cheryl said earlier, this budget crisis is no secret. This has been building and building and building. And we've given you suggestions over the last nine years that are basically falling on deaf ears, most of them.

We've identified this County fiscal crisis. And I was here as recently as last November to speak to this Legislature to tell them that the problem is really bad and the one-shots are all gone. And that part of the solution I had recommended at the time was to increase the tax to the General Fund, increase the sales tax and offer us an early retirement incentive. Because we knew, as we have over the last several years, that the situation has gotten worse and worse and worse. I'm not sure if the County Executive right now at this point realizes how bad this, you know, was. But I have deep concerns for one of his first resolutions was to hire people outside of Suffolk County. I don't understand that at all. We have members here that are doing a great job. And what happens after this resolution is passed, that we hear in the newspaper that part-time, consultants part-time, are being paid \$150,000? 150. Do you know how many of our employees that represents? Approximately four?

There's been a hire to Economic Development Director at \$170,000? Okay. And as the Committees met earlier this week, we found out that the security is being privatized to a Bronx-based company? Bronx-based? What does that do for Suffolk County's economy? What does that do for us?

(APPLAUSE)

And at the Legislature last Tuesday in Riverhead, I had pleaded with you, as many others did, to give us more time to give you some solutions. Well, one of my solutions right here and now is the savings of \$180,000 for those security guards? Why don't we get rid of the Economic Development Director at 170? There's a start.

(APPLAUSE)

The DPW security guards were being let go. That part-time consultant at 150, that ought to save a few more jobs.

(APPLAUSE)

You know, and then you read in the paper that the layoff list was flawed because it included the County Executive's personal secretary. You're damn right that list is flawed. It's about 315 too many.

(APPLAUSE)

Thank you. Last week a representative Mr. Schneider from Mr. Bellone's administration said his door was always open. Well, Cheryl and I have been knocking on that door. Cheryl and I have been calling and we've been e-mailing. We haven't even gotten a response back yet. So, I spoke to Cheryl early this morning and I'm going to leave off with, you know what? We're leaving here right now today, Cheryl and I, and we're going over there and if I have to knock his door down, I'm going to knock the door down. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

LEG. ROMAINE:

One quick question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Yes. To Dan Farrell, did you know, you mentioned the high paid -- price Economic Development people that were hired to save us money. Did you know that today the County of Suffolk has issued an RFP seeking proposals for Countywide strategic sourcing and expense reduction services so that a private consulting firm can look for reductions instead of the high priced Economic Development experts hired.

Are you aware of that RFP.

MR. FARRELL:

No, I'm not aware of that.

MS. FELICE:

In closing, I just want to echo the comments that Dan made here.

These are the feelings that all of our members have had for quite some time. And if I could close

with an e-mail that one of our members received from a Superior, and it starts by saying this: "Thank you for contacting my office with such kind and encouraging words. It's nice to know that you take pride in your work and in the Division of which you are a part of. I am also very proud of the important and life changing work you and your team do for our children. It is true, that our County is facing financial hardships, but please know that early intervention is important to me and my administration and we will work to ensure its success going forward. Please feel free to contact my office should you need any assistance or any other important observation in the future." Sincerely, Steve Bellone, County Executive, dated February 2nd, 2010.

I would just like to leave this Legislature with this: Dan is -- I'm sorry, 2012. I would like to leave this Legislature with this: Dan is absolutely right when he says we have been trying to get to that table and get through that door to offer solutions. We've been doing that since the beginning of the year. There are other options to these layoffs and we deserve a right to be heard. Employees are assets to be valued, not costs to be cut. Thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Browning has a question.

LEG. BROWNING:

Hello, Dan. Okay. Just a real quick one. Dan and Cheryl, you know, you've both talked about tax increases and I know many of the -- many of the people here today have talked about increase in taxes. As you know, we've increased taxes and your Police District Tax, which helps us free up some sales tax money. And that money generates us -- increases the police district, tax generates a lot more money than the General Fund.

Dan, we had that conversation, if we increase the General Fund property tax just by 2%, would maybe achieve \$2 million. That's not going to save 315 jobs. You said if we did it over the past eight years, that still would not save those 315 jobs.

I'm going to give you a challenge. Ask every single Legislator here right now if they would be willing to raise the property taxes. And I will guarantee you, like last Tuesday, the votes was across party lines. It's very easy to be the minority and not have to make decisions and -- the tough decisions. We have to be responsible. I am not taking pleasure in 315 layoffs. I want those 315 people to come back to work. Because they are good people. They're good workers. And I know many of them myself personally. But you ask each and every one of these Legislators here today -- I did not vote no on the layoffs. I voted for the layoffs. I didn't recuse myself either. I don't have family members who work here. But I'm telling you right now that you will not get a vote from each and every Legislator, Democrat, Republican, whatever, to vote for a tax increase. And my challenge to you is to get a commitment right around this horseshoe, all 18, to vote for a tax increase.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Mr. Chairman, I would remind my colleague, because amnesia seems to have set in, that 16 of the 18 Legislators voted for a two percent increase in the Police District. So, tax increases are something that when warranted this Legislature has taken on. And that may be something that you conveniently forgot.

LEG. BROWNING:

No, I did not forget.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And I simply would remind you.

LEG. BROWNING,

And, again, you said 16 of 18. Sixteen votes. Not 18. Let's get it right. All 18 need to share this. All 18 of us.

MR. FARRELL:

But you know, Kate, last Tuesday, and you said at the Legislature also, if we're in the middle of a year, we can't raise taxes. But that goes back to my point earlier of you know what? We've been here every year. Cheryl and I have been here telling you that there's a crisis here and you need to do something five years ago. You decided not to do anything five years ago and here we are today, we have to pay the piper. And the piper comes out of AME. And why does it come out of AME? We didn't cause this problem, Kate. So why should we -- you have the tough decision up there to make -- all of you's have that tough decision to make. And you know what? As far as I'm concerned, you failed AME and you failed the public because you didn't raise the taxes.

(APPLAUSE)

LEG. BROWNING:

That goes for a whole lot more.

MR. FARRELL:

And you know what Kate, we have an early retirement incentive --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

All right, Dan. Thank you. But I think we're going to end it there. We gave you an opportunity to speak and address the issues. And we're taking up -- we're already running an hour past Committee. And for all those here for the Health Committee, I apologize, but I wasn't going to cut off all of the public speakers who came here today. So, we're going to move onto the agenda at this point in time.

We have a presentation. And I'm going to ask Commissioner Chu to try to keep it as quick as possible. It's regarding the Department of Labor's Rapid Response to the County Layoff's.

(APPLAUSE)

They're going to try to do everything they can to assist those of our employees who are facing layoffs right now. Commissioner Chu, if you could try to make it as quick as possible, please.

PRESENTATION

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Well, thank you, Chairman, Committee and the rest of the members of the Legislature. We realize this is a very difficult, very bad situation that we're all in. Department of Labor has been asked, to the extent we can, make the best of a bad situation and offer the best service we possibly can to all those that are going to be impacted by the June 30th layoff. And I will, Chairman, move through this as quickly as possible.

The mission here is to expedite delivery of employment resources that the Department of Labor provides to workers prior to the layoff and make additional resources available that are specifically targeted to best serve individuals. Just for reference, the Department of Labor, our staff is very eager, they have friends, in some cases family members that are impacted by this. We had layoffs in our own Department, so they are very eager to do their best to serve our own.

The Rapid Response Research Center is meant to refer to both the physical resources at our One Stop Center and also the online -- online presence that we've put together for our employees. We're making available 40 work stations that going to be dedicated just for use by impacted County

employees. And those are going to be available immediately. Staff specifically designated to service County employees. A custom web portal that many have already been on designed to meet the specific needs of our impacted County employees. And early access -- this probably the most important thing that we've been able to do, is provide early access to work shop and training that's typically available only after termination.

We're going to make these services available during the 60-day period from the time of notice to the time of termination. This is a screen shot of our web portal, which we're encouraging everyone to go to to sign up for our Resource Center orientation. It's really important for the individuals to get to this Resource Center Orientation because it's going to allow them access to these services that we've been able to put together, which include -- you know, which is a requirement, registration to get into the expedited training.

This is Federally-funded training. These are trainings that we very much want everyone to take -- make use of and take advantage of to get skills to allow them for a better chance at employment. The attendance also satisfies requirements of New York State Unemployment Insurance which would typically -- which would typically happen after layoff and after collection of unemployment.

We're going to go through an overview and scheduling of workshops and training courses. At the orientations themselves, impact of workers will be able to schedule for workshops and trainings right there on the spot, as well as a tour of DOL's One-Stop Research Center. Again, we have dedicated resources just for our impacted workers, but there are full access and use of all of our resources that are available to the public.

We're providing coordinated support with the New York State Department of Labor, as well our sister agencies. Civil Service, we know there are a ton of Civil Service questions. Civil Service staff will be at these info sessions to answer Civil Service questions, the Department of Social Services, again, for the services they provide. And we worked closely with AME last time when we had the 50 impacted -- 50 layoffs and we will work again with them closely, a credit to their leadership for being there.

We also have -- we'll provide on-site partner services, there are veteran-specific services that we can provide; Child Health Care Plus, which is health care coverage on an income eligibility for children; Access VR for disabled workers, and we could also do on-site assistance with the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island which will make impact to workers available -- aware of all the State and Federal health programs that they might be eligible for.

These are just a quick overview, I'll go through this quickly, of some of the trainings and workshops we could provide, everything from group workshops which, again, we're scheduling dedicated workshops for our impacted employees which include resume and cover letters, interviewing and transfer of skills, internet job search and also use of new technology, tools of social networking, Suffolk DOL is a leader in that. Individualized service; some will be comfortable in a workshop setting and that will be enough, others will want individual attention and we can provide that, as well as individualized career counseling, targeted skills and vocational training, and we have a number of on-line courses that they could use.

We also -- we have courses, it's worth mentioning, that range everything from a refresher course, from Word 2003 to brushing up and being able to become familiar with Word 2010, all the way to extensive courses that can take someone all the way to a certification as a surgical technologist or get a CDL license. And of course, those -- some will want to take advantage of the trainings, others will just be interested in getting a job. We have a whole host of job-seeker services that we want to make sure are available to our impacted employees and, again, with specific intention and dedicated staff.

We host job fares, we have 30 job fares around the County, but we're also working on

sector-specific job fares for our employees. On-line job listings; again, veterans get prioritized service. And skills matching or referral technology which is a New York State tool that is a more active tool that will actually e-mail customized job referrals to those who sign up for them.

So this is very important, the important required steps to get everyone is you must, please, do register for an orientation, on-line, by phone or in person. As of noon today, out of the 315, 138 have already gone on line and registered, so I'm glad to see that we're going to get participation. This is -- I think everyone can agree, regardless of the differences, that this is something that all the impacted workers should get to and take advantage of. They need to attend the orientation after registering for -- again, to meet requirements for benefits, and please do sign up for workshops and trainings that you feel could be of service to you.

This is a quick calendar. I'll leave this with you, everyone has it here. I'll just run down it real quick. Notice went out, the orientation meetings will begin next week. And I should also add, we've added two evening sessions to accommodate workers that work in the evenings, at the request of Suffolk County Police Department and DPW; those are on, so you can register for those right now. And the week of May 14th, although workshops will be available immediately, we are putting together specifically tailored workshops based upon our list and the sector needs of our workers that are impacted. And the 21st we'll begin an aggressive job-seeker campaign tailored to the needs of the groups and individuals. I've already spoken with prospective employers. Geico reached out to us, we had conversations with PSE&G who is the new provider for LIPA. I was on the phone, before I got here, with North Shore LIJ going over our course list which is amongst the handouts of the skills that we can give to some of our health workers that will make them -- put them ahead to get employment with North Shore LIF which is the largest employer on Long Island. And that will be a personal mission, I'll be knocking on doors of employers to make sure that they're aware of the talent that we have here in the County that, unfortunately, we cannot hold.

We will repeat this process and we will also continue this process. These trainings will be available throughout the year and we will -- up until to Federal eligibility. And we will also, we understand that there are folks that will not -- that this will really not become real to them until they actually stop getting a check and get a layoff notice. So we'll repeat the orientations again in June and July. I'm glad that -- I'm glad with the participation rate we're getting, almost half have already signed up.

So with that, this is just the way that people can contacts us. This e-mail is set up specifically for impacted workers, rapidresponse@suffolkcountyny.gov. This number, 631-853-6541, again, dedicated to our group. And this website is set up with a portal specific to our employees and it's worth mentioning. We're also using as a pilot situation to address, you know, private sector cases where there's significant layoffs, so we'll be using this when we get our {war nurses}, we'll be using it forward to also offer similar services in private sector events.

So with that, I will be glad to answer any questions. And just to clarify, the one hand that you have, that's a current snapshot of the courses we are offering right now, but we are going to be adding courses as needed and as designed.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Commissioner. Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Commissioner, will you use on-the-job training funds as incentives for employers to hire laid off County workers?

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Absolutely, and I know you and I have had some conversation about this. Right now we have nine OJT contracts, the contracts last four years. You and I had this conversation, I've expressed it's a priority of the Administration, a priority of mine to make sure we use it as a tool to get people into positions. I was at a Minority Business Development Council meeting last night, I'm putting a {Chu letter} to it, I'll be out making sure that employers know that that is something we can offer as a tool to get people into employment. So the short answer, yes, very much so.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Thank you, Commissioner Chu. I hate to say it, but you sound like George Clooney in *Up In The Air*, if you remember that movie.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

(Laughter). I don't have that Gold Card, that Travel Gold Card.

LEG. ROMAINE:

No, you don't.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

But I have stolen a badge to get into conferences.

LEG. ROMAINE:

But hopefully you can help our County employees that unfortunately may be laid off.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

I hope so. And our staff is really taking this to heart. This is our own and we are leaving no stone unturned to make sure we deliver the best service to our own employees.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Does anybody else have any questions for Commissioner Chu? Commissioner, thank you. You know, we thank you for providing the service to all of our employees who, unfortunately, are facing some difficult decisions in the future.

COMMISSIONER CHU:

Thank you, Chairman, and thank you to the committee.

Applause

*(*The following testimony was taken & transcribed by
Alison Mahoney - Court Reporter*)*

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. We're moving on to the agenda now. If we can have Counsel back in the room.

We're on *Tabled Resolutions, IR 1015-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Local Law To Sunset Living Wage Subsidies (Cilmi)*.

LEG. CILMI:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

We have a motion to approve by Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion to table by Legislator Browning.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second the motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Spencer. On the motion?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Second the motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Romaine seconds the motion to approve. I have a tabling motion and a motion to approve. Tabling goes first. All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Abstentions?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

IR 1015 stands tabled (VOTE: 3-2-0-0 - Opposed: Legislators Cilmi & Romaine).

IR 1019-12 - Directing the Planning Department to conduct a feasibility study on incorporating LEAN Government Principles in Suffolk County (Cilmi).

LEG. CILMI:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion to table by Legislator Cilmi. I'll second that motion.

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? *The resolution stands tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).*

IR 1290-12 - Establishing County policy to utilize employees separated from County Service (Spencer). Legislator Spencer, your pleasure?

LEG. SPENCER:

I'm going to table this motion. I want to allow for there to be -- between the Executive and the unions to have the ability to negotiate without being hindered.

MS. MAHONEY:

I cannot hear you.

LEG. SPENCER:

I'm tabling this to allow time for negotiations between the Executive office and the unions with collective bargaining before moving this forward.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. I have a motion to table.

Applause

I will second that motion. I encourage the County Executive and our union leadership to get together as quickly as possible. Thank you. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion stands ***tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)***.

IR 1340-12 - Designating individual agents of the Suffolk County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as volunteers of the County of Suffolk for the purposes of indemnification (Romaine).

LEG. ROMAINE:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I have a motion by Legislator Romaine.

LEG. CILMI:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Cilmi. I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Spencer. On the motions?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Roll call.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

The tabling motion goes first. Legislator Romaine has called for a roll call.

(*Roll Called by Ms. LoMoriello - Deputy Clerk of the Legislature*)

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Yes.

LEG. SPENCER:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

No.

LEG. ROMAINE:

No.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay, ***IR 1340 is tabled (VOTE: 3-2-0-0 - Opposed: Legislators Cilmi & Romaine)***.

IR 1349-12 - Designating individual agents of the Suffolk County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals as Volunteers of the County of Suffolk for the purposes of providing reasonable indemnification (Spencer). Do I have motion?

LEG. SPENCER:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion to approve.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Browning. Any other motions? Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

I have question. On the motion?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

On the motion?

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah, if Counsel could differentiate this bill from the one we just tabled, please?

MR. NOLAN:

Unlike the prior resolution, this one would require the SPCA to maintain a \$2 million liability insurance and the County would be excess to that.

LEG. CILMI:

What happens if the SPCA is unable to secure that insurance?

MR. NOLAN:

This is a condition -- that's a condition preceded for us providing that indemnification; so if they don't have the policy, then they don't have any coverage or indemnification from the County.

LEG. CILMI:

If at some point the SPCA is unable to get that coverage, I suppose at that point they could come back to us and ask us to revisit the issue?

MR. NOLAN:

They could.

LEG. ROMAINE:

It doesn't look like we're going to ever revisit this issue.

LEG. CILMI:

All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Would anyone else like to comment on the issue? Seeing none, I'll call the vote. All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. ROMAINE:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Abstentions? *The motion is approved (VOTE: 4-1-0-0 Opposed: Legislator Romaine).*

IR 1357-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Local Law to strengthen the Affordable Housing Transfer Program for homeowners displaced by a natural disaster (Romaine).

LEG. ROMAINE:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion by Legislator Romaine.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Browning. On the motion, all those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? *IR 1357 is approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).*

Moving on to *Introductory Resolutions:*

IR 1380-12 - Amending the 2012 Operating Budget and transferring emergency medical positions from the Department of Health Services and Fire Rescue & Emergency Services to the Police Department (Kennedy).

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman, if we could we table this one cycle, the Administration would ask? The performance management group is just looking at this to see what the ramifications are. We've got a fairly quick -- we'll have a meeting at the beginning of June. If we can just -- we're asking for just one cycle.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Mr. Zwirn. Do I have any motions?

LEG. CILMI:

Motion to approve.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion to approve by Legislator Cilmi. Seconded by Legislator Romaine.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair, I am not a member of the committee and I'm waiting in deference if there's any committee member who chooses to speak.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Well, we have a motion. If you'd like to speak, go ahead.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I would be happy to speak on the motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Go ahead.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. My reason for putting this bill forward was quite simple, as a matter of fact. As you may recall, last Fall there was an effort to do some movement associated with our EMT trainers. That movement was done predicated on the fact that there was some 330,000 in overtime savings or cost avoidance through backfill of Police Officers when they would be coming into the academy to recertify for their EMT training. As a result of an extensive amount of work with the Police Department -- and by the way, I would ask the Chair if he would entertain Dr. Coyne who is here today, our Police Surgeon, to speak on this as well. There is no cost avoidance whatsoever.

Commissioner Webber has indicated to me time and time again that our Police Officers are not being brought into the academy for their recertification, necessitating backfill within their precincts. And more importantly, there has been an intervening act on the part of this body, all of my colleagues which joined myself and Legislator Hahn in adopting our Narcan Program. Now, as you know, the Narcan Program is predicated on the fact that our Police Officers are EMT's. So in order to adhere to a very aggressive retraining and recertification program that needs to be adhered to, we need to provide some stability for those EMT trainers within the academy.

Therefore, notwithstanding what the performance management team may or may not want to opine on this, quite frankly, there is no dollar cost. And more importantly, there is the role of this Legislature to go forward with putting life-saving Opiate antagonists in the hands of our Police Officers, and it's critically dependent upon that training in the academy. I would urge my colleagues to vote for this and vote for it now.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

You wanted to ask --

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Browning. I think we saw Mr. Bob Delagi earlier in the audience from Suffolk County EMS; is he still here?

LEG. BROWNING:

He's in the back.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Mr. Delagi, if you could come forward. Legislator Browning had a question for you.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, Bob. Real quick, and I believe I've asked this of you before. Transferring all of those people over to the Health Department, you have, I believe, something like 1,500 fit-tests that have to be done. There are a number of personnel that have to be retrained within law enforcement, that have to renew their certification every three years. And I just want to make sure that you can -- can you provide that service in your department? And what effect does it have on you to move these people back?

MR. DELAGI:

Thank you, Legislator Browning. And thank you for the opportunity to answer the questions. My name is Bob Delagi, I'm the Acting Director of the EMS Division in the Department of Health Services.

Prior to the 2012 Adopted Budget which called for the transfer of select Police civilian trainers into my department, we had no responsibility for Police training, for fit-testing or for any such activity. Since the 2012, we remained kind of in the dark in the context that we have taken no responsibility for those employees as they were directed to stay in the Police Academy performing those functions. So we have had no real opportunity to take a look at the through-put and its impact on my department.

Now, having said that, since the 2012 Adopted Budget went into effect, we have had some staffing changes, as had the Police Department staff. So it is my belief at this time that we would not be able to keep up with the Police training requirements with our current staffs here in the Department of Health Services. That's the answer to part one of your question.

To part two of your question, with regard to 1380. If the intent is to simply restore on paper the individuals formerly assigned to the Police Department, put on paper in my department, to now be moved back to the Police Department, then no, there would be no impact on the Department of Health Services' ability to continue to train Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics in the County of Suffolk.

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair, also if we will, Dr. Coyne has waited very patiently here.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

If I may. Am I understanding this correctly, that those individuals that are supposedly being transferred back from Suffolk County EMS to Suffolk County PD never actually made their way to Suffolk EMS?

MR. DELAGI:

That's correct, Legislator Calarco.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

All right, I think we can call the vote. We have a motion to approve. Legislator Spencer, go ahead, please.

LEG. SPENCER:

Certainly. I did want to have Dr. Coyne, if he would come forward, please. Dr. Coyne, I know you've been waiting a long time, it's been an extremely long meeting. I also wanted to just ask real quickly with regards to revenue differences between EMT training versus Certified First Responder training; could you briefly comment on that with regards to just budgetary impact? My understanding is that there is actually increased revenue related because of what we're able to charge for the EMT training versus the Certified First Responder.

DR. COYNE:

Yes. Thank you. Thank you to the committee. All -- each student that is trained in the Police Academy as EMT, originally and recertified, we receive reimbursement from New York State. For original EMT certification that our -- the Police recruits are going through right now, we receive \$775 per student from the State, for recertification we receive \$425 for EMT recertification. Since 1989, all of our officers have been certified as EMT's.

Given the number of courses and students, we projected to train and 2012 will generate a revenue source of \$336,000 for the General Fund of Suffolk County. If we were to change the status of our EMS providers to Certified First Responders, which is basically a first-aider, we would lose \$294,000 of revenue. So we are funded pretty well by maintaining our officers at the EMT level.

LEG. SPENCER:

Thank you, Sir. I appreciate that.

DR. COYNE:

Thank you.

LEG. GREGORY:

I have a question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Dr. Coyne, could you tell me why a number of our Police Officers are not currently recertified as they should be?

DR. COYNE:

Yes. I will just start by preempting that question. In 2012, we have the most robust plan to recertify Police Officers; we have 26 scheduled courses to recertify the Police Officers on the street in the Patrol Division.

There is always a problem to recertify officers because we have to take them for a week from their commands in the precincts. Sometime the precincts are short-staffed, particularly in the summer time, there may be a task force going on, there may be some other problems. And we have to work within the contract, within the PBA contract, which allows them certain days off and so on, and we try adamantly to get them in for recertification. This year, 2012, that was one of our primary concerns was to address the lapse in certification of some of our officers. I might say, the officers who are lapsed typically are not lapsed too long and we try to -- we make every effort to get them in so that they can take the EMT test and be recertified for three years. It's a three-year cycle.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

But the lapse is not generally a result of having not enough trainers, but more along the lines of a result of not having enough Police Officers to backfill the position to release the Police Officer to go in for training.

DR. COYNE:

That is correct. We do not pay -- I think what was brought up in the beginning of this by Legislator Kennedy, the original resolution, budgetary resolution that was passed in November was predicated on the fact that there would be \$337,000 Police overtime savings. In fact, we do not authorize any overtime for training of our Police Officers for EMT. So we don't pay them overtime for attending the academy and we don't pay -- if they're going to be absent from their commands, we don't pay for any overtime covering for that absence.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Does anybody else have any questions for Dr. Coyne? If you could, Legislator Kennedy, we are quite overdue and we have quite a few more resolutions on the agenda.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Go ahead. I'm not a member of the committee. If the committee is ready to vote, go right ahead. I hope you can support it.

LEG. GREGORY:

I have a question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm curious as to know who -- at what direction or order was it that these personnel that's supposed to be transferred to the EMS Division weren't transferred and who ignored a legally binding document that this Legislature adopted last year?

DR. COYNE:

We did not ignore the Legislative resolution. What happened was we had a new class, recruit class starting and they were in the academy, physically in the academy. We were preparing to train them, we're about half-way -- we've trained about half the recruits at the current time. The County Exec's Office was advised by the Police Department and the decision was made that because we were already totally committed to training the officers, we had the instructors in place, and because the recruits are under very strict discipline, we had no mechanism in which to supervise them if they were not to be at the academy. And frankly, nobody was set up to really receive them to do the training, so we were sort of caught and we had to continue training them at the academy. Nevertheless, the site of training did not mean that the funding didn't take place or the salaries, the salaries were transferred to the FRES and to the Health Department who continued to pay the instructors while they were in the Police Academy. So there was no -- there was no attempt to circumvent the budgetary resolution.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I believe we have a motion and we have a second. Does anybody else want to make any other motions? Seeing none, all those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? The resolution carries.

Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Dr. Coyne. Thank you, Mr. DeLagi, for being here today.

DR. COYNE:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

IR 1452-12 - Requiring health insurance contributions by exempt employees (Presiding Officer Lindsay). I'm going to make a motion to discharge this without recommendation.

LEG. SPENCER:

I'll second the motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

On the motion?

LEG. ROMAINE:

On the motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

You know, I have no objection to this being discharged for consideration for the full body. But because of a scheduling mishap, there are -- there is another resolution out there that we're looking -- that will now -- wasn't laid on the table in time, but will be laid on the table at the next meeting, IR 1492, that would delay the implementation for the exempt employees until every single bargaining unit agreed to the exact same deal. We don't want to see separate classes of employees and employees treated differently as it regards to health care. And we will have that debate at another time, but I appreciate --

Applause

I appreciate you discharging this without recommendation. And I'm hoping that my colleagues will table this until the other bill can be up and we can debate both bills because we think that's important. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Kennedy, quickly, please.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay, I'll make it very quick. Again, while I'm not a member of this committee, there are a number of concerns that I would bring to the members of the committee. And quite frankly, discharge without recommendation in this case where we're talking about, you know, the impacts for a \$320 million insurance program that is going to have ramifications across the board for all our workforce, I think it's critical that the committee get a look at what the impacts are.

One of the questions that I would pose, through the Chair, is exempt employees are identified here for participation, but the resolution is silent when it talks about retirees. Quite frankly, the only thing that really governs how this would be implemented is the EMHP planning document and operating document, and I have never seen that. And quite frankly, I would challenge anybody around this horseshoe to say that they ever seen it or read it or be able to give us an answer.

We're being asked to take an action on a very vague, ambiguous resolution that, quite frankly, gives tremendous latitude to the Executive's Office. And I think it's something that the committee should be very concerned about, because we're not only affecting the existing workforce but, quite frankly, all our retirees. It is truly an area I think that is not ripe yet for action out of the committee. And I would ask, through the Chair, what is the dollar and cent amount that the Administration is looking to achieve when it comes to this contribution?

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman, if I might respond? Because this is the County Executive's bill.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

This is actually the Presiding Officer's resolution.

MR. ZWIRN:

Actually, it was a bill that the County Executive supports. And if I might just --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Sure, go ahead. Quickly, please.

MR. ZWIRN:

This bill affects the elected officials and the exempts, not the union workers. We've laid off 315 people, they've got their notices. The County Executive is saying, "Look, right now the only people that are feeling any pain at all are the people that are getting laid off," and it's not fair and he knows it's not fair. So here he is suggesting, along with the Presiding Officer, to pass this bill where exempt employees and elected officials will pay into their health care.

At some point he's going to go before the unions and ask for a contribution as well. And if we don't do it first, you know, we can lead from behind or we can try to lead from the front, and this would be a good example. The savings with the exempts are not great, but it's more setting a tone and setting an example in these tough economic times. The time has come for people to pay for part of their health care. It's been one of the big debates that's waged across not just here, across the State, across the country. This bill would start that in motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay, thank you. Legislator Cilmi, you had some questions.

LEG. KENNEDY:

One --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I'm going to let Legislator Cilmi, who's on the committee, speak and then we'll come back to you, John.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks, Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions. Legislator Kennedy mentioned briefly the issue of retirement. I'm wondering how this resolution deals with overtime pay. Does that get -- does that get included in the calculation of the person's income or not or?

MR. NOLAN:

Yeah, I -- the intention of the sponsor is that this applies to base pay, it doesn't include other type of pay. It's base pay, your base salary.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. The percentages that are contemplated in this resolution, can anyone speak to exactly how they were derived?

MR. NOLAN:

I don't know how the sponsor arrived at those percentages. He asked me to draft a bill with these percentages, but he did not share with me the reasoning. So he would have to speak to that.

LEG. CILMI:

I mean, has anyone taken a look at what other municipalities or jurisdictions do in terms of variable rates of contribution for health insurance coverage? Does anyone know?

MR. ZWIRN:

I believe that there are some numbers that have been done. I can speak anecdotally that when I was in the Town of Babylon I paid 25% toward mine.

LEG. CILMI:

But was that across the board for all employees?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes, I believe that was across the board. This one is staggered, it's over \$150,000 you pay 25%; for 50 --

LEG. CILMI:

Right, I understand the formula.

MR. ZWIRN:

-- it would be 20 and then 15% below.

LEG. CILMI:

But the question I'm interested in is are there any other municipalities, particularly locally, that have variable contributions based on salary?

MR. ZWIRN:

I'll get you the numbers.

LEG. CILMI:

That would be fine.

MR. ZWIRN:

And the Presiding officer can.

LEG. CILMI:

Sure.

MR. ZWIRN:

But on the State -- I mean, the State workers today contribute to their health care.

LEG. CILMI:

I understand.

MR. ZWIRN:

It's not unusual today.

LEG. CILMI:

Listen, I'm fully committed to contributing to health care costs here, so. The last question I had was with regard to our aggregate health care insurance costs in the County. Maybe to Budget Review; do we know exactly what our health insurance costs us on an annual basis?

MS. VIZZINI:

The way health insurance costs are presented in the budget, there -- in 2012 there's a line item of \$320 million, that is the cost to provide the insurance to all our employees, active and retirees.

LEG. CILMI:

Three hundred and twenty million. When was the last time anybody explored the option of moving away from a self-insurance policy to utilizing some other company to do the insurance? And has anything -- has anybody looked at the breadth of coverages that are offered in our self-insurance plan to see whether or not there could be changes made to that coverage that would save us significant money?

*(*Side bar conversation between Gail Vizzini & Ben Zwirn*)*

And if you don't have answers now, that's fine. If we're going to discharge this, as long as we can get that information prior to the meeting on Tuesday, I'm fine. I just -- there are questions that

have been in my mind, I didn't want the day to go by without asking them, that's all.

MR. ZWIRN:

We'll provide the information that we have and I'm sure that the Presiding Officer will provide additional information, but those numbers are available.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Again, I'll make it quick, but I just -- a couple of things that I want to clarify, Ben. First of all, you know, the notion that it has now come time for employees to couldn't be lies everything that's going on for the last two years there's \$27 million that have been worth of savings that have been derived through EMHP.

Applause

So the notion that employees don't contribute is, once again, no a fact-based notion. There is contribution derived from the governing entity, EMHP, which as of today still hasn't been told what the point of savings is that the Executive is looking for. And so I'll go back to the point that I brought to the committee again, we are being asked to endorse some type of a concept or a notion or this tenant, if you will, that lacks much of anything in the way of specificity. There are huge unanswered questions here. And if you look at the eleven thousand members, it's a twenty-three hundred dollar per year contribution right now that's being made.

So of course it's the purview of the committee to take the act that they choose, but this and more is what I'll be bringing forward on Tuesday when we are looked as the only entity that is now lagging; The exempts are lagging and are being asked now to go contributory. It's something that I think goes exactly to equity.

MR. ZWIRN:

The lag would expire on November 1st and that's when this would kick in, so there would not be a double hit.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

John, you mentioned that each employee is paying twenty-three hundred dollars as it stands; explain that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I would be happy to, Kate, and it is -- Legislator Browning. And it is one of the things that for all of us has been the most elusive aspect of this process. And actually, the AME leader right there in the front row, the two of them could sit here and speak to us dispositively all afternoon about the actions of EMHP.

Applause

Not a single one of us can speak with any degree of knowledge at all about what goes on in our committee. The twenty-three hundred dollars per year speaks to the amount of reduction that we

have sustained as employees associated with our medical prescription coverage, with our copays, with our near-full dollar-for-dollar charge for medical equipment, with our reduction in the number of participatory physicians, with the radical change in the way our plan is implemented. And if you compare or contrast where we were and where we are now, twenty-three hundred bucks.

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Muratore.

LEG. MURATORE:

Actually, this is for Counsel. George, how can we charge one person more than we charge another person for the same policy? Are they getting the same coverage, yet they're paying a different premium; is that legal, is that fair?

MR. NOLAN:

This was actually -- a question was raised by Legislator Kennedy and, you know, under ERISA that you could not do this, but ERISA doesn't apply to a municipal plan. We weren't able to find anything else in Federal or State law that would prohibit a plan like this that would make higher paid employees pay a higher percentage. So as far as I can determine, there's nothing to prohibit this type of resolution.

LEG. MURATORE:

So if we were private, then this would be illegal. We're comparing to private, but we're not acting as private.

MR. NOLAN:

As I said, we're not subject --

Applause

We're not subject to ERISA.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Do we have any other questions on the motion? Okay, we have a motion to discharge without recommendation and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Motion is discharged without recommendation (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).***

IR 1453-12 - Authorizing retirement incentive for all County Bargaining Units (Kennedy).

LEG. ROMAINE:

Motion.

LEG. BROWNING:

Well, we have questions.

LEG. CILMI:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion by Legislator Romaine. Seconded by Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. BROWNING:

On the motion.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

On the motion, Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

A couple of things. I'm reading the financial impact. And BRO's report is saying, assuming the same participation we had experienced from the PBA, SOA, SDA, and no backfill of vacated positions, you estimate 34 participants out of the entire membership and a net savings of \$696,000 in 2012, 612,000 in 2013. You continue to say that, *"This will vary based on the number of actual participants and their salaries. Although, the Legislative Intent is to mitigate the July 1st layoffs, backfilling these positions will result in a greater 2012-2013 budget deficit."* So, I mean, I don't believe the bill talks about restoring any positions, if I'm not mistaken. So the Budget Office is basically saying only -- they only assume that 34 participants.

The second part, my concern is is that the agreement with the PBA and the SOA was not something that was negotiated with us. I would like to go back -- and John, I think you remember with the John J. Foley workers. I clearly made a statement about negotiating with the John J. Foley workers for the seal and the layoff of 200 plus John J. Foley employees. I was highly criticized for interfering. So my concern is are we interfering with the collective bargaining unit with this bill? Maybe George can answer.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

George?

MR. NOLAN:

What the bill does, it -- I think it recognizes that the County Executive would have to negotiate such an agreement with the collective bargaining unit. So what it does, it authorizes the Labor Relations Director to offer the same type of incentive to the collective bargaining units that was offered to the PBA and the Superior Officers and the Detectives, but ultimately it is up to the County Executive to negotiate such an agreement.

LEG. BROWNING:

So if we pass this bill, it would not necessarily guarantee that it's -- I don't want to fool the 315 people, I don't want to fool the union or any of the workers to say we're going to pass this bill and it's a reality. So the bottom line is we really don't have any control and it's going to be up to the County Executive.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, but through the Chair, can I -- if I may?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I'd like to hear the answer from Counsel on that, real quickly.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Sure.

MR. NOLAN:

Yeah, I would just reiterate what I said earlier which is, yes, this has to be negotiated. We can pass this resolution. No, it doesn't mean it's automatically going to happen. The County Executive is going to have to negotiate this with the unions.

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Now?

MR. ZWIRN:

And if I can jump in?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

No, I have --

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman, if I could just say that the County Executive's position with this bill, as it was amended, would not be acceptable.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Ben, I'll give you just a moment in a moment. Legislator Spencer is actually next on the list.

LEG. SPENCER:

Actually, I wanted to find out the County Executive's position, so it works out perfectly.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

There's your opening, Ben.

MR. ZWIRN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Legislator Spencer. This is a tool of labor negotiations with the County Executive's Office. We're glad to see that at least some of the members would support an early retirement incentive, but we would like to craft it differently than what has been proposed here.

If you look at the savings, as Legislator Browning pointed out from the fiscal impact statement, it's \$612,000 or something in that range without any restoration of positions; the bill as amended, as I understand it, now calls for the restoration of positions. The problem that we face is that in the 2012 budget, which we are living with now, there was \$68 million in turnover savings that was approved by the Legislature, Legislator Romaine, Legislator Kennedy supported that; 68 million that we anticipate savings this year in turnover savings, a little over \$8 million versus the 68 that was budgeted. So the talk about restoration on an early retirement incentive is premature to find out what we really will face. We would like the opportunity to do that with the newly elected union leaders and make that a part of the negotiations and not do it publicly and here before the Legislature. We'd ask you for that consideration.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Yes. I would like to ask Gail Vizzini on the record. There was an early retirement deal that the Executive negotiated with the PBA, the SOA and the Detectives; on balance, will that deal save the County money or will it cost the County money?

MS. VIZZINI:

We just need a minute to look at the results.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

While you look up those numbers, Legislator --

LEG. ROMAINE:

I think there's an answer forthcoming. Ms. Vizzini?

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Gail, do you have something for us?

MS. VIZZINI:

I do.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay.

MS. VIZZINI:

I do. It was almost a break-even. What was negotiated with the PBA, SOA, was an incentive to remove people from the payroll earlier than they would have ordinarily retired.

LEG. ROMAINE:

April instead of July.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yes, because Police get their accruals very different than the rest of the bargaining units. There is an incentive for this segment of the law enforcement unions to stay to get a lump sum accrual on July 2nd.

LEG. ROMAINE:

So will this deal save the County money or cost the County money?

MS. VIZZINI:

It's almost a break-even, Legislator Romaine. There was sufficient participation in the -- there was 69? They actually exceeded the -- the minimum number of participants had to be in the area of about 55, they exceeded that, they got 69 participants. Because of the cash situation, the initial agreements actually had to be modified because we don't have the cash to pay everybody, so the date by which they are allowed to get their terminal pay had to be changed as well. But when all was said and done, there was enough to mitigate the bumping and retreating and to mitigate the resulting -- the layoffs of 38 recruits that would have resulted from the bumping and retreating and what have you. There was no further savings beyond that.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Was there an overall savings or was it an overall cost?

MS. VIZZINI:

Interestingly enough, in this case it did break even.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Thank you, if that's your answer that this broke even. I spoke with Legislator Kennedy about this resolution. I felt that this deal for early retirement was being offered. I understand there's over 200 people that are eligible today in this County, many of them at high pay that are working. I don't agree with backfilling them, but if we could incentivize them with a lifetime guarantee of health benefits till 65, as we did those Police Officers that retired, and I think there would be a heck of a lot more than 34 people that would take advantage and everyone that retired would save a layoff.

Applause

And I believe it behooves our Executive to do all he can to incentivize people to leave as opposed to laying off people.

Furthermore, I have suggested to the Executive on several occasions to members of his staff that they approach the Governor, considering the situation in Suffolk County, and suggest that anyone with 30 years of service, age 50 or older, be allowed to retire without penalty and collect their pension --

Applause

-- and you would see a lot more people leave by incentivizing retirement. And there's no incentive we would have to pay out, we would talk about no backfills and I think that would be extremely beneficial.

There were several other alternatives in terms of raising revenue that have been discussed with the Administration that, for one reason or another, they chose not to do, as is the right. No one elected anyone around this horseshoe as County Executive, the voters elected Mr. Bellone, he has a very tough job, I respect that. But I would say to him, any incentives for retirement is preferable to layoff and we should explore every option.

UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Yes.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And I will be working with Legislator Kennedy on his resolution.

Applause

And I will be hoping that we consider an early retirement, much of which I've talked about. It may come in different forms or different formats, but I think in the end it is certainly preferable to layoffs. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Again, my rationale for putting this resolution forward was simple. Knowing that we have, I believe, across all of the bargaining units some probably 400 plus individuals that given some type of an inducement, and as of today that representation about exclusion from contribution is yet to be defined. There is no dollar cost yet that's been associated because, quite frankly, we just looked at the resolution before us which is moving forward but has not yet been acted.

I think it is a more humane and, quite frankly, a more cost effective way to shrink our workforce, allowing our employees to have some degree of certainty as they go from retirement age through till 65, cognisant of the fact that they won't have to contribute. And we'll miss them dearly. Any of us who have been here in County service for a long time know what the consequences of the retirements back in 2002 were, I know firsthand. Institutional knowledge goes out the door and it's tough, it is not easy to work beyond that. But anything that we can do to avoid a layoff is absolutely critical at this time. And we are in a very limited window. Action today allows for the possibility on

Tuesday, be it for something that, you know, might be forthcoming from the Administration. We go beyond Tuesday, July 1 comes and goes and there'll be no opportunity to avoid, mitigate or reduce what we have on that layoff list right now. That's the rationale.

Applause

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Ben, go ahead.

MR. ZWIRN:

I just want to reiterate the depth of this problem, and that restoring positions on any scale that I think Legislator Kennedy, because of an early retirement incentive, is putting out false hope. We're not done, there are a lot more things that are going to have to come about. Look at Nassau County; they're talking about zero contribution to employee benefits on that part. They've closed half the precincts, they've sold the Sewer District, they privatized the entire bus service. I mean, that's what happens when we don't, you know, make corrections along the way. We have really serious problems here. And I think we have to -- you have to recognize it.

I've heard all the people that spoke here today. You know, you'd have to be -- have no compassion at all to understand how it affects people, and it does, and the folks who came in today put a face on it. It's not an easy decision, it should not be an easy decision, but we cannot spend money we do not have. And if you want to raise taxes, that's one way to do it, but I don't -- as Legislator Browning says, I don't think there's a commitment in this climate that the public wants to see taxes go up. They're all struggling.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But all the language in this reso does is allow a department to apply some of the foregoing salary to mitigate a layoff. Ben, if you look at --

MR. ZWIRN:

But we can do that without this resolution, Legislator Kennedy. Let the County Executive do his job. Let him sit down with the unions and work out agreements, and I think an early retirement incentive may very well be on the table as well. Let him do -- let him be the County Executive.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But Ben, listen, I hear what you're are saying. And it is not my place or anybody around this horseshoe to take the place of the Executive Branch of government, but we also have to listen to what we hear from those that come into our office and get on the phone. And the AME President is sitting there saying they've knocked on the door and there's nobody there.

Applause

So you want us to let him do the job, he's got to do the job.

MR. ZWIRN:

I don't believe that's entirely true, so. I mean, that's what he said, but --

LEG. KENNEDY:

All right.

"Boos" From Audience

MR. ZWIRN:

Folks, he's your President, you can deal with him the way you have to, but I'm telling you what I know.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. I have a few questions of my own, and this goes to the Budget Review, I think, for the most part. Gail, you're estimating that 34 employees out of how many will take this?

MS. VIZZINI:

This retirement incentive is very, very broad. The way it's written, it only excludes the PBA, SOA and Detectives; so Correction Officers, Probation Officers, it's very broad. So there's 433 people who have 30 years of service and 55 years of age, and if they're in the law enforcement unions, 20 years of service, correct, and the appropriate age, so it's 433 people.

We use the same participation rate as the incentive offered the Police, 7.9%. The reason being when you budget, you know that many of those people with 30 years of service and 55 years of age, that is the magic number in public service. A portion of those people are going to go anyway. A portion of those people in the law enforcement community who hit the 20 years are going to go anyway. So we take off the complete savings. So on top of the people who would normally retire among those 433, returns -- you know, for fiscal impact purposes, 34% will go -- 34 individuals will go. It could change. If people think that not paying for health insurance is the best thing since sliced bread, more people will go.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

So the 34 that go are your estimates that will go on top of who would regularly retire?

MS. VIZZINI:

Yes. Yes.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

And exactly what is -- or maybe the sponsor should speak to this. Exactly what is the incentive you're offering here?

LEG. KENNEDY:

The incentive is simple. That those that leave -- as the resolution's written right now, the window would be through June 1 and June 30, I believe; right, Counsel?

MR. NOLAN:

(Nodding in the affirmative)

LEG. KENNEDY:

If they've, you know, expressed their intention to go ahead and leave and retire, and presumably that's manifested by a copy of the application that they filed with the New York State Retirement System right over here on Motor Parkway, then they will be extended a writing that I presume is the same type of writing that was given to those retirees who just separated from law enforcement. There are 77 -- 74, I'm sorry, 74 individuals that just left from law enforcement.

MS. VIZZINI:

No.

LEG. KENNEDY:

How many, 79?

MS. VIZZINI:

No, 69, a couple of them dropped off.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Sixty-nine, okay. Regardless of what we do with this bill or any other bill in this Legislature, until they hit age 65, when it comes to the whole rest of the workforce and contribution in any way, shape or form into health insurance, they will pay nothing, not five cents.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

So the incentive is that these employees will not have to pay into their health care when they leave.

LEG. KENNEDY:

They will not have to pay in the form of an out-of-pocket that we're looking at as far as what's being contemplated here. Adjustments to the plan? Again, I'll go back to EMHP, that is the irony of all of this. We are being asked to make significant decisions when not a single one of us sits at the EMHP table.

Applause

And it is to our detriment that we're being compelled to go ahead and lead the horse, if you will, to what goes on there. This --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

This is doing the same thing. You're asking us to make a pretty big decision without understanding how the plan works; correct?

LEG. KENNEDY:

What we're being asked to do here is give those employees -- and again, look, you know, I try and work in concretes, you know how it is. Somebody like me who's almost 56 with 37 years in the system who could go out the door tomorrow, watch Jerry Springer and eat Co-Co Puffs, you've got to give folks some inducement to go out the door, and there's 400 plus of them out there right now who could do that.

In the meantime, there's 315 people --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Being laid off.

LEG. KENNEDY:

-- many of whom just stood at this podium talking about losing their house, losing their job, losing their cars, losing their whole way of life that they've done for us. It's a simple presence; let's facilitate those who can go without having the economic let go.

That's the premise.

UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:

It's logic.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Gail, I guess I've got to ask the question again.

MS. VIZZINI:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

So if we have 34 potential employees who could retire --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Out of 400?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Well, say -- well, let me ask this question. Say half of the potential employees were to leave; what would the savings be from them?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Huge. Huge.

CHAIRPERSON CALARCO:

Did you -- could you tell us, like, say, out of the 432, 200 of those individuals left, what would the savings be from that?

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, the average salary is, what, 40 -- you know, when all is said, we figured 40?

*(*Side bar conversation between Gail Vizzini & Bob Doering*)*

We're going to calculate the numbers, but what you're asking is not -- what you're asking is if 200 people leave, based on their salary, how much money comes off the payroll; correct?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Well, what I'm trying to find out is if what Legislator Kennedy is claiming, that the 34 number is probably low, what is the potential savings if more than 34 were to leave? If they were to say, you know, not having to pay health insurance is a guarantee of something that's going to make me leave early. What is the potential savings from a hundred going or 200 going as opposed to the 34?

MS. VIZZINI:

Remember, we're already almost six months through the year and the effective date for getting off the payroll is June 30th, so the savings are only going to be July through December of 2012. A six month basis --

MR. LIPP:

Six months would be 20,000.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, it's \$20,000 for each person who leaves.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. For every person that leaves, realistically -- it sounds like we had about 69 Police Officers go and we saved 38 positions through that. So for how many -- for every position that leaves through this incentive, at what point do we no longer break even when we replace those positions with people who are slated to be laid off? And does this resolution speak to abolishing the position of the person who retires? Because that's the only way to actually achieve those savings in the budget.

MS. VIZZINI:

Remember, this resolution, at the request of the sponsor, was very inclusive. So you have law enforcement salaries in here, you have AME salaries that vary, so it's --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I understand that, and I'll be asking questions on that a little bit, too, because that's a little bit more further. It goes through some of the information we need to understand to know exactly how this

proposal is going to impact us and whether or not we can actually save jobs with this proposal which is, at the end of the day, something we all want to do.

MS. VIZZINI:

Right. Well, one of the things we should be talking about is whether an early retirement incentive is the only way. There are a lot of other ways, and this is the type of thing that the County Executive needs to address with the unions. It is the type of thing that your Budget Review Office and the County Executive's Budget Office are respectfully bringing to the elected officials to make different types of decisions.

You know, it comes down to whether -- how vigorous an incentive this is, not having to pay health insurance if the County goes that way. It's different than the 2010 incentive that was a Retirement System incentive that actually gave people service credit, enhanced pension and this and that and the other thing. So, you know, this is modeled after the PBA agreement, so we modeled the participation after the PBA agreement.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

What is that break-even point?

MS. VIZZINI:

You want to restore 319 positions?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I don't think that there is enough to retire to restore 315 positions, but what is the break-even point? At what point does 34 people go, how much does that allow us to rehire, to take back before it's costing us money?

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, just quick and dirty, half the number of people that were laid off, half that number of people would have to leave with salaries and benefits of equal account, because you've got six more months. But if you're going to fund those people in 2013, now you have to add that to the \$530 million deficit because they're not budgeted. You have to be prepared to raise taxes, sales tax and make other cuts; those types of actions have to follow.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

But that's my question, at what point does this particular action help us offset another person's position and bring that person back? Regardless of -- if we do this action today, save no other action in the future, what are we -- at what point are we able to bring people back or restore positions from the layoff list without it costing us funds? Because at the end of the day, that's what this resolution is supposed to do.

*(*Side bar conversation between Gail Vizzini & Robert Lipp*)*

MS. VIZZINI:

Five people have to leave over -- you know, effective as close to July 1st as possible to bring one person back.

UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBERS:

Five?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Now, if a Probation Officer were to leave, and I think there's four that are eligible as per this resolution, how does that apply to saving somebody else? Because the Probation Officers, none of them were being laid off, so if a Probation Officer decides to take the incentive, how does that affect

our budget? Because does that mean that we get to -- we're going to have to rehire that Probation Officer if we had made the decision we wanted to stay at this particular number of Probation Officers on active duty. So if that person leaves, are we going to -- if we rehire that person, are we actually at a loss there? Are we going to be losing money? And does that free up any space for hiring say the other person within the Probation Department who was laid off?

MS. VIZZINI:

The resolution doesn't define how the mitigation would go into effect. It does, the amended copy as of 4/30. The Health Department has to generate certain savings to put Health Department people back, the Probation Department has to generate certain savings to put people back. If a Probation Officer were to take this, it's possible that the Probation Department would need to put back two AME employees because the clerical support staff is vital to the Probation function. That's a policy decision that would have to be made somewhere along the line.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Well, I think there was a policy decision made not to lay off anybody who actually does the Probation work because they're already short of staff but, I mean, every department is short of staff these days.

What about the Correction officers? How many Correction Officers are eligible to take this incentive? Because I know that the State is kind of demanding that we hire Correction Officers right now.

MS. VIZZINI:

Right. Well, there were no Correction Officers abolished, so.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

How many are eligible for the retirement incentive?

MS. VIZZINI:

He's getting the data.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I know there was none abolished, that's part of the issue.

MS. VIZZINI:

One hundred and three.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

One hundred and three. Out of the 438 individuals that are eligible, 103 are Correction Officers.

MS. VIZZINI:

Correct.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

And if those 103 retire, what is the cost to us? Because we're going to have to rehire those people.

MS. VIZZINI:

Well --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

All 103 and then some, just to open the jail, otherwise we're going to be looking at even higher costs.

LEG. D'AMARO:

How does this save us money?

D.P.O. HORSLEY:

Yeah, that's the big question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I'm just trying to crunch the numbers here, Gail. I need to know what we're doing here. I'm all for an early retirement incentive, I'm all for anything we can do to save a job. But I want to make sure that if we do this it's actually going to save a job and not result in us having to vote in November to lay off an extra 100 people. I don't want to have to do that again.

MR. LIPP:

There's a simple rule of thumb when you do an early retirement incentive, of course they vary, but as a simple rule of thumb, 20% backfill is a break-even. So what we're talking about 20% backfill, as Gail had said a minute ago, is if five people take us up on it we can bring back one person. There's a lot of assumptions involved, I won't bore you with the details. That being said, you're a hundred percent correct, that if we -- if this particular early retirement incentive, if there are Correction Officers that us up on it because of the shortage of Correction Officers at the jail, we would just have to rehire. So that rule would be more adverse if we're talking about Correction Officers; it just wouldn't work with them.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

But they're included in the resolution as it speaks.

MR. LIPP:

Correct.

CHAIRPERSON CALARCO:

As are the Probation Officers.

MR. LIPP:

Correct.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Are there any other types of employees that are on the list that weren't privy to the layoffs? I guess such as workers in DSS, Caseworkers, CPS workers; any other individuals who may take this retirement who we wanted to avoid having to replace, wanted to avoid laying off so we wouldn't have to have the situation of those individuals not being able to do their work? I know there's a court order that's probably pending right now from the State about the way we process Medicaid and Food Stamp applications because we don't have enough employees to do that work. So if we have ten of those individuals take the incentive, what's that going to do to us; we're going to have to rehire those individuals as well?

MS. VIZZINI:

I had some of these same discussions with the sponsor.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I guess -- you know, listen, I would love to vote for an early retirement incentive, I want to have something to save the jobs, especially those people who are facing it this July. The more I ask these questions, the more it sounds to me like we vote for this, even if we over ten people from being laid off in July, we may end with another 20 or 25 or 30 coming on the table in November.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair, if I can, though, and again, I appreciate the indulgence the committee has extended. But as everybody has pointed out, what this resolution would do is authorize the Executive to go ahead and to enter into this incentive with the various collective bargaining agreements. We're all cognisant of the fact that actually we're desperate to open the jail, not only to let -- keep the Correction Officers we have now, but earnest discussion about whether we're going to have to send another class or not.

It remains within the Executive's ability as to whether or not he would execute a writing similar to the writings that were done with the various law enforcement entities that were out there. It is a mechanism and a medium that was put out there to attempt to facilitate the retirements in those areas that ultimately the Executive would deem to be appropriate.

And again, I'll go back to the amendment language was designed to provide the flexibility within the departments from which this whole layoff list was first originated, to make the determinations for those savings that would be occur -- realized by foregoing service. Look, this is aimed at the folks that have been in our workforce for 25 and 30 years, and are usually at top step and usually are at well above or at the upper end of that median salary.

Applause

You know, to characterize it at forty grand, the 200 that's going out there, quite frankly doesn't do justice to the actuality of our workforce. I think by moving the resolution, even if the committee was to entertain a discharge without recommendation, I'll leave here, I'll call the County Executive and ask him if he would be willing to go ahead and fashion a CN that might embrace some of the concepts so we could act on it on Tuesday.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Cilmi.

Applause

Yeah, just a couple of questions, taking off of what Legislator Kennedy just said. The layoff list that presently exists, what is the average salary of somebody on that list?

MS. VIZZINI:

Calculating.

LEG. SPENCER:

While they're calculating that, can I ask a question, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Go ahead, Legislator Spencer.

*(*The following testimony was taken by Diana Flesher & Transcribed by Alison Mahoney - Court Reporters*)*

LEG. SPENCER:

I listened to my colleague's remark that it authorizes -- to the Executive's office, with the collective bargaining process. Is the -- does this authorize the Executive, give him any authorization that he doesn't currently have with the collective bargaining process?

MR. ZWIRN:

No. No. In fact, one of the points we were going to ask, and Legislator Calarco asked it, about

Correction Officers. How many of these are District Attorneys? I mean, some of these positions are going to have to be restored immediately. And generally, when we've crafted early retirement incentives, we've let the department heads have input and we've prohibited law enforcement people to take it because we knew we'd have to replace them, Probation Officers weren't allowed at that time, Foley employees weren't allowed because we knew we'd have to replace them at the Foley center. That's -- that's why I say let the County Executive do his job. He understands that an early retirement incentive could be beneficial, but it has to be crafted in such a way that we're not coming back here in a few months doing this all over again, and it's got to be done. He's the County Executive, he's been here a couple of months. This is all part -- they're meeting now, I understand, AME is sitting down with -- well, they're supposed to be meeting today.

*(*Various Comments From Unknown Audience Members*)*

Well, I understood that they were ready to meet with them today. But the fact is is that the early retirement incentive is going to have to be negotiated. And I have to tell you, we still face a \$68 million turnover savings problem, so when you restore people there aren't budgeted for 2013, we're going to face this again at the end of the year when we do the budget. You still haven't -- we still haven't gotten an answer for how we're going to make up \$60 million in turnover savings. And we're talking about a problem that is of the magnitude that we have never seen out here and it's going to take a lot of different things. The most painful one is cutting back on personnel services, there's no question, on payroll and people losing their jobs, because it is a human tragedy. But you don't have money to pay these salaries. We tried to borrow our way, we tried to do a RAN, we couldn't even get underwriters to do it. So when you say we can borrow our way out of this, that's not necessarily true in this economy.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Gail, you had an answer for Legislator Cilmi?

LEG. CILMI:

Mr. Chair? Yes.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah. The overall savings for the layoffs was \$11.7 million; divided by the 315 layoffs, the average salary is \$37,000.

*(*Various Comments From Unknown Audience Members*)*

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So -- hang on. So I just need you to explain to me, then, assuming that the folks who would be taking advantage of an early retirement incentive have been with the County for some time and likely make a much larger average salary.

MS. VIZZINI:

Ninety-one thousand.

LEG. CILMI:

I'm sorry?

MS. VIZZINI:

Ninety-one thousand.

LEG. CILMI:

What's the 91,000 represent?

MS. VIZZINI:

The average salary of the people who have been here and are eligible to retire.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay, so that's two-and-a-half times or so. So how is that you need to have five of the \$91,000 employees totaling --

Applause

(Laughter) Hang on. It's an honest question. How is it that you have to have --

MR. LIPP:

Okay. It's simple.

LEG. CILMI:

Hang on, let me just finish, Rob.

MR. LIPP:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

How is it that you have to have five employees that are earning \$90,000 a year at a total cost of roughly \$450,000 go to have one employee making 35 our \$40,000 a year?

MR. LIPP:

When you're looking at early retirement incentives, you need to have a factor in there for how many people who would have retired anyhow, and in particular for those people you're not saving a dime.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, that's a little disingenuous, though. Because if people are going to retire they're going to retire.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Cilmi, I think that's exactly their point. If someone is going to retire they're going to retire, and if we're offering an early retirement incentive to only those people who are eligible to retire anyways, there's going to be a certain percentage of those individuals who are retiring one way or the other, so they're leaving. And those people are already accounted in our budget for turnover savings, that's part of what we do in our budgetary process.

The problem that we deal with when one individual leaves, we still have to pay that person's benefits, especially if we're going to say, "You get to leave and you never have to pay your health care again." So we're still paying for that person; we're paying for their health care, we're pay for their pension costs, we're still paying something for that individual. So that's why it's not an even one-on-one trade all the time.

LEG. CILMI:

I respect and understand that it's not an even one-on-one trade-off.

I just don't see the math that it's going to be -- that it's -- that you have a \$40,000 a year, you know, plus benefits cost versus a \$450,000 a year plus benefits cost; it just doesn't make sense to me. But maybe we can sit down and you can show me how it works, because it's just not computing.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I think we had motion on this, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Well, I have to say again, going back on John J. Foley Nursing Home, when I made recommendations of concessions, I was told that we were interfering, it was not something that we could do. Again, this is something that has to be negotiated with County Executive. Our passing this bill does not guarantee that anyone gets to do the early retirement.

Legislator Romaine's comments been contacting the Governor? Absolutely, let's do that. But I don't want to pass a bill that makes you think that you're going to get retired; that's my worry. And I'm just concerned about fooling everybody and making them think that, "Oh, now we're going to get this early retirement." It's not really an incentive. Yes, if you retire you won't have to pay your health benefits, that's the only incentive. There's no cash-outs on this one, like the incentives that you've seen in the past.

You know, again, I don't want to get involved with the collective bargaining unit and what their business is, that's something they have to discuss with the County Executive, I would like to make a motion to table for this cycle. Let the County Executive sit down and talk with the unions. Correction officers, do they want to retire? You know, let him talk to them, let the unions sit down and talk to them about the retirement and what can be done. And in the meantime, let's call the Governor. Let's get to the Governor and say, if we can do, you know, an early retirement incentive with no penalties, then let's get that done, if it's not going to have a negative effect on our revenue.

I'm just -- I'm not going to get up. I got criticized in the past for getting involved in the collective bargaining unit, I'm not going to do it again. So I'm making a motion to table.

LEG. SPENCER:

I have to second that motion. Also I believe in the collective bargaining process. I tabled my resolution earlier with regard to --

I haven't -- these decisions are gut wrenching. I don't want anyone to lose their job. It's killing me, I think it's a -- I think that we have to negotiate, we have to support our unions, we have to support our employees, and our Executive has to make these negotiations. That's why I'm seconding the motion.

LEG. KENNEDY:

On the motion, if I will, and I'll just leave one last statement here. Tabling this bill now, for all intent and purposes, does it in; you might as well table it subject to call or what have you. Because it is structured to allow for the offering period from June 1st through June 30th. That was done specifically to be able to try to, in a short period of time, crunch some funding to avoid layoffs.

If it's the desire to do some other things down the road, as Mr. Zwirn has said, there are many, many different things that we're going to have to contemplate and take a look at. And I will gel with my colleagues, you know, to go ahead and do anything that we have to do associated with the workforce. But this is an opportunity that's before this committee now, and it is designed specifically to try to help obviate some of what -- even if we were to be able to go ahead and take care of five, ten people. We heard so many ideas at this podium today that we've just not -- you know, not explored. I think, you know, it's the committee's will and I appreciate the time that you've put into this in considering. But that's pretty much where it's at.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I have a quick question for Counsel. If we pass this resolution, does it tie the County Executive's hands in negotiating an alternative early retirement plan?

MR. NOLAN:

I would say probably not, because we're authorizing him to go down this road.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Down a very specific road.

MR. NOLAN:

That's true, but he could take a different path. As I said earlier, specifically the language does not direct him to do it. It authorizes and empowers him to go this way; he could go in a different way.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Or he could go no way at all. Or he could go no way at all, he could just not do this. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm not a member of this committee, but I felt it important to be here today and to listen to all the employees. You know, this is not an easy decision. You know, on some level I appreciate Legislator Kennedy's efforts to address those employees that are leaving, unfortunately, but this bill really serves no purpose in the sense -- and I say that in the sense that, you know, it authorizes the County Executive powers of which he already has. I mean, it's almost -- it's akin to we might as well pass a bill authorizing the President to go to war with Iran, it has the same effect; he already has that power.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Actually, Congress.

LEG. GREGORY:

So we're not directing the County Executive to do anything that he doesn't already have the power to do and, you know, it's unfortunate. I think what would be a more beneficial exercise, and I would invite all of my colleagues here, present or not, to draft a letter -- and my office would be glad to do it, to the Governor or the State Legislature asking them to offer a State incentive. I believe Westchester County or some other County Upstate has already done that and has been denied, but that doesn't preclude us from seeking the same consideration. You know, 18 of us sign a letter saying that we want an early retirement incentive, so someone with 20 years of services at age 53 can retire and get credit for their service, and others, that's a more, I think, effective approach. You know, authorizing the County Executive to do something that he already is empowered to do, you know, is giving these poor people, you know, a false sense of hope that's not there. You know, that all lies within the bargaining and negotiating process, this bill does nothing to address that. You know, and it's unfortunate. It's unfortunate that, in a sense, that these people are getting a false sense of security when there's really nothing there in this bill, as drafted.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair, I -- this was not put forward to raise false hope, this was not put forward to go ahead and to really do anything other than put before this body what this body is charged to do in the Charter, and that is to adopt policy. We have a very clear separation of powers in this County; the Executive implements, we adopt the policy.

And while there may have been some inherent ability for the Executive to move in certain areas, there's been no clear policy directive from this body to him regarding implementing a retirement incentive as such. Quite frankly, we didn't adopt anything associated with the law enforcement incentive, he implemented it through a mutual writing. Now, we all communicated with him; we did not want to see Police laid off. But we have a policy resolution in front of us that would send a loud and clear message to him that we are expecting that he would go forward down this road.

As Counsel has said, there may be many paths to move down that road, and I'll defer to his wisdom as the Chief Executive Officer, but the policy comes out of this house. So I think it's very important to move forward with it, and it's done in only kind of a specious or deceitful manner.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

All right, I think we're going to call the vote. Unfortunately, this resolution, if the County Executive doesn't have to abide by it, then it actually doesn't do anything. We have a motion to table and a motion to approve. On the tabling motion, all those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Opposed to tabling for justice's sake, for justice.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I'm going to ask that the County Executive get together with AME in very short order to start working on something. Because if there's still not something reached by June 4th, I'm voting this out of committee. *Motion is tabled (VOTE: 3-2-0-0 Opposed: Legislators Romaine & Cilmi).*

LEG. HORSLEY:

Legislator Calarco, could I just add one comment on that vote of tabling? And I think it was the right decision. But the bottom line to all of this is that we have as Legislators the same ability to -- at the end of this meeting or whenever it is, whenever Danny and Cheryl are going to go over there and knock on his door, for us to say, "Listen, Mr. County Executive, we are" -- "We would like you to look at an incentive program." And we have that ability as legislators, as elected officials, and I believe this County Executive will listen to us. He has in the past, he's had that history. So it is our duty, our job to go over there and say, "Hey, take a look at an incentive program for employees. It may make sense." And I think that's -- I think that's what our message is today. And Robert, thank you very much for doing such a good job with such a difficult situation.

LEG. ROMAINE:

To Wayne's point, good point. I would simply say, and I certainly wouldn't disagree with your characterization of the County Executive, but I have a former -- soon-to-be former union leader, soon-to-be present union leader telling me they both walked down that road, knocked on that door and no one answered. We need -- and if I can use this podium in this horseshoe to send that message, we need this administration to sit with our union leaders. We need them to meet and, if necessary, to meet around the clock, bring in sandwiches, bring in coffee and get this done.

Applause

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Legislator Romaine. So, I think we've made a pretty clear message. I think to both our leadership, I think we're making a clear message to the leaders of both this County, our County Executive and of the union to get to the table and sit down and start talking. And you better do it fast otherwise, you know, things are going to get even uglier.

All right, we're going to move on with the agenda.

IR 1470-12 - Imposing a moratorium on wage increases for County Management Personnel (excluding employees at the Suffolk County Community College and the Board of Elections)(County Executive).

LEG. ROMAINE:

Question before a motion is made. This is a technical question. Are these the same people that we're -- whose pay that we lagged and now we're going to ask to pay for health benefits as well? I'm just asking if they're the same. Because obviously this is a road map and you don't have to not be -- if you're not an exempt employee you can see what's coming, that's why I asked that question.

MR. ZWIRN:

The answer is yes, it deals with exempts.

LEG. ROMAINE:

So we're freezing their pay --

MR. ZWIRN:

Let me answer your question; it deals with exempt employees.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. So we're freezing their pay, we're lagging their -- we're lagging their pay and then we're going to ask them to pay for health benefits. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Do we have a motion on the resolution?

LEG. SPENCER:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Motion to table by Legislator Spencer.

LEG. CILMI:

I'll second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Cilmi. On the motion, any questions? Okay? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Motion is tabled***
(VOTE: 5-0-0-0).

IR 1472-12 - Adopting Local Law No. -2012, A Local Law to ensure honesty in gas price advertising (Presiding Officer Lindsay). This is a Local Law, it needs to be tabled for a public hearing. I'll make the motion to table.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Seconded by Legislator Spencer. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***The resolution is tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)***.

1475-12 - Authorizing a voluntary wage freeze for Elected Officials (County Executive).

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman, this has to be tabled for an amendment. So I would ask it be tabled one cycle.

LEG. SPENCER:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Motion to table by Legislator Spencer. I'll second the motion.

LEG. CILMI:

On the motion. Just to Counsel; is this necessary?

MR. NOLAN:

We've done it with the lag payroll. Could an elected forgo a salary increase? You might have to write a check back to the County, I'm not sure how it would work, but you could effectuate a wage freeze without a resolution probably.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, you know, I wasn't going to do this and it's not -- certainly not why I did it, but I question the reason for this resolution. There really is no reason for the resolution, and the fact that we've done it in the past doesn't make it necessary. Because the fact is that I myself asked for a voluntary wage freeze back in April of last year and it was as simple as sending a letter to a variety of people, including the Presiding Officer, that basically said, "Freeze my salary." And I got word -- I wanted to make sure, because I know sometimes their systems don't work right, right? But I got word from the Comptroller yesterday that, in fact, the salary that I'm being paid being today is the same as the salary that I was being paid last year, is the same that is -- that's the salary that I was being paid when I was first elected and took office in 2010. So the fact of the matter is that you don't need this resolution. Why it would be filed is beyond me, really, but maybe the County Executive's Office could explain.

MR. ZWIRN:

We've asked it to be tabled. We'll discuss it before the next meeting. So I was going to ask you for it to be adopted, I'm just asking for it to be tabled, passed over.

LEG. CILMI:

Do you believe it's necessary, Ben?

MR. ZWIRN:

I think it was necessary to send a message I think to the public.

LEG. CILMI:

What's with all the messages?

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, it's important in this climate that we lead by example and we set some of these things on the record.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay, we have a motion. We are two-and-a-half hours overdue, almost three hours overdue on our committee here, and the Health Committee still needs to meet. Let's take the -- all those in favor? Opposed?

MS. LOMORIELLO:

You need a second.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I seconded the motion. All those in favor? Opposed? *Motion is tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).*

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman, before we adjourn, I just have one statement to make on the record. It has nothing

to do with a bill that we passed, that I promised I would put on the record. It was with IR 1452 which was discharged without recommendation, but it's critical that I just get this on the record. I promised that I would and we passed over it with a discharge motion so quickly that I did not get a chance. Just indulge me for just 30 seconds, that's all I'll need.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Is it really necessary?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yes, it really is necessary. And that was with the --

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Go ahead.

MR. ZWIRN:

It was with the healthcare bill. I just wanted to add that whatever is agreed to with the unions, that management and the exempt employees will also follow suit. There will not be a two-tiered system, there will be one. And that the insurance contribution will be pre-taxed for all County's -- County employees. I just want to get that on the record.

LEG. ROMAINE:

So -- if I may?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. No, no, no, no more comment. We're done.

LEG. SPENCER:

Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

I have a motion to adjourn. I second the motion. This committee's tabled.

LEG. CILMI:

Mr. Chairman, that begs a question.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

We're adjourned.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 4:39 PM*)*

{ } - Denotes Spelled Phonetically