

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
of the
Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Health & Human Services Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York, on **June 3, 2004**, at 9:30 A.M.

Members Present:

Legislator Lynne Nowick • Vice•Chair
Legislator Brian Foley
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Ricardo Montano
Legislator Vivian Vilorio•Fisher

Members Not Present:

Legislator Paul Tonna • Excused
Legislator Jay Schneiderman • Excused
Legislator Elie Mystal – Excused

Also in Attendance:

Mea Knapp • Counsel to the Legislature
Ilona Julius • Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Ron Cohen • Aide to Legislator Tonna
Jim Spero • Director/Budget Review Office
Linda Bay • Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa.
Dan Hickey • Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa
Kevin LaValle • Aide to Legislator Losquadro
Nick Dispenziere • Aide to Legislator Nowick
Ginny Sohr • Aide to Legislator Vilorio•Fisher
Priscilla Smith • Aide to Legislator Crecca
Ray Zaccarro • Aide to Minority Caucus
Ben Zwirn • Assistant County Executive/Intergovernmental Relations

Adam Santiago • County Executive's Office/Intergovernmental Relations
Janet DeMarzo • Commissioner/Department of Social Services
Ed Hernandez • Deputy Commissioner/Department of Social Services
Linda O'Donohoe • Assistant to the Commissioner/Dept of Social Services
Connie Bruno • Community Development Corporation
Roseann Gallagher • Town of Brookhaven Housing/Section 8 Housing
John Train • Town of Brookhaven Housing/Section 8 Housing.
Dr. Brian Harper • Commissioner/Department of Health Services
Joah Sapphire • Deputy Commissioner/Department of Health Services
Len Marchese • Administration/Department of Health Services
Kim Shaw • Office of Ecology/Department of Health Services
Walter Hilbert • Office of Waste Water Management/DHS
Lynne Bizzarro • Chief Deputy County Attorney
Steve Moll • Island Public Affairs
Andrew Pedone • Resident of Smithtown
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer.

(* The meeting was called to order at 9:45 A.M. *)

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Good morning, everybody. We're going to start this meeting but we're not going to vote.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

We can't vote, we don't have a quorum yet.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Right. So we're going to start first with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Vilorina • Fisher.

Salutation

Okay, we're going to start with the Commissioner of Social Services has a presentation I believe. Before I get into that, let me say that Legislator Tonna has an excused absence this morning and Legislator Schneiderman as well, due to a family illness for Legislator

Schneiderman. Good morning.

COMMISSIONER DEMARZO:

Good morning. Is this on? Oh, there you go. Good morning. At the recent Capital Project meeting there were questions raised regarding •• it was on the Tier II Shelter so there were questions regarding homelessness and housing initiatives and one of them was relative to the Section 8 Program Housing Vouchers and recent proposed Federal changes. So we thought it would be helpful if we gave an overview of the Section 8 Program and some of the recent changes proposed and what the effect might be.

Ed Hernandez, the Deputy Commissioner, has a very extensive background in housing so he has worked with the Public Housing Authorities in Suffolk County to develop a presentation for you today. We also have in the audience Connie Bruno from CDC and Roseanne Gallagher from Brookhaven Housing in case there was, you know, specific questions that were beyond the scope of our presentation. So with that, I would like Ed to lay out for you the Section 8 Program.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Good morning.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Before you begin, because I had told the Chair that I might have to run out, I have a 10:30 press conference because we're raising money to help the victims of the floods in the Dominican Republic in Haiti.

But I want to thank you in advance because I did ask the question on the record and you're very quick in coming back with a response, I'm very pleased to see you here. Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Okay. What I provided was a brief overview of the Section 8 Program which I'll go over in a minute and we did a survey of all the Public Housing Authorities in Suffolk County and there's a summary of that survey on the last page. And we could answer some questions; if not, Connie Bruno has graciously agreed to help us out with some of the more technical questions if there are any.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program is a Federal Housing Assistance Program administered through HUD and Public Housing Agencies. Locally, participating towns, villages have community development agencies and that agency, or a portion of that agency, serves as a Public Housing Authority. Also, there are two not-for-profits that are authorized to deal with Section 8, one is Community Development Corporation of Long Island and the other is the North Fork Housing Alliance.

(*Legislator Losquadro entered the meeting at 9:49 A.M.*)

The Section 8 stated objective is to provide financial voucher assistance to very low income •• a very low income is 50% of the area median income •• individuals of families, elders and disabled to afford them the opportunity to secure a decent, sanitary and safe housing. Housing units selected must meet acceptable levels of health and safety before the PHA can approve the unit. The PHA must inspect the dwelling and determine that the rent requested is reasonable. So I can assure you that when you hear complaints about landlords, slumlords and Section 8 Housing, that is not true, there are strict standards that Section 8 has to follow and those houses have to be inspected on a regular basis to make sure those standards are being met.

However, in deference to that, landlords are not required to take Section 8. Congress developed housing laws and appropriate Section 8 funding, HUD develops the regulations and the program framework. The local PHA's establish policies which are at the agency's discretion within those guidelines. HUD oversees and approves each PHA's administrative plan and I will also add New York State Division of Housing Community Renewal also has oversight powers on Section 8.

Section 8 has provisions for rental on home ownership assistance, although none of the PHA's in Suffolk •• well, I believe CDC just started the Homeownership Program, but most of the other PHA's do not have a homeownership component to the Section 8 piece. If the Section 8 recipient moves the voucher moves with them; once you have a voucher you can go anywhere in the country with that voucher, it's not restricted to where the voucher originated. However, there are regulations, if you're on the list and you receive a voucher and don't live in the jurisdiction that you do have to live there.

Section 8 is not time limited, assistance continues until the cost of the unit equals the household share of rent. So if that family keeps earning their share keeps going up, the Section 8 share keeps going down and when they can afford the rent on their own, that's when

their voucher becomes discontinued. Section 8 households pay directly to the landlord their share of the rent which is typically 30 to 40% on the initial lease•up. The Federal Section 8 Rental Program provides the remaining portion of rent by electronically transferring the funds to the towns or PHA's who pay the landlords directly. And I know the Commissioner asked me a question yesterday and I found the answer, if somebody is on Public Assistance, their Public Assistance grant is considered their, quote/unquote, income and their share of the Section 8 rent is based on that, their grant. And the County, as a matter of course, will restrict the rent and pay the landlord that share out of the grant directly.

The amount that Section 8 will pay, the subsidy will pay is determined by fair market rents. They can pay anywhere between 90 and 110% of the fair market rents; when I get to the chart, you'll see that a lot of them now are paying over 100% of fair market rent. The PHA may establish local preferences such as putting people who are homeless or living in substandard housing at the top of the list, paying more than 50% of their income for rent, those that are involuntarily displaced, people who are disabled, veterans and people who are elderly. Some of the PHA's do give preferences, most do not. I've also listed what the current 2004 HUD fair market rents for Suffolk County are and you can see one bedroom is 1,085, a typical two bedroom is 1,324 and almost \$2,000 for a four bedroom; those are fair market rents. I think some of us probably are dealing with clients that are facing higher rents than that, although the market has settled a little bit. And as of March, 2004, the Suffolk County Department of Social Services, a caseload of 6,019, 714 or 11.9% have Section 8 payment vouchers.

If you look at the chart on the last page, this is a summary, again, we made phone calls to all the local Public Housing Authorities so some of the information is guess rather than statistics but they could tell us the housing vouchers that have been allocated, and there's over 7,000 vouchers in Suffolk County, almost 7,000 are active, those that are not active are people who are on the list seeking housing or people who have successfully made over the 30% and lost their voucher. Some of the disturbing statistics is estimated time on the waiting list in years, and you can see most of them •• you know, Patchogue leads with eight but most of them are in the four, five and six year range once you get on a list.

We tried try to get a figure on how many people are on the list but there were so many factors involved that the number would have been more misleading than accurate, but several of the lists have six and 7,000 people on the list when they were open. We looked at •• and again,

we've asked how many people are TNAF recipients and you can see by town what the breakdown is, the numbers won't add up to our number because they were guesses on behalf of the people we spoke to from the PHA. The percent of fair market •• and this has changed significantly. I remember when I first got started in the housing business, most of the PHA's were paying 90 to 93%, now you can see most of them are paying 110%, the maximum, because they want to get people into housing as the goal. Then we see the lists are open or closed, only two lists and they are two of the smaller ones and the date the list is closed. So for instance, we were told Brookhaven has been closed since 11/1/2001, some of them are 2002, Patchogue since 1997, so it varies. When they go through the list they open it up for a brief period, they send out a public notice, they put a notice in the paper and people can apply for •• to be put on the list, they gather all the applications, they hold a lottery and they publish a list and they go down the list in order.

So that's a brief overview of the Section 8 Program. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them; if not, Connie Bruno would come up here and answer them.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Madam Chair?

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Thank you for your presentation. Just quickly, the Section 8 Program is 100% Federally funded or does the County or anybody else put money into it?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

I believe it's 100% Federally funded, the only thing the County puts in is with the Public Assistance folks.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Legislator Fisher, Viloría • Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. Ed, I have a couple of questions. There's so much information here that you don't know where to start; let me start from the back, from the chart.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Okay.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

A six year wait; what is that due to? Is it due to the lack of housing that falls within the range that •• well, just the lack of rental housing that we have in Suffolk County or is it due to a lack of money; what is it due to?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

For a lot of people, especially •• the program is now moving towards working families and given the high rent in Suffolk County, you figure for a two bedroom apartment you need to make a \$50,000 a year, there are hundreds of thousands of people in need of rental assistance and for many of them this is the only hope. So when these lists open up they apply, so they'll get 7,000 applications during the open period just because it's the only hope for several people of being able to afford a safe, decent place to live.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. You're talking •• are these lists prioritized? In other words, someone when doesn't have a job at all, does that person jump to the top of the list because they have no way of paying rent?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Most of the Public Housing Authorities do not prioritize the list. Occasionally I know Islip said they got disabled veterans and elderly is a priority, I know Nassau County for a while is doing homeless folks, but the lists are so long it's up to local discretion of the Public Housing Authority whether they would like to prioritize.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Well, what about people who are in motels?

COMMISSIONER DEMARZO:

(Inaudible).

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

That's up •• the County does not give out any Section 8 vouchers, they're out of the process, they're subject to the local Public Housing Authority. You know, we can appeal to them to prioritize. Well, Connie is coming up so ••

COMMISSIONER DEMARZO:

I waved her up.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

And Connie is from Brookhaven, right?

COMMISSIONER DEMARZO:

No, from community development.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

She's from Community Development Corporation.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Oh, from CDC, okay.

MS. BRUNO:

Yes. Hi, I'm the Section 8 Director for Community Development Corporation. One of the reasons why the lists are so long and it takes a long time for us to get through the list is because of the lack of vouchers that we have available. CDC currently •• well, not right now. Up until last month we were calling in 100 families a month off of that waiting list and we have been doing this since the year 2000 and we are up to number 3,200. You have to •• our agency, we go numerically through the waiting list. As Ed was saying, when the list is open, because it is open for such a short period of time, you not only get Suffolk residents on that waiting list, we have people that live in Florida, California, everybody fills out the application. You have to go numerically through each application, so that holds up, you know, number 6,000 that might be on our list that is a Suffolk County resident, we have to go through each application before we can reach ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

You have opened up a whole different set of questions here.

MS. BRUNO:

Well, you're asking ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

We don't limit our Section 8 Housing to Suffolk County residents?

MS. BRUNO:

The CDC, up until last month, we did limit to Suffolk County residents. What I'm saying, the reason why the list takes years to go through is because you have to go through each application that we receive. When we •• our waiting list, the way a Section 8 waiting list is established, you open it for a certain period of time, we opened it for three weeks; anybody is free to submit an application, we received applications throughout the country.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay, that's what led me to that question; can't we just eliminate those very quickly?

MS. BRUNO:

No, because when you establish the lottery, each application that you open up is numerically •• is given a number, the first application is number one, that might be Key Largo, you have to call that •• you have to give that person an opportunity if they want •• the way it works right now, you have to give that person an opportunity to come and if they wanted to lease up in Suffolk County they would have to lease up here for one year and then they could then take their Section 8 anywhere in the country. This is the new regulation that we're going to so that's why it takes so long.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Can I just interrupt for one second to make sure that I'm understanding this? Do you mean to tell me that people from all over the country come to our office to fill out these forms and we must go through all of these? You're just saying Florida but it could be other states.

MS. BRUNO:

I'm just speaking for CDC. The Town of Brookhaven, I know they have a priority for Suffolk County residents and ••

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

But CDC, if number five on the list lives in Key Largo, you have to go through the application

process.

MS. BRUNO:

Uh•huh.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Even though the address says Key Largo, Florida, you have to go through the whole process, you have to contact them and say, "By the way, you want to move to Suffolk County? We can help you out"; is that the way it goes?

MS. BRUNO:

Absolutely.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

And then it's not until they refuse that you go to the next one?

MS. BRUNO:

We have to issue them a letter for an eligibility appointment, if they come in we have to go through our eligibility process. What I'm saying is we call in 25 people a month, 25 people for an appointment four times a month, if out of that 25 people five people are from out of State and they decide to come in, that holds up five slots for somebody else.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

But didn't you say you were limiting it to Suffolk County?

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

No, not CDC.

MS. BRUNO:

No, we're CDC.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I know, but I asked is there some way you can establish eligibility that people just come from Suffolk County and you said you had but then you ••

MS. BRUNO:

We had up until six months ago.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. Why did that change?

MS. BRUNO:

Because CDC is actually under DHCR, that's where we get our funding.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Which is?

MS. BRUNO:

That's where we get our funding, the Division of Housing.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

DHCR?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Division of Housing and Community Renewal, it's a New York State agency.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay.

MS. BRUNO:

So that's where we get our funding and they have agencies throughout New York and they had to do •• our waiting list, even though CDC maintains and administers our own private waiting list, it's technically one State list, so you can't eliminate ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay, but that's still State and not Florida.

MS. BRUNO:

Yes, I understand that, but you need a choice.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

Let me just make two comments that clarify that. One, it's a Federal program, the vouchers are portable, they can go anywhere. The other thing is if you give priority to Suffolk County residents, those folks are still on the list and eventually they will have to be gotten to after your priorities are taken care of.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Sure, in six years we can get to them.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

And the third thing is, you know, to be fair, a lot of people do apply from elsewhere but how •• you know, I don't think somebody in Key Largo is reading Newsday.com to see if the list is open. A lot of people have moved out of state because they can't afford to live here and family members are telling them that the list is open, apply, because it's the only hope for many of them to come back to Long Island.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

But you have to realize, we're sitting here knowing that we're facing a housing crisis in Suffolk County.

MS. BRUNO:

Right.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

And if we're facing a housing crisis •• and I sit on the Work Force Housing Commission where we're talking about looking at 60 to 90,000 units of housing that we will eventually need, we're not looking to invite people from other parts of the country. And perhaps although we may be part of a larger State system or a national system, there should be a way that we could be exempt from having to entertain applications from anywhere but Suffolk County because we are in a crisis here. We live on an island that's very limited, our build•out is looming in the very near horizon, we don't have the luxury to entertain that kind of •• that kind of outreach. I'm not beating you up, I'm just amazed by this.

MS. BRUNO:

No, I understand.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I'm amazed that we have people in Brookhaven Town or the Village of Patchogue who are waiting eight years for housing ••

MS. BRUNO:

Correct.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

•• and that we could possibly entertain anybody from out of our County and out of our state is just •• I think we're all amazed by this.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

And this is a Federal guideline so there's nothing you can do.

MS. BRUNO:

Yes, and that's why I bring it.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

And another suggestion quickly, to follow up, these people that are living say in Key Largo, do they go to their County Social Services Department and also fill out applications in hopes that they get to them on the list?

MS. BRUNO:

They should. And the reason why I even brought it up is I'm trying to explain why it can take such a long time to actually get through the list, because we are required to entertain every application that we have, and that is only for CDC. All the other town agencies they all have, I believe, a requirement that has to be •• the family, in order to be eligible, have to be a Suffolk resident or living in Suffolk, and up until six months ago that is what CDC had until we were told that we needed to change that. But that is one of the other reasons that is slowing up the waiting list process and I believe that's what your initial question, why the waiting list takes so long, I'm just trying to explain our procedure, what we need to do.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

I think Legislator Foley, unless Legislator ••

MS. GALLAGHER:

I'm Roseanne Gallagher.

LEG. FOLEY:

It's okay.

MS. GALLAGHER:

I'm Roseanne Gallagher, I run the program for the Town of Brookhaven, I'm Rental Subsidy Program Coordinator. And what Connie failed to say is that because it is a Federally funded program, we are mandated by Federal law to take applications from everybody all over the country. Even though we may not agree with that and we want to help the people who live in the Town of Brookhaven, especially in the County, before we help anyone else, we have to take those 2,000 applications from people who don't even live in our area. We have a local preference where we will serve the people who live or work in the Town of Brookhaven before we serve anyone else, they will drop to the bottom of the list. But as Connie said, we're mandated to go numerically through that list, so that is what takes a great deal of time.

In addition to •• people who get on the program do not come off unless they are working toward economic self•sufficiency or homeownership or something like that. Many of the people who are on the program it's intergenerational, the grandmother is on it, the mother is on it, they pass it down through the family because they can be remaining members of the family and stay on the program. So unless you have attrition through death or people who get placed in nursing homes, people stay on the program for many, many years. I've been doing this for 20 years and the people •• many of the families have been on just as long.

And then, of course, there is the lack of funding and that is what really holds up the list which is why we •• before we opened the list in 2001 we hadn't opened it since 1992, so that was •• and we only opened it for two weeks and we got 3,000 applications.

MS. BRUNO:

And CDC, the last time our list was opened was 1993 and we had 6,000. We just opened our

list in 2000 and we received 6,758 applications.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Just to follow up on that, I believe, Connie, you had said •• I'm sorry, I don't remember your last name.

MS. BRUNO:

Bruno.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Bruno. Ms. Bruno, you did mention, and it was just mentioned by Ms. Gallagher, the number of vouchers that you get or the amount of funding; how does that work, how are you funded?

MS. BRUNO:

CDC is funded •• we are all Federally funded.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Right.

MS. BRUNO:

CDC in particular, though, gets their funding through DHCR which is the Division of Housing.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I mean in the amount, relative the amount of money that you get, the Federal government allots a certain amount of money to Suffolk County and divides it up among the agencies?

MS. BRUNO:

There are a lot of variables that go with it. You have to be able to show that you are utilizing the vouchers that you currently have before you can apply for more vouchers. I can honestly say in the last two years I believe, other than CDC, I don't •• did you get any?

MS. GALLAGHER:

No.

MS. BRUNO:

There were no other Section 8 Housing agencies that received vouchers. Last year CDC, we were able to •• our statistics showed that we were 100% leased up and we received 200 additional vouchers, and to this point we leased everybody up and our program is 100% leased. Currently we are unable to issue any new vouchers because of the lack of funding, that is going to hold up our list. We are •• no doubt in my mind, if we were able to get 200 more vouchers we would be able to lease them up ASAP. There is a huge need.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Now, can you borrow vouchers from other agencies?

MS. BRUNO:

No, you cannot.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Or direct people to them from your list if they have vouchers that they haven't leased up yet?

MS. BRUNO:

No, that is not a possibility.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

No, you can't do that. And how is Brookhaven Town doing with funding?

MS. GALLAGHER:

We have funding for 797 slots or families and we currently have 775 leased, so we have a little bit of a buffer there, they are at 100% leased. But now with the funding crunch that we're feeling, they're not going to be reimbursing us dollar•for•dollar for the HAP, the Housing Assistance Payment which is the rental subsidy that we pay out. So what HUD has done, their financial staff, they have given us a weighted HAP average and they're going to be paying us a flat amount and they're also cutting our administrative fee. And it's a very labor intensive program because you're not just trying to find housing for people and you have more than just your inspectors, a lot of times you're doing social work with them and dealing a lot with the DSS agencies and all that and homelessness prevention, so it is a lot of work and now they're

cutting back on the amount of money we make every time we lease someone up.

We used to be able to lease people up on the 1st and the 15th of the month, not every Section 8 office did that. We did that because we felt that if you had a unit and you found it and you didn't have your DSS paper work going at the same time and you had a delay, we would lease you up for the 15th so that you didn't lose the unit. Now we're finding that HUD is not going to reimburse us for that money, so we're not going to be able to lease people on the 15th which may make them lose their rental unit so we can only lease then on June 1st or July 1st. So it's these type of things that we're going to be facing now.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Now, are these cuts because of the proposed budget, the proposed Federal budget, or changes in formula; why are these cuts occurring?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERNANDEZ:

There's two levels of cuts coming down, one is administrative cuts. The new Secretary of HUD put in a number of administrative changes that have had a negative impact; and also the 2005 budget I believe was cutting out a significant amount of vouchers nationwide and it's going to have an additional impact, so it's a double wammy on the program.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Thank you. I'll yield to other questions; I still have lots but I'll yield to other people.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Can I just ask you a question? I know that you said you have to leave here at 10:20.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Yes.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

We now have a quorum, I'm a little concerned••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

So you want to strike while we're all ••

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Well, I'm a little concerned if you leave to go to a press conference that we won't be able to vote.

LEG. FOLEY:

Why don't we vote ••

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

So would that be okay if we could just take a little break here, go to the agenda and then come back to all the questions?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Sure.

LEG. FOLEY:

That will be fine.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

I'm just trying to accommodate Legislator Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

And by the way, everybody please be aware when it comes where you can donate to the relief fund for •• and by the way, Legislator Mystal wanted to be at the press conference with me but he's at his daughter's graduation. As you know, he was born in Haiti and the people in Haiti have lost about 1,500 people to that flood, so that's why he's not here today.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Okay, so let's just go to the agenda. We'll go to the first tabled resolution.

LEG. FOLEY:

Madam Chair? It's customary to have the Commissioner step forward to be at the table if there are any questions for the Commissioner.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

That would be fine, if the Commissioner wants to come up.

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

Good morning.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

Good morning.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Do you have any comments on any of these resolutions before we start to vote?

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

The first resolution may, in fact, be a moot point. This is Resolution No. 1337; it's my understanding that, in fact, these positions have been released and we're in the process of trying to hire for those positions as we speak.

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Tabled Resolutions

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Okay. ***1337•04 • Directing the Commissioner of Health to fill vacant positions in the Division of Waste Water Management (Binder).***

LEG. FOLEY:

Motion to table.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Second.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

All in favor? Opposed? Motion to table is approved. ***Tabled (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).***

MR. COHEN:

I will get Legislator Binder to strike it.

LEG. FOLEY:

That would be helpful.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Thank you.

1440•04 • Adopting Local Law No. 2004, a Local Law to require defibrillators in health clubs in Suffolk County (Alden). Commissioner, did you have anything to say on that?

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

No, we support it.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Adopting a Local Law; did we have the public hearing on this yet?

MS. KNAPP:

Yes.

LEG. FOLEY:

Yeah, it was closed.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

A Local Law to require defibrillators in health clubs in Suffolk County. I'll make a motion.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I have a question for Counsel once we •• I'll second the motion for purposes of discussion, I

just have a question for Counsel.

I know that there had been •• I'm very much in favor of this. In fact, I know the Acampora Family very well who was instrumental in getting the AED movement moving so well in Suffolk County and New York State in general. I know that there were some questions about exposure for the health clubs of liability purposes; have those been addressed? Is there any •• have you heard any of those questions; and if so, has Legislator Alden addressed them in this legislation?

MS. KNAPP:

I've read a number of the articles about defibrillators in health clubs, it's an issue that once Legislator Alden brought it to my attention I did some Internet research and there are a number of articles and some of them do touch on the subject of the cost of liability insurance. But in the course of my research, I found that there were as many issues that arose from the clubs that had an incident where a patron had a heart attack and the question arose as to whether or not they should have had a defibrillator. There is no definitive law, to my knowledge, there's been no decided case. But on the other hand, the cases having to do with defibrillators in emergency rooms basically have come down on the side that if it wasn't working, the courts have looked at whether or not there was negligence in the fact that it wasn't working, but on the other hand I haven't seen any •• you know, I haven't seen any big verdicts. I think that the courts have been hands•off is the best way to say it.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I would hope that they would take into account the good faith effort of having them on premises. So I'm very much in support of this, I just wanted to get that clarified, so I will second it.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Okay. We have a motion by myself, second by Legislator Losquadro.

All in favor? All Opposed? Anybody opposed? **No.1440 has been approved (VOTE: 5•0•0 •3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).**

-

Introductory Resolutions

1464•04 • Designating the second week in May as "Mather Hospital Week" (Presiding Officer Caracappa).

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Motion.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion by Legislator Vilorina•Fisher, second by myself. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Cosponsor.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).

No. 1512•04 • Creating Suffolk County Executive/Legislative Cancer Resource Commission (Foley).

LEG. FOLEY:

Madam Chair, I'm going to make a motion to table. I wanted to speak with the Commissioner, new Commissioner about the proposal and some of the advocates for increasing access for cancer care, particularly those who utilize our health centers. Because this is a new undertaking, I would think that it's going to take several meetings before we actually approve it, but I would like to sit down with the Commissioner and get his thoughts on this and the relationship between community health care and the need for better cancer for those who otherwise up to this point have not been receiving that.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Second.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Vilorina•Fisher. All in favor? Opposed? ***Motion to table is approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).***

LEG. FOLEY:

Thank you.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

No. 1525•04 •• this can go on the consent calendar, right •• Accepting and appropriating 100% State grant funds from the New York state Department of Health via the New York State Legislature to the Department of Health Services, Division of Patient Care Services for the Migrant Health Services Program (Presiding Officer at the Request of the County Executive). I make a motion to approve and place on the consent calendar.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All in favor? Opposed?

Motion approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).

No. 1538•04 • Authorizing the Department of Health Services to increase its fleet by one (1) vehicle for the Crime Lab Accreditation Program (Presiding Officer at the Request of the County Executive).

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Motion.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion by Legislator Viloría•Fisher.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

LEG. FOLEY:

If we approve this, Madam Chair, does that mean that we can get into the CSI show?

VICE-CHAIR NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All in favor? Opposed? ***No. 1538 has been approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).***

1543-04 • Requesting Legislative approval of a contract award for Patient Review Instrument (PRI) Assessment Services for the Department of Health Services, John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility (Presiding Officer at the Request of the County Executive).

LEG. FOLEY:

Explanation, Madam Chair.

VICE-CHAIR NOWICK:

Yeah, that would be a good idea.

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

Essentially, this is a •• the Patient Review Instrument is a tool that's used to assess a given patient which will assist with determining the reimbursement that we will receive at the Skilled Nursing Facility for that patient. It's my understanding that in the past there may have been some problems with our own staff doing this, so this is a contract that has been set up in order for us to have an outside agency actually perform a service for us. Correct me if I'm wrong, but it's again my understanding that we submitted a bid and we only received one vendor that was interested, and accordingly this requires Legislative approval for us to go forth.

LEG. FOLEY:

So essentially, it has the potential for allowing us to •• forgive the word, but to capture additional reimbursement dollars that up to this point we may be missing out.

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

That's correct.

LEG. FOLEY:

Motion to approve.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Second.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion to approve by Legislator Foley, seconded by Legislator Viloria • Fisher. All in favor?

Opposed? **1543 has been approved**

(VOTE: 5 • 0 • 0 • 3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).

No. 1552 • 04 • Amending the 2004 Operating Budget to transfer funds from the Suffolk County Water Protection Fund (477) Reserve Fund to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Division of Environmental Quality for "Open Marsh Water Management to improve wetlands, estuarine water quality and reduce mosquito breeding". (Presiding Officer at the Request of the County Executive).

LEG. FOLEY:

Motion to approve.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion to ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I'll second but I have a question.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Okay. Motion to approve by Legislator Foley, second by Legislator Viloria • Fisher for purposes of a discussion. Did you have a question, Legislator Viloria • Fisher?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Commissioner, this isn't putting more money into the Vector Control to do more ditching, is it?

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

No, this is really more related to actually performing a study to have a sense of what's the best way to address this whole issue of water management. So this is really more of an academic

study that we'd be doing.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. Now, I thought that the EIS, that big project that's costing us about \$4 million for the whole Vector Control •• the spectrum of our Vector Control Program would cover some of the water management issues; they're not sufficiently covered under this large contract that we had with that study?

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

Honestly, I'm not as familiar with that program as •• to be able to answer that question, but it's my understanding it was just ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Budget Review might have the answer to that. Budget Review, we did a lot of discussion regarding the grant, the consultant's fee for that EIS and Vector Control Study.

MR. ORTIZ:

Yeah, this funding is approximately \$600,000 and is not included in the \$4 million project.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

But what I'm asking is any of the study that's covered by this ••

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Is it redundant. .

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Right, is it redundant? I thought that that study that was over \$4 million was going to include what the Commissioner has just described.

MR. ORTIZ:

The Open Marsh Water, or what's called OMWM ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Right, I thought OMWM was a piece of that.

MR. ORTIZ:

It is and this might be duplicative and it really should be looked at closer.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. I'm going to withdraw my second and ask that this be tabled so that we can take a closer look at it, Commissioner.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second the motion to table.

LEG. FOLEY:

Maybe at the next committee meeting we can have some others who are involved with the program, both from Public •• oh.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SAPPHIRE:

Oh, okay. Actually we have ••

LEG. FOLEY:

Okay.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Take the microphone, please.

MS. SHAW:

I'm Kim Shaw from the Office of Ecology and our office is assisting the Department of Public Works with the long•term plan. This project is an early action demonstration project to hopefully allow us to, you know, eliminate larviciding on the marsh. And this project and several others were part of the scoping process that were •• these actions were recommended by the State. So we're trying to implement this, we didn't have enough money through the EIS process.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Madam Chairwoman?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I think we need a longer discussion on this. We're meeting in two weeks and perhaps we could have a more substantive discussion. I'm very sorry but I do have to get over to the Dennison Building.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

We have two more votes. Okay, Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I was just going to say, it's a bit of a misnomer. It speaks to improving the wetlands and water quality and reducing mosquito breeding; I agree, I think we need a longer discussion as to whether or not this is a study, if it's a practical application. So I would again second the motion to table.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion to table by •• who made the motion?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Me.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Legislator Viloría•Fisher, second by Legislator Losquadro. All in favor? Opposed? ***Motion to table is carried (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).***

-

Sense Resolutions

Sense Resolution No. 46•2004 • Memorializing Resolution in support of pending New York State legislation strengthening the insurance standards for the Early Intervention Program (Caracappa).

LEG. FOLEY:

Motion.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Motion by Legislator Foley, seconded by Legislator Losquadro. All in favor? Opposed? Motion •

• Sense 46 has been approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).

Sense Resolution No. 48•2004 • Sense of the Legislature Resolution requesting that New York State enact legislation to further protect victims of domestic violence (Caracappa). I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. FOLEY:

Second.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Foley. All in favor? Opposed? **Sense 48 has been approved (VOTE: 5•0•0•3 • Not Present: Legislators Tonna, Schneiderman & Mystal).**

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Okay. You're both leaving?

LEG. MONTANO:

Yes.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Well, that looks like, Legislator Foley, you're on.

LEG. FOLEY:

I want to thank the Commissioner. It is the Commissioner's first meeting and we're looking forward to your tenure in office as Commissioner. Certainly, as I mentioned earlier, you have already been of help with some constituent requests and so we know that you're taking care of both the macro issues of public health as well as some particular issues in given Legislative districts and I want to thank you for that.

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

Thank you. I look forward to meeting with you.

LEG. FOLEY:

Great. The cancer care, that's going to be I think an emerging field that really needs to be looked at. I don't have anything else for the Commissioner, I do want to speak with Section 8 though.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

We just welcome you and look forward to working with you.

COMMISSIONER HARPER:

And I guess that we can bring the Social Services Department back up again. Legislator Foley, did you have a question?

LEG. FOLEY:

I did.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Legislator Foley has a question.

LEG. FOLEY:

Legislator Fisher had spoken at great length, but there still are some other questions that come to mind. As the representative from Brookhaven Town knows, my office has called a number of times and you have been very helpful, as has the Village of Patchogue and CDC.

Just several points. When we say a list is closed, I mean, you're not taking any new people on board, you have to go through the first list, the list that you already have.

MS. BRUNO:

Right.

LEG. FOLEY:

One of the issues in the past, and I'm glad you answered it today, is that if you had more vouchers you would be able to process more •• I'll say claims or get housing for more people.

Because there are some who are trying to give the impression that because there's an apartment crunch and housing crunch that it's not so much a question of vouchers or funding as it is not enough apartments out there for this clientele, but it's really more a function at this point of the lack of vouchers; is that not correct?

MS. BRUNO:

Yes.

LEG. FOLEY:

Okay. Just for Brookhaven for a moment, preference can be given to the local applicant; is that not correct?

MS. GALLAGHER:

Right, we have local residency requirements.

LEG. FOLEY:

So if, for instance, the scenario that the CDC had given to us earlier, in the unlikely event that someone from another state would decide to come here, you review your list, you put them at the bottom of •• you describe it to me as to how that would work as far as local preference, if one is at let's say 150th and the other person is at 300, how would the local preference work in that respect?

MS. GALLAGHER:

Okay. What happens is when the list is opened it is a lottery system; they mail their completed application to a PO box so that they're not hand delivered to our office.

LEG. FOLEY:

Right.

MS. GALLAGHER:

What happens is when the application period is over, all of the applications are taken, they're put in a huge box, we sit there with our auditors or our Town Attorney and we have the date stamp clock there and we open them one by one, just shuffling them in the box.

So the last time we numbered from 3,510 to over 7,000 or something like that, so that was our

range.

LEG. FOLEY:

Yes.

MS. GALLAGHER:

Because we start from one from the beginning of the program, obviously.

LEG. FOLEY:

Correct.

MS. GALLAGHER:

When we start to call people in, we start at 3,510 and if someone is not living or working in the Town of Brookhaven they will receive a letter from me that says, "You do not meet local residency requirements. This is your number, you will retain a spot on the Section 8 waiting list. However, we do have this local requirement and until such time as that changes for you, you will just stay on the list." And then we will go to the next person, as I said before, in numerical number or numerical order.

LEG. FOLEY:

If you go through the whole list before you open it again, what happens in that case, where you revisit it a second time with a person who's out of the area? I mean, is that •• maybe that's more of a conceptual or theoretical question than a practical one. I mean, has it ever happened to get to that point?

MS. GALLAGHER:

We don't help people who do not live or work in the Town of Brookhaven, yeah.

LEG. FOLEY:

Okay.

MS. GALLAGHER:

They need to move in to the Town of Brookhaven, but we don't have the one year requirement as CDC has, we don't have that.

LEG. FOLEY:

Okay. As far as the cutbacks the Federal government is proposing or has enacted, to Deputy Commissioner Hernandez and also to the agencies, have you put together let's say an impact memo on what that means for your program; have you put anything like that together? And if so, certainly this committee and the department would certainly like to have copies of that.

MS. GALLAGHER:

We have met at least twice with Commissioner _Wrestle_ who is my Commissioner and our financial people in our office and he is working on a very •• we met yesterday, he is working on a very detailed impact statement as far as figures and all of that.

LEG. FOLEY:

That would be helpful for us if we can ••

MS. GALLAGHER:

Okay, I will relay that message.

LEG. FOLEY:

At the right time to receive it.

MS. GALLAGHER:

Okay.

LEG. FOLEY:

Because one of the things that we can go do here is to work with our counterparts and villages and townships to also make the Federal government aware of the impact that this is having, even though it's not directly in County government but certainly there is a way since there's so many relationships between the towns, villages and the County •• in this case, the County DSS •• we could help in trying to mitigate those if not eliminate those cuts, that would be very helpful. Okay?

MS. GALLAGHER:

Okay.

LEG. FOLEY:

All right. Thank you, Madam Chair.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Thank you for the presentation. Have a nice day.

MS. GALLAGHER:

Thank you.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

We have two cards. Robyn Schneider. Are they together? Did you want to come up together, Linda Milch?

MS. MILCH:

Yes.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Okay, sure. Sit at the table.

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Thank you. Good morning.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Good morning. Just speak into the microphone and state your name.

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Good morning. My name is Robyn Schneider and I am the Division Director of the Community Services Division of EAC and my colleague, Linda Milch, who is the Clinical Director of the Long Island Advocacy Center.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Can you just state EAC? We've done the acronisms (sic) today, can we just put that on the record what it is?

MS. SCHNEIDER:

The Education and Assistance Corporation, EAC Incorporated. I do have a prepared

presentation and I just wanted to mention that I did send some literature to all of the committee members prior to today's meeting about the purpose of our presentation this morning.

EAC and the Long Island Advocacy Center have partnered to address a dire need in Suffolk County involving the victimization of children with disabilities. We know that the increase in bullying among all children is rampant and these incidents continue to increase as more children with disabilities are being mainstreamed into regular education classes without the appropriate support. Research indicates that children with poor social skills are more prone to victimization or aggressive behavior. Unfortunately, there is a tremendous lack of violence prevention programs to teach ongoing social skill development in Suffolk County, specifically including children with disabilities who are at the greatest risk of becoming victims of violence or being violent themselves.

Over 8,000 children in Suffolk have a neurobiological disorder that makes them the most vulnerable. Research shows that victims of regular bullying are more likely to be absent from school, have low self-esteem, are more depressed and have varied forms of mental health consequences. These are children with Attention Deficit Disorder, also known as ADD, as well as children on the autism spectrum or have some form of Tourettes Syndrome. Some staggering statistics include the following: There are up to 70% of juvenile offenders that may have ADD; 40% of boys with untreated ADD will be arrested for a felony by the time they're 16; 52% with untreated ADD will have a substance abuse problem and 30% with untreated ADD will never finish high school.

The consequences of our complacency include an increase in the need for mental health treatment including expensive psychiatric hospitalization, an increase in involvement and cost in the juvenile justice system and a missed opportunity to save money associated with special education expenses that would otherwise have to be provided through the school districts. Through a two year Federal grant, the PALSS program •• PALS stands for the Partners in Action for Learning Social Skills •• this program was created to address this problem by offering conflict resolution and social skills training within the scope of existing recreational programs such as the Huntington YMCA and the Sunshine Prevention Center in Port Washington •• I'm sorry, Port Jefferson. These agencies strive to include children with disabilities in their programs, yet they often times have the lack of the appropriate tools to do so. We conduct

workshops with the children and teach them how to accept differences, channel anger, empathize and empower themselves to make the right choices. After a series of interactive training workshops, the children work together on a service learning project for their community.

While the children are working on their service learning project, they are using the skills and experiences they have learned during the training sessions. This reflection of their experiences can take many shapes; however, it offers them the opportunity to better understand their peer's differences and accept them.

We recognize that our challenge as a society is not to find ways to fit these children into our community but rather how our community responds to the unique issues they present and how we can work toward embracing their differences and recognizing their strengths.

As part of this grant, we started a coalition consisting of members and leaders from our community in Suffolk County who have made a commitment toward changing the culture as it relates to children with disabilities. Many of these coalition members represent the youth agencies who have had the least exposure to children with disabilities, yet feel responsible to offer their programs to all children.

Requested by our Federal granting agency, Linda Milch from the Long Island Advocacy Center presented our program at their Annual National Conference last month, and I'd like Linda to speak a bit about what that presentation entailed.

MS. MILCH:

Good morning. As Robyn told you, I'm from the Long Island Advocacy Center and the Advocacy Center mission is to assist families of individuals with disabilities in being able to meet their needs in society and represent the needs of all people with disabilities as well as children in the school system, and because of that we have the ability to work with many families of children who are at risk for these specific issues. We work with the PINS Program and we work with the Mental Health System and see on a daily basis children who are in these systems, PINS and Mental Health, because they don't have the skills that they need in order to function in school and in society.

Additionally, I am the parent of a youngster with a disability and firsthand know about the risks that kids with disabilities have and how they have been left out of a large aspect of society.

And for these reasons, that's why Long Island Advocacy Center and EAC got together and applied for this Bullying Prevention/Violence Prevention Program through _SAMSA_.

What's unique about our program and the reason why I was asked to speak is because we were the only ones throughout the country that addressed the issue of kids with significant disabilities and how they fit into this picture of violence. And the statistics that Robyn gave you about how kids with disabilities, developmental disabilities and neurobiological disabilities, are greatly at risk for being perpetrators of violence and bullying is often unreported in the media when we talk about bullying and violence prevention. And so we were asked to present at this program because already in the second year of the grant, we had so many successful activities that were completed, that the granting source was so impressed with that they asked me to come speak in Kansas City about the program. And the reasons why they were so impressed was because we have been able to for a very •• a relatively small amount of money, we have been able to go into existing programs and help them to enhance their already existing programs.

Additionally, what we have been able to do is leave the culture of that program forever changed, so that while our portion of the program, the service learning and the conflict resolution, is we leave them with that the culture of their program keeps the aspects of the program that we have taught them. So partly while •• why we're here is because the Federal granting source has urged us to let our local area know the good work that we're doing because _SAMSA_ grants are time limited and the hope is that we can continue to grow and expand.

We have now been in four different recreational sites but have had a lot of success there and have a lot of knowledge on how we can not only implement this but train others to be able to do this. So conceivably every recreation center is able to maintain this type of program which will lead to kids having the social skills that they need so that they don't act out in school and in the community. Our long•term goal is to be able to be involved with schools as well.

So that we hope that you're interested in finding out more about us and are available to speak to you individually if you'd like, but I hope that you can assist us in continuing with this program. Thank you.

VICE•CHAIR NOWICK:

Thank you for that presentation. And it's kind of a forgotten subject and until you bring it to our attention, we don't think about it, so it is important that you're here this morning. Legislator Losquadro, it looks to me like you have a question since that microphone is in your hand.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Well, not a question, more of just a statement, sort of to echo Chairwoman Nowick's comments about keeping this in the forefront.

My wife happens to be a middle school math teacher and what we tend to forget is that while these people, if they lack the social skills, may turn out to be perpetrators of these actions, in school many of them are victims of these actions because of their disabilities.

MS. MILCH:

That's right.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

And just this year my wife had a situation, the school is fairly progressive in that they do have a Life Skills Program for the more severely disabled children and some members of her class when they were coming by chose to make fun of these students. My wife took it upon herself to meet with the Life Skills teachers and they now do a grocery store program with the regular and honors math students with the Life Skills students to help teach them those math skills that they need in their daily lives and it has helped tremendously in having the students see them as part of the school, part of the community. It's been very helpful and it's something we just need to keep in the forefront because it is a very real problem. So thank you for coming down. Thank you for putting this on the record, I appreciate it.

MS. MILCH:

What I wanted to say is that what we found is that people that work in recreation programs, human service programs, schools, they want to be able to include kids with disabilities but they really feel apprehensive about doing so. So the coalition that Robyn talked about is a coalition of people from all types of agencies that have gotten together and part of what we've done at that coalition is help individuals who don't typically work with children with disabilities understand really how easy it is to do things like what your wife did with the willingness, the desire and sometimes a little bit of tools to do that. So thank you for sharing that as well.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Absolutely. Thank you.

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR NOWICK:

Thank you.

LEG. FOLEY:

Not so fast.

LEG. NOWICK:

I'm sorry. Legislator Foley does have a question.

LEG. FOLEY:

That's okay. We have some others; we may only be a few members but we have a number of questions.

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Okay. I'm sorry.

LEG. FOLEY:

The recreation centers that you have offered your programs to, were they town rec centers, County; where were they, the four centers?

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Okay, the first one •• well, not necessarily ••

LEG. FOLEY:

And in a moment I'll tell you why I'm asking, but go ahead.

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Do you want to speak about the Sunshine ••

LEG. FOLEY:

I don't •• we don't need to go in a lot of specifics, but ••

MS. MILCH:

We actually •• we've offered ••

LEG. FOLEY:

The recreation centers, were they town recreation centers, village, County; what kind of recreation?

MS. MILCH:

Variety is your answer, they were all of the above.

LEG. FOLEY:

Okay.

MS. MILCH:

They were offered to all of them and we've discussed the possibility of doing it with a number of them, but the ones that we •• one is a town program.

LEG. FOLEY:

So in other words, you have offered this program••

MS. SCHNEIDER:

Patchogue Medford, yes.

MS. MILCH:

Yes, to all.

LEG. FOLEY:

You've offered this to a number of recreations.

MS. MILCH:

Yes, to all. And we actually have a variety, we have a town program, we have a church program, we have a private program and we have a Y program.

LEG. FOLEY:

Because my point, and it's important that you're here today but the point that I was going to raise, that particularly in Suffolk County, somewhat different from Nassau, is that that many of the recreation programs are not run so much by the County as they are by the towns and the villages.

MS. MILCH:

Uh•huh.

LEG. FOLEY:

And also by some of the youth agencies or contract agencies that have contracts; well, some have them with us, like you mentioned Patchogue Medford which is my district. But really the principal source from a governmental point of view is really the towns and the villages that have the rec programs, we don't. So that's •• if you're looking for advocates, if you're looking for allies, if and when, you know, the funding ends at the Federal level, we can be of help. But where it really is centrally located here is in those other levels of government that you need to speak to.

MS. MILCH:

Each local •• you're saying each local ••

LEG. FOLEY:

Villages run recreation programs.

MS. MILCH:

Right.

LEG. FOLEY:

The towns run recreational programs. We help to the extent that we help to partially fund some of those, but the principal monies are at the village and town level. So what you're doing here today is important, my only point is you'd want to do this, take this on the road and speak with

the others as well.

MS. MILCH:

What about in terms of violence prevention and bullying prevention?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

If I may, Legislator Foley?

LEG. FOLEY:

Yeah, sure, go right ahead.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I know in my district in particular there's an organization called North Shore Youth Council and they do big buddy/little buddy programs and things of that nature; they contract directly with the school districts.

MS. MILCH:

Right.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

So Legislator Foley is exactly correct, it is on a far more local level than the overriding branch of government that the County is, it is on the the town level and even below that on the individual school district level where these contracts are reviewed and awarded. So you may want to speak to individual districts and the individual towns about the programs that you're offering because they seem quite good.

MS. MILCH:

We will do that as well, but we would like you to think of us also in terms of a bullying prevention program that can go into a variety of locations. So this program we chose to go into recreation centers, but it's also a possibility of making it more global. So we fit under the category of violence prevention, bullying prevention and even criminal justice because these programs prevent youngsters from ending up in the criminal justice system as well. We started out with recreation programs because we knew they had a philosophy that they would embrace this, but we're interested in this becoming a more global program.

LEG. FOLEY:

Thank you.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you.

VICE • CHAIR NOWICK:

Thank you. Thank you for your presentation. Well, I guess the meeting is adjourned. And thank you, everybody, see you next week, two weeks.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 A.M.*)

***Legislator Lynne Nowick, Vice • Chair
Health & Human Services Committee.***

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