

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE**

Of the

**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**2012-2014 Joint Capital Budget Meeting**

**Verbatim Minutes**

A special joint meeting of the Health & Human Services Committee and the Veterans & Seniors 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 Thursday, May 18, 2011 at 11:30 a.m., to discuss the matter of the 2012-2014 Capital Budget.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Kate Browning - Chairperson/Health & Human Services  
Legislator Jack Eddington - Member/Health & Human Services  
Legislator Steven Stern - Chairman/Veterans & Seniors  
Legislator Sara Anker - Vice-Chair/Veterans & Seniors  
Legislator Lou D'Amaro - Member/Veterans & Seniors

**Members Not Present:**

Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher - Vice-Chair/Health & Human Services  
Member/Veterans & Seniors  
Legislator John Kennedy - Member/Health & Human Services  
Legislator Edward Romaine - Member/Veterans & Seniors

**Also In Attendance:**

Marge Acevedo - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Jack Caffey - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay  
Christina DeLisi - Aide to Legislator Schneiderman  
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick  
Justin Littell - Aide to Legislator D'Amaro  
Susan Lieneu - Aide to Legislator Anker  
Gail Vizzini - Director/Budget Review Office  
Craig Freas - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Laura Halloran - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Eric Kopp - Chief Deputy County Executive  
Ed Hennessy - County Executive's Office  
Holly Rhodes Teague - Director, Department of Aging  
Margaret Bermel - Suffolk County Department of Health Services  
Mary Finnin - Health Center Advisory Council  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken By:**

Alison Mahoney - Court Reporter

**Verbatim Transcript Prepared By:**

Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary

*(The meeting was called to order at 11:39 A.M.)*

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay, I guess we'll begin. We'll start with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Stern.

***Salutation***

Good morning. We have one card and I'm assuming that this is with Health & Human Services, and it's Mary J. Finnin.

**MS. FINNIN:**

Good morning. I just want to make a few comments with regard to -- I know this is the Capital Budget hearing. So I want to relate my comments, if I can, to some of the expenditures under Capital Budget. In the past we have funded, and have in our health centers, x-ray equipment, digital mammography, lab equipment. Now this equipment was purchased and maybe more are on your books, I don't have the current budget proposal. But I want to say that this was very expensive equipment and there's a lot more that was funded or is funded in budgets. And yet we're looking at curtailing, you're cutting the services that would use those particular -- that particular equipment.

One of the concerns I have about the lab equipment is that what we have today is drawing stations, and the County does group purchase for lab services. And it doesn't make sense to me that we send patients out for individual labs, you know, under the new policies when we have group purchase for labs that maybe we pay a per capita on each lab of 10 or \$15, and whether or not we can retain the lab services that we have and use the group purchase option even for new patients that are coming into the health center that may have to pay the higher fee or pay for the individual labs that they're getting. Under the County contracts they have a group purchase that works very well and I'm hoping that that can also be available to the patients that have to pay.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Thank you, Mary. And we do have Budget Review here.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

What Mary is referencing in terms of the capital project is Capital Project 4055. It's an ongoing purchase of equipment for health centers. There is -- in the schedule there is 167,000 in 2012, 87,300 in '13, and 35,000 in 2014, and a modest amount in subsequent years as well. This is typically for, you know, as you all know, we have six contracted health clinics and we have the two, Tri-Community and Riverhead, which we own and operate. They're in our own County-owned buildings. This provides for both new and replacement equipment to keep up with the technology.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. I'm not finding that right now. But I know we have a budget meeting later, we'll go over it. I see that you have some other recommendations with the Health Department. Okay, let's go to the brownfields site rehabilitation; that's 8219?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Did you want us to discuss the Budget Review Office recommendations?

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Yes, please.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Sure. No problem.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

I know there's a difference of opinion.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Just need a minute.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

We actually have a couple of them in here.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Yeah, there are five specific Budget Review Office recommendations that would require action on the part of the Legislature. The first one involves --

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Can't hear you.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

The first one involves the Medical Examiner's equipment. Although the County Executive has included \$185,000 in 2012 for equipment for the Medical Examiner's lab, we feel that there should be at least \$100,000 also in 2013 and 2014.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

What number is that one?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Craig is clarifying for me for the record. It's not for the equipment but rather the safe and sanitary conditions in the building itself.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. I'm not seeing it right now.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

The brownfields, the proposed program includes funding in each of the years of the program. We are suggesting --

**MR. FREAS:**

Right. This is a new Brownfields Program, and it's sort of the intention by the Executive and the Health Department is that this would be a program that would kind of fill in the space between our Brownfields Program and places that are public nuisances, but might not necessarily qualify for our regular Brownfield Program. While we believe that the program had merit, we also believe that some of the legal issues needed further resolution and to dedicate the amount of funds recommended by the Executive was inappropriate at this time. We felt that it should be recommended as a pilot project with some planning money and enough to rehabilitate one or two sites in '12, and then see how successful it is at both, being able to clean-up the sites under the funding per site and also returning the sites to the tax rolls.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Do we get any other aid for brownfields?

**MR. FREAS:**

It depends on how big the clean-up is. If the clean-up is sufficiently large enough we work with the State DEC funds. They used to fund more; now they fund less, probably about 10% of the larger sites, which are the other Brownfield, 8223. This one would be funded locally.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Does anybody else have any questions?

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Yeah.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Legislator D'Amaro.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Okay, on that project, I'm looking at the BRO recommendations and actually right above that you do talk about what you just spoke to with respect to open legal issues. Do you mean legal issues on individual properties --

**MR. FREAS:**

No, sir.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

-- or whether or not we have standing to pursue remediation.

**MR. FREAS:**

That was what I meant, whether we had standing to issue remediation and what the mechanism would be, even with a stipulation agreement to keep an owner from walking away if the contamination was too large. Who was going to pay for it if, for example, we tested the site at one of these public nuisance sites, found that the contamination really couldn't be paid for under the program, then how do we get it into our other Brownfields Program and who's going to pay for that. That didn't seem to have been resolved yet at this point.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

The proposal, and I'm just reading the description of the program, is for Brownfield sites that are not owned by the County and remediates them if contamination is minor or moderate.

**MR. FREAS:**

Correct.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

So I guess that's envisioning not taking on extensive liabilities or even attacking parcels that are severely contaminated, but rather, you know, a minor contamination that can be remedied quickly, I guess anticipating that an owner would always cooperate under those circumstances.

**MR. FREAS:**

That's the hope in the project.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Uh-huh. So -- okay. And the other question I had was the reason for not recommending to fund this out of the water quality funds is simply that those funds are otherwise or you anticipate will be otherwise spoken for.

**MR. FREAS:**

Yes.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Okay. All right, thanks for answering.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

I just wanted to add to that. I think there is some question, and I would defer to Legislative Counsel, as to whether the mitigation of the brownfields is an appropriate use of water quality.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Right.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

It is proposed to you in that fashion. If you are in agreement with that there's the potential for that to erode a significant amount of the water quality funding.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Those -- I tend to agree those funds have very -- at least my experience has been we have a good handle on what we like to use those funds for. I don't know that remediation would be one of them, and that can get very costly as well, so.

**MR. FREAS:**

We also had one more issue with the use of water quality funds is that considering the number of potential sites, each project would then have to be approved by the Water Quality Review Commission if the funding was used. So you're talking about, assuming the program moves on and is successful, 60 sites a year. That's a lot of approvals.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

It is, and also if the County discovers that a property is contaminated to a point that it's deemed contaminated under State or Federal statutes, the owner has an obligation to remediate anyway. So I'm not sure that -- you know, I'd have to think a little bit more about the policy of us actually stepping in and doing it with the owner. Do we then step into the shoes of the owner? Do we get reimbursed for doing that by the owner? I mean, I'm not sure how this program would work.

**MR. FREAS:**

That's why we said we should run it as a pilot program first.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Okay, thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay, thank you. Does anybody else have any questions? No? Go to 4003, construction and renovation of Suffolk Lab Facilities. You want to move up from subsequent --

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Yeah, there's ten million dollars in subsequent years. We are recommending that we want to pursue this a little sooner rather than later. It advances the ten million from subsequent years to 2013 in conformance with health services request and where the funding was in our current adopted Capital Program. It has to do with the -- it dovetails better with the cost estimates that we have and the timing for the renovations and improvement to the laboratory facilities.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. And then after that I see one -- you're recommending the 4081, environmental quality geographic information and database management. You're not recommending the 100,000 in 2012 like the County Executive? You're moving the 900 up to 2014?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

We're moving the money out of subsequent years to 2014, just to advance the project, again, a little sooner rather than later.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

So what -- the hundred thousand that's -- okay, that's just planning money? And -- okay, I'm trying to figure this out. Why is the hundred not there in the 2012?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

What are you looking at? Are you looking at the -- could you show me what you're looking at? Okay. What you're looking at is -- yeah, the hundred thousand would stay in 2012.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Oh, okay.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Remember, Budget Review Office's recommended -- recommendations as reflected on that page are only the changes.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Oh, yes. Okay.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

So we're not making any changes to '12 or '13, but we are advancing 900,000 from subsequent years to 2014. And this is -- basically it replaces the outdated system and improves the interface with the other County GIS systems.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay, thank you. Sorry, my mistake.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

It's okay.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

I was thinking you zeroed that out. Okay. Anybody else? No? I guess with that, Vets & Seniors. Anyone here on Vets and Seniors? No?

**LEG. STERN:**

Folks, anything?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

As most of you know, the capital project that we do in the Office for Aging, it's for vehicles. The vehicles are used to transport seniors to nutrition sites and also to transport meals to those who are receiving home delivered meals. There are some vehicles that are used as part of what we call central transportation to doctor's offices and to grocery stores. We have a fleet of 58 vehicles right now that we lease back out to the towns and the contractors who provide those services. They are responsible for the upkeep and the drivers and the other things that are -- you know, the insurance, so we definitely have the better end of the deal, I think, in terms of the cost of running a transportation program for the elderly in Suffolk County.

And for the project that we have in front of you, it's for 2012. It's for the purchase of four vehicles. Two of the vehicles are 14 passenger, center aisles, and the other two vehicles are smaller vehicles that would be used mostly to provide the meals to the home delivered, because they don't need to have the big buses do that all the time. So that's the project that we have moving ahead, and then in 2013 and '14 it's for another couple of vehicles each.

**LEG. STERN:**

Holly, are these vehicles going to be, then, additional vehicles, or are they primarily replacement

vehicles for some of the fleet?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

They're replacement vehicles. We don't -- we haven't really increased the fleet. We basically replace as needed. And then when the vehicles come back in they go to DPW to sell back out.

**LEG. STERN:**

Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

I guess no other questions. No? Okay, thank you, Holly.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

With that, I guess we'll adjourn.

*(The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 A.M.)*