

**HEALTH COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Health 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, November 21st, 2013 at 2:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Legislator William Spencer - Chair

Legislator Kate Browning - Vice-Chair

Legislator Rob Calarco

Legislator Ricardo Montano

Legislator John Kennedy

Also In Attendance:

P.O. Wayne Horsley - Legislative District No. 14

Legislator DuWayne Gregory - Legislative District No. 15

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature

Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature

Craig Freas - Budget Analyst/Legislative Budget Review Office

Lora Gellerstein - Aide to Legislator Spencer

Paul Perillie - Aide to Legislator Gregory

Tom Vaughn - County Executive Assistant

Kevin Rooney - Oil Heat Institute of Long Island

Neal Lewis - Sustainability Institute at Malloy

Rick Brand - Newsday

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Reporter

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

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Good evening. Welcome to the Health Committee. We're going to begin with a salute to the flag, if we could stand, to be led by Legislator Browning.

Salutation

Please remain standing. And again, as we go into the Thanksgiving week, we still are going to be mindful of the tens of thousands of people who were -- well, the thousands that were killed in the Phillipine disaster, and then the hundreds of thousands who are homeless and they're still looking for food. Let us keep them in our hearts and our thoughts.

Moment of Silence Observed

You may be seated. So I will begin with our public comment portion, and I have two cards. If there's anyone that wishes to be heard -- actually, there's only two people that's here with Tom Vaughn, so that would cover everyone. Kevin Rooney is the first speaker, representing Oil Institute of Long Island. Welcome, Kevin. Thank you for coming out and joining us this afternoon. The podium is yours. You have three minutes to be able to expound upon anything that you so choose.

MR. ROONEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee. For the record, my name is Kevin Rooney, I'm the Chief Executive Officer of the Oil Heat Institute of Long Island.

I rise today to speak in favor and support of Introductory Resolution 2052, Declaring January as Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Month in Suffolk County. In the 30 plus years that I have represented the heating oil industry on Long Island, we have worked very closely with the State Department of Health and Health Departments in both counties to increase awareness of the issues related to carbon monoxide. We have supported State adoption of Amanda's Law back in 2009, and subsequent incorporation of the requirements of that law into the State Building Code in 2010. We were part of the working group that worked with Legislator Horsley to write and enact the Suffolk County Carbon Monoxide Detector Law.

Bottom line, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that any appliance which burns fossil fuel, and it really doesn't matter what the fossil fuel is, whether it's natural gas, propane, heating oil, wood or anything else, it is capable, under the right circumstances, of producing is CO. These circumstances are what we generally refer to as less than optimal operating conditions, such as insufficient exhaust or incomplete combustion. When you have a situation particularly with a fuel burning appliance in the home that is not properly exhausted, that has incomplete combustion, it will generate carbon monoxide and that is a potential threat. This legislation, to be perfectly honest, is a public service no-brainer. Raising the issue profile raises awareness of the risks which enhances public health and safety and may save lives; case closed. I strongly urge unanimous adoption of this resolution. Thank you so much for your time and attention.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Thank you. Kevin, I have a couple of just comments, questions I'd like to just maybe get your response to.

MR. ROONEY:

Oh, by all means.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

When we -- with carbon monoxide, I think that the issue is that a lot of times you don't detect the symptoms of it.

MR. ROONEY:

Of course.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

You know, carbon dioxide is something that we naturally discrete, but carbon monoxide, again, you a lot of times will feel the symptoms but you can't necessarily detect it.

MR. ROONEY:

It's the silent killer.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

It's silent, okay. And I think, you know, sometimes you can smell other fumes that are associated with it. Are there other things that we can do to try to -- I mean, it's one thing -- awareness is always a very important thing and that's what this does, it creates awareness. But being in the industry, the Oil Heat Institute, are there other things that are easy fixes that would save a lot of lives, but because of bureaucracy we're not doing them?

MR. ROONEY:

No, that's not -- every year for the past three decades, prior to the heating season commencing which is usually around the beginning of November, I send out a notice to virtually every heating oil company on Long Island, usually with a simple brochure that they could make copies of and ask them to put it in their customer newsletters, to send it out with their statements or invoices, to drop it off when they make a delivery, and just let people know that they should be aware of the signs of potential carbon monoxide generation.

Now, different fuels react differently. And far be it from me to speak to the issues generated by friends, and I use the term very loosely, in the natural gas industry. Usually speaking, if you have inadequate exhaust or incomplete combustion in an oil heating system, there are certain tell-tale signs. There will be an odor, all of the oil is not being completely burned which means it's generating carbon. If that carbon builds up sufficiently, a home will usually have what is called a puff back, which is a pushing --

*(*Legislator Kennedy entered the meeting at 2:30 P.M. *)*

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Uh-huh.

MR. ROONEY:

-- the boiler pushing that carbon build-up out into the home. Now, while that is certainly an inconvenience that we like to avoid, it's something that's not deadly. So it really is a matter of letting homeowners, certainly in my industry, know if you smell oil or if you see this carbon, this black dust build-up around your boiler, call your heating oil company. Make sure that you have an annual tune-up where they check the efficiency, they check the draft, the smoke stack, and make sure that the system is operating at its optimal efficiency. When heating systems are operating as efficiently as they can, they produce very, very little carbon.

One of the things that we did with all -- without belaboring the subject, Mr. Chairman, two-and-a-half years ago the Long Island heating oil industry and our partners in New York City, worked very, very, very hard in the Legislature to adopt a law mandating ultra-low sulfur heating oil in the State of New York. To be perfectly honest, we took enormous amounts of crap from the

major oil companies that are a part of my industry, but they're the big boys and we're the little boys, and they opposed it vigorously. New York now, thanks to the passage of that law, is the only state in the nation that requires ultra-low sulfur heating oil. That has reduced CO and CO2 emissions by approximately 95%. That means that here in New York, the likelihood of generating CO from incomplete combustion is much, much lower than it is in any other state in the nation where the heating oil that they are using, instead of being 15 parts per million sulfur, is as much as 1500 parts per million sulfur. So it's a roundabout way of trying to make heating systems cleaner, more efficient so that they run properly and they don't generate CO.

In terms of what the County can do, it's simply what you're doing, raise awareness. Have the Health Department make sure that everyone who -- particularly everyone who is HEAP eligible is made aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide. Those who are less fortunate in our society, who utilize HEAP -- which, by the way, opened last Monday -- they're generally less likely to have newer, cleaner, more efficient heating systems because, A, they don't have the money to upgrade them; B, they don't necessarily have the money to do regular routine maintenance. So certainly for that -- that portion of the population which is HEAP eligible, if the Department of Social Services could provide any HEAP recipient with a brochure alerting them to the potential dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning, that would be a major step in the right direction.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

We had recently in our Legislative District some of the fire departments that gave out carbon monoxide detectors to families.

And then last year we sponsored legislation in this Legislature where in hookah bars we require carbon monoxide detectors as a way to protect the kind of employees that are there.

MR. ROONEY:

Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

You being a memory -- a member of this -- *(laughter)* -- not a memory, a member of the Oil Heat Institute, would you consider it overreach or too burdensome a regulation, or do you think that we could partner in terms of looking at requiring homes with boilers to have carbon monoxide detectors? Whether or not we say those with children or requiring all homes, I mean, do you have -- and again, I'm not saying that we are going to do this or even if we tried to if we would support it, but, I mean, it seems like when you talk about a life being lost, some of these carbon monoxide detectors in bulk can be as inexpensive as \$5.

MR. ROONEY:

Uh-huh.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

You know, do you think that if this Legislature were to entertain requiring carbon monoxide detectors in all homes with children, or in all homes --

MR. ROONEY:

Where you have a fossil-burning --

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Where you have fossil-burning, do you think that that would be -- and again, I guess this may be anecdotal so don't spend a lot of time, but what do you think the response would be to that; do you think it would be a good idea, bad idea?

MR. ROONEY:

You got my vote.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

(Laughter).

MR. ROONEY:

This is what we routinely, we print up thousands of these. This is a two-part form that we produced as the *Notice to Homeowner Pursuant to Suffolk County Carbon Monoxide Detector Law*. Every new appliance that is installed requires this to be filled out by the heating oil -- the installing company and signed by the homeowner. The problem you have, Mr. Chairman, and this is something that Legislator Horsley is all too familiar with from doing this a couple of years ago, is you can't make people --

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Right.

MR. ROONEY:

-- put in a carbon monoxide detector.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Right.

MR. ROONEY:

And you can't make companies that supply -- because they supply a fuel, they also now have to install a carbon monoxide detector. The liability is enormous and no one will go there. But should all homes have a carbon monoxide detector, as I do? Yes, absolutely. How you make that happen? You make that happen by, A, making them as inexpensive and simple as possible, even the plug in types you can use that have a backup battery, they don't have to be hard-wired. If they're inexpensive or they're supplied to homeowners free of charge and homeowners are realized or are made to realize why this is a really good thing for them to have, just like a smoke detector, then you're well on your way to getting one in every home. There should be one in every home. I routinely tell people, *If you don't have one, go to Home Depot or Lowe's or Ace Hardware or whatever, spend the 20 bucks and buy one.*

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

I agree. It's --

MR. ROONEY:

I'm the convert. You know, it's just like preaching to the converted.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

It's tough; sometimes, what I recommend medically has to differ from what is politically acceptable. But anyway, thank you so much.

Any of my colleagues have a question? Legislator Horsley.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Kev, I just wanted to just to thank you for coming down here today.

I appreciate your comments. You're always spot-on and I appreciate your -- not only your keen interest in your industry, but for the people of Suffolk, too, as well. So thanks, I appreciate it.

MR. ROONEY:

Thank you, Presiding Officer.

P.O. HORSLEY:

And by the way, it's not just -- this issue doesn't just relate to oil heat.

MR. ROONEY:

Oh, no.

P.O. HORSLEY:

This is as much, and often times in even greater ways, more for gas systems as well, so.

MR. ROONEY:

Because you don't have some of those tell-tale signs --

P.O. HORSLEY:

Exactly.

MR. ROONEY:

-- of incomplete combustion before generation of CO, yes.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Right. You know, and if you don't have the proper flume in your chimney, where oil works well with that, gas sometimes does not --

MR. ROONEY:

That's correct.

P.O. HORSLEY:

-- and monoxide gets out. So thanks a lot, I appreciate you coming down here today.

MR. ROONEY:

You're more than welcome, always. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Thank you so much, Kevin. Appreciate it.

Our next card is from Neal Lewis, and he's representing the Sustainability Institute at Malloy. Welcome, Neal. Thank you for coming. And he has handouts.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Legislature. The -- I'm speaking on the same topic as Kevin Rooney, and it's a pleasure to be working with Kevin on an issue like this having his tremendous knowledge and expertise.

I work for the Sustainability Institute at Malloy College. We see ourselves as working to make people aware of things that they can do in their lives to build a more sustainable future, and one of our primary areas of focus is on energy issues. And I want to come to this issue from the energy angle, if I could, so I do have a recommendation for a sentence that I'd like to add to the resolution if we could. So a -- thank you. There is a program called Climate-Smart Communities that exists in New York State and Suffolk County is one of the communities throughout the State that adopted the Climate-Smart Communities Pledge. And Legislator Horsley asked me to serve as the Chair of the committee that was created as part of that Climate Smart Community program. So that task force is meeting and working and this is one of the topics we discussed there. There is language in the program to encourage public education, so I think this very much fits within that.

*(*Legislator Gregory entered the meeting at 2:50 P.M. *)*

And I want to give an anecdote that speaks to this. I was at an event in the Town Hall in Brookhaven talking to people about home energy audits, so we encourage people to get home energy audits done. And it was about two years ago that we worked with the Suffolk Legislator -- Suffolk Legislature and Legislator Horsley at the time introduced a bill that was adopted that sets a standard for how home energy audits are done, and this is important to the topic we're addressing today. Because if someone says *We're going to do a home energy audit*, but they don't actually do the audit, they just do a walk-thru with a clip board, then odds are they're not going to do what's called a combustion safety test. And when a home energy audit is done properly and consistent with the law that was adopted here in Suffolk County, if you're going to call it an audit then you have to do certain things and one of those things is the combustion safety test, and this is very important. So when we were in Brookhaven, we gave this presentation and we were encouraging people to get home energy audits which currently are free under New York State Law, so it's a perfect time for people to be taking advantage of it, and we sort of asked for show of hands of where people were at, whether they were looking into it and we kind of went through everybody and there was one woman left who hadn't raised her hand. I said, *"Excuse me, so what's your interest,"* and she said, *"Well, I already had the audit done."* I said, *"Oh, okay."* So I was waiting to hear like a bad story that something went wrong, which I have not yet had that experience, people are very happy with this program. She then told me a story about how her son had for years a serious problem with severe migraines and that he lived in what she called the cave, because the only thing the doctors could recommend was to darken his bedroom because he had a light sensitivity that seemed to trigger the migraines.

She said that she had a -- she came to our program a year earlier in the Town of Brookhaven and heard about the free home energy audit, so she had one. And when the technician came to the house to do the home energy audit, he wears, as is common with these guys, a carbon monoxide detector right on his hip, on his belt, and it went off right away; and the stove that she had, which was a gas stove, was leaking and it triggered the detector. He said to her, *"You know what? This is actually one of the higher readings I've seen and I don't really want to even finish working in here until you deal with the problem with your stove,"* which she did.

The long and short of this story is that the child's migraine problems completely went away, and this is the point that we want to make here which is that there are a number of things that people can experience as a result of exposure to carbon monoxide at low levels, levels which will not trip the detectors because it's not going to kill you. It's at a level like 70 parts per million or something in that range, maybe a little bit lower, a little bit higher, and it won't trip the detector, but it's enough that it can cause a range of health symptoms that may be like a flu, headache, dizziness, in this case severe migraines that I described. So our goal here is to make people aware of something that I don't think there's good awareness on, and if the Suffolk County Legislature could put its name behind this, it will go a great length towards explaining this.

There are issues that can sort of be unraveled from this. So the question about detectors, for example, there are now newer detectors that are electronic and can detect lower levels. As a matter of fact, there's an article in today's New York Times about a company in the business section that's selling a detector that's both carbon monoxide and -- am I going too long? I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

I'm giving a little bit of leeway since we're so small, but if I start breaking our rules --

MR. LEWIS:

Understood.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

-- then I'll establish a precedent. So if you could wrap up in another 10, 15 seconds. You may have a question, though, that will allow you to finish.

MR. LEWIS:

Understood. Thank you. If I could just read in, then, the sentence that I wanted to add. So referring to the -- here's the sentence, quote:

"WHEREAS, Suffolk County has adopted the Climate Smart Communities Pledge and participated in the New York State Climate Smart Communities Program, one of the goals of the program is to educate and inspire the public to take action on climate change and awareness on carbon monoxide hazards is consistent with that goal of promoting -- with the goal of promoting home energy audits and improving the efficiency of combustion appliances in the home."

So I just think it would be good to tie in the fact that this is consistent with the previous work, that's the goal with part of my comments. Because Kevin did such a good job of giving the initial presentation on the issue, I wanted to sort of tie it in to the energy issue and how the best defense against these concerns, if you have these concerns, is to have a home energy audit which today is free.

It won't be free forever, but New York State has a law making them free, let's encourage people to realize that's one of the elements of it, and then also understand some of the limitations with those carbon monoxide detectors and they should all be Underwriter Laboratory branded detectors, they're stamped with that brand. So, those are my comments, and thank you for the liberties of going over the time.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Thank you. And Legislator -- I'm sorry, Presiding Officer Horsley has a question for you.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Neal, thank you for being here. And truth be told that Neal has been the wind under my wings on a number of pieces of legislation over the years and I appreciate all you do for Suffolk County and what you have -- how you have helped me making myself a better Legislator.

Let me ask you, where is that in The Times, what section?

MR. LEWIS:

It's the front page Business Section today, today's paper.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Really? Front page.

MR. LEWIS:

So it's a story -- it's really a story about this innovative detector.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay, we'll take it any way we can get it.

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah. But it points to the fact that there is movement to make these detectors better. There are concerns if the detector goes off more than once, that you really need to throw it away and buy a new one. And this one, which is very sophisticated, it will connect to your phones, it will tell you an app on your phone when you had a problem and it will detect those lower levels that I was talking about, it's also a fire alarm and, you know -- so it's a smoke detector and a carbon monoxide detector in one. So we're seeing some interesting changes in the industry and this is stuff that we can help get people to be more --

P.O. HORSLEY:

So are they connected to, what, landline phones; is that where? Rather than your cells. How would that --

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah, that's a great -- it didn't use the word WiFi, but I was assuming it was connected by WiFi.

P.O. HORSLEY:

I have no idea.

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah, okay. I might have missed that sentence, but yeah, that's the assumption. And like I said, I think we're moving to a place where you will have more opportunity to have these electronic detectors, but until we have that, you really need to have a professional come in your house and do a home energy audit, because then they'll find that you have something that's leaking. And it could be the case where, like with that stove I described, it was an old unit that, you know, we should be concerned about; old stoves, old dryers that also have natural gas sources, whereas the electric ones aren't going to have that problem. And then clearly the heating systems, whether it's oil or natural gas, both of them have this potential, although Kevin pointed out the potential does seem to be higher with the natural gas ones. But, you know, if you have an electronic detector in the house, it will give you some numbers when it's relatively low but not enough to be a life threatening concern but enough to be a health quality concern.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Can you pick up an electronic detector in like a Home Depot, Lowe's, that type of place, or is it they're just through -- they're just new inventions now?

MR. LEWIS:

They're -- I'll promise you this; if we do the month, I'll make sure I go around to all the stores and find out what's available.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay.

MR. LEWIS:

Because I may be talking more about what's available in theory than whether it's gotten to the local stores yet.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay, that sounds good.

MR. LEWIS:

But it clearly --

P.O. HORSLEY:

That's a deal.

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah, that's a deal, okay (*laughter*).

P.O. HORSLEY:

(*Laughter*) Okay. Thanks, Neal.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Thank you.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you all.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

That's all the cards that I have. Is there anyone else that wishes to be heard today? Seeing none, we're going to move on.

LEG. MONTANO:

Could you take -- I'd like to make a motion to take 2052 out of order.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

2052?

LEG. MONTANO:

The one that they were speaking about.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

We could take it out of order, but there are really no other resolutions.

LEG. MONTANO:

I've got to go, though.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Okay.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

There are three tabled ones, I don't know who's here.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Okay. Yes, it would be my please. So motion and a second to take IR 2052 out of order.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I second it.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? We have it before us, it was seconded by Legislator Kennedy.

Introductory Resolutions

2052-13 - Declaring January as "Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Month" in Suffolk County (Presiding Officer Horsley). Mr. Presiding Officer, what would you like to do with this?

P.O. HORSLEY:

Move it.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Move it, all right. You make the motion to approve and second it. Any other thoughts or just items for discussion? No? With that, we'll call the vote. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion carries, thank you. (*Approved - VOTE: 6/0/0/0 - Vote Includes Presiding Officer Horsley*).

LEG. CALARCO:

Cosponsor.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

I did -- before we move on with the agenda, there are a couple of pieces of correspondence, just loose items I wanted to follow-up on. Thank you, again, for being here.

We did receive an e-mail regarding the employees pharmacy drug cost increases. So I just wanted to ask, Tom, do you have a minute? Can you come forward if there's something we could have you follow-up on for us?

I had received an inquiry from a constituent who serves on the Pharmacy Bureau, was inquiring regarding that we had passed something last year where we were looking to have the prescription plan through a mail order, I guess, house that would save a significant amount of money. So the inquiry, let me just go with the official correspondence, I'll read that into the record, and it said, "*I spoke with your office in the past. It's the Long Island Pharmacist Society met with Suffolk County officials and union officials last year when the contract was going to be a mandatory mail contract for municipal employees. I very much would like to address the Health Committee today regarding potential reasons for increases in the cost of prescriptions for Suffolk County employees,*" as reported just, I guess, recently in Newsday last week.

So I did want to, again, not just go on hearsay, but I was going to ask if we could get some sort of formal maybe response. One, have costs increased; and if they have, what are the reasons for that? You know, so if you could get back to us, I'd be very appreciative. And if you have anything that you may know about this particular issue that you could share with the committee now, that would also be good. No?

MR. VAUGHN:

I'd be happy to look into it.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Okay, that's all I can ask. Thank you very much.

The second piece of correspondence I wanted to address had just been with regards to some of my other Legislators concerning the recent -- I'm sorry, I got distracted from just someone reminding me of something else. But with the health care centers, there was an inquiry just regarding where do we stand with regards to the RFP process for FQHC's. We have definite, you know, two sets of RFPs that we're looking at, one with our contracted health centers and one with our County Health Centers. I have had some contact with Administration regarding that that indicates that there are ongoing negotiations and that things are proceeding, moving forward actually according to plan. But with regards to specifics, I think that one concern, you know, we have our new contract, but with employees wanting to know if there would be situations where they will be transferred, knowing their status, And we're not able to address that at this particular point because these negotiations are under way. And if any Legislator would like more detail, the Administration would be happy to brief you further.

So we're going to ask for an update, Mr. Vaughn, at the end of the year, too, or at the point where just regular updates on where we stand on the process. Legislator Browning?

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, just I'd like the status of the RFPs, have they gone out, what kind of responses. And the doctor said there's two RFPs.

MR. FREAS:

(Shook head in opposition).

LEG. BROWNING:

There isn't?

MR. FREAS:

No.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, Craig is saying there isn't.

MR. FREAS:

We're operating under -- unless there's a completely new RFP, we're operating under two separate RFP waivers. One for the --

LEG. BROWNING:

Waivers.

MR. FREAS:

Two waivers. One for the County-staffed health centers, which has been extent I think for about a year and a half, and the other waiver which was granted I think in the last month or so for the contracted centers.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And what does the Administration expect to be the timeline? Because I understand there's already negotiations, obviously Southampton, that agreement has already been put in place. What's your timeline to have that partnership with Hudson River HealthCare with our County-owned facilities, and what timeline do we have for our contracted facilities?

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

My understanding, Legislator Browning, is that as far as just an overall, rough timeline is that the first half of the 2014, according to when I understand the negotiations to -- the way that they're going at this point, that we are on track. But as far as -- I do think that the Administration is willing to brief you further, if you would like just specific details.

LEG. BROWNING:

You know, I don't know if Craig has a lot of information on it but, you know, I know we have Brookhaven Hospital that contracts with us for Patchogue and Shirley. And again, you know, what -- what do we need to -- where's our role? Because you have Brookhaven Hospital, you have Hudson River, they're going to be in discussions, and what is the County's role in this? And as far as the funding is concerned, we're not totally out of it when it comes to providing any kind of assistance with funds. So what -- I'm trying to figure out, you know, which goes first, the chicken or the egg. I don't know.

MR. FREAS:

I want to address the funding questions, and I think Mr. Vaughn might better be able to possibly address the general timeline questions you had.

No, the initial intention is not for us to be completely out of the business by the end of '14. Assuming everything goes according to what was proposed in the budget and my understanding of the situation from speaking to the department, the contracts for the four centers under hospital contract would transition by the end of '14 and would -- would then have a contract similar to the one that we currently have with Hudson River for -- for the Elsie Owens Center where they would receive a Community Benefit Grant. And so we would pay them -- like that, it would be considerably less than what they receive now as their payments for running the health centers, and they would no longer be under the County's license.

LEG. BROWNING:

Right. But when we did the operating budget, we estimated a certain amount of money.

MR. FREAS:

Correct.

LEG. BROWNING:

With a plan that everything would be done by a certain time; correct?

MR. FREAS:

Correct. And that plan, depending on how everything goes, that money -- depending on whether some health centers go early or they all go at the same time, provides from seven to nine months of funding for the contracted health centers. The two County appropriate -- the two other County appropriations for the Riverhead Health Center and the Tri-Community Health Center are theoretically funded for the whole year.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. So -- well, so, basically we have to get it done by the timeline that we expect or we don't have the money to --

MR. FREAS:

In our review, you know, we mentioned that this -- that not getting it done by the timeline was a risk. What would happen is the department, and then if the money that's left over in the department isn't enough, then money from elsewhere in the budget will have to be moved in the place that you could move it, because there is some money for hiring in some departments is, of course, personnel which then would keep us from having any -- it would limit -- it would limit the amount of new hires that we could make in any given year.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah. I mean, obviously dealing with the County Health Centers, it's going to be less complicated because it's just the County and Hudson. However, there's going to be negotiations and discussions between our hospitals and all of our health centers, whatever hospitals are operating. So there's going to be negotiations and discussions, because I'm sure the hospitals, while they've been basically having a lot of the control over our health centers, now you've got another entity coming in who has their set of rules and guidelines and expectations. So I'm kind of curious if it's going to get a little complicated, especially when it comes to staff, so.

MR. FREAS:

I really don't -- I don't know how to answer your question.

LEG. BROWNING:

No, I'm just -- I guess it's a thought out loud, but just that, you know, there's three parties now going to be involved. And I don't know how much of a role we are going to be playing in negotiations between, say, like Brookhaven and Hudson. What role will we have in that negotiations? Are we going to have anything or are we just going to be -- Tom, do you know?

MR. VAUGHN:

Legislator Browning, did you know that I was a graduate of Eastport High School?

LEG. BROWNING:

(Laughter)

MR. VAUGHN:

And the reason that I say this is that as a graduate of Eastport High School, my absolute favorite teacher there was a man named William Troller, and Mr. Troller was my English teacher and he had a saying which is, "*You can sit there in silence and have people think that you're a fool, or you can open your mouth and prove it.*"

*(*Laughter*)*

And in this case, since I have absolutely no information, I am going to choose to sit here in silence and allow you to come to all your own conclusions.

LEG. BROWNING:

(Laughter).

MR. VAUGHN:

That being said, I do understand the nature of your concerns and your questions and I will be happy to see what I can do to facilitate answers to them.

LEG. BROWNING:

Well, I would never think what you said, but I'm not going to throw you under the bus.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

I think you're brilliant.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'm the former bus diver *(laughter)*.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

I think you're brilliant. That was good. That was beautiful.

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you, Tom.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Thank you. We'll continue to get updates and share as much information as we can. We'll stay in regular contact with the Administration as these negotiations proceed. I do understand that things are on target and they're moving forward, and hopefully within the first half of the year we can have at least a disposition as to where we stand on each of these.

So with that, that's all the correspondence. I have no presentation. We are expecting kind of an end of the year update in our December meetings from our Commissioner.

Tabled Resolutions

I'm going to move on to the agenda, and the first item is ***IR 1601-13 - To appoint member to the Early Intervention Task Force (Salvatore Caravella, M.D.) (Spencer)***. I'm going to ask for a motion to discharge this because Dr. Caravella is actually working on the committee days, but he's actually available on a General Session Tuesday. He'll appear at the Legislature, he's agreed to that.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

So second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion has been carried to ***discharge without recommendation (VOTE: 5/0/0/1 - Not Present: Legislator Montano).***

1679-13 - To appoint member to the Teen Pregnancy Advisory Board (Lawrence Philips).
Lawrence Philips is not here today, so I'm going to make a motion to table. Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion is ***tabled (VOTE: 5/0/0/1 - Not Present: Legislator Montano).***

IR 1692-13 - Establishing guidelines for the use of Methoprene in Suffolk County (Schneiderman). We're going to -- we are in the progress of getting a former -- formal, not former, formal literature review and we're in contact with the Department of Health and the Administration regarding this issue. And so at this time we're going to continue to table this resolution.

LEG. CALARCO:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SPENCER:

Second by Legislator Calarco. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 5/0/0/1 - Not present: Legislator Montano).***

We already acted on our Introductory Resolution.

I have no further business before this committee today. With that, I'm going to ask for -- I'm going to make a motion to adjourn.

We're adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 P.M. *)