

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

PUBLIC HEARING

APRIL 10, 2014

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC HEARING HELD AT THE EVANS K. GRIFFING BUILDING

IN THE MAXINE S. POSTAL LEGISLATIVE AUDITORIUM

300 CENTER DRIVE

RIVERHEAD, NEW YORK

Minutes taken by:

Diana Flesher, Court Reporter

PUBLIC HEARING WAS OPENED AT 10:05 AM

P.O. GREGORY:

Okay. Welcome to today's Public Hearing on the Tri-Community HRH -- transferring the license of the Tri-Community Health Center to HRH in Amityville. Mr. Clerk, would you please read the notice?

MR. LAUBE:

Will do. Notice is hereby given that the Suffolk County Legislature will conduct a Public Hearing on the proposed transition of the Maxine S. Postal Tri-Community Health Center to FQHC Status, an operation by Hudson River Health Care, Inc, as set forth by Introductory Resolution Number 1318 of 2014 and Introductory Resolution Number 1320 of 2014. Notice is further given that the County Legislature will hold a Public Hearing on said petition at the Maxine S. Postal Legislative Auditorium, Center Drive, Riverhead, New York on the 10th day of April at ten a.m.

P.O. GREGORY:

Great. Before we proceed, we should all rise and say the Pledge led by Deputy Presiding Officer, Jay Schneiderman.

SALUTATION

Okay. Thank you. Thus far we have one card, Linda McGregor.

MS. MCGREGOR:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. Linda McGregor, Suffolk County resident. I work for the Suffolk County Department of Health Services so I'm here to speak on behalf -- not officially on behalf of the Department of Health Services, but as a Suffolk County citizen as well.

First, I want to preface what I'm about to say with my First Amendment right to freedom of speech. You might not like hearing what I have to say; you might disagree with what I have to say, but I still have the right to say it. And if you feel that anything that I'm saying that I cannot prove in a court of law is true, then you have the right to sue me or to seek termination from employment.

I want to go into the -- first, I feel the savings advertised by the County in privatization of the Health Center -- it's not just Tri-Community because we've been told it's going to be all the clinics -- will be offset by Federal, State and County taxes, which the new operators rely on and could not operate without. I'm not talking about Medicaid or Medicare reimbursement. I'm just talking about opening the doors. They rely on Federal, State and County funding in order -- just in order to open the doors. So while savings are being advertised by the County, it's going to be made up with the increase in Federal, State and still County funding.

I also feel the clinics have been misrepresented in the media and the public is being led to believe that patients in Suffolk County have received an inferior product all these years. The clinics have provided the following: Primary care, infant pediatric, adult and geriatric care, prenatal and gynecology care, mental health services, dental care, HIV care, radiology and laboratory services, immunizations and free vaccines for children, colposcopy and colonoscopy clinics, dermatology, podiatry, cardiology, and gastroenterology clinics, Center for prenatal care, free STD screenings and treatment, free TB treatment, Migrant Farm Worker Program and transportation for migrant farm workers. We've been led to believe by our Union that this is going to be a unanimous decision April 29th, that all the Legislators are on board.

I would like now to quote Bill Moyers, famous -- a national public figure, Emmy award-winner for investigative documentaries and publisher of Newsday from 1967 to 1970, "the press is supposed to be the watchdog. If the watchdog doesn't bark, how do you know there's a burglar in the basement? Investigative editors share the conviction that news is what's hidden, everything else is publicity." And publicity -- publicity is what all of you are receiving from the newspapers, from the

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not-for-profits and from your own press releases for the grants you're securing from the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund and Cultural Advisory -- Cultural Advisory Board, the Department of Economic Development and Planning. I recognize those to be member items. You're taking credit. You're the ones being given credit. You're standing in front of the crowds with the applause and the praise for this public funding, to not-for-profits. They're member items. So not only do member items not end in 2011, they've been historically under reported per New York State law. New York State law requires that member items have to be published and they're not being published.

BEEPER SOUNDED

That was five minutes?

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Keep going.

P.O. GREGORY:

That's three. Yes, You have two more minutes. Sorry.

MS. MCGREGOR:

Okay. I thought you had five -- unanimous doesn't always mean right either. I know that it's unanimous with the Suffolk County Legislature. The political party fusion between the Democrat and Republic biparty nullifying the vote of Suffolk County citizens. Political party fusion cross-endorsement is illegal in 42 states because it's viewed as election rigging. Here with County, local and town races, there's usually -- there's -- a lot of times there's one -- there's one person on the ballot cross-endorsed by multiple parties. It nullifies our votes.

You're also unanimous on your endorsement of District Attorney Thomas Spota. Thomas Spota has violated the 1st, 13th, and 14th Amendments of the Constitution in the Sentosa Nursing Case and the result is a multimillion federal lawsuit against the County. That's been going on year number five now. You like to throw out numbers about how much health services cost the citizens, how much John J. Foley cost the citizens, but there's no accounting of how much the illegal prosecution of the Sentosa Nursing Center and their attorney cost the taxpayers. That prosecution was stopped by the New York State Appellate Court, multimillion dollar Federal lawsuit against the County and also the Judge, Robert Doyle and District Attorney Thomas Spota. You're also unanimous in your endorsement of him. There's been no call for his resignation by any of you or any of your political parties. And he is a product of cross-party endorsement between Democrats, Republicans, Conservatives and Independents.

You also unanimously endorsed the patronage position in Civil Services title -- brand new Civil Service title created for Cheryl Felice when she lost her union election that Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone gave her in the wake of a budget deficit. Cheryl Felice has published false judicial decisions, false New York State Attorney General decisions, discriminated against a fellow executive board officer based on sexual orientation. I attended two of the public hearings at the New York State Division of Human Rights. I witnessed corruption first hand. I witnessed the senior attorney {Darren Bizzare} refuse to cross-examine Cheryl Felice. I read the Judge's decision. Tapes were entered into evidence. Cheryl Felice self-incriminated herself. Those tapes were excluded from the Judge's decision like they never existed. So corruption goes all the way to the top. And this person was rewarded with a brand new Civil Service title, Deputy Fund Administrator. And the Legislature didn't call the Executive out on that.

We do not have watchdogs here in Suffolk County with our news organizations. We don't. Occasionally there's an in-depth article once in a while, like Long Island Press many years ago issued an article on John J. Foley. But just -- the savings are going to be offset. Member items are not being disclosed per New York State Law. And it's wrong. It's wrong. How do you expect us to find you credible when you're not following the law? Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

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P.O. GREGORY:

Thank you. Okay, is there anyone else in the audience that would like to come forward and speak, please come forward at this moment. Okay. Not seeing any.

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Does the Notice say the hearing has to remain open for a certain period of time?

MR. LAUBE:

No.

MR. PEARSALL:

Not necessarily.

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

The Notice, Tim, does it say --

MR. LAUBE:

It doesn't say that but you're welcome -- the Notice doesn't say that but you're welcome to keep the Public Hearing open longer if you'd like to see if someone shows up.

P.O. GREGORY:

Maybe we'll keep it open 15 more minutes until 10:30. Maybe there's, you know, with the bus system or whatever. Okay. So we'll recess for 15 minutes see if anyone shows up. Okay.

THE PUBLIC HEARING RECESSED FROM 10:14 AM AND RESUMED AT 10:30 AM

P.O. GREGORY:

Okay, we're back. It's 10:30. We don't have any other guests or speakers. So at this moment we're going to adjourn the Public Hearing. All right. We stand adjourned. Thank you.

**THE PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED AT 10:31 AM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**