

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Human Services 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 November 10, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Monica Martinez, Chairperson
Leg. Kate M. Browning, Vice Chair
Leg. Lou D'Amaro
Leg. Leslie Kennedy
Leg. Robert Trotta

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel/Legislature
Jason Richberg, Clerk of the Legislature
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Andrew Tarantowicz, Budget Review Office
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office
John O'Neill, Commissioner/Department of Social Services
Lisa Pinkard, Aide to Leg. Martinez
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Trotta
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
William Shilling, Aide to Leg. Calarco
Josh Slaughter, Aide to Leg. Browning
Ali Nazir, Aide to Leg. Kennedy
Kathy Liguori, Welfare to Work Commission
Kathy Malloy, AME
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:04 PM

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay, good afternoon and welcome to today's Human Services Committee. If we could all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by Legislator Kennedy.

SALUTATION

Thank you. Clerk, do we have any cards for today?

MR. RICHBERG:

No cards, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay. We do have the Commissioner here. Commissioner, do you have any words that you would like to say to the Committee?

COMMISSIONER O'NEILL:

Good afternoon, members of the Human Service Committee, Chairman Martinez. I figured you may want to ask questions about the IR so I just figured I'd come straight up.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Sure.

COMMISSIONER O'NEILL:

So IR 1768, I would ask if you could table this resolution until such time as the Department has had an opportunity just to work on a couple of minor edits.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER O'NEILL:

And then for the next IR 1843, this is a pass-through grant, Continuum Care Grant Renewal Program, Beacon House United Veterans, Beacon House to supply eight units of homeless housing to veterans and their families. So I would ask that obviously you support this resolution. And I'd like to say a big thank you to our veterans day before our Veterans Day. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. Okay. Since there's no one else, we'll --

MS. LIGUORI:

I didn't see a card to fill out.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Can she fill out a card, Clerk, so she can -- Mr. Clerk. Mr. Clerk.

MS. LIGUORI:

My name is Kathy Liguori. I'm from HabiTots Preschool and Child Care Center as well as the Vice Chair of the Welfare To Work Commission. I just wanted to say thank you for putting together the Child Care Commission resolution and understanding that it's going to be tabled today.

Again, I wanted to express our appreciation. For many, many years since 2004 we've been

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testifying before you. The Child Care Council put out a report about childcare as Long Island being an economic industry and then revised it again in 2014. The Welfare To Work Commission in 2014 put together their childcare report. And this resolution is actually the first recommendation of all of these reports that is being acted upon.

So the other thing that I wanted to say is that -- that this resolution is meant to elevate the voice of childcare and to bring together and lift the programmatic silos so that we can work toward a common goal and making childcare more affordable, more assessable (sic), raising the quality and all the other things that go along with that. So I just wanted to share my appreciation.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Thank you. I know we have a couple of questions. So, Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'm not so sure it's necessarily, Kathy, it's good to see you and feel better because I am surprised to see you. I think more when we get to the bill to kind of get some input from George and, you know, some of the concerns that I've had about the Commission.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Okay, then let's continue with the agenda. We do not have any presentations. Thanks, Kathy.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

We don't have any presentations, no Tabled Resolutions so we'll go onto Introductory Resolutions starting with the first one **1768**, and that's **Establishing the Suffolk County Child Care Commission. (Martinez)**. I will like to make a motion to table; second by Legislator Kennedy.

MR. NOLAN:

We are on the bill. We're tabling. Do you have any questions?

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, sorry about that.

MR. NOLAN:

We're going to table it.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. You are making amendments to it?

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Yes, there are several edits that still need to be made in communication with our Commissioner.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And there is going to be participation from Social Services.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Yes, there will be.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. You know, the only thing that I had a concern about is, I know with Welfare To Work Commission and we've had the Child Care Council come here to talk about, you know, daycare and funding. And the one thing that I'm always concerned about, and we're seeing it right now in Public Works over the bus transportation, that when, you know, the commissions come to the Legislature

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and say "we need more money, we need more funding" but we're strapped because we're not getting our fair share.

And I -- that's one of my major concerns is that, you know, there isn't going to be a report coming back to say "Suffolk County, you need to do this" when it's really not coming -- the lack of funds or the lack of support is not coming. I think our Social Services Department has done the best they could. You know, they make every dollar stretch the best they can.

So that's my biggest concern is that it's not going to wind up being directed back at Suffolk County. And we're going to have a ton of people here saying "you need to do this, but we don't have the money," that it needs to be directed at the right places, like the Federal or the State government who could potentially be, you know, shortchanging us.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

And I agree. And this resolution has been amended multiple times for that reason so Suffolk County is not put in a position where they are held responsible -- you know, completely responsible for this. So the original resolution did put a lot of the onus on Suffolk County. And that's one of the amendments that we did make is that it's because of the formula that is used at the State level is the reason why we're not being funded as we should.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, and I -- again, having the commission, a group of experts and people who know the business, to put their heads together, to say, you know, how this money should be spent or the best way that it can be used is, I think, more important than pointing fingers at who should be doing it. And is there a -- we know that there's limited dollars. And it's not going to come any -- you know, we're not going to get anymore any sooner; that if there's a way that we can be creative just to make sure that everybody's getting what they need and -- you know, I think Kathy said it all the time is, you know, providing affordable daycare, it helps our economy, it doesn't hurt our economy.

So, I'm glad you're tabling it so we can, I guess, have further conversation with Commissioner.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Agreed. And just so you know, this resolution has been in the works for the last two years so -- as George can attest. So I think it's, you know, it's time that we do finally -- and I'll make sure that we have everything, all our ducks in a row and making sure that everyone is happy at this point because it has been two years and we need to move forward with this. So I do look forward to having a conversation with you, and not just with your staff but you directly.

COMMISSIONER O'NEILL:

I would agree that's the proper way to proceed.

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

All right. So we have a motion and a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Resolution 1843, Accepting and appropriating 100% grant funding in the amount of \$183,848 in 100% federal funding under the Continuum of Care Grant Renewal Program from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and authorizing a contract with United Veterans Beacon House, Inc. (Co. Exec.). Motion to approve and to place on the Consent Calendar. Can I get a second?

LEG. TROTТА:

Second.

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CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Second by Legislator Trotta. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0/CONSENT CALENDAR)**

That is the end of our agenda. Meeting is adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:13 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**