

**PUBLIC SAFETY & PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
of the
Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Public Safety & Public Information 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 **February 4, 2003**.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Fred Towle - Chairman
Legislator Joseph Caracappa - Vice-Chair
Legislator David Bishop
Legislator William Lindsay
Legislator Andrew Crecca
Legislator George Guldi

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Sabatino - Counsel to the Legislature
Bill Doyle - Aide to Legislator Towle
Meaghan O'Reilly - Aide to Presiding Officer Postal
Tim Motz - Aide to Presiding Officer Postal
Eban Bronfman - Aide to Legislator Guldi
Rosalind Gazes - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office
Joe Michaels - Deputy County Executive for Public Safety
Bill Faulke - County Executive's Office/Intergovernmental Relations
Alan Otto - Chief of Staff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Department
James Abbott - Chief Deputy Commissioner/Suffolk County Police Dept
James Maggio - Deputy Commissioner/Suffolk County Police Department
Phil Robilotto - Chief of Department/Suffolk County Police Department
Mike Pirone - Suffolk County Police Department
John Blosser - Lieutenant/Aviation Division - SCPD
Thomas Brandon - Inspector/Aviation Division - SCPD
Don Popavaro - Lieutenant/Aviation Division - SCPD
Ken Phalen - Architect/Suffolk County Department of Public Works
Debbie Eppel - Public Information Office
Dr. Jeanne Alicandro - Director/Emergency Medical Services
Eileen Kremers - Stop DWI Coordinator
Vincent Iaria - Director/Suffolk County Probation Department
Jeff Frayler - President/Police Benevolent Association
Tom Muratore - Vice-President/Police Benevolent Association
John Meyerricks - Vice-President/Deputy Sheriff's Benevolent Assoc.
Kristine Chayes - Suffolk County Department of Civil Service
Ruth Cusack - Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Elie Seidman-Smith - Director/Community Service Program/ARC
All Other Interested Parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:
Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

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(*The meeting was called to order at 1:26 P.M. *)

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
I'll call the meeting to order. And Legislator Caracappa, if you would lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Salutation

If we'd take a few minutes to stand in a moment of silence for the Astronauts that have been lost.

Moment of Silence Observed

Deputy County Executive Michaels, if you would please join us this afternoon, along with Commissioner Gallagher or his representatives and anybody from the Department of Public Works for the purpose of just discussing and reviewing the East End Medevac Helicopter Operations.

While they're getting set up, if anybody else is addressing the committee, if you can just please fill out a card this morning or this afternoon, that would be greatly appreciated.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:
I could probably answer all your questions without --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay. That's good, Joe, I'm impressed. What's the price of gas for the helicopter now? I'll come up with a tough one.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:
About two dollars a gallon, I guess.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
That was a very confident answer.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:
Well, I got it from my Lieutenant.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
I appreciate your appearance this afternoon before the committee. If we could maybe just start off with a review of last year, how the operation worked on the east end, whether or not it was successful, the number of missions we did; you know, basically a little statistic

and background. It probably wouldn't be a bad idea, Joe, if everybody identified themselves for the record, too.

MR. PHALEN:

Ken Phalen, I'm an Architect for the Department of Public Works.

INSPECTOR BRANDON:

Thomas Brandon, Deputy Inspector, Special Patrol Bureau, Suffolk County PD.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:

Jim Abbott, Chief Deputy Police Commissioner.

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DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Joe Michaels, Assistant Deputy County Executive for Public Safety.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

John Blosser, Lieutenant with the Suffolk Police Department, Commanding Officer, Special Patrol Bureau.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

I'm going to direct that question to Lieutenant Blosser, he has the statistics, he's been acquiring statistics over the course of the year.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

LEG. GULDI:

You need to put the mike right in your face.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Pull the microphone right to you, yeah, if you would.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

The east end helicopter project based at Gabreski first opened in May, 2001, and closed December 31st, 2001, then reopened May, 2002, until the present day and it remains open 365 days a year. It was closed during the current phase-in -- when I say the current phase, that was between May 1st and the 30th of January of 2003 for a total of 27 days that we should have had it open. The closures were because we didn't have two helicopters in service; when we only have one of the three in service it's based at McArthur Airport and serves the whole County from there.

In terms of our aircraft in service, our A-Star aircraft was in service 81% of the time, our older MD-902 -- and when I say older, it's older by a month -- was in service 68% of the time, and our newer

MD-902, 55% of the time. The West Hampton based closures have had several causes. The 902's have been simultaneously grounded on three occasions due to mechanical problems that caused fleet-wide groundings for necessary inspections or repairs. They also require lengthy inspections each year, an annual inspection takes at least a month; in fact, we're in the annual now with one of them. This leaves us vulnerable, whenever an unexpected maintenance issue occurs, to having to close one of the bases.

Based on the reliability of the A-Star, the Aviation Section has recommended purchase of an additional A-Star helicopter to try to stem the problem of having to periodically close that base. It's been -- as I said, it's far more reliable than the other two 902 helicopters.

In terms of hours flown per year, 1999 through 2001 we experienced a steady increase from 937 in 1999 to 1,113 in 2000, then we spiked up in 2001 to 1,560, went down slight in 2002 to 1,296. We attribute that to two factors. One is the September 11th, 2001, Trade Center Disaster spiked up our hours, we did aviation operations for about three months after that, very intense. Also, in 2002 we seemed to have had a little worse luck keeping the helicopters in service and

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when the helicopter isn't in service obviously it doesn't accrue hours.

Medical missions per year have also seen a steady increase from 413 in 1999, 446 in 2000, 573 in 2001 and 648 in 2002, so those are just on the steady increase of about 50 to 75 more per year.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Just repeat those numbers again, would you mind?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Sure. In 1999 we did 413; 2000, 446; 2001, 573; 2002, 648. And up until the end of January, 2003, we've done 40, so if you predict that over 12 months it would give you 480, but obviously we'll presumably get busier in the summer months, recreational months.

(Brief loss of power)

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I'm telling the truth, really.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

That's when the Chair gets the shock. You just realized the power that the Legislature has.

LEG. GULDI:

That's very unusual here, I want you to know.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Scene Medevacs have been on the increase, recent trend indicates that more victims are being transported directly to the University from scenes rather being taken on an inter-hospital basis. For example, in the year 2000 we were 87% scene, 13% inter-hospital; 2001, that shifted to 91% scene, 9% hospital; 2002, 95% scene, 5% hospital. We presume that's happening because some patients that in the past were taken to a local area hospital in the east end are now getting Medevaced and being taken directly to the Regional Trauma Center at Stony Brook.

In terms of our base infrastructure, at the moment the West Hampton base is being operated from a -- actually a subleased hangar which we sublease from somebody who leases the land that the hangar is on from Suffolk County. The lease cost for this hangar, approximately \$4,500 per month, they started at 5,000 and now they're down to 4,000. There is currently a Capital Project under way providing for construction of a new County-owned hangar to house the Gabreski base and the projected costs of this hangar are \$2.29 million.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Update on the building, let's start with that, I guess, as far as a construction time line, planning time line, etcetera.

MR. PHALEN:

Okay. Right now we have met with the unit to discuss their needs, we put it out for a bid for proposals, two architectural engineering firms. We have received those bids, we're reviewing them, we expect

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to go out shortly with the winner for them to start designing the actual project, they'll be planning it. They will be analyzing the location of the proposed hangar, there are various spots in the airport that we have looked at, they have to coordinate that with the FAA, with the airport, with the police and various other agencies as well as dealing with a proposed new tower and a master plan for the airport.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

How much of the 2.29 million is for planning and design?

MR. PHALEN:

Right now there's currently appropriated from 2002 \$175,000 for planning.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Why are we not able to do this plan in-house, for a hangar building?

I mean, we're not building --

MR. PHALEN:

It's not just a hangar, it's hangar, office space, special equipment.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. But, I mean, this doesn't seem like it's an out of the ordinary type of a building for us to have to build. Why can't we do this in-house; why are we contracting this out for \$175,000?

MR. PHALEN:

There's a lot more involved in dealing with coordination for the actual location with other consultants that are working on projects in the airport and dealing with the FAA. There's a lot more red tape involved than just mere construction.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. And we're paying an outside firm to also deal with that red tape for us as a governmental agency ourselves?

MR. PHALEN:

As part of the coordination efforts with the other consultants, there is a consultant that is doing a master plan for the airport for future expansion and progress for the airport. There's also a separate consultant looking at a proposed new location for a tower for the airport, they all have to consult, make sure that they coordinate with each other, that they meet certain guidelines so that it is appropriately located.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. Needless to say, I don't support spending that kind of money. I mean, having gone beyond that point for a second, what is the time frame that the consultant, assuming you're going to hire that person by when?

MR. PHALEN:

Right now we're reviewing that, we should have that momentarily. Once --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Not to interrupt you, momentarily meaning like this week, momentarily meaning next month?

MR. PHALEN:

Within the next few weeks.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

MR. PHALEN:

Once the contract is awarded they will be instructed to proceed. They will be setting up meetings with the special consultants, with the Police Department and Public Works to analyze the proper location first and then go ahead and do the design. We anticipate that that should take us through the beginning to middle of the summer, take about 12 months for the construction process.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So you're figuring by July we should have some plans.

MR. PHALEN:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Assuming that we have plans by July and everybody agrees -- Police, DPW, Legislature, County Executive, et al -- when would you actually look to start construction on the building?

MR. PHALEN:

Construction, probably once we go through the bidding process, management negotiating labor rates, probably -- I would say the earliest would be the fall and if we could get it in, depending on the weather. The past couple of years the weather has been great to build during the winter, this year has been an exception, it got cold very quickly, as far as laying foundation work, that might play a problem.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

You're talking the fall of next year, not the fall of this year. I mean, if we're getting the plans in July, you actually think we can start construction by September, October?

MR. PHALEN:

I don't think it would be that early, be able to do it that early, but it depends on how quickly we could coordinate all the consultants and the FAA. Going to the FAA, we're going to have to rely on them getting back to us, we have no control over that, that may take some time just in doing that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Obviously from -- although the issues are intertwined, I would like at least a monthly update in the form of a memo to the members of the Public Safety Committee from DPW as to what the status is with the engineers, the consultants, etcetera, as far as the building is concerned. It's ridiculous that we're paying \$4,500 a month to lease a building on our own property, I mean, it's ludicrous, and then

another \$175,000 to design a building so we don't have to spend \$4,500 a month to lease a building. Legislator Guldi, questions on the building first?

LEG. GULDI:

Yeah, it's a question on the building. The first question is, Lieutenant Blosser, the building you're in right now is a 100 X 100 hangar, I believe; am I correct, you have some use of the adjacent office space as well under the current lease or not?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

That's correct, we have use of a small office.

LEG. GULDI:

One small office in the adjacent office space. How is that current facility meeting your needs even though it's a shared facility?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

It's adequate, we've had some problems with it. When we initially went there we anticipated it was only going to last one summer and we made a very modest request in terms of space so the office is basically too small to hold the three people. We have to share a bathroom with the landlord. We had some trouble with heat in the hangar, it wasn't heated all last winter, he has heat now which seems to be somewhat better. He has no emergency generator so if the power goes out the door can't be opened and the helicopter is trapped, either out in the weather or in the hangar.

LEG. GULDI:

Can't the doors -- don't the doors have a fail-safe mechanism so you can open them with a battery powered drill?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

No, I think he has to hand crank it and it takes him about two hours. I don't think a battery -- I'm not sure about the battery powered drill, I don't think that's adequate and powerful enough.

LEG. GULDI:

I've seen that in other applications as a back up system.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I don't think his can do that. I think there's a hand crank but it takes two hours, it's not going to get you out in time for a mission.

LEG. GULDI:

Okay. How does the facility that -- the specifications for the facility that we've designed differ from the facility we're in?

MR. PHALEN:

Currently the facility that we're in right now is a 100 X 100 space

that we're using a portion of it.

LEG. GULDI:

My question is how does that space differ from the space we've specked for design?

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MR. PHALEN:

There is no room for equipment, office space in order to properly operate the unit. The new facility would include offices for --

LEG. GULDI:

How many officers, how much space? Am I correct that the facility we're designing is a 100 X 100 hangar, or is that not correct?

MR. PHALEN:

Approximately.

LEG. GULDI:

How much adjacent office space outside the hangar footprint is in the design?

MR. PHALEN:

That would include within that footprint --

LEG. GULDI:

You're not designing any space outside the footprint.

MR. PHALEN:

No.

LEG. GULDI:

So all the facilities are within the footprint. So you've got a 10,000 square foot facility that you've got a \$2,300,000 budget on it and I'm wondering how you get there; are you gold-plating it?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Very expensively.

LEG. GULDI:

The reason I'm concerned is the facility you're in which Lieutenant Blosser just described as adequate was constructed, I've been informed, for about a \$100,000 with a -- including the adjacent -- not just the one office we have but I think that the adjacent office space is for five rooms and a bathroom. Now, how are we doing it for 23 times as much? I know the Wicks Law is supposed to add 20% and I'll give you that, but there's still a little bit more that I'm concerned about.

LEG. CRECCA:

George, would you suffer an interruption on this particular point?

LEG. GULDI:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Crecca, go ahead.

LEG. CRECCA:

I just calculated out, we're paying 4,500 a month for this facility?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yep.

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LEG. GULDI:

Well, actually I'll get to that, I want to go another direction, though.

LEG. CRECCA:

Well, no, but --

LEG. GULDI:

Before you even get to the math --

LEG. CRECCA:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Hold on, you want to hear this.

LEG. GULDI:

I want to hear this first but --

LEG. CRECCA:

We would have to pay -- in order to get to \$2.5 million?

LEG. GULDI:

Yes.

LEG. CRECCA:

Oh, I only did it at 2.5, it took 46 years of paying rent to equal the 2.5.

LEG. GULDI:

Right, and the life expectancy on the building is about 20 years or is it 30, or is it 40?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Forty-six actually.

MR. PHALEN:

The current facility, from what I've seen, is just a blank hangar, there's nothing inside of it. There is an adjacent room, there's added on a small cubicle for a lounge area for the pilots to do their office work and to wait in-between calls. Otherwise, it's a prefab metal building, there's nothing in it. They only received heat this winter, there's nothing else special in it, there's no room for office space for storage for mechanical areas, etcetera, it's just a plain box, there's nothing special about it at all.

LEG. GULDI:

It's a plain box with adjacent office space. Back to my question, how does the specified designed building differ; what do you have in it besides office space? How much office space do you have in it; can you give me that?

MR. PHALEN:

If you bear with me I'll calculate it, but I don't have the specific amount allocated.

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LEG. GULDI:

A thousand square feet, two thousand square feet, a hundred thousand square feet?

MR. PHALEN:

Thirty-five hundred square feet maybe. We have room for a radio room, officer's room, locker rooms, toilet rooms, paramedic room, paramedic closet for equipment, an area for storing equipment for the airplane for possible repairs, a caged-in area, an area for their --

LEG. GULDI:

All that's located in the 100 X 100 footprint on the building you're designing; is that correct?

MR. PHALEN:

Right now, yes.

LEG. GULDI:

Okay. The concern I have, members of the committee, is that I had occasion to review the lease of the tenant at the airport who is -- who we are the tenant of and it contains a provision that states that if the County declares that it needs the facility for a governmental purpose, we have the right to immediately take the facility for the landlord's cost basis or approximately 1/20th or certainly -- actually, my estimation, though we've demanded the tax returns that

will show the cost basis, for less money than the proposed design cost for the design contract, to take the facility and the adjacent office space; it's the same footprint.

LEG. CRECCA:

Is it the 100 X 100 area or the whole hangar?

LEG. GULDI:

Well, no, the 100 X 100 -- there's a question, the question has been raised whether we would be required to take the whole hangar, the office space and the ten additional hangars, I don't think that the lease requires us to do that from my look at it with getting the data. My concern is the space is adequate, if we could modify it, if we could take it, if we do have the right and it's 1/20th of the cost of the proposed -- or 1/25th of the cost of the proposed new hangar, would it continue to be adequate for the department's needs or should we go ahead and spend the extra two and a half -- \$2.3 million?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Guldi, obviously you've thrown a new log into the river, to say the least.

LEG. GULDI:

I'm sorry, it's a bad habit of mine, actually reading the documents; I apologize.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, in the future try not to cut down the whole forest, just the log, all right? I mean, it just seems absurd that it's costing us two point -- I'm going to round it off, \$2.3 million to build a building. We're going to hire a consultant for \$175,000 to layout the building

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and we verbally just heard pretty much what I would call a layout of the building from DPW; obviously not perfectly specifically but close enough as to what we need based on obviously conversations between DPW and the Police Department. To spend this kind of money which we're obviously going to bond on top of it, if we were to bond this money, Kevin, what is this going to cost us, this \$2.29 million?

MS. GAZES:

We'll get back to you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. Why don't you run that, I would be curious.

LEG. GULDI:

Mr. Chairman, before you go there, I still would like an answer to my question.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Go ahead.

LEG. GULDI:

Would the current facility, and presuming we could take it all, presuming we could take all of the adjacent space, presuming we could build outside the parameter for ancillary storage areas and modify the interior of the hangar for whatever needs you have, would it be adequate for the department's needs; a question of adequacy. I didn't get an answer.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Whoever feels free.

LEG. GULDI:

I'll -- granted, I'm ambushing you with this question and I'm putting you on the spot, so I'm not going to hold you to the answer but, I mean, your first impression I'd like to get.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Yeah. Well, the bottom line with it is it was not looked at initially. We can go back and look at it, I'm sure that there could be an answer given as to whether it would be adequate and whether certain add-ons would satisfy the need.

LEG. GULDI:

The storage cage you described could be added, the facility itself. I mean, yes, it had some problems, it wasn't designed to be heated; actually it was designed to be heated, I know there's a radiant heat grid in the floor of the hangar, it had just the -- the heating plant hadn't been installed.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Recognizing the fact that you're on the Airport Committee and you're familiar with it more than we are, more than I am, the answer would be we'd have to look at it to make that judgment call. We can get back to you with this, I mean, this is -- our objective is to work together to make -- to do what we have to do to make it work and give the Police Department necessary resources to --

LEG. GULDI:

One of the concerns I have is obviously we've been operating from this, it's not an ideal location, I realize that, it's not a location we would have selected for the hangar. My question isn't that, my question is is it adequate. Yes, it's problematic to some degree, I want to know in terms of a permanent, potential permanent site, the answer to that question. I want to know in terms of the

specifications you've talked about in the custom built hangar, how they're different from this. And the other thing I've really got to get a handle on is how we've managed to do this for 23 times what the private sector did, that I've got to see.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

We will get back to you.

LEG. GULDI:

That's not your number.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

No, I understand what you're saying. We will get back to you perhaps at the next meeting with the answer to that question.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I appreciate that. Do you guys have a cost on that yet?

MS. GAZES:

We're getting it.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. Do you want to respond to anything else about the numbers or the dollars from DPW's point of view to Legislator Guldi's questioning or you want to hold off one meeting?

MR. PHALEN:

I would rather hold off as well.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

MR. PHALEN:

I can confer with the Police Department.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Let's be clear on this before I recognize Legislator Crecca. I don't want to do seven meetings to figure out the answers to these questions. You know, if you're not sure what the answer is going to be to -- you really need to think about what we're going to ask you and it's based on your presentation. You need to have the people here that are going to be able to answer a question so we don't have to keep on continuing this. We've got to be able to defend how we're going to spend \$2.3 million, which I imagine by the time they get done figuring out it's probably going to be two and a half, two point six, \$2.7 million with interest to build a brand new building when, you know, there are some thoughts that to build a building that we're in would only be about \$100,000. I mean, how do we justify that? I mean, I'm sitting here hearing another helicopter this afternoon and

I'm on board with that, as one member of the Legislature I recognize the numbers -- which I want to get back into that, by the way, I wanted to get the building out of the way. I recognize that fact, that's something we're obviously going to do as this County grows; as we continue to provide more services, you have to have enough equipment to do the job, there's no question about that. But clearly, you know, to spend \$2.3 million on a building, I would much prefer to spend the money on equipment than to be wasting it on a building, not saying that you should not have the proper space to operate out of but, you know, to me that price seems a little absurd. Legislator Crecca.

LEG. CRECCA:

Yeah, my question actually was -- I'm not familiar with the space and probably, George, you might be able to answer it. My understanding was that we're using 100 X 100 but the hangar itself is about double that size; is that correct?

LEG. GULDI:

Negative. Lieutenant Blosser, correct me to the extent that you have more familiarity. The building that we're in is a 100 X 100 hangar steel structure, suspended ceiling, the whole front wall opens virtually. The floor itself is epoxied over concrete to give you a hard, smooth service, the walls are insulated, the ceiling is insulated, it's heated through, I don't know what kind of -- he used a gas plant?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

He used a gas plant and then he runs, as you said, radiant heat out of the floor.

LEG. GULDI:

He has radiant heat in the slabs so the floors are warm, actually it reduces the temperature you need to bring the structure to because your feet are on the floor and --

LEG. CRECCA:

There's not another -- I thought there was another part of the facility that he was using for other purposes.

LEG. GULDI:

Right, adjacent to that 100 X 100 hangar, butted into the wall is a section of what's known as T-hangars, they're nested hangars for aircraft where the tails are narrow and the wings are wide but they nest back to back so that the overall building is more efficient for storage aircraft. There are ten hangars, five on the side, of that purpose and in-between those ten hangars in this building is -- frankly, I mean, the design -- it was authorized by the Airport

Leasing Committee as a clubhouse for pilots but it was built as a -- it's being used as an office space and it was built as a small apartment that consisted basically of four or five rooms, a bathroom and a kitchen facility; am I correct, or a kitchenette facility.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I haven't -- obviously it's his office, not mine, so I haven't been through the whole office. What we have access to is the one bathroom

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and I know -- obviously I've walked into his front office, what he has upstairs in the kitchen, I've never been through.

LEG. GULDI:

I'm not certain about a kitchenette but I remember seeing at least three or four different rooms, two stories and, you know, you're looking at about -- 45 X 45, you're looking at about three or 4,000 square feet; what do you know.

LEG. CRECCA:

Right, that's why I was asking about the part that was adjacent to it and it might be more amenable to being converted into --

LEG. GULDI:

One of the concerns I'd have from an application standpoint is that the adjacent ten hangars are occupied by private individuals; is that an operational problem? In terms of the department's need, right now we control the rest of the footprint around the facility, there are applications coming here to the Legislature to do construction in those areas, what are the department's needs for keeping those zones clear for operational perspectives? All of that needs to be answered. But I still don't see how we're getting to these cost figures and I'd love to -- you know, this industry, aircraft hangar industry is something I've had some familiarity with and an opportunity to explore. There's a group of manufacturers who build kits, deliver them on a competitive basis for stock designs, one of which is a 100 X 100 square box.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I thought you couldn't lease a hangar.

LEG. GULDI:

There's a long story there.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Obviously I think the issue of space and the cost needs to be addressed at the next committee meeting, so we're going to need to come back to that issue. If none of the other committee members have any other questions on the space, I want to get to the operations for

a second. Legislator Lindsay?

LEG. LINDSAY:

Yeah, before we get off the space, I just want to clarify in my mind, this has nothing to do with equipment, the 2.3 million, it's just for the structure?

MR. PHALEN:

Correct.

LEG. LINDSAY:

So that's like \$230 a square foot for property that we already own.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

You got it.

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MR. PHALEN:

Cost for construction.

LEG. LINDSAY:

And it's just steel metal construction?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

It's like a butler building, isn't it, for all intents and purposes?

MR. PHALEN:

It could be. Once it's built it will have interior walls, office spaces. We have a typical layout of what we are looking at possibly, if it helps we can present it to you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

You have it? Why don't you present it to the committee. I'll have Greg make copies.

MR. PHALEN:

By no means was this anything that was developed with approval of the Police Department, it was just a rough sketch based on the spaces that they requested to give the consultants an idea of what we are looking at.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay.

MR. PHALEN:

And if I can clarify, the existing hangar that's there right now, of the 10,000 square feet, we are only leasing 3,000 square feet, the other 14,000 all hangar space, there may be a small office area for the owner of the building, I have not been in there, but the only

office space that the Police Department is using is a small 15 X 12 room that was added on the back that doesn't have sufficient heating or sufficient use to be able to operate properly.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

As many questions as you'd like, Legislator Lindsay, go ahead.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I don't think anybody here is disputing the need for a facility there --

MR. PHALEN:

No, I'm just trying to explain what's there.

LEG. LINDSAY:

-- and the proper facility for the police to operate out of, we're just questioning the cost of what you're proposing.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. Moving back a second, if we could, to the actual operations. Lieutenant, you gave a breakdown of the EMS calls which was obviously very helpful. What was the breakdown out of those that were out of Islip or out of Gabreski, starting with, you know, I guess 2001 because that's when we were there.

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LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I keep the record by where the actual call was, so I really don't have the ability to say medical missions that the helicopter left from Islip but I can tell you medical missions that it was in one of the five eastern townships; will that serve your purpose?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

For now, if you would, that would be great. And obviously if you could have your staff take a look at the numbers overall, you know, for the next committee meeting, that would obviously be helpful.

LEG. GULDI:

Can I --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yes, Legislator Guldi.

LEG. GULDI:

Mr. Chairman, can I ask DPW to give me the breakdown on detail on your budget and cost estimate on this? I would like to see your work papers on the 2.3 million cost work-up that's been done on this property.

MR. PHALEN:

I don't have that with me.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
For the next meeting.

LEG. GULDI:
For the next meeting I'd like you to bring it, if you want to route it to me beforehand I would appreciate that, but I'd like to see the detail.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
And bring --

MR. PHALEN:
I'll be seeing you this week.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
And obviously bring the plans and the larger version so we can take a look at those. I mean, this is fine but I'm like --

MR. PHALEN:
Again, this is just a quick draft.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Yeah, rough draft. I'm sorry, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:
That's all right. We have it broken down two separate ways so I will give you both.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay. What's the first way you have it broken down?

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LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:
The first way is by the phases; in other words, the first phase again being from May 1st -- or actually it was about May 16th, 2001, until December 31st, 2001. We did 188 missions, medical missions in the east end, i.e., the five east end towns, and 315 in the five western towns. In 2002 -- well, actually, again, the current phase when it reopened May of '02 until the end of January, 2003, we did 236 medical missions in the east end and 452 in the west end. Now, for the whole calendar year of 2002, the scene Medevacs for the year 2002 were 414 in the west plus nine inner hospitals in the west, so there were 423 total medical missions in the west. In the east five towns, 198 scene Medevacs, 27 interfacilities, that's a total of 225 medical missions in the east end; and again, your total would be 612 for the whole County scene Medevac and 36 interhospital.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So approximately 40% of our calls, roughly, for 2002 were east end.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

It's about 35 to 40%.

LEG. GULDI:

Point of clarification.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Guldi.

LEG. GULDI:

In your categorization, are you categorizing the calls based on which helicopter served the call or the location of the call?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

The location of the call.

LEG. GULDI:

Okay.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

There is a certain cross over, if there are, for example, two Medevac calls simultaneously in the west end, we will bring the west helicopter -- we will bring the east helicopter west and vice versa, if there are two in the east which frequently happens in the summer we'll bring both. So I found it more useful to see where the usage is rather than where the physical helicopter left from.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

On the breakdown of the EMS calls particularly, have you -- are you capable of breaking down which helicopter responded to the EMS call, whether it was the A-Star or one of the MD-902's?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I don't have that data now, no.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay, I'd want that for the next committee meeting. Let's talk for a second about --

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Excuse me.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yes.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

From what point? I mean, you want --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

From what point as to you're asking to possibly purchase another A-Star for the Police Department, which I believe as a committee member, and I have not spoke to the other committee members, would be inappropriate for us at the time that a good part of our missions from the helicopter's perspective are EMS calls, and we're ripping out seats in that helicopter to transport people to do an EMS mission in addition to a police mission. The other helicopter, however, which was one of the recommendations of the consultant that the County hired through the Police Department and the Legislature and the Executive was the MD-902, that helicopter appears to not only suit the EMS mission but also the police mission. From my perspective, I would be more interested in purchasing a helicopter that met both of those missions as opposed to just one. And I have some mixed feelings on that personally but I'm willing to listen, you know, to the department's information regarding that, but it's kind of tough to make a decision as to whether or not that is a practical problem or not knowing which helicopter we're using to do what.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Legislator, if it helps you as an interim thing, because this is going to cause me to have to go back and look at every single mission in 2001 and 2002 which is about 1,200 missions, we will never do a Medevac in the A-Star if we don't have to. The only reason the A-Star is used for a medevac is if both 902's are not in service; unfortunately, that happens very frequently because of the 902 has had a difficult maintenance history.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay, that answers at least my perspective of why then buy another A-Star as opposed to a helicopter that could do both missions, so that's really a point that we could debate. But I want to get to the maintenance problem of the MD-902 because that's obviously on my list of things to discuss today.

What helicopters did we use during our assistance to New York City; did we use all the helicopters or did we -- obviously we didn't leave our County without a helicopter at some point.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

We used all three at different times. The first day when the thing was in progress we did move all three to the city for about 16 hours, though it would only have taken us about 20 minutes to get back to the County line had we had to; then after the first day we always had at least one helicopter, usually two, in Suffolk County.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And I'm assuming we kept some records as to what helicopters -- I mean, one of the points I'm trying to get at is it's my understanding that the MD-902 spent a lot of time in the city and we put an inordinate number of hours on those helicopters outside the normal use that we would have had to use, and that is one of the contributing factors to some of the maintenance problems that we're experiencing now some year or two later. We've put so many hours on the helicopters that we would normally not have done in a normal every day operation of our division.

LEG. GULDI:

Would you just suffer an interruption?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yes, Legislator Guldi.

LEG. GULDI:

It might expedite this -- Lieutenant, it might expedite this discussion and address his concern if we can simply take the logged hours on each of the helicopters as of every six months or every quarter and give us the total hours of use on each of the birds. It would give you how many hours are on each of the helicopters, though it wouldn't parse the training from the police mission, from the EMS mission it would tell you how much use, gross use, total use each of the helicopters are doing and it's data that should be rather readily available and easy to ascertain.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And as I said, I don't expect that today; I mean, you obviously were not prepared for that question, I would imagine.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Would a one year setback go back one year to make that determination? Because they did do some collection of data in that vain for a year, to go beyond that would really not be --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, that would be fine.

LEG. GULDI:

Show us what you got first.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Obviously we put in for reimbursement for that I'm assuming and that's why you have the data?

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

We put in for reimbursement for 9/11, yes, and we did receive

reimbursement on that. Just a comment on your --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Earlier statement.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:
-- viewpoint that we use the helicopters more extensively, the MD

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more extensively than we use the A-Star, that does not seem to be borne out in fact; I believe we have that kind of data.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:
The A-Star -- excuse me, the MD has an overall -- not just our copters but as a group or as a product they have a worse record than the A-Star, that's just something to keep in mind when you look at, they've had more recalls and more downtime than the A-Star. And we do have that information that you asked for available, the amount.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:
The hours of 2002, I kept it.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay. If you want to go over that now, that's fine, if not we can move on, it's up to you, whatever you prefer.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:
I can give you a quick year breakdown.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Go ahead.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:
The total hours flown for 2002 were 1,295.9, that broke down almost evenly; the A-Star flew 463 hours; helicopter two, the older 902, flew 427.9; and the newer 902, number three, flew 405.04.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:
Just to go one step further into that, the cost factor and the maintenance of the A-Star is about \$257 an hour based on the manufacturer's recommended cost. The cost of the MD is \$408 per hour, that's based on a 5,000 hour doing general maintenance. However, we're not getting the 5,000 hours that they're talking about, we're getting somewhere around 500 hours, so that factor can be multiplied out even higher.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Let's talk a little bit about the recalls, what have they been for? And before you answer that, I mean, I just -- obviously for clarification. Obviously the MD-902 has been out for how long of a period of time in service? Not ours.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Ours or the model?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Right.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

No, no.

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So we started with those helicopters, basically, unlike the A-Star that's been in service for --

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

The A-Star came in service in the early 80's, the 902 -- well, the 900 series came out in the mid 90's, we have 902 configurations, Serial No. 84 and 85 contrast that with our A-Star which is Serial No. 3000 to 298. I can go through my long listing of different problems we've had with the 902.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Is that a memo you've prepared?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

It was a letter I wrote to the manufacturer asking for some relief on the warranty on some of the items. They have -- their warranty is a two year warranty, it's a full one year warranty, then the second year it prorates down and I wrote a letter to their Director of Customer Service before our first year expired expressing my concern about some of these items failing very, very prematurely and asking that we get full relief until such time -- either this full second year or such time as the issues were addressed. I can just highlight the major issues.

The transmissions in both helicopters have repeatedly failed. When they came in they were supposed to be on condition -- i.e., there was no mandatory retirement time on them -- but they ball park figured us about 5,000 hours which made sense to us. We had a similar transmission in our BK-117 helicopter made by the same company, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, and it lasted -- well, we got rid of it at 5,000 hours and it was still doing fine then. We found that ours were failing between three and 400 hours, not a problem up till now except

for a lot of down time because it's about two days to take a transmission out and put another one back in, so every time we have a transmission fail the thing is out of service for four to five days. The second -- they have redesigned the transmission, we have the first in the field of the new redesigned transmission, although we've only had it in service less than a hundred hours. The problem we're going to face in the future is that overhaul is upwards of 200 to \$250,000 and they have informed us that the time between overhaul and this new model is I believe -- it's either 1,200 or 1,500 hours, but at any rate, we're going to end up spending \$500,000 about every two years on each helicopter, so just in transmissions alone we're going to be spending a million dollars and I don't see that we have a recourse when they put it a time between overhaul, mandatorily that's when it has to be taken care of and once it's out of warranty we're kind of stuck with that.

We've had problems with the fuel cells. It's a rubber fuel bladder, the material has deteriorated, it goes in and clogs the fuel jet pumps which we've had fuel cells replaced. And even just now recently we've just failed another fuel transfer test on a hundred hour inspection which is now going to require eight hours of labor to just take the floor up to get to the fuel cell to clean the jet pump, presuming that the only problem is a clogging, another eight hours to put the floor

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back in, so every time that happens that's another two days it's down and that's happened almost every hundred hour inspection.

Some other minor problems with oil cooler leakage which we've solved on our own, some anti-equation strobe lights have caused problems, they keep breaking the power -- the power supplies fail and you have to disassemble the tail to get to the power supply, that's another good day or two of work. There are what they call NACA doors, it's a cooling, venting door. The actuators have failed repeatedly, had to be replaced twice on one of them and three times on the other. That one is going to be an expense issue more than a time issue, it doesn't take a whole lot of time to replace them; but again, the expense will come.

The upper drive link assembly should last about a thousand hours, they've had to be replaced on the average of every hundred, it's a bad bearing that requires an extensive disassembly; again, it keeps the helicopter down for a long time. The air conditioner evaporate fan motors have burned out. Apparently when you fly in the rain and it rains in these things they burn out and they make smoke in the cockpit, that design flaw has yet to be figured out by MD apparently, so I guess we can't use the air-conditioning if it rains until they figure it out.

Hydraulic bypass valves have had to be replaced and filters, so every time one of these things pops you have to replace the filter, the filters are \$800 a piece and that's out of warranty, that's going to be a problem. Main transmission bypass button, same situation, just with the transmission, not the engine. Okay, we solved that one ourselves so I won't bring that up.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Lieutenant, what kind of response have you gotten from MD? I mean, not to cut you off but, I mean --

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

It's okay.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Obviously there are some very inherent questions, you know, and I'm curious what their response has been to this, considering we're the guinea pig, if you will.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:

(Inaudible).

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I'm getting to that, that's down at the bottom, I'm only on page two. I think to their ability to do it they have been responsive, but sometimes they just can't do it. For example, with the fuel cell problem, everybody agreed our fuel cell kept failing, it was obviously a defective fuel cell, we need a new fuel cell, they said, "Okay, we'll send you a new fuel cell." They sent us one that was apparently reworked that was visually defective the moment it got in and we didn't even bother putting it in, which they were fine with. And then it took about a week of just sitting waiting until such time as they

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could get a fuel cell from the fuel cell manufacturer which is a subcontractor in Arkansas and we've faced that problem with numerous items. There's an instrument -- Integrated Instrument Display System, it gives all your engine indications, there was a fleet-wide recall on those and they gave us used ones from like a -- I traced it down, it was from a 1996 helicopter that was in England and I called them and said, "I understand you're allowed to give me a rotatable spare but mine had like less than a thousand hours on it, I would like you to do mine and give me mine back," because presumably it would last longer and their answer was, "You know, pal, you should be happy you have one of your helicopters at all because there are seven worldwide right as we speak," this was about two months ago, "There are aircraft on ground because there aren't anymore IIDS' in the pool."

So the problem -- it appears to be a financial problem with the

company. It's been resold a few times, it's owned by a Dutch holding company now. And I think up to their ability to respond to us they do but it just seems like they possibly don't have the financial backing and even it made one of the trade papers, apparently it was very publicly known that they weren't able to pay all their bills and a lot of the subcontractors would cut them off. So when we run across problems with engineering, they may not have the money to actually square the problem away. So I would say their response is perhaps not as good as if they were a bigger, more capitalized company, but that's just an opinion, obviously.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

The letter you sent, that's the contact you deal with on an every day basis with MD if you have a problem?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Not anymore, he was unfortunately indicted on some Federal charges and he was -- I deal with his replacement.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Helicopter computer parts, right?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

The allegations was that he and some cohorts were stealing parts and giving them to people that didn't pay for them and apparently some were owned by the Federal Government and they took a dim view of that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I want to get a copy of -- before I get to you, Legislator Guldi, I want to get a copy of the memo you sent out. The person you sent the memo to, is that person still there or that's the person that's not there?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

He actually -- he's still employed there but he's doing what they explained to me as special projects now, he's not doing --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Making license plates, okay.

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LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Whatever, he's not in charge of customer service anymore. I have a contact that I --

LEG. GULDI:

They have him running the parts room, right?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I don't think so.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Provide us with a contact for MD, I want to make it a point to reach out to them.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Guldi.

LEG. GULDI:

Yeah, Lieutenant Blosser, just to help me understand. Could you break down -- you mentioned you had a range of problems. Are any -- is this still a clean sheet of paper in terms of aviation or there are a lot of AD's that have been assigned to this aircraft already?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

There are lots of AD's.

LEG. GULDI:

AD is an Air Worthiness Directive, it's a mandated repair by the FDA, for the record.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

It has a lot of AD's, it has additional service bulletins on top of that.

LEG. GULDI:

Yeah, I was going to get to service bulletins versus field problems that were squawk sheets. I mean, can you parse our problems; how much of it is obviously grounded AD's fleet-wide, how much of it is service bulletins and how much of it is squawk sheet or field problems we've experienced that are neither of the above?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I guess it's probably a mix of those and it would be hard to say. First of all, our air worthiness program we need to comply with all the service bulletins, so if we get a service bulletin we're complying just because that's what we get, a hundred hours, the annual plus the SB's have to be complied with. So to us, if they send us a service bulletin, if it's mandatory it's just as an AD.

LEG. GULDI:

Yeah, I think that's good practice in any aircraft and I would assume that. I just want to know in terms of categories how much of it is

mandated, how much of it is manufacturer initiated and how much of it is ours?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Most of it -- although like the transmission, there's not been an AD on the transmission because the maintenance manual covers it; if it makes chips that are a certain size or a certain number it has to come out, but it's doing that.

LEG. GULDI:

Okay.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

So there's really no -- it's obviously a defective product but they're not going to make an AD to bring it to your attention because the maintenance manual already covers it. The biggest -- it had a number -- that fuel system had an AD that was complied with in the factory but it continues to generate problems because those jet pumps -- exactly the problem we later had continues to generate the same problem. There's an AD on the upper rotor hub which, again, it's nice to have the AD but there seems to be no solution; i.e., this upper rotor hub is supposed to have -- it's a five or 10,000 hour service, it's something fairly substantial and ours have cracked at about 900. Well, we found one cracked at 900 where ten out of ten bolt holes were cracked so we looked at the other one and that had three out of ten, so we obviously took that out of service, too.

LEG. GULDI:

So that's the hub?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

It's the upper hub.

LEG. GULDI:

The upper hub.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Yeah, that obviously -- if that fails, that's a catastrophic failure where the helicopter -- the rotor will depart the airplane.

LEG. GULDI:

In simple terms, if that fails the blades fall off.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Well, the whole head falls off in one unit, including the blades. But again, they have an AD on that which says check for the cracks, so you find the cracks and you replace the hub.

LEG. GULDI:

You have to check for the cracks, it's a maintenance intensive AD, I

understand that. How big is -- do you know how many of these aircraft that are in service in the fleet now, is it still a relatively small number?

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LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

They're making number 111 now, so I guess probably about 105 are in service.

LEG. GULDI:

Yeah, so it's an extremely small number. Is it possible that the maintenance and parts supply problem are in some ways related to the fact that they were in a new aircraft, new aircraft with small foot numbers in the field?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

My personal opinion is yes, with any new design you're liable to have those types of problems. My concern is that the company doesn't seem totally capable of supporting it or squaring it away once we do. In fact, we're finding the problem -- in their defense, when I wrote them this letter they pretty much worked to correct every problem that we found and it wasn't costing us, but we had what I would describe as a little change of attitude with this upper rotor hubs. I made the point to the new fellow that replaced this guy that I wrote the letter to that we had complied -- there are service bulletins and there were these directives about checking bolt torques and we had documented that all very well, so to me we had fulfilled what we needed to do and yet they still cracked, and in checking with some other operators, apparently that's just to be expected about every 900 hours. So I said, "It appears to me that you either have a manufacturing defect there or an engineering defect and I presume that you're going to take care of this until such time as they last, how long are they supposed to," and their response was, "No, you're prorated. It's January, you have 58% coverage and so those parts are \$38,000 a piece and it will be \$27,000 for you." So that was that. I mean, that's the frustration we face, is I don't know that they're at this point able to square away these problems.

LEG. GULDI:

Do you -- the list of AD's and service letters, do you have those bounded and collected at the office as part of the maintenance logs?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Oh, of course.

LEG. GULDI:

Could you provide me with photo copies of them, I'd like to look them over. It's not more than a hundred pages, is it; relatively a hundred, 150 pages?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

I don't think it's that big; it doesn't matter, we'll get it to.

LEG. GULDI:

Okay. I didn't want to put you through the trouble if it was that voluminous. But I'd like to look through those and get a feel for what you've been dealing with. I appreciate your answers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And just as an aside obviously I would have preferred to obviously hear about some of these problems sooner. So obviously if this is a

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continuation, you know, we should obviously receive some type of a periodical update. Getting back to the purchase --

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Well, just to comment on that, we have been -- so far, the manufacturer, as he points out, has been addressing the issues and we've been going on with them and getting relief from them. Just recently there has been a change of attitude, as we pointed out, there may be a change in their financial posture in terms of long-term business.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

You know, obviously not having enough information to make an intelligent decision or direction, it would seem to me that, you know, unless these problems were worked out, purchasing another type of helicopter like that would obviously not be a smart move. Purchasing the A-Star, although reliable, also appears to have some questions in regards to the EMS service component.

So one of the things I'd appreciate you looking at is what options are out there before we move to do either or of these two options. Obviously, the consultant's report -- which I'll pull out and redistribute to the committee and make sure that each of you have got a copy of it and the Legislature as well -- had made multiple recommendations and this appeared to be, you know, one of the top two recommendations. We obviously knew that this was a new product or a new line of service, so it doesn't surprise me to hear some of the problems, it does surprise me to hear the financial issues and the attitude and that does concern me.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

One of the things that should be kept in mind is the fact that in order to keep our insurance at a lower rate, we must train our mechanics and our pilots at the factory, this gives us the ability to insure for a lesser amount premium. Introducing a third make or a

third brand would up that substantially, also, in fact that if we introduced a third brand it also causes us problems with -- a third of the fleet going down or a quarter of the fleet going down as a result of a recall, or what the official term would be, is all of these things have to be taken into consideration.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Absolutely. And obviously in the reverse, if we go out and buy another MD-902 and there's a problem with that helicopter and they're all grounded, three of our four helicopters are down. And if there was a problem with the A-Star, two of our helicopters would be down, I guess the same would apply.

Talking about mechanics, where -- my understanding is that we had a retirement on a mechanic; where are we in filling that position? Just to get off the helicopters.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:

The SCIN is over at the County Exec's Office. The department has prioritized it as number one, we're awaiting the returned SCIN.

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

When is that SCIN going to be signed? Joe, let me ask you because obviously it's in the County Executive's Office.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Shortly.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Can we get that SCIN signed this week and back to the Police Department; what's the problem?

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

I'll get back to you with that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

It should be clear to the County Executive's Office that we consider that a priority. That position has been vacant now --

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

We recognize that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

-- for some months. There is a question of getting that person on board, getting that person trained, getting that person acclimated before we obviously reach the peak of our season and the use of the helicopters, and to wait any longer in reference to that position is ridiculous. And if there's any problem on the Legislative

end, I'm sure the committee can work with the Presiding Officer to get that signed, if necessary. And I'd like an update at least by the next committee meeting as to when that SCIN was signed, because hopefully it will be signed within the next two weeks, and when that person is actually going to be on board. I'm assuming you've got the list ready to be canvassed or you've canvassed the list or you have a person?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:

My understanding is the list has been canvassed, the names have been selected, we're just awaiting the signature of the SCIN and then we'll hire him.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

That's great. Let's try to resolve that by the next meeting. And as I said, if you could go through the litany of things that we've discussed today so that we can continue this discussion at the next meeting, I think that'll be helpful in getting a better understanding of what we're doing specifically at each location and what we need to do to provide you some assistance in reference to the building. And obviously an addition to a fourth aircraft, that obviously is something that needs to be brought on the radar scope at some point before the year is over.

Any other issues on the helicopter from the committee or -- Legislator Bishop, I'm glad you joined us.

LEG. BISHOP:

Good afternoon. Are police operations including but not limited to

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Medevac being challenged or even compromised because of military obligations of our sworn personnel?

INSPECTOR BRANDON:

Initially --

LEG. BISHOP:

Probably challenged, I assume we're not compromised.

INSPECTOR BRANDON:

Initially we did have a number of pilots activated, right now we only have one pilot who's currently on active duty, we've begun to get some of them back. So right now we're in pretty good shape with that.

LEG. BISHOP:

You're anticipating getting them back, not losing more?

INSPECTOR BRANDON:

We've got all of them back that were activated except for one who we

have no idea when he'll be back. We could lose them again, we have a few of them still in the Reserves, so depending on what happens world wide.

LEG. BISHOP:

How many -- I mean, just to get some perspective, how many pilots do we have that have military obligations as well?

INSPECTOR BRANDON:

John has that information.

LEG. CRECCA:

How many pilots total?

LEG. BISHOP:

And how many do we have total?

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Okay, we have 24 pilots total; of the 24, 8 are in the military. The breakdown there is three of them are in the 106th Airguard which has been activated before and I presume is going to be activated again.

LEG. BISHOP:

Right.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

However, I've spoken to all those three guys and they have all indicated their intention to retire from Guard Service, so the chances are we've seen the last of their departures, they'll probably be with us.

LEG. BISHOP:

I don't know if they'll be given that option, though, right?

LEG. GULDI:

There may be a retention bill, you know, they may not have the option.

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LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

They're in process now and, I mean, exactly who knows if they can or can't but they have led me to believe that the one guy has like been processed out already.

LEG. BISHOP:

I mean, I guess what I'm asking is you guys will have a plan to deal with that assuming -- I would assume that all eight are going to be unavailable for a period of some time during the course of the year.

LIEUTENANT BLOSSER:

Well --

LEG. BISHOP:
Perhaps simultaneously.

INSPECTOR BRANDON:
Luckily, with them being in various branches of the service, we haven't run into all eight of them at one time, but of course anything is possible.

LEG. BISHOP:
Well, what happened in the Gulf War? I mean, that would, I guess, be the best indicator.

INSPECTOR BRANDON:
You'd have to ask somebody that was there then.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:
Twenty-one days.

LEG. BISHOP:
And during the 21 days was --

LEG. GULDI:
We had the other 16 people.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
I think the question Legislator Bishop is getting at is what happens if tomorrow all eight of these people are activated, what's our plan, what are we doing? Are we going to just hit and say, "Oh, they're all activated and I guess we'll make the best of it", or what are we doing?

INSPECTOR BRANDON:
We'll fill in with overtime where we have to.

LEG. BISHOP:
I don't know, can you operate with 16 pilots? I'm sure if we tried to cut one or two you'd tell me there's no way to operate.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
We can't do it.

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LEG. CRECCA:
If we can operate with 11 Legislators, they can operate with 16 pilots, right?

LEG. GULDI:

Define operate.

LEG. BISHOP:

Anyway, please, I think that we need to look at how we can achieve our current operations. Obviously their first and foremost obligation is to the country, but as a department and the government we should be preparing for that and have plans in place and perhaps structures in place to deal with that, permanent structures.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I think to take that a step further, I think Legislator Bishop hits a good point, if we're going to talk about an additional aircraft, you know, in the budget for this year, whether it's purchased for this year or purchased for next year, if we're going to talk about people, eight of which that have military service, some of which are retiring from the military service, what's their plans with us, what's their plan on retirement with us at some point in time? Do we have people that are planning on leaving now, next year or the year after or whatever? Obviously this is not a division where we could just pluck somebody off the street and they start the job knowing what they need to do; this person needs to receive intensive training. And we ought to be looking at -- really looking at that; no different for the pilots or the mechanics because the same applies.

Commissioner Abbott, when did you guys apply for the Mechanic SCIN, when did you put that in?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:

The SCIN went over I think approximately 30 to 45 days ago; don't hold me to that, that's just a window.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

The officer you're talking about retired or the mechanic retired January 6th this year, so it went over shortly after that.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ABBOTT:

I apologize.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Deputy Commissioner Michaels, with all due respect, on the 7th that SCIN should have been signed; I mean with all due respect. The fact of the matter is that we've known that mechanic was going to retire. This isn't something that's negotiable. What are they going to do in servicing our helicopters if they don't have a mechanic? This isn't something that we could discuss as, "Well, you know, the budget's a little tight, maybe we could hold off"; we can't hold off on this. On the 7th -- the day the guy retired we should have had the SCIN signed so the person could have started on the 7th.

I mean, I have a gotten more calls about this mechanic's position not being filled than I could shake a stick at, from fire department, EMS, people within the Police Department, etcetera. What are we doing? I mean, it's been almost a month and we haven't signed that SCIN. I understand the County's got some tough fiscal times but this isn't a political position, this isn't an administrative position, is a mechanic to service the helicopters so the police staff and the EMS staff are protected and the job they do and the citizens we pick up are protected. So I definitely want to hear about that SCIN before the week is over, and why it's not being signed if it's not going to be.

Any other questions? Gentlemen, I appreciate you being prepared today and hopefully at the next meeting we can resolve some of these other outstanding issues.

LEG. GULDI:
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Thank you. Before we move to the agenda, if Commissioner Fischler would join us for a second. And while he's doing that, I also want to recognize a guest that we have, Greg Anderson, the President of the Council of Suffolk County Fire Chiefs; we appreciate your presence today. Commissioner, how are you?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:
Good. And you?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Very well, very well. Each of our offices have been inundated with calls in reference to proposed cuts that you are making in reference to our training facility. It was my understanding, in discussions during last year's budget, that there was no proposed cuts for fire, EMS or police services, and then I've heard conflicting stories that no, you've experienced a 10% cut and have chose to make those cuts in our academy, which before I get into questioning that, let me just try to find out exactly where we are. And that's why I thought I'd ask you up before we went on to the agenda.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:
Okay. Obviously, not to redo the Legislative process, there were things going on starting at the beginning of the Legislative process, monies changed, reductions made.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Not by the Legislature in your department, that's not true.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, yes, because the Omnibus bill took \$341,000 out of my FRES budget and put it into the Fire Academy budget, therefore, there was that impact. That's the bill that was passed by the Legislature as the Omnibus bill, therefore approximately three hundred came out, came \$345,000 that I lost from the FRES budget itself.

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The academy did receive about \$250,000 of that -- of my money that was restored to the Fire Academy. Thereafter, we had the directive from the County Executive to reduce all contract agencies by 10% as well as a few other monies within my budget, within my department.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Dave, hold that point. Joe, would you mind joining us back up here? I'm sorry. And I know you were putting your coat on, I'm sorry, I wasn't expecting to involve you in this conversation.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

So therefore, implementing that 10% directive, as a contract agency the Fire Academy received that directive, they're the ones who initiated the cost savings or cost reduction plan. I asked them -- in terms of what the County Exec has directed, I asked them to submit that plan to me in what they -- how old they would meet that 10% reduction in which they did submit that plan. It involved some consolidation, some of the things made sense and things that we should have been doing probably a long time ago. There were -- there would be some reductions in training --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

How much did you cut in total from the academy?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I believe the cost was approximately 140 some odd thousand, I don't have the exact number with me.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So let's say 140 plus, ball park.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Ball park, 140, 150,000.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Any other cuts in training besides the \$140,000?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No. I mean, if you look at the budget, we put in for a 1.8 as a budget request, last year we were 1.4, I don't recall the exact numbers from last year, but it was 1.8; I mean, it depends on what number you use in terms of reduction. But we have also seen

unexpectedly, but I think all of us have homeowners have seen it, fuel oil costs, training fuel costs have gone up more than what was projected by the vendors that would ask for information when we were preparing the budget; obviously, nobody could project those increases. But other things that were initiated were some charge backs, but those chargebacks were basically -- it has occurred, unfortunately it has occurred where a fire department did not show up at a training field for their scheduled training session, yet we had to pay four to \$500 for instructors to be there and be available. That's not to say that they were at a fire or doing what they're supposed to be doing, there were times when they said, "We went to a parade instead or we didn't have enough people to come," and that cost us money. So we initiated a chargeback for those type of things; if they're at a fire, obviously that doesn't count.

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Deputy County Executive Michaels, my understanding from the County Executive's cuts, or maybe I was wrong, was that they were not public safety, fire or EMS; is that true or not true?

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MICHAELS:

Everything was -- it was across the board.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So it didn't exempt police, fire, EMS. Legislator Lindsay, I'm sorry.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Dave, I know we got the numbers, how many classes were actually cut, what's the reduction? Because I'm hearing it, too, in my district.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, we're -- I can't tell you the numbers of classes we cut but what we've done is --

LEG. LINDSAY:

Right, but are we doing half as much training, 25% less training?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I wouldn't say half as much. What we've done is implemented some type of zone training, we're calling it zones, establishing zones and offering specific classes in there for that zone. Some of it is already worked rather productively. For example, in the north fork we did a HAZMAT refresher class for the entire north fork in the Mattituck High School and we had 240 or 280 some odd fire fighters attend that class. We're doing that in other areas.

LEG. LINDSAY:

When you have a big group like that, how many instructors do we have?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, they're per diem so we have approximately 75 instructors but they only get paid when they teach.

LEG. LINDSAY:

No, I don't mean that, for this class of 245.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It was only one instructor because of the nature of the class as a refresher --

LEG. LINDSAY:

So we have one instructor for 240 firefighters?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It's a refresher, it's a lecture format in that class.

LEG. LINDSAY:

So the Fire Academy is within your jurisdiction but it's a contract agency.

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COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It's a contract agency, right.

LEG. LINDSAY:

And in the Omnibus we reallocated money from your agency to the Fire Academy and then you cut their budget 145,000 you said?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It wasn't me cutting, it was the directive that we received that all contract agencies were --

LEG. LINDSAY:

I see, that 10% --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

It was the County Executive that did the cut, you implemented the cut.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Implemented the cut.

LEG. LINDSAY:

The 10% across the board on contract agencies amounted to the \$145,000.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Approximately.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I see. How did -- do we pay for the instructors or is that -- somebody told me there was a State line there.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

We receive approximately \$250,000 under State aid from the State Education Department.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Specifically for the instructors.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Specifically for the Fire Academy because that is the academy's -- really it's called the Fire Academy is what we call it, but it's actually the Vocational Educational Extension Board which is a board that -- there used to be a lot of them back in the 40's, it was probably the precursor to the BOCES system where it offered vocational training and it did more than fire training, that just was one component back when they first were there. Most of the State has gotten away from us, Nassau, Onondaga County, and I believe Erie County are the only ones that are remaining of vocational boards, you know, that exist. But it was formed under the Education Law and therefore is eligible for State funds through the State Aid Program which, reading the most recent budget proposal at the State, who knows if that will be cut or not.

LEG. LINDSAY:

What is our cost for teachers in the academy per year?

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COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I don't have that number because there's a per diem, they get approximately 70, \$75 per session.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Okay. Is it much more than 250,000?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Oh, yes, definitely. The County funds the majority of -- it's direct funding from the County, the 250,000 is just a small component of what the County puts into it. In addition, we do buy a very small number, I don't have the number for 2002, but 2001 was approximately \$6,000 that we took in. We do charge private industry for fire training that they're required to have and we do charge them and they -- you know, pay us.

LEG. LINDSAY:

But there's no charge back to the individual department.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Maybe you could get us the cost of the instructors, some kind of break down there.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Yeah, sure.

LEG. LINDSAY:

You know, I think we're all interested in somehow finding some additional money to restore some of these classes, but we just want to make sure that they're utilizing the dollars to the best effect.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Commissioner Fischler, any other cuts in your budget besides the 341,000 that you said that the Omnibus took out?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, it actually was 345 because there was -- the total number was 341 out of one account which was the salary account and the rest were 10% reductions from other accounts.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay, so 345,000 was taken out of the salary account.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Three forty-one plus.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And those were for vacancies in the budget.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No vacancies, these are filled positions.

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So the \$345,000 was filled positions.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. And --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Therefore, I don't have enough money to pay salary, you know, at the

end of the year.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

In positions within your department or positions within the instructors.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No, department.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. I obviously want to speak to BRO so they can respond to this between the next meeting. Then the Omnibus took 250 of the 345,000 and put it into the academy.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Right, they put money back; where it came from, I don't know.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Well, it obviously came out of the 345.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Yeah.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I mean, theoretically.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Theoretically, right.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I mean, obviously it's one big pool, but one would assume that Bob was behind that. Then in addition to that 250 that they were given back, you then cut them 140,000 under the directive.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Under the directive, I asked them -- you know, gave them the directive, this is what's expected as a contract agency and produce a work plan to meet that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay, this is where I'm a little confused. If they got an additional \$250,000 from the Omnibus beyond what they were supposed to get originally and then you cut them 40,000, there still should be a positive effect of \$110,000.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

There was an initial cut, the County Executive's proposal had reduced it already 10%.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And what did that amount to, what dollar amount?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I don't have the figures; if I knew you were going to ask those questions -- I can have them the next meeting, we will supply them.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So originally the County Executive's original budget cut the Fire Academy by 10%.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Approximately, I don't know what the exact percentage is but they did cut it.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

But ball park 10%.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Right.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Then the Legislature added back \$250,000.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Right, approximately.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Out of your budget, but nonetheless added back \$250,000 which I guess, in essence, you're telling me was sucked up by that 10% cut, so therefore there wasn't a positive gain by the Fire Academy.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It was, there was a positive gain at that point, I don't know how many dollars but it was --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And then the County Executive gave you a directive to cut it 10% again and that totaled \$140,000.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Right, approximately. The County contribution went out of that budget is about 1.5 excluding the --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Even under the first -- if the second cut totals \$140,000, it's safe to say that the first cut was probably in the same ball park of about \$140,000, giving us a \$280,000 cut.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I would say -- I'll give you the numbers.

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Right.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I mean, I didn't --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

But ball park, we're talking about \$280,000. If the Legislature gave you \$250,000, you're almost whole, it's \$30,000.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, based on 2001 budget numbers, basically we're looking at --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

No, based on 2002 numbers.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No, based on our 2001 -- 2002, budget, yes, excuse me.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

So why are we cutting services by 25% if you only lost \$30,000?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Because there are increases, they've been running into the same issues we've had, increase in training fuels which weren't expected, they have increased pension costs that were exactly the same thing that came against us. As I said, if I knew you wanted this information I would have had it available with me and I'll supply it to you.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Why if we're going to -- if you're going to look to cut the budget by 10% within your whole operation, would we look specifically at the academy; knowing what was going to happen, by the way. I mean, this to me wreaks of like the school district when the voters vote down the budget --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It was not --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

-- the first thing they cut is transportation. Of course, you know the parents are going to be in arms and come storming to the next school board meeting and storming to the next election. Every one of us I'm sure has had heard from every volunteer fire organization or fire department and you've got to know that we're going to amend your

budget to make the Fire Academy whole. So the choice you'll have is either you do it or we'll do it for you, I mean, that's the choice you have at this point.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I can't do it, I'm under the directive that contract agencies need to produce a 10% cut. It wasn't me and you have to understand that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

It wasn't me either so, I mean -- you know, I don't think it was

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anybody here in the Legislature. We actually, in fact, put more money in the academy.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It wasn't me that made that decision, we were given a directive of a 10% cut for contract agencies, that's a contract agency, I had no other option.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

But, Dave, you started off the conversation --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

If you can restore it --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

-- we took out money from the academy, in your presentation here today. And in fact, I've attended at least two fire organizations who have told me that you said, "The Legislature cut the Fire Academy."

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I did not --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I sat there scratching my head saying, "What are you talking about?"

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, they misinformed you because I never said that the Legislature cut the Fire Academy, they did cut my department.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

That's correct, under the Omnibus.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Maybe they misinformed you or misunderstood what was going on, but I never said that they cut the Fire Academy but the total effect upon the department has been a reduction.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Right. I think what you need to do is two things. One is you're going to need to review your numbers for 2001, two and three and be able to speak fluently at the next meeting of exactly what the cuts were, what options you have or don't have, what cuts you've implemented and what it cost to run the operation of the training, as Legislator --

LEG. LINDSAY:

What do we need to restore it.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And what do we need to plug that hole, realistically and why and how. Because we're about to do it ourselves and amend the budget to provide you more money to plug the whole in the academy, that's not going to stand.

LEG. BISHOP:

Can't we just cut it administratively?

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

That's exactly where we're going to go. We're going to go into this department and cut it further to plug a hole that he was directed to cut and that serves no purpose; that serves no purpose. It's ridiculous, it's like cutting transportation for students at a school district; I mean, we're not going to allow that to stand. I mean, come to us and say, "Look, I've got a dilemma, these are the things I need to do, what do you want us to do?" But to cut the academy where we're training volunteers, the very place that we're trying to encourage people to become volunteers and we're spending money to do that to me makes no sense.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I think if you look at my testimony last year during the budget process, I took that exact position about -- and we presented you the tables and looked at it throughout the entire budget process saying that it was unacceptable to cut anything at the Fire Academy.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah. And if I could -- before I recognize you, Legislator Lindsay -- Mr. Michaels, if you would go back to the administration and let them know that it is the will of the Legislature to try to plug this hole and we'd like to work with the Executive to do that. I would like some options from yourself or Commissioner Fischler at the next meeting as opposed to us having to do it on our own. I'm tired of you did it, we did it, they did it, he did it, she did it, I'm tired of getting letters, faxes and e-mails, let's fix this problem. This is not a problem we want to leave in place for the rest of the year.

Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:

The Fire Academy, how many administrative staff is involved there?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Full-time, most of it's part-time, you know, per diem type people, full-time we have three full-time administrators.

LEG. LINDSAY:

How many part-timers?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Four.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Four, we have seven people there. My concern is with the Fire Academy and I guess they schedule the classes, make sure the supplies are there and all that stuff, right? I mean, I'm not looking to cut any --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I'm not including clerical in full-time, I'm just talking administrative.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I'm not looking to cut anybody's job but I don't want to see the classes diminished either, you know.

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COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No, and I don't think --

LEG. LINDSAY:

And again, I agree with what Legislator Towle says, it seems like the easiest thing to do to apply the best pressure point is to cut the classes rather than look at other savings.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

We didn't cut classes, we had asked the Fire Chiefs and some of the things that came back from the Fire Academy's recommendations was to consolidate training.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

You didn't cut hours?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

No, consolidated.

LEG. LINDSAY:

See, that's the thing that we have -- yeah, we have to know --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Consolidated, cut, I mean, it's the same thing.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, it is and it isn't.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I mean, there's less training hours now in the month of January, February and forward in this year, there's less training hours to train volunteers, yes or no?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

There's less training hours but we can train more volunteers, or the same number.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

I guess if you put 600 people in the room with one instructor you could say you're training more volunteers too, but the question becomes are they getting trained.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Because we had class sizes -- class sizes of ten was our minimum class size, we can increase that to 15 and still be just as effective, we did that.

LEG. LINDSAY:

So you don't see any backup in demand for training?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, we saw it last year. The charts that we provided the Legislature during the budget hearings clearly indicated the increase in training requirements of the volunteer segment. I made that known and so did Chief Gackenheimer to every one of you here during that process of the budget that, you know, in our plea that we should not

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have any cuts at all to the Fire Academy; that is our position and we always said that.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Well, we're glad to hear that because clearly we're not going to sit back, as I said, and allow that cut to stand twice.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I think we have to know, though, how many less available classes you anticipate this year as compared to last year.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

And if you could put that together --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

I think it's difficult to put a number to that because there's a difference -- you know, trying to be more efficient and by consolidating classes -- for example, one Chief's Council got together recently when we brought this up and they said, "Oh, we can deal with this," and they took all their training chiefs who meet now and coordinate the classes so instead of ABC department running each one they're working with their neighbors to coordinate those classes together, "So we'll do this class, you do that class." So we're not doing five different classes of the same subject but they're working together --

LEG. LINDSAY:

And that's all wonderful if we're meeting the demand, but here's what --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Yes, and we've --

LEG. LINDSAY:

But here's what we're faced with. There's an impression by the departments in my jurisdiction that there is going to be less availability of training. And you know, I'm sure you know, one of the most requested classes is to bring firemen out and go through the live burn building and that stuff and they're telling me that they used to be able to do that eight times a year, now they can only do it four times a year and that's what we're after. And there's talk about, you know, building in some of my departments having their own burn building, live burn building to train people within the district and, you know, if all our departments start doing that, first of all, we're going to have an environmental nightmare and, second of all, you know, it kind of defeats the whole purpose of establishing a centralized Fire Academy. And that's what we're trying to get, it's how many less classes do we have if we have any less classes, and if we do, what kind of money do we need to restore some of those classes. I mean, we're not --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Right. No, I understand.

LEG. LINDSAY:

We're not doing this to give you a hard time or anything like that --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

But some of the officials --

LEG. LINDSAY:

We're trying to respond responsibly to a complaint that we have in our district.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Right. And I think some of the efficiencies we have taken only improves the training, too, so it's a combination of both.

LEG. LINDSAY:

That's wonderful if we're not short of training.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry I was out of the room, I was meeting with some Public Works officials.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Not a problem. Sorry the meeting is running late.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Dave, I'm sure this was posed to you, but I want to as one Legislator make it clear to you as well that I've been receiving what are -- let's say they're complaints, they have been aggressive complaints that we the Legislature are the ones who are responsible for certain cuts to FRES and other emergency services throughout the County. And this is coming primarily from people who serve on the FRES board which I find to be outrageous, you know, to sit in my district office and get berated by people who should actually know better where cuts came from and where restorations came from as well and where restorations come from throughout the year. To sit there and to have this erroneous statement be thrown at not only myself as a vice-chair of this committee but as a Legislator and a member of the Public Safety Committee and my colleagues is absolutely wrong and I want to know if you've discussed that with them and if so what was said and what's their response?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

And just briefly, you know, not to reiterate what I've said, but briefly --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I apologize for bringing it up again, but I want to put it on the record that it's from me, too.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

During the process, the budget process I lost approximately \$345,000 from my budget, totally there has been a loss and everything and that

was explained to them. That money was -- some of that money, 250,000, approximately 250 was restored to the Fire Academy and then we had the 10% reduction after that, but I'm still down the \$345,000 --

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LEG. CARACAPPA:

I understand that.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

-- in the FRES budget. Okay? So in terms of what that process is, you know, we're still -- as a department, total department, there's still a loss of revenue -- loss of funding.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Well, I made a suggestion to those people, and in fact a gentleman from my area, Mr. Egan, on several occasions, and he's been quite vocal about his position which I appreciate but I just wish he'd get it right and the other people would get it right with relation to the issue, that maybe they should come here and talk to us as a committee. I have requested that on numerous occasions over months and months, especially during the beginning of the budget process, and still no one comes here to talk to us face to face to get the facts right.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Well, if you remember, during the budget hearing we had four Fire Chiefs here, one of which addressed the body during the budget process asking for cuts not to occur to the Fire Academy, that was Frank {Obremski} representing the Town of Babylon. There were other Chiefs here but basically one person spoke during that process asking for those cuts to keep whole FRES and Fire Academy together, not to take one or the other back and forth.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

How many --

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

So they were here doing that. You know, today even the President of the Suffolk Chiefs is present today, or was, I'm not sure if he's still here.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

It's just discouraging for us. We worked very hard, as you know, to come up with the funding that was cut and we're still going to during this next budget cycle via amendments. It just really boils our blood to know that here we are knocking our heads against the wall to try and make sure that you're adequately funded, especially with the rising classes and the significance of it in this day and age, let's try and get it right.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Yeah. Well, you were part of the process in terms of public safety last year and you remember our presentation where we gave you those numbers and asked you not to -- that there be no cuts on either side, whether it's the Fire Academy or my budget, and actually increase it, you know, in certain lines particularly related to domestic preparedness and so on. That was our plea throughout the entire process and everything so that, you know, not through a combination of everything that didn't occur.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

One last thing for my own information.

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COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Not related to the Legislature but condemnation on both sides.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

How many members sit on the FRES Board?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Eighteen.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Eighteen, okay. And their appointments are -- come up how often? They're staggered.

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

It's a three year appointment.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Three year appointment and they're staggered?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

Yes.

VICE-CHAIR CARACAPPA:

Any other questions?

COMMISSIONER FISCHLER:

And any Legislator is welcome to, I know Legislator Lindsay has attended those meetings, Legislator Carpenter has been there.

VICE-CHAIR CARACAPPA:

Any other comments from the committee?

LEG. LINDSAY:

No, let's go. You want to go to the agenda or wait for the Chairman?

LEG. CARACAPPA:
Here's the Chairman.

LEG. BISHOP:
The Chairman had to step out because he committed at the first meeting that every meeting would last an hour.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
An hour, I know. I had to go stop all the clocks. But in all fairness, Legislator Bishop, Legislator Guldi's meeting delayed the whole process.

LEG. BISHOP:
Oh, is that right?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Yeah. We're going to move our meeting to one o'clock, the Public Safety meeting, we'll move the next meeting to one o'clock to give Legislator Guldi enough time to throw the full forest into the river as opposed to spilling over into this committee.

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LEG. CARACAPPA:
And mine half an hour.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
I have no speaking cards. The card I did get was for the Public Works Committee which will be next. We're going to move right on to the agenda.

Tabled Resolutions

Resolution 1832-02 (P) - Adopting Local Law No. 2002, a Local Law implementing volunteer firefighter and ambulance worker County real property tax exemption (County Executive).

LEG. LINDSAY:
On the resolution. And I know I probably asked this last month, but what is the difference between -- maybe we could have an explanation, especially in the difference between this and 1022.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Which is also on our agenda as a new resolution today.

MR. SABATINO:
The difference between the two is that 1832 is linked to the State language as it currently exists which because of a technical glitch in it at the State level would result in an average property tax decrease of approximately \$14 from a County wide perspective. And 20 -- 1022 has incorporated generic language which states that it will be

predicated on whatever the State legislation turns out to be. So currently it would still be the same \$14, but if the State Legislature ever does what it expressed on an individual basis to Legislators last year it would do which is to make that adjustment in the State legislation to provide for what was advertised as, I don't know, a 40 or \$50 average tax cut, then the County legislation would automatically pick that up at that point, you wouldn't have to do an amendment after that. So it's basically a difference between the current law versus what the current law is and any future amendments that might occur.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Okay. So 1832, 1832 would only take effect if the accompanying State legislation was passed, signed into law.

MR. SABATINO:

No, they both will take effect --

LEG. LINDSAY:

Immediately?

MR. SABATINO:

-- upon filing of these at the Office of Secretary of State. The key is that with 10 -- with 1832, 1832 is directly linked to what the current State legislation is and the current State legislation means that because of the formula they put in the State bill, that \$14 which has been troubling to local Legislators is what the number will be. What 1022 states is that that same provision will kick in but if they ever go around or get around to amending the State language, then

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whatever it maxes out at will automatically flow under the County law as opposed to doing a subsequent amendment.

LEG. LINDSAY:

So right now both of them would give \$14.

MR. SABATINO:

Both of them are still -- that's what the State law formula provides; no matter what you do at the local level, you can't change that formula.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Right.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I believe, Mr. Chairman, at the last meeting we were going to give the State time to meet, a month. So I would make a motion to table both of those bills.

LEG. CRECCA:
Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay, we have a motion to table 1832. Any discussion? All those in favor? All those opposed? List me as an abstention.
Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-1-0 Abstention: Legislator Towle).

1878-02 (P) - Appropriating funds in connection with the renovations & additions to Police Precinct Building - 4th Precinct (CP 3184) (County Executive).

LEG. CRECCA:
On the motion.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Legislator --

LEG. CRECCA:
I'll make a motion to approve for the purpose of discussion.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Motion to approve by Legislator Crecca, seconded by myself. Any discussion?

MR. SABATINO:
The only problem, Mr. Chairman, is that this amends the 2002 Budget. So it was tabled the last time and we need a corrected copy to get it to 2003, but I don't see a corrected copy unless it --

LEG. CRECCA:
Is there anybody here from the County Executive's Office? Should we expect a corrected copy?

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MR. FAULKE:
I think it --

MR. SABATINO:
Yesterday was the deadline, I didn't get one, unless it's --

MR. FAULKE:
I believe we actually withdrew it, I have to check.

LEG. CRECCA:

Okay. Motion to table.

LEG. GULDI:
Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Second by Legislator Guldi. Any discussion? There being none, please have an answer for us by the next Public Safety Committee on that.

LEG. CRECCA:
And actually, since this is -- I represent almost a big chunk of this precinct, if you could get back to my office directly on it also as to what the plan is?

MR. FAULKE:
Sure.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Any discussion? There being none, all those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1878 is tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).

TABLED SENSE RESOLUTIONS

Sense 69 --

LEG. CRECCA:
I thought we tabled this subject to call, didn't we?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
No, we decided to hold off on going to war with Iraq.

LEG. CRECCA:
Yeah, I think that we should leave this to the White House.

LEG. GULDI:
Second the motion to table subject to call.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay. Sense 69-2002 - Memorializing Resolution requesting United States Congress to enact joint resolution authorizing use of force against Iraq (Binder).

LEG. CRECCA:
We could declare war on someone else if you'd like.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
We could, we talked about the State of New York.

LEG. CRECCA:

I think we should keep it within the County, though.

LEG. GULDI:

The city is popular this week.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

We had a motion to table subject to call by Legislator Crecca, second by Legislator Guldi. Counsel, anything you want to add to that?

MR. SABATINO:

I was just going to say --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Please tell me you're not going to encourage us to go to war with Iraq.

MR. SABATINO:

No, I was just going to say, I mean, technically there is a glitch because this was predicated on -- this was predicated on support for that resolution that was already adopted, so the thing it sought to achieve already occurred.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Well, that's the power of the Legislature; see, we encouraged them to approve it. Table subject to call, any discussion? There being none, all in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I'm opposed. I'm the war monger.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay, one opposed. Tabled subject to call (VOTE: 5-1-0-0 Opposed: Legislator Caracappa).

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

1022-03 (P) - Adopting Local Law No. 2003, a Local Law authorizing 10% property tax exemption for volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers (Cooper).

LEG. CRECCA:

For the same reasons as earlier, I'll make a motion to table.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay. I'm going to make a motion to approve, I may be by myself.

LEG. GULDI:

Second the motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Okay, second by Legislator Guldi to approve. We have a motion to table

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MR. SABATINO:

There's a public hearing, Mr. Chairman.

LEG. CRECCA:

Isn't this the same?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Motion to table for the purpose of a public hearing. 1022, motion to table by myself, second by Legislator Crecca. Any discussion?

LEG. CRECCA:

On 1050?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

1022.

LEG. CRECCA:

Sorry.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).

Resolution 1050-03 (P) - Amending the 2002 Capital Program and Budget and appropriating funds for the purchase of Automated External Defibrillators, AED's, for County Buildings (CP 3205.523) (Crecca).
Legislator Crecca, your pleasure.

LEG. CRECCA:

I make a motion to approve. This is just putting --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Second.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Second by Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

On the motion.

LEG. LINDSAY:

How much, how much money?

LEG. CRECCA:

A hundred and twelve thousand dollars.

LEG. GULDI:
Second.

MR. SABATINO:
Just for the record, it's now -- this one has been updated to 2003, so it should read 2003.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Okay. Legislator Caracappa.

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LEG. LINDSAY:
And it's in the budget?

LEG. CARACAPPA:
No, we're amending; what's the offset; Budget Review?

LEG. CRECCA:
It's furniture --

LEG. GULDI:
Furniture and equipment.

LEG. CRECCA:
Furniture and equipment which this is really appropriately where it should come out of, furniture and equipment. There's 1.3 million roughly in furniture and equipment.

LEG. BISHOP:
Do we have a line in the Capital Budget?

LEG. CRECCA:
There wasn't for 2003, no.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Furniture and equipment from where?

LEG. BISHOP:
We have it for 2004?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Hold on one second, we're all running around here, hold on. Furniture from where?

LEG. CRECCA:
I think it's from Legislator Towle's office; I don't know who he is, but --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

No problem, we'll sell the couch, the desk, whatever.

MS. GAZES:

According to the copy of the resolution we have, it looks like the amendment part is that it's pay-as-you-go, General Fund money.

LEG. BISHOP:

Oh, no.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Wait a second.

MS. GAZES:

That's what it says here. The funding designation is G.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Now, there's only for the year '03 -- excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

For the year '03, I believe there's 800 -- only \$800,000 in pay-as-you-go money for the year. This wouldn't be an appropriate offset in my view.

LEG. BISHOP:

May I ask --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Legislator Bishop, go ahead.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Can I get an answer?

LEG. BISHOP:

I thought that was rhetorical.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

No, I just want to make sure that there is only \$800,000 in pay-as-you-go funding.

MS. GAZES:

I don't know the exact amount but it's much less than has been available.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Usually pay-as-you-go's are.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Legislator Bishop?

MR. SABATINO:
It's about \$880,000. But you're correct, it's less than -- it's just short of 900,000.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Legislator Crecca, I'm going to ask you to table this so you can try to resolve the funding offset issue.

LEG. BISHOP:
What I want to know, if I may still ask my question.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Go ahead, Legislator Bishop.

LEG. BISHOP:
I thought that we -- I thought that you had successfully advocated for inclusion of a defibrillator program in the Capital Budget, and that's what I'm trying to understand.

LEG. CRECCA:
Let me go back and review with Budget Review. I think there was a screw up, I think we did do -- I think it was in there and then it

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wasn't, so let me clear it up. The other thing, too, is Legislator Towle, can I ask for this commitment, though? If I can get this resolved before next week --

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
I'll do a discharge, yeah.

LEG. CRECCA:
-- we'll do a discharge on the floor?

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:
Absolutely, absolutely.

LEG. CRECCA:
Because I would like to get this rolling, we're a little behind in doing this. And what I did do, just for the committee's awareness, there are a lot more recommended sites than what are here, what we did was we really prioritized which ones really were more important than others to get defibrilators in our County buildings.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Talk to me after.

LEG. CRECCA:

Okay. So I will make a motion to table.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Motion to table, second by myself. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? 1050 is tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).

Resolution 10 --

LEG. BISHOP:

If we table this last one we'll have nothing on the agenda.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, we are going to table the last one, too, I hate to tell you that. Resolution 1080-03 (P) - Adopting Local Law No. 2003, a Local Law to amend the process for the seizure and distribution of forfeited assets used in connection with or constituting the proceeds of crimes (County Executive), it's an update of the DWI seizure law.

LEG. GULDI:

Motion to table for a public hearing.

CHAIRMAN TOWLE:

Yeah, motion to table for a public hearing as well as a meeting that's going to be held between the Legislature, County Attorney's Office and the Exec's Office to discuss the bill and some other amendments. Any discussion? Motion to table by myself, second by Legislator Guldi. There being none, all in favor? Opposed? 1080 is tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).

There are no other items before us. Anybody wishing to address the committee, last call. We stand adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

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(*The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.*)

Legislator Fred Towle, Chairman
Public Safety & Public Information Committee

{ } - Denotes Spelled Phonetically

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