

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 January 31, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington • Chairman
Legislator Kate Browning • Vice•Chair
Legislator Wayne Horsley
Legislator Vivian Vilorio•Fisher
Legislator Joseph Caracappa
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Jay Schneiderman

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan • Counsel to the Legislature
Ian Barry • Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz • Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Robert Calarco • Aide to Legislator Eddington
Michael Cavanaugh • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Linda Burkhardt • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Seth Squicciarino • Aide to Legislator Vilorio•Fisher
Carl Yellon • Aide to Legislator Kennedy
Jim Maggio • Budget Review Office
Jill Moss • Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn • Assistant County Executive
Brian Beedenbender • County Executive Assistant

Brian Bielanski • County Executive Assistant
Lynne Bizzarro • Chief Deputy County Attorney
Robert Kearon • Division Bureau Chief/District Attorney's Office
Robert Moore • Chief of Department/Suffolk County Police Department
Aristedes Mojica • Inspector/Chief of Dept's Office/SCPD
John McElhone • Chief of Support Services/SCPD
Thomas Kelly • Lieutenant•1st Precinct/SCPD
Kim McGreevey • Lieutenant•2nd Precinct/SCPD
Tom Bloomberg • Lieutenant•5th Precinct/SCPD
Matt O'Malley • Sergeant•Chief of Patrol's Office/SCPD
Lloyd Hicks • Police Officer/Suffolk County Police Department
Robert Misegades • Suffolk County Retired Police Detective's Assoc.
Joe Williams • Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Brad Maier • Deputy Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Belinda Pagdanganan • Director/Emergency Preparedness•FRES
Miles Quinn • Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Tom Kost • Director/Suffolk County Fire Academy
Richard Stockinger • Deputy Director/Suffolk County Fire Academy
Warren Horst • Suffolk County Fire Marshall
John Desmond • Director/Suffolk County Probation Department
Tom Henry • Suffolk County Probation Department
Drew Silverman • Suffolk County Ambulance Chief's Association
Hope Collazo • Director/Community Service Program•American Red Cross
Debbie Eppel • Public Information Office
Tom Muratore • Vice•Present/Police Benevolent Association
Tom Tatarian • Recording Secretary/Police Benevolent Association
Maria Perez•Lent • STOP DWI Coordinator
Douglas Death • Chair/Transportation Advisory Board
Danny DelValle • Vice•President/Probation Officer's Association
Catherine Hoake • Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Mary McLaughlin • Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Andre Collins • SMILE/Suffolk Minorities Involved in Law Enforcement
Jaime Bustamante • SMILE/Suffolk Minorities Involved in Law Enforcement
Sandy Sullivan • Legislative Liaison/AME
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer.

(*The meeting was called to order at 11:35 A.M.*)

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good morning. I would like to start the meeting of the Public Safety Committee and I'm going to ask Legislator Horsley to lead us in the pledge.

Salutation

Thank you. And I'd like to welcome Legislator Caracappa to our committee, I'm sure with all his experience and knowledge he will be very helpful.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

With correspondence, I want to mention that Commissioner Dormer has invited the Public Safety Committee to hear a presentation on Homeland Security. So if the committee is interested, you can let me know and I will arrange for a presentation for us.

I would like to start today with the public portion. And I want to just put on the record that I apologize, the first meeting went over an hour and it infringed on the other committees and I'm going to pretty well make sure that doesn't happen again. So I appreciate their patience.

Okay. I have Robert Misegades, if you would come forward, please, and address the committee.

MR. MISEGADES:

Good morning. My name is Robert Misegades, I'm a retired Suffolk County Police Officer. I'm here on behalf of Resolution 1140 which was submitted by the Police Commissioner, Richard Dormer, providing for the training of retired police officers in order to comply with the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2004 which was signed into Federal legislation by President Bush in July of 2004.

The resolution simply provides that retired police officers who wish to comply with the certification process provided in the further legislation applied to the Police Department for firearms training. The training will be provided at no cost to the taxpayer or at no cost to the County, but exclusively by the applicant who applies for the firearms training.

I have spoken to Paul Sabatino, the Deputy County Executive who has been in on this resolution since the beginning and he advises me that in addition to Commissioner Dormer, the County Executive is on board with regards to the concept of this resolution. I ask that you give it serious consideration to pass the resolution so that the Police Department can begin training the police officers who have retired from the department. Thank you.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much for your comments. At this time I'd like to invite Drew Silverman to come forward and address the committee.

MR. SILVERMAN:

Good morning. My name is Drew Silverman and I am the President to Suffolk County Ambulance Chiefs Association and the immediate former Chairman of the Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Commission. I would like to address the members of the Public Safety Committee regarding Intro Resolution 1124 concerning the replacement and purchase of one Medevac helicopter.

While I applaud County Executive Steve Levy for submitting this resolution for this body to consider, I believe that it falls somewhat short. Approximately five years ago the County purchased two fully equipped model MD•902 Medevac helicopters, unfortunately these two ships have been plagued with chronic rotor crack problems making them potentially unsafe to fly. After every 50 hours of usage, these two helicopters must be grounded for inspection and maintenance, this includes the rotors being meticulously inspected for cracks or other damage. These two problematic

helicopters have been grounded for weeks and even months at a time because it has become increasingly difficult to find replacement parts. This in turn has decreased the Police helicopter fleet down to two ships leaving only the A•Star model helicopters available which are extremely undersized for Medevac usage.

Resolution 1124 calls for the replacing of only one of these problematic MD •902 Medevac helicopters for the recommended purchase of a new twin •engine Eurocopter Model 145. As a representative here today of the volunteer fire and ambulance services, I respectfully ask that this committee consider replacing both existing problematic Medevac helicopters this year and immediately replace them with the recommended Eurocopter 145 models fully equipped for Medevac transportation. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you for your comments. At this time I would like to invite Commissioner Joe Williams of the Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services Department to make a presentation. Let me just stop •• have a seat. Is there anybody else that wanted to address the committee? Okay, I'm sorry. Why don't we let this gentleman go next.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Sir, go to the podium.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sir, go right to the podium.

MR. COLLINS:

Good morning. My name is Andre Collins, I'm a retired Suffolk County Detective and currently President of Smile which is Suffolk Minorities Involved in Law Enforcement. I'm also liaison to the minority community and law enforcement for Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy, Executive Board member of the Eastern Long Island Branch of the NAACP, member of 100 Black Men in Law Enforcement, and past President of the Suffolk County Guardians and a product of the Suffolk County Police Department's first

Community Service Aid Program.

For those of you who don't know what the Community Service Aid Program was, it was the Suffolk County Police Department's first initial Cadet-type program. There was a program that brought on the majority of African-Americans and Latinos into the department, it had very many positive results, not only within the Police Department but also within the minority communities. That's probably why it no longer exists, it worked.

Within the next year or so, the majority of the African-American officers within the Suffolk County Police Department will have reached the required 20 years for retirement. What does the department do when they do retire? Currently the Suffolk County Police Department averages about two African-Americans in a class of 50, sometimes in a class of 100; this will never recover from the lack of representation.

Let's round out some facts. We have approximately 3,000 officers here in Suffolk County; out of those, about 60 are African-American which brings the percentage to about 1.8% African-American, well below the average percent of the demographics of Suffolk County. Latinos are slightly higher but nothing to write home about.

There are a few remedies to the problems and they should be done in conjunction with one another. One major component to achieving a Police Department that is more reflective of the communities that they serve is to reenact the Cadet Program. The best way to do that is to include all races into the Cadet program; this will allow the program to stand up to any criticism. The selection committee responsible for choosing the candidates should be comprised of representatives from the following organizations: One member from the Suffolk County Police Department; one member from Civil Service; one from SMILE; one from the NAACP, Coalition of Branches; a member of the YMCA; one member from the EOC of Suffolk; one member from the Urban League of Long Island; one member from Catholic Charities; one member from Adelante; one member from OA; one member from a Jewish organization. A program formulated in this manner would ensure that a more diverse group of candidates are chosen and would probably reflect the County's demographics.

Additionally, if you truly wish to diversify the County, this Legislature must lower the application fee of \$100 and the \$75 fingerprinting fee for all applicants; this would have an immediate impact on increasing the pool of minority as well as majority applicants.

The next major issue deals with the lack of positive contact between law enforcement and the minority community and the way that our communities view law enforcement. Those in the majority have either family or friends that are involved in law enforcement and have positive contact with them on a daily basis. We, on the other hand, do not. Unfortunately, the majority of the contact that we as African•Americans and Latinos have with police is when we or someone in our families or friends are stopped by police, arrested or even worse. The perception or the reality of mistreatment is rarely dealt with in a manner that is productive by our law enforcement officials or politicians. As a result, our youth usually do not have a positive outlook about the police and their parents are less likely to encourage them to go into a career in law enforcement; together we need to change that.

As lawmakers you can help change that by utilizing a program that is already in place within the Suffolk County Police Department that has the capability, if run correctly, of attracting more minority youth to careers in law enforcement here in Suffolk County, and that is the Police Explorer Program. Right now there is some fighting between the police unions and the Police Department, reference to overtime issues for officers involved in the program and I understand that this program may be canceled. A focused effort should be made to maintain the explorer program and utilize it to recruit minority youth into the program. This will increase positive contact between minority communities and law enforcement, and currently the department keeps no records of demographics on the explorer program. As we are well aware, the County Police Department as well as other law enforcement agencies within the County have been plagued by a history of racial incidents and bias.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Excuse me, Mr. Collins.

MR. COLLINS:

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

It sounds like you have a lot to say.

MR. COLLINS:

I'm almost closing.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, because I didn't want to hold you only to three minutes. You're coming to a closure?

MR. COLLINS:

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you.

MR. COLLINS:

Thank you. I promise. Not only has the County Police Department been under a Federal Consent Decree for many years, the department, high ranking supervisors and some of its officers were found guilty of discrimination and violating civil rights of minority department members in Federal Court in two highly publicized trials. These cases and the continuous lack of effort made to heal the tensions or make progressive steps to decrease discrimination within the department also hurts our efforts of increasing diversity.

In closing, there is no quick fix, but with your help we can make many proactive approaches and real steps in ensuring a long-term commitment towards increasing diversity within our County Police Department and other law enforcement agencies.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. I would just like to add, could you make a copy of your suggestions available for the committee?

MR. COLLINS:

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. And I do have a question from Legislator Viloría•Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Thanks for coming down, Andre, good to see you. There is a resolution on today's agenda introduced by Legislator Montano and a number of us have agreed to go on as cosponsors on it because it does address the issue of diversity within the police force and that is the task force that is suggest •• are you familiar with that resolution?

MR. COLLINS:

I'm aware of the first draft, but the SMILE organization would like to be included in helping to draft this proposal, if that is possible.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Okay. Yes, I notice in the draft that I have that it doesn't •• I think it refers to The Guardians, but I don't believe it has SMILE as members of that committee. But it would seem to me that there would be •• that input would be appreciated from that task force and perhaps you could reach out to Legislator Montano and see how you could •• you didn't make direct reference to that particular legislation and what changes you would have wanted made in that legislation.

MR. COLLINS:

Correct.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

So what you're saying is that you don't agree with the legislation as it currently stands?

MR. COLLINS:

There currently hasn't been any dialogue between myself and Legislator

Montano in drafting it. I hope that in the future we may be able to sit down and assist each other in trying to get this done.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. Because I believe his intention was to have it approved out of committee today so that it could go before the full Legislature on Tuesday and, you know, I don't know if anyone else has had •• have you had an opportunity to speak to any other Legislators regarding this bill?

MR. COLLINS:

I have not, no.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

So this is your first time coming before us. Okay. Well, thank you, Andre. And I'll take a closer look at the legislation and see how it fits in to what you've already said. Perhaps as the task force comes together you could reach out to members of that task force and have some input through that task force, because its purpose is to create greater diversity within the Police Department.

MR. COLLINS:

It does seem like that, that is what the purpose is, but if you're familiar with minority law enforcement, when we're talking about The Guardians and the Hispanic Society, they are not very active at this time. So to include somebody who is not active and unsure of the on goings of the day•to•day, I don't think that you're going to receive a proper analysis of the situation. So all we would like to do would be to assist from an active standpoint in a minority community.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Thank you, Andre.

MR. COLLINS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Just one more second, Mr. Collins. I have Legislator Montano here, so he

could address that right now.

LEG. MONTANO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting me join you; I'm not a member of the committee but I appreciate the opportunity. Andre, how are you?

MR. COLLINS:

Very good.

LEG. MONTANO:

You were talking about the minority task force bill that I authored with respect to the minority recruitment issue, correct?

MR. COLLINS:

Not exactly; it was brought up after my statement in reference to your proposal.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. I did speak with Felicia on this bill and when we first submitted it we •• it died last year and we resubmitted it, we now have a representative from SMILE that will be on the task force along with a representative from the Hispanic Society as well as The Guardians. And you know, we think that this is just going to, you know, be another way of making sure that we accomplish the goal which is to increase minority officers within the Police Department. We've seen that the last test did not result in an increase in minority officers, and I know you've been involved in that. If you have any specific questions I'd be more than happy to speak to you either here now or we can discuss it after, but SMILE will have a representative on the task force.

MR. COLLINS:

Okay. And the other thing is that you weren't here for my statement, but pretty much we can't wait until a person is 18 or 19 or 20 years old to address this issue, we need to start at a young age.

LEG. MONTANO:

I agree with you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

What I would like to suggest is that you do get together with Legislator Montano and discuss this fully and then we'll get the information.

MR. COLLINS:

Great.

LEG. MONTANO:

Thank you very much.

MR. COLLINS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay then. If there's no one else, I would like to let Commissioner Williams give his presentation.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Good morning. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to give an overview of what FRES does. Starting off this morning, what I would like to do is introduce the key members of my staff to the board. I have with me today, if you would stand up, Deputy Commissioner Brad Maier; to my right I have Chief Fire Marshal Warren Horst; I have Belinda Pagdanganan with me this morning who is the Director of Emergency Preparedness; Miles Quinn which is our Chief of Operations; I have Chief Tom Kost which is our Executive Director of Fire Academy; and I have Chief Dick Stockenger which is our Assistant Director of the Fire Academy. These are the people who have a lot of input at FRES, work every day with us and I'm sure you'll have some interface with them as the time goes on. Thank you.

What I'm attempting to do this morning is just give you an overview, what we're doing at FRES, what some of our plans are, just what's in place, starting off with our staffing. Just to let you know, FRES has 76 positions including three positions which are 100% grant funded. In addition, we have five other positions that are grant funded anywhere from 25 to 50%.

One of the major things that we do at FRES is actually look for funding. We have an opportunity to gain some of that, we participate in as many as we can.

One of the other avenues we're looking at which is going to help us tremendously is we're working right now with the Metropolitan College of New York with some full-time graduate students to do some work in our EOC; this will afford us the opportunity to do some planning, researching some of the plans we have. These people are graduating, they will be under the control of our Director of Emergency Preparedness and we look forward to continue with that and move ahead with that.

Just to give you a little background about the EMS and the fire emergency •• EMS and fire in Suffolk County. Right now in Suffolk County we have 108 volunteer, 100% volunteer fire departments. We have seven career fire departments, and by career fire departments, as an example, Brookhaven National Lab, McArthur Airport. We also have 25 volunteer ambulance companies in Suffolk County.

In 2005 we had a total of 49,377 fire alarms and we had 121,752 EMS alarms for a grand total of 171,129 total alarms in the County. What this is equal to was actually a 9% increase across the board from 2005. One of the problems that's plaguing the fire service in particular is false alarms. We've •• most businesses and homeowners have gone to the safety of false alarms, of automatic alarm systems in their homes. It continues to be a problem in the County with false alarms. What it does to a volunteer service is that they get called out a couple of times to the same location, same week, same day sometimes, it's demoralizing going back. We're talking with the County Executive's Office or I'm looking to try to put some type of resolutions in that maybe can correct that situation, whether it be a fine situation or just a letter situation, but we need to really address that some day.

One of the interesting things that came up in 2005 with our department, we discovered that 36% of our emergency calls are coming in via cell phone. The use of cell phones, even private homes, people are using them instead of primary phones, but the cell phones are actually becoming a part of our

operation. Also, too, in 2005 we had 21,348 calls for structure fires, that's 11.6 increase in 2004. I don't know why the trend is going that way, but it's been up.

Just to give you a little vibe of what some of the volunteers are doing for our community, the busiest volunteer agencies for 2005, we have Brentwood Legion Ambulance did 6,559 EMS calls last year, just one agency. The Brentwood Fire Department did 1,620 fire calls. I can tell you from personal experience, those two numbers, there are career departments in the United States not doing a part of that, so those two departments in the whole fire service deserve a great hand, but these people are really •• the Brentwood Legion Ambulance, there are some days they do 30 alarms in one day. Last year in 2005, unfortunately the number of deaths due to fires was 18.

At FRES we have a dispatch center. We dispatch not for the whole County, there are what we call public answering services points. We dispatch for 62 fire departments and 72 EMS agencies, those are the departments that FRES actually takes from the start of the alarm to the end of the alarm. Just an explanation of that for some of the members who •• what happens is some departments we get the alarm at FRES, it goes through the 911 system and we'll hand it off to the local fire department or EMS agency which will activate themselves and carry the alarm for themselves. Other ones we activate for them and then they take over the alarm from there, so it's a little bit different with each one of the departments, it's their local decision on how they want to run it.

The next subject I'd like to talk about is volunteerism, recruitment and retention. In Suffolk County we have a vital need for volunteers. A program was instituted a number of years ago we call the SERVE Program, it's the Suffolk County Educational Program for Recruitment in the Volunteer Emergency Service. What this program does is actually offer a college education, we'll pay for •• the County pays to a Suffolk County Community College, the participant in it agrees to have five years of service with the local volunteer agency, his marks are monitored, we get report cards back and what happens, right now we have •• to date we have 24 volunteers as part of this program. It's only for new members coming in, not existing members. It is well received. We're trying to push that program, I really

think that the program has not really been pushed enough, I think people need to do it. We're getting it out, the word out, we're pushing it very hard.

The other volunteerism group that we have concerns our citizens, it's called the Citizen Corps Council. It was formed right after •• by the Federal Government right after 9/11. These teams are made up of community people who want to volunteer their time in time of emergency. They come in, they take a ten week program, we've been successful with that. To date we have 313 members, we recruited 313 members and it trained eight CERT volunteers. We have three classes going in right now, we're working with Legislator Horsley on some more; when he was with the Town of Babylon, he actually helped us much. We have a group in the Town of Babylon of veterans which is a great group to have, they're stable people, they're used to volunteering. We have a CERT group right now in the Town of Babylon made up of nothing but veterans from the American Legion or VFW Hall. We're embarking on another campaign specific to the veterans because we really feel that, number one, they're stable in their community, they want to help out, they're used to working together and I thank Legislator Horsley for the help in the past and I know we're working together on this again.

We had an overwhelming response after the hurricanes of last year, particularly Katrina. What's happening right now, to try to keep up with the classes we're actually going to be conducting some classes in March to train the trainer. We're taking some of our CERT members and actually going to certify them as instructors. What's a better way, if we're going to go to a veterans group, to have another veteran come in and train them; it does work good, they have empathy towards each other, they get along very well.

The next area I would like to talk about is grants. FRES receives Federal and State grants in the areas of Homeland Security, Urban Area Initiatives and Emergency Management. The grant money received by FRES in 2005/2006 was a Homeland Security Grant of 1.25 million and an Urban Area Security Initiative Program of two million. The money we receive, we share that grant money with the Suffolk County PD, the Health Department, Sheriff's Office and Public Works.

We also have a grant where we involve the Juvenile Firesetters Intervention Program through a grant. We're also working right now with the local towns and villages on a Multi-Hazard Predisaster Mitigation Grant which came through directly from FEMA for a little over a million dollars. The exact amount was 1,117,904; of this total, one million, a little over one million will be distributed to the participating towns and villages.

The FRES budget for 2006 is \$8.7 million. Looking at last year we had a high overtime cost due to implementing our computer dispatch system. In October of 2005 we've hired seven new dispatchers which is contributing to a decrease over a time period of 25% from 2004. As these people come on line, they go through a six month training program while overtime will be increased, but will never we always man our radio room to the fullest extent no matter what day it is, holidays and all.

On the capital projects at the Suffolk County Fire Academy, we're working with the Vocational Education Board, VEP. Right now participating this year, we're going to be starting our new pump facility, storage facility and we're slated to be started at the end of this year into 2007. Just this past year in 2005 we brought in a new training building, we call it a class A building, what it is is a residential home building. This new building is equipped with one of the most advanced in the County, it's equipped with heat sensing devices to protect the firefighters. It also we can also change the layout of the building. What was happening in the past, the fire fighters were going to the training center, they knew in the smoke where the walls were, how it was laid out, this new building we actually can go in and we can change the rooms around. This particular building replaced the training building that was built in 1954 and that came on line this year.

One of the other advantages we had this year through a Federal grant in bought County money, we brought on our Computer Aided Dispatch System. This is a dispatch system where before there were notes handwritten, what this has done, everything is done by computer now. We all know in response times, the quicker we can get there, this computer system has knocked off almost one minute in our response times in getting the alarm out, which is fantastic.

The other thing we're looking into right now, we're looking at the County is we're looking at a backup radio communication center and emergency operations center. We're working with the Space Management Committee right now, we're looking to use the old 6th Precinct basement as a backup radio communication center in the OC. We've gone through the first round of talks with the Space Management, I feel we're sitting well with this. After it's fully assigned to us, then we'll be looking for grant money, any money we can get to buy the equipment to get this up and running.

The other thing that just came up this particular year was last year we had the data collection resolution that was passed. We have been working with EMS, the Health Department and all the fire departments about how we're going to be collecting this data. We should be receiving this data starting the beginning of February. It's a volunteer program. There are still some problems getting the data in to us, we're going to be taking it manually and by fax, Internet or what we call CAD•to•CAD from the other public answering services. We're working with some of the fire departments, they do have questions but this will be the first month we're collecting it.

Another part of our FRES Department is the Fire Marshal's Office. The Fire Marshal's Office is charged with doing school inspections. They do it for 35 public school districts, 10 private schools and we actually inspect 525 school buildings in a 45 day period. The number of investigations last year by the Fire Marshal's Office was 33 fire investigations, 420 false alarm investigations; that goes back to when we were talking about the automatic alarms. The Fire Marshalls even in our own County buildings, we inspect those, we have to go back and do an investigation on them.

Our Fire Marshals also have a K•9 dog which is our accelerant detection dog. The current dog we have right now is reaching •• is nine years old. One of the requirements of the ATF and all is to replace the dog after ten years because of the scent, going to court. This year one of our marshals will be leaving in another couple of weeks to go on. We're actually adding a second dog this year, so for 2006 we will have two dogs, anticipating a retirement next year of the other dog, this way the dogs can work together; we'll probably have a party for him. But it's good to know that this is 100%

funded through ATF, the cost of this dog, all the training. Our marshal goes away for

Six weeks and when he comes back he'll be coming back with the new dog.

Under public education, our Juvenile Firesetters Intervention Program manages the program which provides education and counseling to contracted youths •• contracted counselors for youths that have been identified with fire setting tendencies. When we hear from the arson squad, we work closely with the Suffolk County PD on this, if they have a problem with somebody setting a fire, especially a juvenile, we have counselors that sit down to work with these youths. The program was established three years ago under a grant from New York State Criminal Justice. Our Fire Marshals also provide public education to community residents, the John J. Foley Nursing Home, medical and health care providers, County employees, police recruits. We conduct fire drills for County agencies and fire warden training.

Last year at our fire academy it was one of the highest levels we ever had, we actually put through 43,473 firefighters or students through the academy last year.

The next theory I would like to talk about is interoperability and redundancy of communications. One of the biggest things that came out of the events of 9/11 was communications, people talking to each other. FRES has taken progressive approach orders through grant fund money, from County money. What we've been able to do is to make sure that all fire service, all EMS service, all intercompany, all the departments can talk to each other. Just some of the areas that we've done in the last couple of years, in this last year is we've given out 800 Megahertz radios to any every volunteer fire service and every EMS agency in the County; everyone can talk to each other no matter where they're located.

We also will be distributing those same radios to all town •• all ten town emergency operation centers. That if the lines go down, the phone lines go down, anything goes down, we can still talk to each other for our own emergency operation center. We've also ordered •• we've also provided 800 radios to all the emergency operation centers of the local hospitals, all

hospital radios will be •• all hospitals will be having 800 radios.

Realizing the distance to Fisher's Island, there's always been a communications problem with Fisher's Island. We installed an antenna and a base center at Fisher's Island and we're also in the process of doing that with Plum Island right now, we make sure we have communication with our two distant Islands out east.

We're planning on distributing 800 radios to any ferry service in Suffolk County for the same reason, if the communications go down we can have communication with every one of the ferry services who are part of our evacuation routes, especially for the Fire Islands. We're also going to be providing an 800 radio to all 79 school districts. At their administrative office they will have •• I want to let you know, the money is •• these are not wishes, we have this hard, fast money and these radios are coming in, we're handing them out. We've also conducted meetings with local fire districts and ambulance companies to discuss the feasibility of acting as a temporary backup radio communication to FRES on a short-term basis until we get that backup radio room at the 6th Precinct up and running. We've also issued those same radios, in the County we have 72 Fire Coordinators receive those radios; those Fire Coordinators are made up of people appointed by the County and also by the local townships.

We have also issued a radio to Nassau County University Medical Center. What's happening with the closing down of Brunswick, a lot of Suffolk County Departments are going into Nassau County, so they're on and we can talk to them also on the same thing.

One of the other things that came up during 9/11 was the phone situation. We're in the process right now, we call them GETS cards, they're coming from the government, emergency technology services. We're actually issuing them out to a lot of County agencies where it will give us priority wireless service during a time of emergency. We would call in •• we would get priority service on our lines; that's going to be going out to a lot of County agencies, the County Executive's Office.

We're also in the process, we have 32 satellite phones that are coming in

right now, they were purchased through County •• through grant funds. They'll be going to eight County agencies and one to each Town Emergency Operation Center. Currently we have a 40 foot command van which was purchased in 1903 •• 2003 with a Federal Grant which provides communications, command and control and law enforcement services. What this van let's us do is call interoperability. Again, going back to 9/11 which we've heard so much about where the Police Department couldn't talk with the fire department and the fire department had units coming in, this particular device allows us to take every single fire department, Police Department, we can put it into our computer, they can talk on their normal frequency and they can talk to anybody else on their frequency, you would never notice a difference that we're not on the same frequency.

In addition, we have just through a Federal grant ordered a much smaller scale command van which is going to be given to us on a more quicker response. It has two seats, we would be making an offer to a lot of the towns for local drills.

Our Emergency Management Office. The County takes an all•hazard approach, a mitigation preparation in recovery for natural man•made disasters. As per the Federal guidelines, all our planning, all the preparedness is followed under the National Incident Management System, NIMS. The All•Hazard Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan which we forwarded out to all of you at the beginning of the year, the plan includes the following specific disaster response plans. We have a plan for hurricane/coastal storm plan, a bioterrorism plan, heat storm plan, joint emergency evacuation plan for medical special needs, we have a joint emergency evacuation plan for mental needs, and the disaster preparedness for towns.

One of the things I need to over emphasize is the key to us in Suffolk County, and we do have a good working relationship, is our local forms of government, our towns, our villages. Like at any incident, any type of evacuation, anything that's going to start with those people, we include them in all planning, we ask for their advice, we constantly meet with them, we talk with them, they're really important to our planning. Besides that, we continue to work with our counterparts in Nassau County, New York City,

Westchester, any other nearby regions, FEMA, New York State DOT and New York State Emergency Management, those are key people that we have to work with, we have a very good working relationship.

The American Red Cross as far as sheltering, true Federal guidelines, the American Red Cross is responsible for sheltering Across the country. What they have done, they have identified in Suffolk County 140 evacuation shelters in the County. During any given event, not all shelters would be open, it would pertain to the event. If any one of them were in the flooding area, we would not do that, we would not open them. We work in conjunction with them very closely, they work very closely with the school districts in getting their agreement signed, but they are charged with that.

Also, we're having discussions right now with the Army Corps of Engineers to look for a funding source to complete the transportation study to provide specific information on evacuation zones and evacuation routes. We are working very closely, again, with the towns of villages on that particular study.

On a County level, we continue to work closely with all the County agencies and the day•to•day operation. We have a really close relationship with all the County agencies, especially Suffolk County Police Department. We work together very, very well, we train together, we share information. I know myself and the Commissioner of Police, we're always a phone call away. With all the other Commissioners in the County, Suffolk County PD and FRES work very well together.

Right now we coordinate Homeland Security efforts with public safety agencies. We also work with the New York State police, MTA Police, Federal Protection agency, Park Police and various other law enforcement agencies and localities. Right now to continue their close relationship with towns and villages, we'll be holding monthly meetings with our town managers of the ten towns. The purpose of these meetings is that we're not an island to ourselves, if you want to say it like that, we need the input from them. What we've done in the past, we've given copies of our plans, they're in the process of giving our plans. We want to make sure that we don't have

anything contradictory, we don't work against each other. And again, I think as a unified force, we're a stronger force across the County.

One of the things that we're working with is they're called general population shelters. These ones are run by the American Red Cross and BOCES to get shelter agreements signed. New York State Emergency Management is running Regional Shelter Task Force meetings. They used to conduct these meetings before, what happened last year down south, they realized they have to continue conducting these meetings.

We're also looking at what we call First Responders Shelters. One of the things that was loud and clear in many, many disasters across the country is you have your police officers, you have your firefighters, your EMS people, your first responders, your people from DPW, people from our office; you're requiring them to come to help with the situation. One of the problems that was realized loud and clear is what do they do with their families. If you're going to turn around and ask someone to work a 12 hour shift or hold them for 24 hours in the fire house, they have to be reassured that their families are safe otherwise you're going to have a tough time having them come.

What we're doing now, we're putting together specific shelters for the first responders. We're looking at, for instance, the Federal Courthouse in Central Islip. We're dealing with Chief Mark White from the Suffolk County PD to look at the Police Department Police Academy for police officer families; this will give a level to those two organizations of where their families are. We're also dealing with the local fire departments and EMS agencies to see will they be sheltering their own people at their own fire houses, and that gives a level of comfort; it's been loud and clear across, I can't say that enough.

One of the other things that came up specifically to the past summer storms, prior to this the American Red Cross does not take pets into their shelters; they do it for a variety of reasons, liability, allergies. Back last September in meetings with the County Executive and the SPCA, Suffolk County is now opening and looking to open pet-friendly shelters. Right now we've identified one County building, the purpose of this would be people who are let known, if they want to take their pet, where to bring them. This

will be a multi•purpose •• people, residents shelter and pets. The ASPCA is working on an area to separate them. People will know if you come to this shelter, this particular shelter, that if you have a phobia for animals, allergies, don't come to this particular shelter. We plan on opening at least three to four of those shelters. I don't think it ever can be documented that people stayed home during Katrina because of their animals, but I guess we never will know, but I think that's one of the things that we're looking at right now.

Evacuation plans. Again, working with our local levels of government which we're mandated •• and those are, in my opinion, some of the most important people in this whole plan •• we're reviewing and updating our current County and town evacuation plans. We're using the results of a Hurricane Evacuation Study that was conducted by FEMA and the US Army Corps of Engineers to identify evacuation zones. We're researching the evacuation plans and lessons learned from recent hurricanes in the south.

Under resource management, we were able to •• under a Federal grant, we now have a Resource Management Officer in Suffolk County, part of our Office of Emergency Management; it's a 100% funded position for the next two years. One of the things that we discovered, we never had an inventory of what we have in the County, what Nassau County has, what New York City has in specialized equipment. What this person's charge would be is actually making up an inventory that we're at any type of scene and we need something similar from a dump truck to any type of specialized equipment from the Police Department, we know where it is, who has it and how we can get it.

In 2005, just to let you know some of the exercises that FRES has participated in. We had a full•scale biological exercise participate this past December, we attended four tabletops, numerous tabletop drills across the County, Nassau County, we continue to drill with New York City and mainly getting a relationship with Nassau County because we're so close to each other.

We also attended the Long Island McArthur Airport Drill. Suffolk County PD Terrorist Drill, a Plum Island Drill at the Suffolk County Police Academy. For

2006 what our plans are, at least the first part of the year, us along with Nassau County, KeySpan/LIPA, the National Weather Service, we're going to be conducting a full-scale hurricane drill on June 6th of this year, we will be asking for participation from the public. Also, prior to that we conduct a two-day conference on planning Long Island Emergency Management where we get over 400 attendees. FRES also participates in a number of committees, Terrorism Task Force Committee, Fire Island Law Enforcement Committee.

I just want to go to closing now. Some of the issue that we're focusing on are improving efficiency and operations. This year we're taking a more protective approach in our community outreach and public information efforts. We brought on a Public Information Officer which we never had before at FRES, we're looking to get more information out to the public.

One of the important things that was clearly defined to us right away, FRES has a website. Looking at it, we've changed it and one of the things we discovered about it, most people don't especially the flooding we had last fall was that people were looking to go for help and they were looking for their Emergency Management Office, that was list under Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services; there was a lot of confusion, they didn't know where to go. That's going to be changed, that's being changed almost as we speak, we're rewriting that. They're going to go on our website and see Emergency Management Office and know how to get to that. I know a lot of the Legislators got phone calls on that, there was a lot of confusion, we're straightening it out right now.

We're also working with our Computer-Aided Dispatch System to make our forms on-line, we're putting them on-line, we're putting as many of our forms we can put on-line. We also have a Fire Extinguisher Servicing License application we're going to be having on-line. The EMS response data collection, we want to get that all on-line and make it easier for the volunteer service.

Right now we're looking into putting we're piling the mobile data technology. The second part talk, the Computer-Aided Dispatch System which will help the firefighters and the EMS people is actually similar to the

Police cars, we're going to have those mobile data computers right in the car where the times are collected. We're working with a third party on that right now.

We're also working with the Suffolk County PD on a GIS System. FRES will become the primary custodian of it, of the file and we're working very closely with them. One of the biggest things we're going to achieve out of this, at least on the fire and EMS agency, is that we get this GSI system up and running, when it comes time to dispatch our emergency forces, we will be able to tell which is the closest unit to the scene, not only in the firehouse but on the road. If we have an ambulance returning from Brookhaven Memorial Hospital and there's an accident on a certain road and we know that they're down the block, we're going to •• our aim would be to activate that with the closest ambulance and same thing with the fire.

I thank you for your time. I'm prepared to answer any questions.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I thank you. You said between 20 and 30 minutes and I see 29 minutes, so I thank you very much.

At this time I would like to invite a representative from Suffolk County Executive's Office, because we do have some questions directed towards the helicopters and the cell tower situation on the north shore.

Okay, I would invite any questions to our presenters.
Legislator Romaine.

MR. ROMAINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity, although I'm not a member of the committee so I'll keep it very brief.

I read 1124, the resolution in question which we're going to have one additional helicopter, but it did address the training issue. Could someone tell me, are we trading in both MD•902 helicopters or just one of them, or what's the story on the trade•in situation?

MR. ZWIRN:

We're trading in one helicopter.

MR. ROMAINE:

Okay. Now, my understanding is that the County Executive in December, 2004, labeled both helicopters as lemons. It's also my understanding that both MD•902's have significant problems, especially with the continued failure of the rotor hubs. The downtime is greatly exceeding any expectation of normal scheduled maintenance and many in the EMS community, including Drew Silverman who spoke here earlier, have concerns that the other MD•902 is not capable of safe and continuous flight. So what is our plans with the remaining MD•902 that we're not trading in?

MR. ZWIRN:

First we're going to get one •• the last time we did this, I think it was Legislator Towle who was the sponsor of the resolution, the County ran out and bought two MD helicopters; they turned out to be lemons. The County Executive prudently would like to purchase one helicopter at a time to make sure that we don't wind up in the same situation, that we can live with this new helicopter.

The plan is to have four helicopters in the fleet. There's been some misinformation that has been garnered out there. There would be four helicopters, under the Gaffney Administration there were three helicopters, and some of the Legislators came on this board originally understanding there was one helicopter. The plan is in the Capital Budget there is a hangar, a modular being built out at Gabreski Airport which will house two helicopters, one A•Star, one Medevac helicopter. There will be one A•Star and one Medevac helicopter that will be stationed at Islip McArthur Airport to cover the County on a 24/7 basis. There will be four helicopters, a new home for the helicopter. In past capital budgets, only a portion of the money had ever been allocated or appropriated to build approximately about half a hangar, now we have the money in there to purchase and build a helicopter hangar that will hold two helicopters and that is the plan.

So Suffolk County will now have four helicopters and the County Executive negotiated a deal with Nassau County to have a backup plan in the event

that all four helicopters should come down at one time and not be flying, that we have Nassau County's helicopter fleet to back us up as well.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I just wanted to add that under investigation, I found out that the time of maintenance has gone down from 300 hours to 50 hours to check the rotors and the hubs, and that the parts are much more available now for that; am I correct in that?

MR. ZWIRN:

That's correct. There was a time when the manufacturer was in dire financial shape, they have sold this company off and the parts are now more readily available.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

My understanding also is that the Police Department pilots have said that they feel comfortable with this plan.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, it is a public safety issue, the County Executive would move with the Legislature post haste to put another helicopter in service. We will have four helicopters. If it is a public safety issue and that other MD helicopter is not working properly, then we will purchase a fourth helicopter, the money was put in the capital budget to do that. But we thought the prudent thing, at least the County Executive thought the prudent thing was to work with one helicopter at a time to make sure we don't wind up in the same situation that we wound up presently.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you. Legislator Schneiderman.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Are you done, Ed?

LEG. ROMAINE:

No, I had one last issue, question.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, Okay.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let the Legislator finish then.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. ROMAINE:

This is my question; we have an A•Star helicopter that we purchased in 2000, we have an A•Star helicopter that we purchased in 2005, none of these A•Stars are equipped per se for Medevac evacuation. If there's a Medevac evacuation that the A•Star has to occur, the co•pilot has to get out and someone has to drive him back to the base and his seat has to be removed so that a patient can be brought in and there's not enough room for the doctor to travel with the patient and the doctor actually has to get in a car and be driven to the hospital because the A•Star is not specifically and primarily a Medevac helicopter. The 902, the MD•902 is a Medevac helicopter, but there has been tremendous maintenance problems with that and it continues to be. And it was recommended by the Budget Review Office, it was recommended by the Police Department in their Capital Budget and it was recommended by the FRES Commission that ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator, there is a question coming?

MR. ROMAINE:

Right, that the two helicopters be purchased and that we trade•in the two MD•902's while we still can, the lemons that County Executive Levy charged that they were back in December of 2004. What changed his mind? And the second part of that question is my concern is since the A•Stars are not primarily Medevac helicopters and since the MD•902's have had significant mechanical problems, and even the County Executive admitted that they're a lemon, when we buy this new helicopter essentially we'll have one good •• hopefully good •• helicopter that will operate. My concern is about coverage on the east end when we have a lot of evacuations, just from reading my

local newspapers that I can see on a weekly basis, how is that going to effect coverage on the east end?

MR. ZWIRN:

Coverage on the east end will be covered 24/7; I think I've gone into as much detail as I can, I don't know what else I can tell you. The reason we're not buying two at once is because the last time we bought two at once, they were both lemons, we don't want to wind up in the same situation, we're trying to be more prudent. Why you purchased A•Stars, perhaps you were on the Legislature at that time and can explain why you purchased the A•Stars as opposed to the Medevacs.

MR. ROMAINE:

I left ••

MR. ZWIRN:

The A•Star is used for a different purpose, it can be used for a Medevac evacuation in an emergency situation, it's not what optimally would like to have, but it's a pursuit helicopter and that's primarily what it's for. There would be one of each stationed at both places in the County. Now, you have to understand, if one helicopter is down, it doesn't mean that the helicopters at McArthur can't go out to the east end or vice versa, the helicopters from Gabreski can cover the western part of Suffolk County; once they're up in the air, there's not a lot of traffic and they can move very quickly. But they will be stationed out there at Gabreski, closer to the east end on the north and south fork, especially in the summer time.

Only one other person in this room lives further east than I do and that's Legislator Schneiderman who is my Legislature •• Legislator, and I am anecdotally very interested in what goes on out on the east end personally. The County Executive has made a commitment to increase the fleet with the Legislature's cooperation and with their approval. The Legislature has determined that there should be four helicopters instead of three, the County Executive concurs and he thinks he's going about purchasing these new helicopters in a very prudent and methodical way.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you very much. Legislator Schneiderman.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let me start on the subject of the Medevac helicopter and then I have some other questions on some other topics. It's hard for me to say right now that there are four even under this current plan because one, that's been characterized as a lemon, we've looked at the maintenance records, we could easily say it's down 50% of the time, so at best under this plan it would be three and a half helicopters. My first question has to do with where the one new one under the County Executive's plan, the fully •functioning Medevac helicopter that's not a lemon; is that the one that's going to Gabreski or is it the MD•902?

MR. ZWIRN:

That's the plan is to put that one out there.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Now, we don't have the hangar yet, so when •• no construction has started on the hangar, I was out at the airport yesterday. When is that proposed to be built?

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, Public Works is the next committee, you can ask Commissioner Bartha. But My understanding is it will be this year, it will either be commenced in the spring or the early part of the summer; it's a modular unit so it should go up quickly.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

So In the meantime, because the helicopter is supposed to happen pretty quickly, is that going to be at McArthur for now and then shifted when the hangar is done or is going to go into the hangar that we're renting?

MR. ZWIRN:

We don't go into the hangar that we're renting. And most of the time the helicopters can be outside except for the maintenance, I mean, they're usually up in the air, you know, as much as they can be.

But I don't think whether the hangar is constructed at the same •• it's not going to hold up the purchase of the helicopter.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. You said we would do one at a time rather than buying two brand new helicopters to replace the two clunkers. Do you have a sense of timing for the second brand new one?

MR. ZWIRN:

I think they'll wait to see how this one operates and I think when the reviews come in then together the County Executive and the Legislature will make that determination.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

How did we make a determination even that four helicopters is the right number? Commissioner Williams spoke earlier about the percentage increase in ambulance calls. It's my sense that the need for the Medevac helicopter continues to grow. Right now I believe under this new scenario we'll have about three and a half, three reliable and one unreliable helicopter. It seems to me clearly we can use four fully functioning helicopters. I'm not sure that even that's enough, so maybe you or Commissioner Williams can talk about how we determined the correct level; I don't want to say staffing level, but really fleet size level for the Medevac fleet.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, I don't know how many helicopters the Legislature thinks are necessary. You can have one for each town, I suppose, you could have ten helicopters.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

No, that's not really the point.

MR. ZWIRN:

I'm just saying, I don't know if there's a magic number but I think that ••

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

No, the point is we need to respond in an emergency. And if there are times when all four are committed and in the field and we're not able to respond to additional calls ••

MR. ZWIRN:

We are, we have Nassau County in an agreement to back us up as well.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Maybe Commissioner Williams can answer that, back it up with some data.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I don't have a formula for you on that. All I can say is that the increase that we have, 9% is across the board for all EMS calls. The vast majority of EMS calls are still transported by ambulance, I don't know where there's a break, we could probably find out from EMS how many of them are Medevac. But on any given day that 9% increase is more towards ambulance calls transported by ambulances.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Have there been times when we have not been able to respond with a Medevac helicopter when needed because of the inadequacy of the fleet size?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I would not •• I don't have that information readily at my hands.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Could you provide us with that information?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I would have to go back to the Suffolk County PD, because our request would go to Suffolk County PD for the Medevac helicopter and they would come back to us and say if it's available, not available; but I could get that information for you.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yeah, I would like to see that.

If I could move for a moment to a bill we passed toward the end of the last •
• end of last year to provide electronic equipment to our ambulances in terms of for the PCR reporting; what is the status of that? I thought we put a million dollars in place so that we could provide that kind of equipment so we could have a uniform data collection and an expedient data collection.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

That's a committee that's being run by the EMS Health Department. I do have a representative on that committee that reports back to me, my understanding is they're going through the process now of putting an RFP out to look for which vendor they want to go for. They are working towards that, but that's more of a health issue, it's being run by them. My own reports back from my own staff member who attends it, they are looking at a vendor and what they want to accomplish.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. My last question has to do with evacuation planning that you spoke of earlier. As a representative of the east end, my particular concern has to do with the safety of the community on the east end, particularly the south fork. We have Plum Island which some would say might be a terrorist target, we have Millstone II which could lead to a radiological type of emergency. It's my understanding that the County's emergency planning has pretty much given up on evacuating the east end and is dealing only with sheltering individuals at high land; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Well, they say at the County Emergency Management gave up on evacuating, I don't think that's a correct statement.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

So are you working on an evacuation plan? If the situation •• if a situation occurred, a category four, a category five hurricane, a biological or radiological emergency where we had to get people off the east end, I imagine such a plan would look at all the rail services, an inventory of all public boats and ferries, Coast Guard facility, places with deep water ports

where you can actually transport the public out of there; have you done any type of planning that would provide kind of a best case? Even though it may have lots of faults, at least an attempt to come up with a plan to move people from the east end of Long Island if we had to.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

What we're doing now, like a mentioned during my report, we're conducting some meetings specific to the east end with some of the emergency management people out there, we're looking at this specific problem. One of the things that came up, it wasn't Suffolk County Emergency Management saying that the east end was very difficult to evacuate given the road conditions and everything out there. That study was done by the Army Corps of Engineers a number of years ago when we were looking at Shoreham, that was one of the reasons why Shoreham never opened because they adamantly •• and this is the Army Corps of Engineers who made this statement, they could never adequately evacuate everybody in a quick period of time; that doesn't mean that we're not looking to do the planning on it.

The plan right now, all our plans, even talking to local emergency managers, we would bring people west. We also realize the uniqueness to that; that's the reason why in the last couple of months we were convening these committees specific to evacuation, sheltering. We have broken it down to like ten different groups to see what we can do to make it better, what physically can we do. We can't change the location, but we're bringing in the Army Corps of Engineers, we've spoken to them, they're looking for funding right now specific to look at to address the issue of evacuation and the road systems.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. I would just ask you to expand your emergency planning to look at, besides the road systems, other ways of evacuating people, including water resources and air resources.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Commissioner, thank you very much for your report. I wanted to, first of all, compliment you on your outreach program, I think you're doing a great job on it. I go to the Chief meetings, at least in the Town of Babylon, I see you there, I see Brad there and it does make a big difference. They've got a connection and a ready access to you guys on a routine basis and I do appreciate that.

Going back to the CERT Program, as you know •• and thank you for your comments before •• I have a strong feel for it. You talked about your hurricane preparedness program for June that you're going to have a full •scale preparedness program; are you going to bring out the CERT peoples there? These guys I think need to have something to do; they've gone to the training and they're just sitting there waiting to get involved. I would love to see that the whole CERT Program has some sort of input and some sort of involvement in that hurricane preparedness.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Absolutely. One of the things we keep on looking at, because we don't want to train people and don't use them, they get complacent.

LEG. HORSLEY:

They do.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

We're looking at every avenue we can do right now, during our three•day biological drill we brought them in. Every time we activate our EOC, whether it be a snow storm or a flooding condition, we invite someone to come in just to show them that we appreciate what they're doing, they take great pride in wearing their vests and we don't want them to get complacent. So we're always constantly looking at •• as a matter of fact, I think there's a half of a marathon or a marathon coming up in the month of March up in the Stony Brook area I believe.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Selden.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Selden; we invited CERT members to come in and help, you know, whether they would be handing out water, whether they would be by a first-aid station, whatever happens, just to keep them feeling that we need them, keep them part of it.

LEG. HORSLEY:

That's great. Just for the other Legislators' information, we are very shortly going to be reaching out throughout Suffolk County to see if we can bring in our veterans community to join the CERT programs. I think it's a good idea and I applaud both your offices as well as Commissioner Ronayne.

Let me ask you, and as well as the County Executive, of course. The recent influx and talk about the increase of Homeland Security monies are going to be coming to New York and those high concern areas; how does that money funnel through to your offices, to the Police, how does that work? Just for my own edification, I'm not sure I know.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

The way it comes to like when it was in the paper is that we belong to a group of New York City, Nassau County, Westchester and Suffolk County, it comes in as a group to the Urban Area Working Group. What's happening, an X amount of money comes in to us funneled through that location. One of the things that's a little bit different this year than past years, the Federal government came out and was handing out Federal Homeland Security funds across the country. They're making it a little more direct specific today.

We're attending a meeting two days from now, some staff members, to first start talking about what issues we have. The one thing they put in to the mix this year is we're all competing for the funds. The areas that were identified now have to compete against each other for the amount of funding. Also, as far as I've been told, what they also did is they decreased the total amount of money that's available for the funding. We could quite

conceivably wind up with more money in Suffolk County here because of our close relationship to New York City in a threat, but there's less money to dole out. So each one of the regions are actually going to be coming up with a program to compete what they're going to do with the money, how they're going to spend it, what accomplishments they want to do and that's going to be compared with all the other regions that were okayed in this last batch.

So we could wind up with the same, we could wind up with less, but basically all the Homeland Security money comes in to this Urban Area Work Group which is basically New York City is almost like the lead agency on and it filters down to us, each County gets a certain amount of money. Then when we get the money, we identify how much money we're going to get, we sit down with Suffolk County PD, the Health Department and see what areas we're going to spend the money on and then we divide up our share.

LEG. HORSLEY:

And do we need to lobby for those dollars, is that something that we should be proactive in and say, "Hey, come on, New York City, the city can't have it all." Where should we be as a County?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

I don't know •• I honestly, after this meeting that the people are attending two days from now, maybe we will have a better avenue on it. I don't know if there's anything we can do other than write a good program, a good ••

LEG. HORSLEY:

You know, knock on the door to Senator Clinton, "Come on, please, we need some in Suffolk," you know, that type of thing.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Yeah. I couldn't give you an answer, I don't know if, you know, if they're going to even have anything to say about it. The best thing we can do as a County is work real closely with our other counties we work with and New York City, that the program we presented them is the best we can get and hope it stands out from everybody else and we get the most amount of money we can get.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Does the County Executive's have any position on our outreach on this issue.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, we work with our elected representatives in Washington to try to get our fair share. I know we recently received I think radiation detectors for the Police Department that came out of Homeland Security funds, but a lot of our work goes through FRES and with the Police Department making applications for grants that are available.

LEG. HORSLEY:

I just have this feeling that there's going to be a gold rush and I just want to make sure that we're there at the door for whatever there is to be had.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, I know New York City has been fighting for what they think is their fair share ••

LEG. HORSLEY:

Absolutely.

MR. ZWIRN:

•• and they've been a target. Many of our Suffolk residents, you know, actually work in New York City so they're at risk there as well, so we want to make sure that the region is covered and as safe as possible as well.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Plus just to let you •• one more one thing that Warren had mentioned to you. Deputy Chief White of the Suffolk County Police Department is their Homeland Security, he's the area rep for our anti-terrorism group and he does an awful lot of lobbying for us. We work with them very closely but he's also a friend to everybody in the County when it comes to this, he will be helping to get us some more funding on this.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay, thank you. You'll keep us informed?

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Yes, sir.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Viloría•Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

No.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, then Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I'm starving, I'm not going to ask any questions.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

My question is quick, I'm hungry, too. To Ben, just quickly on the Nassau intermunicipal agreement on the copters. I guess it's a two•way agreement where we would provide the same coverage to them. How many copters do they have; I believe two or three?

MR. ZWIRN:

I think they have four.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

They have four? And they're all in good shape.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, I hope so.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I just want to make sure that they understand that we're going to be in a transition period with our vessels and that they're under the understanding that there may be a time there when we don't have the ability to do coverage for them while we're •• we'll be substantially low, most likely, when it comes to service and replacement and training and everything that's required as it relates to bringing a new helicopter on•line. So I'm sure •• are they aware of that and that's all been discussed?

MR. ZWIRN:

Your point is well taken. And I believe Chief Moore can probably speak to it, but I think that they're in constant contact with Nassau County with respect to other issues, including the helicopter issue. So they know that when we need their assistance and when we're going to be needing their assistance, we let them know in advance.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

And I know it relates more so to the east end because I think they would be the first to be excluded if we're into some •• we're bound to this intermunicipal agreement with Nassau, so I just want to make sure we're all on the same page, both the counties. And I applaud the agreement and I know you're working on a lot more things as it relates to sharing and co sharing. Anyway, thank you.

MR. ZWIRN:

Thank you. And Let me just say, while I have just one second, I want to thank Legislator Caracappa for his time as Presiding Officer. When I was the County Executive's representative the last two years, he's always been very gracious, very civil and very deferential to the County Exec's office and I just got an opportunity now to see him and thank him because I didn't do it last year. Thank you.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Then I'd like move on to the tabled resolutions.

Tabled Resolutions

IR 1025•06 • A Local Law to prohibit all registered sex offenders from residing near schools, day care centers and playgrounds (Cooper).

I would like to get a motion.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Motion to approve.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I'll second it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Motion by Legislator Viloría•Fisher and second by Legislator Caracappa. IR 1048 ••

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Call the vote.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, I'm sorry, yes. Let's have a call; all approved? All opposed? Any abstentions? Okay, ***it is approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).***

IR 1048•06 • A Local Law strengthening the procedures and remedies of the Suffolk County Human Rights Commission (Mystal).

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I believe this has to be tabled, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

That's right, that's being tabled by a request of the •• motion to table.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to table.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to table by Legislator Schneiderman and a second by Legislator Horsley. Yes?

LEG. MONTANO:

If I may, I would like to ask a question on this. I'm not a member of the committee but I'll be very brief. Ben, do you know when the County Executive's bill •• because I understand that there is a bill coming from the County Executive. I spoke with the County Attorney months ago and, you know, we were holding off, Legislator Mystal and myself •• yeah, maybe the County Attorney can answer. When is the bill that was being worked on by the County Attorney's Office going to be ready? I know it's been several months and we're still waiting. And it was supposed to be a bi•county bill with Nassau?

MS. BIZZARRO:

Chairman Eddington?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure, thank you.

MS. BIZZARRO:

Yes, Legislator Montano, I spoke to the County Attorney this morning, she just received her final, hopefully final comments from ERACE Racism on Friday; they were incorrect and they had to send us over new ones. We're working, you know, working in bits and pieces on it but it's a very lengthy bill, we're trying to get it as close to Nassau's bill as possible, we're trying to have it comply with the Fair Housing Act as best we can. So it's a very •• you know, it's a 24 page document at this point and, as I said, the County Attorney is going through it basically line by line. They should have

something •• she should have something very soon, you know, I would say three weeks, that's what I'm anticipating.

LEG. MONTANO:

So it will not be introduced on Tuesday.

MS. BIZZARRO:

It will not, no.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay, one last question. You say that you're trying to make it similar to Nassau; does that mean that the bill you are working on is dissimilar from the one that Nassau is presenting? Because I thought it was going to be one bill, the same bill for both counties.

MS. BIZZARRO:

I don't believe that they're exactly the same.

LEG. MONTANO:

They're not the same.

MS. BIZZARRO:

I believe that we're trying to make it as similar as we can.

LEG. MONTANO:

Thank you. Legislator Mystal did want this tabled, I'm a cosponsor, we'll table it one cycle.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

(Inaudible).

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Did we vote on •• we voted on that already.

LEG. HORSLEY:

No, you didn't call it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, okay, then I'd like to ••

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

The motion to table.

LEG. STERN:

We had the motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, we had the motion. Then I'd like to •• approved? Opposed? And abstentions? Okay, thank you. ***The motion is tabled (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).***

IR 1050•06 • Creating a task force to increase minority representation on the Suffolk County Police Force (Montano). I'd like a motion.

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Browning, second by Legislator Vilorina•Fisher. Okay, I'd like to ••

LEG. CARACAPPA:

On the motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

•• Vote on the motion. Approved?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

On the motion?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Comments.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, comments. Okay, Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could ask Legislator Montano, now that he's here. I have the bill here but I haven't gone through it •• who are the members of the task force, who picked them, how did you pick them, why did you pick them, what process was used to pick them?

LEG. MONTANO:

Well, the members of the task force are spelt out in the bill. We have the Police Commissioner, his or her designee; we have the Suffolk County Attorney or her designee; we have a representative to be appointed by this committee, the Public Safety & Public Information Committee; we also have the Director, Personnel Director of the County of Suffolk from the Civil Service Department; and a representative from the •• a representative of the Hispanic Bar Assoc •• I mean of the Suffolk County Bar Association to be selected by the President of the association; a representative chosen by the Suffolk County Guardians; a representative chosen by the Hispanic Police Society; and a representative chosen by the Suffolk Minorities In Law Enforcement.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Which would be SMILE.

LEG. MONTANO:

Which would be SMILE, and those three organizations are law enforcement organizations within the Police Department and they represent the various

sectors of the minority communities within the Police Department. And we think that the representation is a good representation for the kind of task force that these •• and to deal with the kind of issues that the task force will address.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

And Obviously your goal is to increase minority representation on the police force, something we're all striving for. Are there any avenues you're looking to pursue now or any programs that you're looking to bring back? Have you pinpointed certain programs you want to implement now and you're just finding ways to implement them through this task force? Has there been any preliminary work or positions, predisposed positions as it relates to the route you'd like to take?

LEG. MONTANO:

Honestly, there is not. What happened last year was that the County Executive proposed a •• Suffolk County is operating and has been operating for I think at least the last 20 years under a Consent Decree with the U.S. Department of Justice. Last year •• and by the way, the last test that was administered by the Civil Service Department for selection of police officers, and I believe out of the last test which was I think in 2002, we are selecting or have selected 220 candidates from that list •• we have not made a dent in terms of increasing the minority representation on the Police Department; we're now in the process of administering an another test.

Now, our purpose in this was •• and going back to what happened last year, the County Executive had proposed to the U.S. Justice Department a concept where police officer candidates would be selected in priority status based on zip code, those zip codes would be selected based on high crime areas. The Justice Department has responded and said very clearly that that is not a proposal that complies with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and is not a proposal to be implemented and cannot be implemented in Suffolk County or elsewhere, you know, with the permission, authorization of the Department of Justice.

This task force bill is sort of in reaction to what's been going on or hasn't been going on for the last 20 years. I met recently with someone from the

Police Department, I believe Lieutenant Donohue, who is heading up the minority recruitment effort and there is an extensive recruitment effort that is going to be undertaken by the Police Department. Some of the concepts we discussed, one was banding together certain scores so that we are able to reach more people. That has to do deal •• in order to do something like that, we need to clear the legal hurdles with the Justice Department and with the Department of Civil Service, that's why they have a representative on the task force.

So we're not talking about bringing back the old cadet program, we're not talking about bringing back anything at this point, what we're asking the task force to do is to look at this from both the perspective of the exam that's being administered, the recruitment efforts that are under way by the Police Department and also paying particular attention to the law, to Title VII and the laws that regulate selection of police officers to see if there are any avenues that we could pursue prospectively to accomplish the goal of increasing minority representation. We don't have any predetermined agenda or programs at this point. Whatever we do •• and that's why we have a representative from the Bar Association because we want to make sure that we cover the legal avenues. Good ideas could come forward but if they don't meet •• if they don't pass legal muster, we're not going to be able to get them through. So this is a combination of let's look at this issue again, it's been there 20 years, we haven't made a dent in it, let's try one more time. The task force should come back by June 30th with a recommendation and we'll take it from there as far as the Legislature.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Well, thank you for that. I'm glad I asked that question because I'm very satisfied with that answer. It was my fear, unfortunately, due to past, most recently, the last couple of years, Supreme Court rulings as it relates to our Cadet Program and the way we operated it and the way other police departments have and municipalities across the nation, and also the Title VII problems that were included with the County Executive's proposal of last year. I don't want to create false hope for a community that may be disenfranchised at this point with our efforts to increase minority hiring. So your answer was excellent and I appreciate it, it's just what I was looking for. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Legislators, for your clarification. I have a motion and so I'd like to take a vote. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstain? Okay.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

If the Clerk could list me as a cosponsor, please.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you. ***Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).***

LEG. HORSLEY:

I think you're probably on it.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I didn't see it on the copy.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, ***IR 1067•06 • A Local Law to establish the Special Traffic Options Program for Driving While Intoxicated (STOP DWI) as a Division with the Probation Department (County Executive).*** I'd like a motion.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

The public hearing is closed, Counsel.

MR. NOLAN:

It is, it's closed.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Do I have a motion?

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Viloría•Fisher and seconded by Legislator Horsley. All

those in favor? Opposed? Abstain? **Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).**

Okay, I would like to move on to the Introductory Resolutions.

Introductory Resolutions

IR 1081•06 • Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$186,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for the Suffolk County Police Department Bellport Task Force 2005 with 75% support (County Executive).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Losquadro, second by Legislator Browning. I would like to take a vote. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay.

Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).

IR 1094•06 • Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$13,300 from the State of New York Governor's Traffic Safety Committee for the Suffolk County Police Department to continue a Child Passenger Safety Program with 100% support (County Executive).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion to approve and place on the consent calendar.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right, Legislator Losquadro and second by Legislator Schneiderman. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).**

IR 1095•06 • Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of

\$289,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for the Suffolk County Police Department 1st Precinct Gang Task Force with 75% support (County Executive).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Browning.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Horsley. I'll take a vote; all in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).***

IR 1096•06 • Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$65,800 from the State of New York Governor's Traffic Safety Committee to target speeding and aggressive driving with 84.5% support (County Executive).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion from Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).***

Moving on to ***IR 1097•06 • Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$22,500 from the New York Division of Criminal Justice***

Services for the Suffolk County Police Department's Second Precinct Community Support Program with 75% support (County Executive).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Losquadro and second by Legislator Horsley.

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).**

IR 1123•06 • Appropriating funds in connection with the purchase of a prisoner transport bus (6th Precinct) (CP 3175) (County Executive).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Browning, second by Legislator Viloría•Fisher.

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).**

IR 1124•06 • Appropriating funds in connection with the purchase of an additional helicopter (CP 3117) (County Executive). Motion by Legislator Schneiderman.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).

IR 1140•06 • Establishing a Firearms Qualification Program for qualified retired law enforcement officers (County Executive).

Do I have a motion?

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Viloría•Fisher and second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 7•0•0•0).**

There are no tabled resolutions. Okay, then I would ••

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I would ask for a motion to adjourn.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

So moved.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So moved by Legislator Viloría•Fisher ••

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

•• and second by everybody?

LEG. BROWNING:

We're out of here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much for your attention.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 PM*)

**Legislator Jack Eddington, Chairman
Public Safety & Public Information Committee**