

PUBLIC SAFETY & PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Operating Budget Minutes

A special 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 October 25, 2006, to discuss the matter of the 2007 Operating Budget.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington • Chairman

Legislator Kate Browning • Vice•Chair

Legislator Wayne Horsley

Legislator Joseph Caracappa

Legislator Daniel Losquadro

Members Not Present:

Legislator Vivian Vilorio•Fisher

Legislator Jay Schneiderman

Also In Attendance:

Legislator Lou D'Amaro • District #17

Legislator John Kennedy • District #12

Renee Ortiz • Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature

Robert Calarco • Aide to Legislator Eddington

Michael Cavanaugh • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay

Gail Vizzini • Director/Budget Review Office

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

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

Brad Maier • Deputy Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services

Richard Stockinger • Deputy Director/Suffolk County Fire Academy

Warren Horst • Suffolk County Chief Fire Marshall

Vincent DeMarco • Suffolk County Sheriff

Alan Otto • Chief of Staff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office

Joseph Rubacka • Deputy Warden/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office

John Desmond • Director/Suffolk County Probation Department

Tom Henry • Suffolk County Probation Department

Hope Collazo • Director/Community Service Program•American Red Cross

Debbie Eppel • Public Information Office

Bill Mulligan • President/Superior Officer's Association

Tom Muratore • Vice•Present/Police Benevolent Association

Ray Griffing • 1st Vice•President/Suffolk Detective's Association

Nancy Marr • Suffolk County League of Women Voters

Catherine Hoake • Suffolk County League of Women Voters

Mary McLaughlin • Suffolk County League of Women Voters

Sandy Sullivan • Legislative Liaison/AME

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Lucia Braaten • Court Stenographer

Minutes Transcribed By:

Kimberly Castiglione • Legislative Secretary

*(*The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM*)*

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I'd like to ask everybody to rise for the Public Safety meeting, and we're going to start with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Salutation

Thank you. Before we start, I just want to mention a procedural change that I'm going to initiate in my Public Safety Committee meetings. That I'm going to request that the Legislators ask a question or two and pass the floor to the next Legislator, and I will go around a hundred times if it takes all the questions to be answered, but I'm seeing a trend of 45 minutes of one Legislator asking questions non•stop while the rest of us sit. So we're going to start this change starting today so that we will have everybody involved and engaged in the process.

Okay, I have Sheriff DeMarco on my list first to come up to us.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Good morning.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good morning.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Legislature for giving us the opportunity to address our concerns with the 2007 Operating Budget. We'd also like to take the opportunity to thank the County Executive's Budget Office as well as the Legislature's Budget Review Office for their time spent on a very comprehensive evaluation of our 2007 Operating Budget request.

This is my first Operating Budget and I'm very impressed on how well the divisions of County government work together to get to this point. Other municipalities should take note and realize that teamwork is essential to getting anything done and in Suffolk County we prove that every day. At this time, I'm going to turn the presentation over to my Chief of Staff, Allan Otto.

CHIEF OTTO:

Good morning. While we support all ten recommendations made by Budget Review Office, we would like to discuss the details of the following; they are the reinstatement of eight of the 58

Correction Officer positions recommended to be abolished. Fifty of the 58 positions that were recommended to be abolished by the Budget Office were placed in our budget in 2005 and have never been filled. These positions were established to staff the new correctional facility in Yaphank. The thinking at that time was to get these officers into the workforce early so that they would become fully trained and experienced prior to the facility coming on line.

Since the new correctional facility will take three to four years to become operational, it does make sense to abolish these 50 positions in the 2007 budget and then reinstate them at a later date when we have a much better idea on how many new positions will be required for the new facility.

Eight of the 58 Correction Officer positions recommended to be abolished are vacancies that have been caused by retirements and/or promotions; consequently, those eight should be reinstated. The Sheriff's Office has reached a point in this evolution where we must have at least one recruit class of Correction Officers each year just to cover separation of service. If we do not hire the new officers to replace our vacancies, overtime will increase to the point of being unmanageable.

We, therefore, agree with BRO on the second recommendation to hire a class of at least 25 Correction Officers in September of 2007, which requires filling all existing vacancies, including the eight positions recommended to be reinstated. This number could increase as additional officers leave County employment.

As with the Correction Officer positions, if we do not maintain a baseline of Deputy Sheriffs by filling vacancies on an annual basis, then overtime will increase to unacceptable levels. We, therefore, concur with BRO's third recommendation to hire a class of at least 20 Deputy Sheriffs to fill all existing vacancies to coincide with a scheduled police class in September of 2007.

BRO's fourth recommendation is that ten new Correction Officer positions be included in the adopted budget as requested by the Sheriff. They include one Correction Officer Lieutenant, two Correction Officer Sergeants, one Correction Officer Sergeant Investigator and six Correction Officer I Investigators. The investigator positions are required due to the increase in workload of our internal security and gangs investigation units; this is directly related to the 20% increase in the inmate population which we have experienced since July. The vacancies resulting from the creation of these positions, according to BRO, should be added to the Correction Officer class in September at a cost of 113,670. We agree with all aspects of this recommendation.

The fifth recommendation is for five new Deputy Sheriff Investigative positions to be included in the adopted budget. One Deputy Sheriff Sergeant Investigator and one Deputy Sheriff Investigator should be added to our Criminal Investigations Bureau, and three Deputy Sheriff Investigators should be added to the Family Court Bureau. The increase in workload of the Criminal Investigation Bureau is also directly related to the number of inmates in the correctional facility which, as stated earlier, is up 20%. This increase in the workload in the Family Court Bureau is related to the increase of Family Court orders, complaints and summonses.

In the sixth recommendation BRO recommends adding one Neighborhood Aide position to expand the bail expediter function. We believe this is an exciting new proposal initiated by the Sheriff which will prove to be cost effective and expand our coverage.

The last recommendation made by the Budget Review Office, which we will address, is arguably probably the most important. When the Sheriff's Office prepared its 2007 Operating Budget request in May, we anticipated that we would be hiring 45 Correction Officers in January of 2007, and 25 Deputy Sheriffs in September of this year. Since we only hired 16 Deputy Sheriffs in September, nine less than originally budgeted, there is no provision in the recommended budget to hire 45 Correction Officers planned for in January, 2007, our 2007 overtime projections are now no longer valid.

Consequently, we are not filling our vacancies as previously planned, our overtime expenses must be adjusted upward. Deputy Sheriff's overtime must be increased by one-half million dollars to account for the shortage of nine Deputy Sheriff positions and the Correction Officer overtime must be increased by \$2.1 million to account for the 45 Correction Officers.

This concludes our presentation and we would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Just before we start questioning, I'd just like to hear from BRO. Any comments?

MS. VIZZINI:

We're very happy to hear that the Sheriff's Office is in concurrence with our concerns for an adequate level of public safety positions and adequate appropriations to address overtime and the other needs of the Sheriff and we applaud their willingness to take on the Bail Program. As we say in our report, we don't know whether a Neighborhood Aide is the best position, but it certainly gives them a lot of latitude and we applaud them for taking on that additional responsibility.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Sheriff DeMarco or Chief Otto, either or. You mentioned the vacancies for the current budget year. Have you filled out the SCINS for •• are those sitting up at the County Executive's Office or are they just being ignored or have you decided not to just move forward with them internally in

the department?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

We hired a class of 55 ••

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Right.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

•• Correction Officers in January and I believe we were slated to hire a class in January, this January.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

This January.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

But that class was •• those positions were really put in the budget for the new jail, but the new jail is probably three to four years out, so we haven't ••

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Have the requests department•wide for the filling of vacancies over the current fiscal year, have

they all been met?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Yes. We hired a •• I think except for nine positions, nine Deputy Sheriff positions. We hired a class of 16 Deputy Sheriffs in September and our class of 54 Correction Officers was hired in January as planned.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Okay. I'll ask Budget Review, if it's all right if we move on?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, absolutely.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Gail, I don't know if the working group has been addressing this, I'm sure they have, I'm not serving on it this year. The increase in overtime for •• that's been recommended by the Sheriff, and obviously by you in your report, would it be feasible to take that projected overtime increase and run that •• and just put new positions in the budget that correspond with that dollar amount, or at least maybe half the year; have you adjusted that in the working group?

We've done it in years past. I remember vividly during the Mahoney Administration when we would take the additional overtime and flip those into positions that were needed within the jail. Unfortunately, those SCINS were never signed, as was mentioned earlier in my point. Is the working group discussing that or the possibilities of doing that, rolling that overtime money in for

additional positions that are needed?

MS. VIZZINI:

This overtime money is to meet their needs beginning, you know, January 1 throughout the year; it would really depend on the timing of when the classes begin. And as you know, the training for the Correction Officers is 14 weeks plus field training, so by the time they really reach full productivity, we don't usually anticipate that adding positions will impact overtime until they are fully productive.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Many times we've done it half-year, realizing that.

MS. VIZZINI:

The working group is being apprised of all our recommendations, and certainly our recommendations in Police and Sheriff and public safety were one of the first things we brought to the forefront. And we can certainly do some calculations, but at this point I think this amount of money is needed certainly to carry them through at least until the new staff is fully productive.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Legislator Caracappa, one thing, too, that maybe BRO can look at. I think that we feel that hiring 45 Correction Officers would cost more with their fringe benefits than the \$2.1 million. So there probably is a ••

LEG. CARACAPPA:

That was my next question, thank you.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

I don't know the exact number, though, but maybe Budget Review can get that for you.

CHIEF OTTO:

There was also a problem that you touched on with regards to how and when the class would start, okay? It takes, you know, like six months by the time we start doing our initial investigations. We had originally thought that we could even put a class together for January of '07, but we would not be able to make that, enormous amounts of overtime in personal investigations to meet that. So, again, in the summer we really can't have a class. The best window we got was September of '07, and that's where we're aiming for.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Mr. Chairman, in the spirit of your new procedure, I'll withhold my questions.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, I won't take too long. I'll give back to you, Joe. The bays, we had a lot of conversation

about the bays in Yaphank that are closed and are not being used; correct?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

The what?

LEG. BROWNING:

There's two bays ••

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Oh, the dorms?

LEG. BROWNING:

Dorms, whatever, that are not currently being used. Okay? There was a lot of conversation yesterday with DPW about the jail, about Yaphank jail, and the fact that these two dorms are not opened and, you know, according to Ben Zwirn and DPW, they say there is no reason why they can't be repaired and be reused. Can I get a comment from you on that?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Yeah. When I came in in January we looked at them because I feel the same •• I still feel the same way that you do and Ben and DPW, and we approached the State, the State Commission of Correction who closed them and said, "Hey, you know what? If we rehabilitate these internally with help of DPW, put in some new plumbing" •• that's what the problem was, plumbing ••

turning to direct supervision which is something they require at a very minimal cost, I think it was somewhere like \$40,000 we figured we'd have to spend on it and we can house probably close to a hundred inmates in there. They told us no because of a lawsuit that was filed by the County and part of the settlement of the lawsuit was that those dorms would be closed.

And one other thing. Those are the first two parts that are to be demolished when the new jail construction starts, so even if we were able to use them it would be very short-lived probably. In June or July they would be knocked down.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And how many prisoners are you currently sending out?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

I think as of this morning we had about 110 or 115?

DEPUTY WARDEN RUBACKA:

Right.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Yeah. We had as much as 160 at one point, but we were able to bring a lot back.

LEG. BROWNING:

So if we were able to use those dorms, you wouldn't be sending anybody out of there.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Right, yes.

CHIEF OTTO:

Those dorms basically have been condemned. I mean, it is totally out of Suffolk County's hands. The State would have to let us do it.

LEG. BROWNING:

Well, that's why we're looking for a change in January.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning. My questions are just twofold, I guess, and they kind of go to some of what Legislator Caracappa talked about. And I apologize, I'm sure you must have addressed this already, Chief. We did hear yesterday about the population has been increasing at this point. We're presently at how much in the jail, 1,810, 1,815?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

I believe we're at around 1,770 as of •• that was as of yesterday morning. The population did spike this summer; you know, we don't know if this is just a one year thing. In the past, I believe in the late •• late 90's we had a population spike and it was just •• it turned out to be a one year phenomenon.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, that was going to be my next question, Sheriff, relative to some of the query that Legislator Caracappa had about the ability to go ahead and convert the overtime to some sort of a fixed class, even if it was a bridge class. Do you have any ability to project out now over the next six months as to •• or even three months as far as where the population is going to go, or are we just subject to ••

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Well, the population •• the population really doesn't change the number of posts that we have to fill, because when we reach a certain breaking point we ship them out and somebody else watches them.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Regardless of whether you have fixed or overtime, you're into the transfer out and housing out.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Right. Just because the population spikes, it doesn't change our staffing necessarily.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. My other question •• and again, yielding to what the Chair has asked •• and relative to with DPW yesterday, we heard some additional information as far as how the actual construction project is progressing for the jail, or not progressing. And I guess I was going to ask from your perspective, if you see where we're going as far as time frame and the ability to go head and start to use our anticipated new facility, the ability to put people in?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Well, the timetable to break ground is still June and July, so that's on schedule. And then, you know, probably predicting three to four years before it's operational.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And that's not impacted by the fact that we still do not have a contractor for the cells yet? I know that there's been a submission and then a reletting. We're anticipating ••

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

I believe that they did get a bid.

LEG. KENNEDY:

One bid that they're working with that's subject to a bunch of vagaries.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But that doesn't look like it's altering what your •• composite ground•breaking schedule?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

From what I'm told from DPW and the County Executive's Office is that we're still on our time line, I believe.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right, thank you. I'll yield.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Legislator Caracappa?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I'm good for now, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Any other questions?

LEG. D'AMARO:

Jack?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator D'Amaro. Thank you for being here.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thank you. Good morning. Just a couple of quick questions. First with the Corrections Officers; how many Corrections Officers do you have on staff presently?

MS. VIZZINI:

Eight twenty•six.

CHIEF OTTO:

Eight twenty•six.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Eight hundred and twenty•six? And how many are authorized, how many positions are authorized in the '06 budget?

CHIEF OTTO:

Eight ninety•six.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. And in order •• in the '07 budget, in order to bring that staffing up to your needs, how many more positions do you need filled?

CHIEF OTTO:

As we presented in our budget request, we want to fill all the vacancies, not the new positions that we created for the new facility; 50 of the vacant positions now were created for the new facility, we agree that those should be abolished. We want to have eight of the 58 positions that were slated to be abolished reinstated, and then every other vacancy that occurred between now and the time we have a set class in September of '07 to be, you know, released by SCIN form. And also, it's interesting ••

LEG. D'AMARO:

By the way, those are •• just so I understand. So those •• you're talking about positions that become vacant in '07 which are filled ••

CHIEF OTTO:

Through attrition.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay, which are filled right now.

CHIEF OTTO:

That's correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So keep the staffing or keep •• any position filled with a warm body right now you want to remain in '07.

CHIEF OTTO:

Absolutely.

LEG. D'AMARO:

In addition to that, you want to keep eight of the 58 proposed to be abolished?

CHIEF OTTO:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And you want to keep those positions and you would like to fill those as well.

CHIEF OTTO:

That's correct. Those eight positions were also caused •• those vacancies were caused by retirements or promotions.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay, so that's eight additional Corrections Officers. Now, in addition to that, you're looking for a class of 25?

CHIEF OTTO:

We were estimating, and that's why I think Budget Review's language was at least 25, between now and September of '07 we should have at least 25 vacant positions.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Right now, Legislator D'Amaro, we have about 22 unfilled positions if you take out the 50 that are going to be abolished, or 58. So we have about 22 vacancies now and that class in next September, we want to include those 22, plus the eight that we're asking to have reinstated, plus any people who retire from now until September. So it's just budgeted positions we want filled.

We don't want any new positions filled except for those eight.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right, by reinstatement.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Right.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Because the recommended budget abolished 58 and you would like eight of those back, in effect.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Right.

LEG. D'AMARO:

All right. And the same general questions with the Deputy Sheriffs as well, how many on staff now, how many positions are there?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

It's 263. I believe we have 16 in the academy right now.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

And we have 21 vacancies, I believe, right now, and we're looking for five new positions.

LEG. D'AMARO:

How many was that; how many, Sheriff?

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Five new.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Five new, okay. All right, thank you. I yield.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much, gentlemen. And I just wanted to add that on Halloween, I think we'll be bringing the Public Works Committee to visit you.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you.

SHERIFF DEMARCO:

We'll have the ghouls.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. If I could have the representatives from the District Attorney's Office come forward.

MR. KEARON:

Good morning, everyone. My name is Bob Kearon and I bring best wishes from Tom Spota. He asked me to thank you for all your assistance in many areas, but in particular for your consideration for us with respect to our budget. And I'd also like to thank the County Executive's Budget Office and Gail Vizzini and her staff for the analysis done with respect to the 2007 recommended budget.

I won't take up much of your time. We just have one minor issue that we'd like to bring to your attention and ask you to address, and that has to do with respect to the elimination of one position

in our recommended budget for 2007. That position is the Deputy Chief Investigator for the office. While we acknowledge that that position has been vacant for some time, we have had a change in circumstance this year which we feel justifies the reinstatement of the position.

Our Chief Investigator, Bob Creighton, retired earlier this year and we have been without a top level investigator supervising all of our 47 investigators in the office since that time. What we've done to breach that gap is we've asked the Police Commissioner to allow us to use a Police Inspector to supervise our Detective Investigators, and that has been happening since the retirement of Chief Creighton. But that gentleman has done a terrific job and has reorganized the ranks of the Detective Investigators, but at the same time he's responsible for the supervision of all of the Detectives assigned to us from the Suffolk County Police Department. And, frankly, he is stretched way too thin at this point in time.

District Attorney Tom Spota would like to in the very near future appoint a Deputy Chief Investigator with a view towards not only supervising all of the current staff, but also analyzing that individual's skills with a view towards perhaps making him eventually the Chief, or she, the Chief Investigator. But we would like that position restored.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you. I'm going to just ask Budget Review to give us a comment.

MS. VIZZINI:

Actually, this is new •• excuse me, new information. At the time that we prepared our report we did not have sufficient information or justification to do anything more than concur with the staffing, so I would defer to the District Attorney in terms of his needs.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much. Question, Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Mr. Kearon.

MR. KEARON:

Good morning, Mr. Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Can you speak a little bit about the request, I guess, and the submission as far as the Information Technology budget with the District Attorney's Office and how whatever your needs are, may or may not be met with what the Executive's recommended?

MR. KEARON:

The County Executive's Office came to us late in the budget process and proposed taking money from our budget for IT and putting it into the County Executive's IT budget. We were given an assurance that whatever needs we would encounter during 2007 would be met by the Countywide IT Department. And with that understanding, we agreed that our funding could be reduced and transferred over to the County IT system.

We are in the process of developing a case management system and that process is still ongoing. We have been in close consultation with the IT section throughout these last several months, and we're fully expectant that they will make any necessary purchases that we need once the system has been identified, the vendor has been selected.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So we don't have a vendor yet? You're actually still just going through the scoping process as far as establishing, I guess, needs and parameters in order to go ahead and let an RFP or is there one out there?

MR. KEARON:

Not at this point in time. We are still in the process of reviewing. As we speak today our senior programmer analyst that we just brought on this year, who is going to be spearheading the project, is in Queens meeting with the Queen's District Attorney's Office staff to review their case management system.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Is it your expectation you're going to be able to go ahead and actually procure something in '07 and implement it?

MR. KEARON:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. I'm now going to defer if I can for a moment to BRO and ask •• I see that BRO concurs with this recommendation and the inclusion, I guess, of the Exec's IT office in order to go ahead and provide the support here. Throughout the course of the past couple of days discussion about IT has come up from department through department through department. I guess I'm just going to ask you if in your opinion it's reasonable and it's within the parameter of IT's existing resources to meet what will probably be a fairly ambitious project with the DA's Office?

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, at this point in this project it's definitely necessary for the District Attorney to rely upon the IT expertise. You know, they have some expertise in their office but not enough to bring this project to fruition. Therefore, they would •• we do concur that IT take a more significant role. As far as whether IT has what is needed or may need to contract out to augment what's going on, either way, I think they're in the best position to assist them.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right. Thank you. I'll yield.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just going over the District Attorney's requested positions. And, Bob, I see •• of course I see the Chief Deputy Detective Investigator that you mentioned. Also, a District Attorney Operations Aide, which was requested by the department but not put in the

recommended budget. Where are you guys on that one?

MR. KEARON:

We ••

LEG. CARACAPPA:

As well as the Office System Analyst IV. You asked for one new and it was not added.

MR. KEARON:

Well, in the process of the normal give and take when we submit our budget, the County Executive oftentimes does look for a bit of compromise with respect to the addition of new positions and we're asked to prioritize the requests that we submit. So we did and as a result, and this has happened every year, we lost a few of the recommended positions. But we think we have enough staff on board to do the work.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Very good. I'd ask Budget Review, then, to prepare a stand alone resolution, through the Chair, to add back that Deputy •• Chief Deputy Detective Investigator. Hopefully the working group will be including that in omnibus, but if they don't we have a belt and suspenders approach here. So, thank you.

MR. KEARON:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Any other questions? Okay. Thank you for that recommendation, Legislator Caracappa. Okay. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

MR. KEARON:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

At this time, I'd like to call the Superior Officer's Association and the other branches of our law enforcement to come forward. Yeah, that's all you guys. Okay. Greetings. Gentlemen, when you're ready.

MR. MULLIGAN:

Good morning, Chairman Eddington and members of the Public Safety Committee. First let me thank you for giving us the time this morning to make a short presentation to you and to answer any questions that you may have.

My name is Bill Mulligan, I am the President of the Superior Officer's Association. I'm here to talk about the reductions in the Police Department in County Executive Levy's proposed budget. I sent each of you a letter several weeks ago about these reductions; I will not bore you by

rehashing that letter, but will be glad to answer any questions you may have about it.

Over the last 25 years, the face of policing has changed dramatically. Twenty•five years ago the population of Suffolk County was 1,284,000 plus; that's according to the 1980 US Census. According to LIPA estimates, the population of Suffolk County on 1/1/05 was 1,483,000 plus; that's an increase of about 200,000 or 15.5%. And Suffolk County is still growing; by next year the population of the County could be over one and a half million. Just by comparison, a \$200,000 •• 200,000 in population is approximately the size of the Town of Huntington, so over the last 25 years we've just about added the size of one large town in the County.

Twenty•five years ago the number of sworn officers in the Suffolk County Police Department was 2,602; today it is 2,729, which is an increase of 4.88%. So the population over the last 25 years is up 15% and the size of the Police Department is up under 5%.

Twenty•five years ago there was no 7th Precinct. Twenty•five years ago there were no COPE officers in the precincts, we didn't have DARE units, the DARE Unit. We didn't have an Office of Homeland Security and Anti•Terrorism; we didn't have gang teams in the precincts; we didn't have an Islip McArthur Airport detail; we didn't have a Computer Crime Section; we didn't have a Major Crimes Unit; we didn't have an Asset Forfeiture Unit; we didn't have a Field Audit Unit; and we didn't have an Anti•Crime Unit.

Now, I'm sure you're wondering where the staffing for all these units came from. Well, the answer is simple; they came from the staffing of the basic service that the Police Department provides to the public and that's the officers, which include Sergeants and Lieutenants, who answer the calls for help when someone calls 911.

Twenty•five years ago we didn't have the aggressive driving problems that you have on our

roadways today. A Newsday report of October 6th showed that Suffolk County again led the State in motor vehicle fatalities, yet two years ago the department disbanded the SITE Unit, which is the Suffolk Intensive Traffic Enforcement Unit, which was within the Highway Patrol Section. Unfortunately there is no way to measure exactly the number of lives that are saved or the number of accidents prevented by intensive enforcement, but experts do agree that intensive enforcement does reduce accidents and save lives.

Twenty•five years ago we didn't have crime associated with gang members that we have today. No one heard of drive•by shootings 25 years ago. Not enough is being done in this area.

Twenty•five years ago we didn't have the threat of terrorism that we have today. This is not only a national responsibility, it's a local police responsibility. Twenty•five years ago we didn't have computer crimes such as identity theft and we didn't have internet sexual predators that prey on our youngsters that we likely have today. Currently there are two Sergeants and 14 Detectives assigned to Computer Crimes Section and Identity Theft. You could easily double that number and they would still not run out of work.

Suffolk County is still a wonderful place to live. Crime has been on the decrease, but that pendulum always swings back the other way.

The staffing needs of the Suffolk County Police Department cannot be ignored any longer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Mr. Muratore.

MR. MURATORE:

Tom Muratore from the Suffolk County PBA. Good morning, Mr. Eddington and members of the Public Safety Committee. My purpose before the committee today is to bring forth some vital information concerning staffing levels within the Suffolk County Police Department, particularly the number of police officers assigned to patrol.

I could bore you all day with numbers, and I'm sure representatives from the County Executive's Office will come forth to defend the Executive's decision not to hire a sufficient number of police officers to at least replace those officers who retire, are promoted, designated or leave the job. We're all aware of the attitude of the County Executive and the Police Commissioner; it's one that we can do more with less. If this is the case, why are there more people working in the Executive's Office than ever before? Why has the Commissioner come before you and stated that taking officers from COPE to staff patrol would be like stealing from Peter to pay Paul? He pledged not to do that, but COPE units are being shut down and back to patrol throughout the County on a daily basis.

We have an •• we have all been asked to reduce personnel. You as a Legislature have been asked to reduce your staff. Is this possible?

I don't think so. There are certain limitations on how far you can reduce staffing and continue to provide a viable service to those you serve. In the police business, the most important aspect is response time. How fast can we arrive at the scene? When was the call for service received by the dispatcher? I'm quite sure if you were to poll your constituents, you would learn that they are satisfied with the quality of service, but unfortunately have to wait an excessive amount of time to receive that service. An abandoned vehicle; a dispatcher could hold on to this call and it may take a sector car hours to respond. But who knows what's in that abandoned vehicle?

What about those calls for service that require meter response? With manpower being reduced, sector cars being shut down, the number of police officers being injured in the line of duty, what happens to response time? You can ask the department for figures relating to this; I think the people to ask are either the police officer that actually responds or the dispatchers that assign the calls to the sector units. Hopefully you will be able to ascertain the truth from these people without the threat of reprisals that are so prevalent within the Police Department when someone rises up with the correct information.

Suffolk has grown in leaps and bounds over the last few decades.

This Legislative body formulated a task force to look into police manning and made a recommendation to increase the size of the department. All this has fallen on deaf ears. Has the department grown? No. Diminishment of patrol continues, responsibilities keep growing, the calls for service are up, the population is up, arrests are up and the population of the Police Department continues to fall. Why?

As we all know, the cost of public service is expensive, but what price do we pay when the safety of the public is compromised? The men and women of the department are being asked to perform superhuman feats, they are doing just that. But I ask, how long can it last? You've all seen what happens when we drop our guard and others take advantage because we neglected our duties and took public safety for granted. Are the members of this committee going to take responsibility when something serious happens due to the lack of a properly manned Police Department?

It is responsible to cut the very •• is it responsible to cut the very line that protects society from the threats of terrorism that exist today? Rest assured, should that happen, I will personally carry that message forward to your constituents. It's always easy to blame the other person. As Legislators, you have the responsibility to make sure taxpayers in Suffolk County can enjoy the

freedoms set forth in our Constitution. You must remove politics from this issue and make sure the Police Department is properly funded and patrol is properly manned. You must make the hard calls.

The cost of a properly manned Police Department is not that expensive when compared to compromise of the safety of the public. Currently we are ranked by Forbes Magazine as the safest suburban community in America. How low are you willing to drop? To number seven, to number ten, to number 20? That decision is in your hands.

In closing, I ask this simple question; why can the County Executive do more with more and the rest of the County, including the Legislators and the Police Department, have to do more with less. Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to attempt to answer them.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, before we do that, I'm going to ask BRO to just give us some comments and then we'll ask you how you really feel about this.

MS. VIZZINI:

Thanks, Jack. From the budgetary perspective, it's very, very challenging because, really, from the budget side of me, the police operations, the Police District are really driving the budget. It's a five hundred and ••

MR. MAGGIO:

Six hundred million.

MS. VIZZINI:

Six hundred million dollar operation for which for the Police District alone we raised \$429 million in property taxes. And as you know, although the taxes in the Police District went up about six million, it's still a very minimal percentage over all. So from the budgetary aspect, I can actually understand why the appropriations are the way the appropriations are; to minimize the increase in taxes and to try to rein in on the appropriations.

On the other hand, in terms of historical number of police officers, we in our report have raised some concerns, so much so that we're actually recommending a provision for an additional class of police officers in March, a class of 50. And I have said this before, that based on our projections, if we do not have this additional class, the way the budget is proposed and anticipating the usual number of 95 to 100 retirements, we will be at a point of 124 fewer sworn positions, SOA and PBA, than we were January 1 of 2004. These are all policy decisions.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, I didn't know you •• I thought you were just taking a breath, I'm sorry. Yes, I'm sorry I left you out.

MR. GRIFFING:

Chairman Eddington and members of the Public Safety Committee, my name is Ray Griffing, the 1st Vice•President of the Suffolk Detectives Association. I just want to be on the record to indicate that the Suffolk Detectives are in total support of the request made by both the PBA and the SOA this morning. As stated by President Mulligan of the SOA, in order to fund or to staff his members and members of the Detective Association, we must draw on from the uniformed services. So in order to continue service to the public, we must have those officers increased in numbers. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you. As regard to the positions within Superior Officers, one of the points that I think •• that doesn't get mentioned often enough is that the possibility of career advancement leads to the development of the officers throughout their career. They study for tests, they take tests; it's a process of self•improvement. Even if the promotion does not happen right away, is this not part of the development of the officer as they strive for advancement?

MR. MULLIGAN:

Yes. The time and effort put in by Police Officers, Detectives and Superior Officers for advancement is a great asset to not only the Police Department, but the County itself. When these promotional exams are given, these individuals study literally for years so that they can score high enough on the exam and their studies make their skills more proficient, and that's to the advantage of the County.

It's very competitive. I think there's •• there were 15 individuals that had a mark of 100 or better on the last Lieutenant's exam; so far there have only been four promoted off that list and there are currently vacancies which are not being filled, and it's unfair to these individuals. And what's going to happen is that people are going to give up on advancement and they're not going to study for it and it's going to be a loss to the department and the County.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I think this not only affects the Superior Officers, but obviously the rank and file of the regular patrol officers as well. The possibility of advancement is always a driving factor in one's desire to perform well in their job and to advance themselves both intellectually and within their career. They go hand in hand. So I see this as an important process within our department in not only maintaining morale, but also maintaining the quality of our officers. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, gentlemen.

MR. MULLIGAN:

Good morning.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I did receive your letter, Mr. Mulligan, and read it with great interest, and I'm going to ask you, I guess, to speak about just a couple of the units that you mentioned in there in particular. And the SITE Program, in particular, I guess I'm concerned about because I do recall that the Commissioner or the County Executive made quite a bit of publicity about the traffic intersections throughout the County that had the highest incidents of accident and an initiative on the part of the department to address them.

I know some of those intersections are in my district, one of them being 111 and 347, and it was noted as a high incident/accident area. With the reductions in supervisory personnel and the impact to the units, what is that doing as far as our department's ability to address those high collision areas?

The other unit I'll ask you to comment on, actually two, is Emergency Service and Aviation. Again, the supervisory aspect or lack thereof; what is your perception about those unit's abilities to function?

MR. MULLIGAN:

Okay, let me speak first about the SITE Unit or what used to be the SITE Unit and what their responsibility used to be. They would do intensive enforcement at these areas that were identified as high accident areas and high fatality areas, and that responsibility has been turned over to the precincts, to identify them and do the enforcement at these locations. But the people in the precinct don't have time to do that. I mean, they can identify it, but they're just running from call to call, they don't have time to monitor speed and red light enforcement.

The SITE Unit was a •• they were highly trained individuals within Highway Patrol that would go into an area and really like blitz the area and write a lot of summonses and the public was well aware that they were there and that enforcement was being done and as a result of that, that incident location would be cleaned up for a period of time. I mean, everybody knows if you know there's a police officer watching you, you're going to drive a little more carefully; you're not going to speed, you're not going to run red lights, you're not going to drive recklessly because you know that he's going pull you over and give you a summons.

LEG. KENNEDY:

So there was a positive correlation that you could observe as far as activity by this unit and a decrease in traffic accidents and injuries.

MR. MULLIGAN:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

MR. MULLIGAN:

And as far as Emergency Service and the Special Patrol Bureau, that is definitely understaffed as far as supervision is concerned. In Emergency Services, I believe there's one Lieutenant there now, they just had a few transfers out of there, but Emergency Services is a 24 •• 24/7 operation. They work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There were three Sergeants in there which left •• which meant that there were no Sergeants assigned to the midnight tours. So if Emergency Service needed supervision on the midnight tour, they would have to call a Sergeant from home. Now, everybody knows a delay in •• to get somebody with that expertise can be critical in a situation; you can't wait for somebody to get out of bed and get dressed and come down with the equipment and the expertise that is needed for that type of situation.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The other area that I saw •• obviously, I was concerned as far as what I saw with all of the units. The other one I guess I would just ask you about, because I've had occasion recently to have some friends have to be hospitalized, and I know the Aviation Unit is involved in doing medical

transport I believe, and they pretty much run around the clock as well, don't they?

MR. MULLIGAN:

Yes. Yeah, I believe there are only two Sergeants in that unit, and that's a 24/7 operation so they •

LEG. KENNEDY:

And the absence of the supervisory personnel compromises the unit's ability to function?

MR. MULLIGAN:

Well, if there's no supervisor, there's no boss there, you know, to make some decisions when decisions have to be made. I mean, these officers are highly trained and they're •• you know, they know their job and they know what to do. But the Sergeants are there for a reason and to have only two Sergeants for a 24/7 operation is just not adequate.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. I'll yield, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Yeah, first of all, I want to comment that I did have a number of candidates for

advancement come see me and it put me back to my military days, because I advanced four pay grades and I remember waiting for the list. And I'm going to be talking to the County Executive about dealing with the people that are •• that had expectations that those positions would be filled, so we will be dealing with that.

The other thing I would like to know is about Gabreski Airport; last year I visited it and there was no heat. I called the Commissioner because my understanding was there was no heat again and he told me that he would deal with it in a timely fashion; I'm wondering if you can give me any feedback on that.

MR. MULLIGAN:

No, I can't, I'm not aware of that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

The hangar. You know, I'm talking about the hangar where the helicopters are.

MR. MURATORE:

Mr. Chairman, I sent you an e•mail in reference to what was going on there. Apparently they put a lock, KeySpan put a lock on the gas main because the landlord hadn't paid the gas bill. So that's why there's no heat. I mean, have been out there, Jack?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, somehow I'm getting that de ja vu all over again feeling. All over again.

MR. MURATORE:

It is, it is. Nothing changes here, Jack. I mean ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, we're going to have •• we will have the County Executive's representative and Chief Moore come up.

MR. MURATORE:

Well, maybe we can find some money in the budget to pay the gas bill. Hopefully we can.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. MURATORE:

But just to answer Mr. Kennedy's question, when he was directing to Bill about those sections. Bill brought up a lot of new areas that we do patrol in. And where do the people come from that man those patrols? They come from patrol. Where do Detectives come from? Patrol. Where do Superior Officers come? Patrol. Where do all of these new sections come from? Patrol. Why do you think that these sections are no longer viable? Why is SITE gone? Because there's no Police Officers to man these.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. MURATORE:

I mean, the bottom rung of a ladder to ascend, you know, for public safety is the Police Officer. And this particular committee has to find a way to send a message to the Executive's Office that we need to hire more than 100 cops. Because as my name is Tom Muratore and I sit here today, I won't believe that that class will be hired in March. They'll find some reason to do away with it and maybe we'll get 50 in September, but that's not going to cover the number of retirees. And realize, the number of police that we deal with, I mean, Budget Review gives you numbers, that's only a number that people receive paychecks for. That's not everybody •• you know, there are a lot of people receiving checks that are out of work due to •• we have right now ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. MURATORE:

•• a hundred police officers out of work due to extended line of duty injuries. We have 20 police officers out due to extended personal, sick or maternity, and we have 68 police officers on light duty. So what's really the total number of police? Now, those numbers I gave you have nothing to do with my brothers in Detectives or in the SOA, that's Police Officers. So what are we really doing the job with, less than seventeen hundred? Seven twenty•four. You know, we're looking to get more supervision, we need more Detectives. I mean, crime is up, and I don't know what they tell you on the other side of the street but, you know, the quality of life crimes are up, and why?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right, right.

MR. MURATORE:

The first thing you learn about being a Police Officer is to be visible. The omnipresence of the Police Officer deters crime. I mean, drive•by shootings in Holbrook? What is this coming to in Suffolk County?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. Well, I think you've made your point very clear. I am concerned, as the Chair, that we're going from a proactive approach to a reactive approach. I've seen in my own community aggressive driving and what I mean is a total disregard for stop signs, just blow right through them. When I did call for some information with the town, they told me that they're going to have to do a traffic study, so I did mine. I sat there for 45 minutes by a stop sign, saw 43 cars blow right through it, 23 hesitate and roll through. And luckily, I spoke to Inspector Quinn and he did dispatch a car and in 30 minutes gave out about 27 tickets. So I can see where it could be cost effective to staff you adequately and that SITE program sounds like an awesome program that we need to look back at.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Mr. Chairman, if I could comment.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I just wanted to offer a comment about SITE for some of the members that were elected after it was disbanded. Unfortunately, my first year in office we had a number of fatalities on the 25A corridor through the Miller Place and Mt. Sinai communities and I requested that the SITE officers be dispatched there, and they were. And I know it seems like a number that's unfathomable, but in a month's time they issued thirty•five hundred summonses. And it was absolutely incredible, for the rest of that year and into the next year, it was a changed roadway.

And unfortunately, we're back to a point now where driving has become very aggressive. And with the limited staffing of COPE units and their reduced capacity to be able to monitor patrol checks, it's very difficult for the individual precincts to be able to dedicate the type of manpower necessary to monitor these high traffic areas. So I know I have personal experience with that program and it was immensely successful.

MR. MURATORE:

But that can't happen if we don't hire cops.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I think that's quite clear. I think it's clear to all.

MR. MURATORE:

That's our problem. You know, there's nothing in the well. I came here today and I see the District Attorney's Office representatives here asking for personnel, the Sheriff from Suffolk County is here asking for personnel. Has my Commissioner come forward and asked for additional people? I mean, I don't see him here today, but maybe the Chief is going to come up and ask for another 150 or 200 maybe, hopefully. But has he come before, maybe I wasn't here, has he come before this committee asking for additional personnel, or was it what we saw last year, "Well, I can do more with less?"

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

The point is that we're here, we're concerned and we can deal with it. So it doesn't matter who's asking, we are •• it's crystal clear the situation, so we hear you loud and clear.

MR. MURATORE:

Well, if I •• I would hope that if the CEO of the corporation or the business was here asking for more people it would carry more weight than three union guys.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I think you undervalue yourself.

MR. MURATORE:

Okay, I hope that's true.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I guess right along that line, I don't know if it's questioning from you or questioning from us, I agree over the •• I also represent an area, Tom, as you are very well aware of, with the worst stretch of road in New York State, Route 25 from Lake Grove to Coram. In the last two weeks alone, two young men have been killed on that route and one 14 year old boy right in front of my own eyes was mowed down by a car in Selden. It's devastating. I'm getting to my question, Mr. Chairman, I'm just prefacing my remarks.

If you go, and we do, speak to our civic associations, community groups, whatever it may be, you ask what the main problem is in the community and they'll say traffic and aggressive driving. And you ask what do they want more than anything with their tax dollars, it's two areas; first is public safety and second is quality education.

The Police Department has been basically decimated over the last couple of years and, you know, we all understand there's budgeting issues that we have to deal with, but we respond to the public. And again, I'll say it again, I want to be redundant on this, this is their number one priority. When they shell out their tax dollars, this is what they want; safe streets and safe neighborhoods.

Here's my question. I know you're a union guy, we all know you're a union guy, I know I'm going to ask these questions and don't use the "aim high shoot low" mentality. In your estimation, Tom, where do we need to get to by way of additional patrolmen?

MR. MURATORE:

To be realistic?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Realistic.

MR. MURATORE:

Probably three hundred, to be reasonable 150. You know, that would stem the advancement and the designation and some of the retirements. I mean, I think we've had 89 to date this year retirements, we could have one or two more accidentals that go out of that hundred that are out extended line of duty. So about three hundred would be pie•in•the•sky, but 150 would be really, really nice and I'm sure the department could live with that, too.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Oh, I'm sure they could and I'm sure the precincts would be thrilled.

MR. MURATORE:

Oh, definitely.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Because these men and women are stretched thin, even though •• because they're out there doing a

lot of work, as has been mentioned on the record already, through all the new departments and all the coverage that has to happen. Suffolk County is growing by leaps and bounds, especially in the eastern part of the district.

MR. MURATORE:

You know that my •• the Ladies and Gentlemen in my organization can't get days off for baptisms and weddings, and we knew when we took the job that that was part of it. But, you know, on occasion you do have personal days and you do have vacation days and unfortunately they're so thin right now that you can't even get a day to go close on your house unless you have a personal day. You can't use a single vacation day. So, I mean, like Legislator Caracappa said, the men and women are getting stretched.

There are people in the audience right now, you know, the cream of the crop, that are waiting to get promoted. They spent many years on the street, they do wonderful jobs. And like someone said before, you know, when you study for a promotion exam, it enhances your ability to be a better police officer. You know the law better, you know how to make an arrest better, you know how to do your job better. And yet these people are sitting here on the cusp because of what's going on with budget problems and, you know, we can't get supervisors that we severely need, we really, really need.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Understood. Mr. Chairman, one last thing.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Uh•huh.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I'm certainly not being hypocritical of the County Executive's Office, I think pointing fingers is not going to get us anywhere. I think it's up to this Legislature during this budget process to definitely examine and do something about the number one priority of our constituents and that's public safety. And I'm sure there will be a whole host of stand-alones if the Omnibus doesn't represent that and I'll be sure to handle that.

And to the precincts and the Commanders and all the men and women on the street, they're doing a hell of a job, and I'm not trying to blow smoke here. You know, I see them every day, I talk to them every day, as my colleagues do, and these accidents and these calls for which they go to within their own communities on the job, I know that it affects them personally and they're doing everything they can for us, so I appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And I would just like to add, amen to what Legislator Caracappa said. I think he's verbalized what we all feel. Legislator Lou D'Amaro.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thank you. Good morning. Legislator Caracappa really hit the nail on the head. I was just curious as to what your specific requests were. The budget recommended calls for 50, as you know, and then our own BRO has recommended another 50, which I believe is what you call a class. And you're saying that an additional 50 would be the minimum, or 150 total, to bring you up to at least a reasonable or acceptable number of Police Officers.

MR. MURATORE:

That's not going to bring us anyplace. It's going to keep us in a line, but not going anyplace with 150.

LEG. D'AMARO:

My understanding is that 100, roughly 100 a year retire or through other means are not active.

MR. MURATORE:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So if we just simply put back the 50 •• the 100, rather, through the BRO recommendation and the County Executive's recommended budget.

MR. MURATORE:

We'll have zero growth, right.

LEG. D'AMARO:

You're going to have zero growth. Okay, so the additional 50 would then expand your ranks somewhat.

MR. MURATORE:

Not •• well, you're going to have to make •• you know, you'll have to make supervisors, you'll make Detectives.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. MURATORE:

So I'm talking •• now, remember, PBA, Police Officers only, the silver tins.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. MURATORE:

You're not going to increase my ranks by anything. I'm going to be back where we started with 150.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Uh•huh.

MR. MURATORE:

If you fill what Bill needs and what the Detectives need and retirements and, you know, injuries, we're going no place.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I'm concerned ••

MR. MURATORE:

That's why I said 300.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, I'm concerned like my colleagues are. You know, I represent an area that includes a portion of Huntington Station and, you know, there's been tremendous efforts in that area to try and step up patrols and things like that. And the Police Department's been terrific in responding to that as best you can, but I'm not sure that it's enough either.

The question I have is just conceptually, you had mentioned in your opening comments that I think you quoted a Forbe's study that said that Suffolk County was the safest suburban community in America?

MR. MURATORE:

In the country, right; now, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Much to the credit, I'm sure, of the Police Department. But how do you square that with the criticism that the staffing is not where it should be?

MR. MURATORE:

Because the men and women go above and beyond. You know, it's all about what we have. But if you don't •• like I told you before about these people in the audience, the cream of the crop?

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. MURATORE:

If you don't give them anything to look forward to, we'll just be civil servants, we'll just be people who say we do our job and that's it. We go above and beyond, we're cops; like military men and women, they go above and beyond. They are given an order to maybe go and die for somebody that they don't know.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. MURATORE:

And that's what happens to us. On Christmas Eve, one of my guys or girls could go out and step in front of a bullet for somebody they don't know, because that's what we have to do and that's why we do the job that we do. But you know what? It can only go so far. You're cutting the cord thinner and thinner, eventually it's going to break. I mean, we see it in other jurisdictions, you know, throughout the country where cops get so disgusted •• we saw it in New Orleans. What happened with New Orleans? The cops became as corrupt as the criminals because there was nothing to look forward to.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Let me ask you this. If let's say we went to 150 in the '07 budget; would that result in any additional patrols?

MR. MURATORE:

I would hope so. I mean, he's doing this with •• you know, we're doing the job with what we have right now and a little bit of an increase would help things, I'm sure.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So it would put more uniform police officers on patrol.

MR. MURATORE:

Definitely, you have 150 new •• you know, a class •• you know, I said 50 is a class; the class right now is a hundred. So if you want to go talk about classes, give me three or four classes. I mean, 50 is like •• is nothing. First of all, you don't even get 50 out of a class sometimes and then you got •• you know, when you separate, when you're pushing them out to seven precincts, what are

you talking about, seven bodies a precinct for seven sections? Transfers usually come up, so your net is really zero.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Do recruits, when they graduate from the police academy, go right into special units?

MR. MURATORE:

No.

LEG. D'AMARO:

They don't. So they all start in patrol?

MR. MURATORE:

Unless they have some hidden talent that the department might need. But I have never •• I've been on 33 years, I very •• I don't think I've ever seen that where as a recruit you go •• I mean, that's for television, that doesn't happen in real life.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I don't watch much television.

MR. MURATORE:

Movies, whatever, you know?

LEG. D'AMARO:

So in other words, if the patrols, the new recruits come in, they go on patrol, they start their careers ••

MR. MURATORE:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

•• in that fashion, that would then free up officers who have the experience then to go into these special units.

MR. MURATORE:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So if we don't do more than just replace those that are retiring or are leaving the department for whatever reason, we're not going to be able to sufficiently staff those special units; is that what you're saying?

MR. MURATORE:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay, thank you. I appreciate your time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you, gentlemen. I'm going to ask Chief Moore and maybe

Mr. Zwirn to come up and just respond to what we're talking about.

What I'm going to ask you to do is to make us feel a little safer than we do right this moment and for the next future. So let us know what the plans are. Mr. Zwirn, are you getting your instructions from BRO?

MR. ZWIRN:

No, I was just asking them a question, because one of the things that was raised was to add more Police Officers. And as Legislator Caracappa pointed out, I think everybody would want more police officers, but there's a cost that's involved. And I'm not sure I can remember the exact number, but I think when Jan Moore was in the Budget Office I was serving on the Public Safety Committee that Legislator Carpenter and Legislator O'Leary chaired in the last Legislative session and we were talking about the addition of Police Officers, I think it was 150 some odd thousand dollars for a full-time Police Officer with fringe benefits and everything else.

Chief Moore tells me it's five million per hundred in the first year, but that goes up. I mean, if you have 300 more Police Officers in the department, I just would like to know, and I'm sure the Legislators would like to know, what that means in tax dollars.

Because what this is is a balancing act. We don't compromise on public safety, not this County Executive, not any County Executive and not the Legislature. What we try to do is find what works. Now, the Police District excludes the five east end towns which have their own town and village police departments out there. So when we talk about Suffolk County and the staffing levels, we're talking about the Police District, and not the east end police department, not the State Police, not the metropolitan police and what other police departments, law enforcement agencies we have on Long Island. So let's take out the east end equation for the most part, even though they do get police services like aviation and forensics and crime scene and things like that and they pay taxes into that. I live in that •• in the east end.

There's been pressure on the Legislature to take some more public safety money and appropriate that out to the east end and village police departments. The County Executive has resisted that and tried to increase the amount of sales tax revenue that can be used for the Police Department to give them a little more flexibility without having a tremendous impact on property taxes. And I think when you •• as Legislator D'Amaro mentioned and as the union representative mentions, Suffolk County is the safest place to live in the United States.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right, let me just stop you for one second.

MR. ZWIRN:

I'm just saying, that's pretty good. So now you have to figure out how many ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Whoa, whoa, whoa, let me ask you •• let me just get right to this point here. I've never been the strongest math student in the world, but I can tell you that if a hundred officers are retiring every year and we're planning on hiring 50, as a clinical social worker I can figure out we're safe now, but will we be as safe next year with less? I'm not saying, you know, put every •• fill every vacancy, but I'm saying maintain the status quo and I don't even hear that, that's what's concerning me. So how are we dealing with that?

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, I'll let the Police Department answer that, but they're doing the job; I mean, it's borne out by the facts. I mean, you live in the safest suburban community in the country.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, with the staff we have and I commend them, but what I'm hearing is we're going to have less staff. I don't want to wait until the statistics change, like the officer said, and we're seventh and eighth. Do you understand what I'm saying? To me it's a numbers thing and that's what's concerning me.

MR. ZWIRN:

That's why I asked Budget Review to give us •• if we can get some numbers. How much?

MS. VIZZINI:

You know, \$30 million if you're going to be hiring 300 police officers for the full year.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MS. VIZZINI:

But as you know, you need a manageable number of officers, a manageable number of classes. You'd phase it in, you know, as we're recommending, a class in March, the County Executive is recommending a class in September.

MR. ZWIRN:

But my point is if you add 300 and have 300 as your base number, because that was my impression what the union representative said.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

But I'm not saying that.

MR. ZWIRN:

That you wouldn't have an increase of ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, but I'm not saying that.

MR. ZWIRN:

No, no, I'm just talking ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, I'm not saying that.

MR. ZWIRN:

I'm talking the global picture, let's understand, and then you work backwards.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

What I would like is a response to we have 100 retirees, we're going to hire 50; how are we going to maintain the safest County in the United States with less staff? I talked to the officers, as my peers do here. They are doing an unbelievable job, but I don't want people pulled out of their home from a party or something to come fill a slot, and that's the sense I'm starting to get. I would like to know how are we going to do the same job? I don't want more, but the same job with a lot less, and that's my concern and that's what I need to hear.

MR. ZWIRN:

I'll turn that over to the Police Department to answer that much better than I can.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

CHIEF MOORE:

Good morning, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good morning.

CHIEF MOORE:

Lady and gentlemen. I'm Robert Anthony Moore, I'm Chief of Department, Suffolk County Police Department. And with me this morning is Dominick Barrone, he's the Chief of Support Services, and the Commanding Officer of our Administrative Services Bureau, Patricia Sitler.

In the past few years •• you know, being a boss, being a manager in the Police Department is a very hard job. We •• when Richard Dormer first became Police Commissioner, he challenged himself and he challenged all of us to stop going to the well whenever we needed to fix our problems. First and foremost, he's always made it his policy for himself, as well as for everyone in the Police Department, to think about other ways to do this work, and he has. It's not easy. If •
• give me 1,000 Police Officers tomorrow, my job will become extraordinarily easy. I will dye my hair to its original color and I'll never have another gray hair, but that's just not doable, that's just not doable.

The Police Commissioner feels that the 50 officers proposed by the budget is adequate at this time. In the past few years we've engaged in a civilianization program that's taking Police Officers doing what everyone admits is a job that could be done by a non-sworn officer and then that officer is redeployed back into the field, back to the sector cars, back to the foot posts. We've transferred or redeployed 42 Police Officers thus far. Not only that but, you know, in the precincts, there are a number of commands. Let's take the 1st Precinct, because they're all the same.

The 1st Precinct, the 100 command, that's the Inspector, the Deputy Inspector, the Captain, the administrative staff, and at one time there were Police Officers assigned to that staff. The 110 command or the 210 command, that's the Police Officers driving the sector cars and walking the foot posts, and that's what I think all of us are really talking about. And then you have the 120, which is the crime section, that's the plain clothes officers who handle misdemeanors; the 130, that's the COPE; and then of course there's a detective squad.

And I think what we're talking about is, you know, what's happening with the officers who drive the sector cars and the officers who work the foot posts. Well, 42 of the officers who were assigned to Support Services, Chief Barrone's, are now out there in the sector cars and walking foot. But not only that, but in the 10 commands, the 110, the sector car, the foot post command, there were officers on the desk; 21 of those officers were redeployed to the sector cars. So even within the 10 commands, officers who were assigned to those tasks were not doing those tasks, they were behind the desks, they were redeployed.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Let me stop you for one second. I'm going to ask you to quarterly send a report to the traffic •• to the Public Safety Committee on the civilianization positions.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And where people went.

CHIEF MOORE:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So that what you're saying, it helps a lot, but I'd like us to be informed on a quarterly basis that the positions are being filled, they're being redeployed and where they're being redeployed.

CHIEF MOORE:

We'll begin with the very next Public Safety meeting.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

CHIEF MOORE:

Okay. On Monday, seven of my 14 officers assigned to Applicant Investigation were redeployed

to the sector cars and to the foot posts. Civilianization is intended to permanently redeploy. Now, the Applicant Investigation officers, I have no intention of having them redeployed to patrol forever. Once we begin the process of doing the police orientations and the background investigations, those sorts of things for the new people, the anticipated recruits, I want those officers back because that's their basic task. But for right now, we can afford to put those officers into the patrol cars and on foot posts.

So we have on the one hand permanent redeployments as a result of civilianization. Now, when you take these officers from Chief Barrone's command, you know, Police Officers are always commanded by police supervisors, and civilianization thus far has impacted Police Officers; Police Officers going back to the sector cars, Police Officers going back to the foot posts. Well, what happens to the bosses? Well, we've discovered over time that the Sergeants, the Lieutenants, the Captains, the Deputy Inspectors, the Inspectors in charge of those commands are now in charge of what are wholly civilianized commands. Pat Sitler is an example; her bureau was commanded by a Lieutenant, now it's commanded by a civilian. There are no Police Officers assigned to that bureau.

So when we start to deploy Police Officers, what do you do with the supervisors? Well, you redeploy the supervisors. But whereas in the case of Police Officers, the difference, there's always been a difference historically between the authorized strength of the Police Department and the actual strength. There's virtually never a difference between the number of Detectives authorized and the Detectives, the actual Detectives. There's virtually never any disparity between the number of supervisors, actual and supervisors authorized.

What happens when you don't have supervisory positions available for supervisors? Well, I think unfortunately, because I don't disagree with the SOA, I don't disagree with the PBA, our cops •• the competition nowadays for promotion is ferocious. You can get a hundred and have virtually no chance of being promoted. We went through that ourselves for Sergeant, for Lieutenant, for Captain. I got a hundred on my Captain's exam, I was number two on the list. They made three people off my Captain exam, however, the list before that they made nearly 30 Captains. There's no guarantee as to how many individuals are going to be promoted off of a particular list, there

never has been. It would be nice if we could say, "Hey, the first five Captains, definitely. The first 15 Lieutenants, the first 25 Sergeants, done"; we've never been able to do that.

In the early stages of the Suffolk County Police Department when it was first being organized, all you had to do was pass a promotional exam and you were promoted. It's always been that situation for our officers. And it is hard, they give up their summers, you know, the family goes on vacation without them; I know, I know, but that's always been the case.

Anyhow, so we have redeployments as a result of civilianization. But then we also have what I call situational redeployment. And you all, you're all familiar with it, the Police Commissioner has been to every one of your offices a number of times, whenever you call him; if he's not there he answers, he gets back to you, if you write him a letter he responds, if you send him an e-mail he responds, and you know that we engage in situational deployment.

During the holiday season, starting Black Friday, right after Thanksgiving when the shoppers start coming out and they're carrying a lot of cash and the malls are filled with people, we redeploy officers who are not regularly assigned to patrol to the shopping centers. As a matter of fact, the Sheriff is going to be announcing in a few weeks the handicapped parking initiative which we engage in every year with the Sheriff and with the other departments. Who's it staffed by? Well, it's staffed by the officers in patrol and these other officers who are reassigned for periods, the holiday season being one.

This year, in 2006, we had the summer initiative where we redeployed officers; 488 patrol days were provided by officers who are usually not on patrol. They go back at the end of the summer, they go back after the end of the holiday. So we have situational redeployments, short-term, specifically for the holidays and for the summer, because these are periods of high activity. Not every day generates the same level of activity, you know that, you know that intuitively. We can demonstrate it through the charts.

Are there fewer Police Officers today than there were 25 years ago? Yeah, yeah, there are. But 25 years ago we didn't have portable radios. If you were on a foot post, you were on your own. You had to drag whoever it was that you were engaged with to the nearest call box hanging from a telephone and hope that it worked. Today we do have portable radios. Oh, by the way, we also have computers in the cars, we also have cell phones, we also have GPS systems, we call them ABL's, the same thing. We also have a •• we have plate readers that you can put on the side of the road and it reads every license plate that goes by and tells you anything you want to know about that •• we have ten of them, we have another ten on order.

How many Police Officers would you need to do the same volume of work? We'd spend hundreds of millions of dollars. In the past couple of years we have \$21 million grant from the Federal Government for technology advancement. There are strings attached. Whenever the Federal government gives you something, they want something back. And when they gave us this \$21 million technology grant, you know what they wanted back? Efficiencies. They wanted us to demonstrate that we took their \$21 million, put it in technology and then we can demonstrate that, "Oh, by the way, this performs this amount of staff hours."

Tom Muratore and I were footmen together. And when Tom Muratore and I were on foot, if we made an arrest, it would take four hours to process the arrest, five hours, six hours. Today, much of that work is done on the computer, many of the redundancies are done. We're now experimenting with doing virtually all of the paperwork right there in the car.

When Tom Muratore and I came on this job •• he's a little older, I knew you knew that •• if you wanted any sort of training whatsoever in the Police Department, you had to leave your sector car, get replaced by someone on time and a half, so one hour of training cost two•and•a•half hours of the taxpayers money, and then the police academy had to figure out, "Well, we have to wait until we have enough information to justify taking the Police Officer out of his or her car, because we need six, seven, eight hours of instruction."

You know, today in some instances, a Police Officer can go to a •• go out of service, press a button, watch a video on the car, take a test which gets e•mailed to the police academy and catalogue; they don't even go •• in some instances, you don't even go out of service, you don't even leave your sector anymore when it comes time to update some of your skills. In every case? Of course not, but we're experimenting with it. So technological advances.

Initiatives and efficiencies. Yeah, it's true that historically the Suffolk County Police Department at any given time would have nearly 200 officers on long•term injury or illness. Now, it happens. It happens in police work, it's one of the tragedies of the work that we do and that's always going to be the case. I wish it wasn't, you wish it wasn't, but it is the case. But today, about two days ago there were 49 officers on long•term jury and illness. Why? Innovative programs and practices on the part of the Police Commissioner.

You know, the •• some of the commands that were mentioned by our friends in the unions have helped, hiring more •• you know, there was a time when if a Police Officer was injured, he or she, and still the case today, had to wait for a police surgeon who would examine the officer so that the officer could go back to work. Our officers aren't bums, they're not slugs, they want to work, they want to get back there but they couldn't, and the reason they couldn't is because they didn't see the police surgeon. And we didn't have enough police surgeons, so a Police Officer would have to wait 30 days, regardless of the injury, until the police surgeon said, "You know what, you can go back to work." That's rare now. And that's one of the reasons, there are other reasons, but that's one of the reasons why we've gone from hundreds of officers out of work to 49.

So technology, innovative practices, redeployments. We have a plan in 2006, 2007 to redeploy 70 Police Officers and supervisors. We sent them to the Department of Civil Service and the Department of Civil Service said, "Wait a minute, you can't civilianize all of these positions. There are positions that don't exist." Okay, so they ruled it down, I think it's 56, I have the actual number. But we are bending over backwards to do the best we can.

You know, our Police Officers •• you know, I'm a Police Officer for more than half of my life. I can't imagine being anything else, I can't imagine doing anything else. Yes, my Police Officers work hard; no, they're not lazy. Yes, they make sacrifices, not only out in the field but sacrifices with their families to take this kind of job, and they are deeply committed to the work that they do.

Now, I have five pages of innovative programs and practices; it's in bullet form and it's in really small type. Unlike past practice, I am not going to read that into the record. With your permission, Mr. Chair, I'll give it to you and, of course, you can share it with anyone you choose.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

CHIEF MOORE:

It's hard. It's hard on all of us. It's hard on our Police Officers who study and work hard, it's hard on the union officials who hear their concerns and, you know, try to do everything they can to support their officers. And it's hard on us, because we did the same things; the only way you get here is by doing that. And all the things that they are going through now we went through, the Police Commissioner went through, because he was a Police Officer also.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. Well, you know, I appreciate your frankness and I will take that report and get copies made for everybody; in fact, if you pass it over, we'll get it done now. And I'd like to ask Legislator Losquadro to offer a question.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yes, I'll open the questions. How are you, Chief Moore?

CHIEF MOORE:

Sir.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Well, you answered some of my questions as I was writing them, but one of the questions I had, when you talked about 42 sworn officers out to the field, I was going to ask how many of them were temporary assignments and not full-time. You answered part of that by saying those seven individuals from Applicant Investigation will be going back, that they would only be out there during those situational redeployment periods.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

But that goes into my next question of what about areas that are no longer in existence like SITE or units like COPE that are being redeployed to cover sectors that I know routinely are not able to cover their patrol checks and unfortunately, and I've shared this with you, don't even sometimes have the staffing to be able to return the phone calls that are left on the answering machines for them.

So I understand the situation of redeployment where you're trying to address spikes in activity

during certain times of the year, and I'm sure you can demonstrate that with wonderful Ross Perot type charts and graphs, but, again, those are situational redeployments.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

And I don't think that necessarily addresses some of the full-time staffing of these specialized units, and I just want you to address that.

CHIEF MOORE:

Sure. Again, to clarify, 42 •• approximately 42 officers have been redeployed through civilianization. Twenty•one desk officers were •• in addition to that, 21 desk officers were redeployed to the field and then seven officers; so it's 42 plus 21 are the permanent assignments and the seven is an example of situational. So I hope that clears that up.

In the case of COPE, during the time that Commissioner Dormer has been in office, we've done a number of things with COPE. First of all, as you know, COPE is not a 24•hour a day, seven day a week operation. There are two squads assigned and they rotate, so one squad would be working, you know, a certain tour and the other squad will be working the other. There are times when there are no COPE officers available, or one or two at most. So that's one thing, just for the record, for those who may not be aware of that.

From time to time, the Commissioner has attempted to keep all COPE officers in COPE doing COPE related work full•time, and then at other times he's used COPE during the winter and the

slower periods to support the sector car operations. But in the summer, I'd be very surprised, because I •• the Police Commissioner's instructions to the Chief of Patrol was that during the summer, COPE is not to backfill. They may be •• as a matter of fact, they probably are backfilling right now, but during the summer and probably during those high holiday seasons they will not be backfilling and they haven't been backfilling. So the answer as far as COPE is concerned is, well sometimes yes, sometimes no.

Where do these other people go? You mentioned the SITE team.

SITE was very •• was very successful. The Commissioner at one time was Commanding Officer of the Highway Patrol; I have never served in Highway so I bow to his expertise in that arena. It was basically a policy decision on the part of the Police Commissioner. He felt that the •• since most of these traffic issues occur within the precincts, the precincts should not only be aware of it, but they should be responsible for addressing it. And how they chose to address it through the sector car operators, through COPE, through extra officers which we sometimes have during the winter and when vacation season is not at a peak, that's when those things •• and plus, again, the technology, using the license plate readers, the speed signs.

As a matter of fact, we have on order •• the Police Commissioner was driving somewhere one time and he noticed a speed sign that not only tells you the speed but says, "Hey, slow down." It gives you some sort of message. Well, we're getting one of those. He likes that and we may be getting •• you know, because we usually do that, we'll get one or two or a small number just to see if there's a benefit, and then if he determines that there is a benefit then he makes a larger purchase. And I think that's appropriate, because sometimes you have a sense that something's going to work and it doesn't necessarily turn out to be the case.

So it's not so much the SITE team as it is the work of the SITE team and is that being done and the answer is yes. Right now the Chief of Patrol is in the process of developing a plan where the Highway Patrol and the local sector car operators will work together. It's a little premature to comment on that, but that's another thing that is in the works.

And I do have to tell you that, for example, in 2006 we were actually able to increase not only the number of sectors, but sectors that had been operating two tour are now operating three tour. The 702 car, which you're familiar with; the 709 car is Legislator Romaine's •• the 620 car, the 613 car, the 516 car, the 714 car. And most of this was in 2006, this year, cars that hadn't existed now exist. Cars that had been two•tour cars, now are three•tour cars. So that's why the Police Commissioner is comfortable with the numbers in the current budget.

We are getting the job done.

In 2004, the Commissioner's first year in service, the prior administration gave him zero Police Officers and our Police Officers got the job done. The next year, 2005, the Commissioner was given 120 and 118 passed through the academy and the 118 were placed into service and they're doing the job. This year we have 100 and we're going to put them to use right away and we'll get the job done. And whatever we receive in the future, we'll put them to good use and they will get the job done.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you. There's sort of a Part A/Part B to the question.

CHIEF MOORE:

Okay.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

As you know, you and I have had discussions about my previous career before doing this and during my ten years working in that field, we literally went from Polaroids and, you know, A and

B forms to digital cameras and laptops and wireless transmitters. But it didn't change the need for the human element, you still needed "X" number of people to go out and carry on the job.

One of the basic principles of law enforcement has always been that visible presence, we've heard it talked about on many occasions. And I understand the need and the desire for the electronic efficiencies and I think that overall gives an enhanced public safety, but I think many of the •• and I want to thank the department for recognizing the need, especially on the east end, but I think a lot of these recognitions of the increase in population and increase in the need to service those communities are a long time coming. It's not as though they're new, we're addressing problems, unfortunately, that have been around for quite some time. And I point to •• unfortunately, you talked about portable radios, you know what I'm going to bring up and that's the radio tower up in Rocky Point ••

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

•• which unfortunately, as recently as last week, we're driving up on Woodlawn Road there, construction has not commenced. We started that process back in February and it took quite a while to go back and forth with the Water Authority and get all the memorandums and everything in place, and ultimately the Water Authority agreed to do the site improvements and I think that's a wonderful thing. But here we are coming into November and, you know, there was some criticism as why did we start the process so early back in February? Well, I knew this wasn't going to be something that would turn around quickly.

So my point is there are problems that have existed, especially on the east end of the district, for quite some time and we're only beginning to address them. So while I commend the department

for the efficiencies they put in place, I really feel that the human element is still paramount and we need to continue to put these efficiencies in place if we hope to only keep pace with the increase in the population and the increase in the number of incidents that we see unfortunately on an annual basis. And if you could please check into the situation on the radio tower, I'd certainly appreciate it.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, Chief. How are you?

CHIEF MOORE:

Sir.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'm going to ask you about three areas, I guess, if you can just give some comment. And like my colleagues, first of all, I guess I would applaud the efforts of the department to go ahead and move forward with technology. Similar to Legislator Losquadro, I went through a process that was completely paper driven and by the time that I got out of it, it was, for all intents and purposes, a

hundred percent automated and there were tremendous synergies that were gained, most in cost savings but more importantly service to the public, delivery of service to the public. That's where technology I think is beneficial, when what it does is helps to improve or enhance or keep delivery of service to the public. But some of the items, I guess, that you reference as far as technology I don't know replace that human element that we talked about.

I'll just reiterate, I guess, the comments about the SITE unit. We talk only about, you know, the high collision impact areas that I have in my own district, and certainly no criticism to Inspector Rhodes in the 4th Precinct, they do an excellent job, but they, like all your precincts, are stretched way too thin. No amount of plate readers, no amount of additional technology is going to stop the collisions and the other things that are occurring in these high incident areas. It's only going to happen if you can go ahead and deploy the resources that need to be there, and I don't know that you can go ahead and pull them from within the precincts that are stretched thin now to cover the balance of their responsibilities.

Witness what's occurred recently in the 4th Precinct with the number of different incidents that have been fairly significant crimes, unfortunately. So I don't know that I necessarily subscribe to Forbes or other remote evaluations about where crime's at. You know, you can tell anybody that crime is down, but talk to the victim; crime is not down at all, crime is there and the crime is very much in their life. So just like bond ratings, I'm not necessarily impressed or impacted by remote, you know, entities that give us these different ratings. So much for the soliloquy.

Three things. One, the two areas that I spoke to Mr. Mulligan about before as far as the Emergency Services Unit and also I believe it was the Aviation Unit that I spoke about as well. There's a third area that I'm going to ask you to just •• I don't know if it's something that's on your radar screen or not, but unfortunately I had the opportunity to spend some time in Stony Brook ER recently, for about a 12 hour period, and I saw there officers from every precinct, one through seven, at the CPEP unit, at any given time in excess of 10 or 15 officers, and in some cases officers for in excess of three or four hours with individuals that were undergoing, I presume, psych evals.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

*(*Legislator Horsley entered the meeting at 11:23 AM*)*

LEG. KENNEDY:

For whatever reason it was, they were called to the particular incident in the community. Now, obviously, it's within the realm of your department to address that in the first instance, but from your perspective as a manager and from a systems analysis perspective, that is the most inefficient, unproductive way to go ahead and address an issue that I could possibly imagine. Do you know about it; what will you do about it?

CHIEF MOORE:

Well, it's actually improved.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Don't tell me that, because I'm telling you, eyeball to eyeball, I saw it. If it was worse than that, they would have had to expand the ER in order to accommodate all the officers.

CHIEF MOORE:

There was a time when hospitals throughout Suffolk County would call the Police Department and say someone who had been under long-term care at the hospital suddenly became mentally ill and a danger to themselves or others, and demanded that the Police Department provide the transport from the particular hospital to one of the then existing psychiatric centers. That has

actually improved with CPEP and Stony Brook. As a matter of fact, my understanding is that many, many years ago when ••

LEG. KENNEDY:

Building 21, I worked it, yeah, I know. I remember when •• yeah.

CHIEF MOORE:

Oh, they used to lock us in and they wouldn't let us out; I mean, it was unbelievable.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I had the key, I know.

CHIEF MOORE:

That happened to me and to Tom Muratore. And it is •• you know, I wish I could sit here and tell you that we're in control of everyone and everything. I wish that I could sit here and tell you that just because we're the police, everyone is immediately going to meet our needs the moment we have a need, but the fact of the matter is that's just not the case.

That •• even though we've had improvements, and we really have, sir, as far as our Police Officers doing the transports to the psychiatric center, to Stony Brook, even though they have a psychiatric emergency room, even though •• although they have a Stony Brook Police Department now, because they didn't, that's a fairly recent innovation. Even though they have security guards, even though they have secured facilities, it's still hard for us to get out from under that and it drives us

crazy. If you could help us mediate that, we would be indebted to you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I will.

CHIEF MOORE:

Anything that you can do to ••

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'll be happy to speak to you and to the Commissioner.

CHIEF MOORE:

Sir, you're on.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And as a matter of fact, there has to be a way, whether it's you assign that as a sector and staff it, there must be some other way to go ahead and accomplish this, still cognizant of the legal responsibility for custody, still cognizant of all the other issues, systematically or systemically there must be a better way to do this because it's just •• it is unpalatable that you sit there and see that.

CHIEF MOORE:

If you do that, we'll name a building after you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Don't need it; don't want it, not interested.

CHIEF MOORE:

It's unbelievable.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But I'll be happy to go ahead ••

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

It takes a resolution.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yeah; of course, after review by a committee.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right. But no, I'll be happy to ••

CHIEF MOORE:

Sir, I appreciate your comments, and if you want to meet tomorrow on this I'd be happy to.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I will. But more importantly, and I'll yield to the Chair after I ask you to go ahead and speak about the other two areas that I had the dialogue with Mulligan about.

CHIEF MOORE:

Emergency Services; Emergency Services had two Lieutenants and three Sergeants, it did not have a midnight Sergeant. And I have to tell you, having two Lieutenants in charge of the same command at the same time is like having two chefs in charge of the restaurant kitchen; it just •• it didn't work out. So •• I'm sorry?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

It spoils the broth?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes. So the Commissioner has re•evaluated the position and right now we have solicitations out for a Lieutenant and a Sergeant. The Sergeant is going to be the midnight Sergeant and the Lieutenant is going to be the Commanding Officer; we think it's far more efficient, far more effective.

Now, because this is a recent decision, we're still, as I said, have the solicitations out and doing the interviews. And in the interim, the Aviation Lieutenant has stepped over, because they're in the same building; so if they were in widely separated areas, that would be insurmountable. But as it stands, in the short-term, that is how we're dealing with the issue of Emergency Services, so there will be a midnight Sergeant and there will be one Lieutenant in charge of the command. Now, the other one had to do with?

LEG. KENNEDY:

I believe the two that I spoke about was Aviation and Emergency.

And the Chair has asked me, in order to go ahead and keep the dialogue going, that we limit it. I have a curiosity about your response to the balance of the areas that have been brought up, but I'm going to yield in deference to the Chair's request.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. And I'll let Legislator Browning continue.

LEG. BROWNING:

Good morning.

CHIEF MOORE:

Good morning.

LEG. BROWNING:

And I have to say one thing, at the 7th Precinct, since we got those 24 new Police Officers and the additional sector cars, I have heard so many compliments about the 7th Precinct and Inspector Meehan is wonderful.

CHIEF MOORE:

We like him, too.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, we do. And the police presence in the Mastic Beach area has increased; I know he said recently they have a 30% increase in arrests due to the fact that they have additional Police Officers. However, I know that they have an East West Task Force.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

And it's a combination of Five, Six and Seven. I believe there's one Lieutenant and they take a couple of Police Officers from each precinct and put them in this task force. One of my concerns is you were here the last time when we had the East Patchogue people here complaining about the problems in their community with crime.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. BROWNING:

I hear it often from the North Bellport people, there was a drive•by shooting there also. I'm concerned about taking Police Officers from like Five and Six where we have North Bellport, Gordon Heights, where they're really needed and, you know, putting them in the task force and then where they're going to be focused in say Mastic Beach. And we certainly need that, but I'm concerned about pulling them out of areas where they're really, really needed.

These task forces are a great idea, however, I think we need to maybe staff it in another way and not pull them out of the precincts but to have that •• maybe that would be like the SITE program idea. So I am concerned about that; I don't know if you can respond on that one.

CHIEF MOORE:

Well, only in general terms. We like task force operations. As a matter of fact, we're big fans of multi•agency task force operations where it's not only just the police, but there are Probation Officers, Parole Officers. Interestingly enough, the Sheriffs, the Deputies, I can't tell you how often they rush to our support as well and we always appreciate that. They're all Police Officers.

But, you know, what happens is when officers move en masse to a particular area a couple of things happen. One thing is the bad guys see him and they take off, they go somewhere else; it's called displacement. So one of the great benefits of a task force operation, as opposed to a sector

car based operation, is the sector car has a finite boundary, it's got to stay where it is, and the task force can move around. So it's the best of both worlds when you have sector cars and foot posts and task forces because the task force can move to an area, support the sector car operations, support the COPE operation. The area starts to cool off because of the large volume of arrests and the displacement, and then they can quickly, the same night, move to another area. So there are areas that have more challenges than others.

There are areas that •• situationally there are areas in Suffolk County where we know, and you know as well, where on Friday night it's drag race night and we redeploy to that area and take their cars. So task force operations are a big plus. It's actually •• it's good for the Police Officers, it's job enrichment, they get away from what they're normally doing and get to do something, you know, that's different, so yeah, fun, it is fun. The productivity is remarkable. But again, one of epidemics in the criminal justice system is that we tend to see the same people time and time again and, you know, that's really not the fault of the police, we have to talk to other aspects of the system.

You know, any community, they are very close to their COPE officers. The precinct commanders are out there morning, noon and night, weekends, holidays, the Police Commissioner is always available.

So if someone sees a problem, well, let us know, because we don't always see things and we don't always see them as quickly as the community does, so you just let us know and we'll address it.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And I don't know if I'm answering the question •• asking the question that John had, but Aviation they say has two Sergeants.

CHIEF MOORE:

Three.

LEG. BROWNING:

Oh, three?

CHIEF MOORE:

I'm sorry. You know, I don't know; I could get back to you, I'm not sure.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, because I believe that it was Mr. Muratore who said that we had two Sergeants. It's a 24/7 operation, so who's in command on each of those shifts? So that would be four shifts.

CHIEF MOORE:

I'd have to get back to you. Off the top of my head, I'm not sure what the supervisory staffing is in Aviation. I believe it's a Lieutenant and I'm not sure how many Sergeants.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And last question, this will be a quick one, because I was reading the Suffolk Life questionnaire of all the State•electeds and the Highway Department, you know, we are working on State highways, we have our highway Police Officers. What are we getting from the State with these highway Police Officers, or shouldn't the State Troopers be patrolling these roads? It's

costing us money to patrol State highways.

CHIEF MOORE:

That's a policy decision. Mr. Zwirn, would you like to ••

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah. The County Exec's been working on that with our State representatives since he's been in office. We talked about it in Nassau County when I was back there in the 90's; the State's got a good thing going and, you know, we're not going to pull Police Officers off the road until they're going to start staffing it. So it's a conundrum.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I can mention that daily I do mention to my State representative no State unfunded mandates. So I'm working on it, too.

MR. ZWIRN:

Clearly, you have no influence.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

True. Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. God, I don't want to get into the long debates we've had in the 90's on the redeployment of police on Route 27, on Montauk Highway and the LIE; unbelievable. It almost came down to a showdown where we did pull the cops off and the New York State Troopers said they wouldn't show up if we did, so; anyway, there's a lot of history there.

I, too, would like to add my congratulations to the Commissioner, also Chief Moore and all of the brass in the Police Department for the sweeping changes you've made over the last couple of years by way of •• the way the Police Department is run. It was originally met with some skepticism by people around this horseshoe and in the department and I'm happy to say that many of those ideas have panned out for the better and it's giving you the ability to do the innovations that you've spoken about.

But my concern is this, and I guess it's just a pretty much straightforward answer. Are those innovations and are the reemployments and the civilianization and everything that you've done to help, has that increased police presence in Suffolk County or is that basically the Police Department desperately trying to maintain a level of public safety that we're used to here? As has been mentioned many times in whatever article that they want to keep bringing up. Is this simply trying to backfill the best you can to keep that number up to where we're used to, or are we adding on top of what we usually have.

CHIEF MOORE:

You know, I really can't give you a good answer, it's never been presented to us that way, and I really don't want to speak off the top of my head about that.

I think that all of these factors •• well, in the 1970's in Kansas City they did an experiment in law enforcement that is now famous and it's called the Kansas City Experiment and it led to what is now a focus on directed patrol and quality of life enforcement. It was a very simple experiment. They took Kansas City and they divided it into three areas. In one area they didn't do anything •• the same number of Police Officers. In the second area they took all the Police Officers out, and the Police Officers would only go into that area if they were called. Then they would go into that area and they would do what they needed to do in that area, and then they would go into the third area which already had, so the third area had, you know, let's say twice the number of officers.

So you had one area that didn't change, that was your control. Then you had one area where there was no one doing random patrol, omnipresence, you know, that sort of thing. And then you had the third area that had cops all over the place, you know, comparatively. You know what they found? Nothing. They didn't find changes in crime levels in the three areas, they didn't find changes in public perception of, you know, whether they were adequately policed or whether or not they felt safer. In fact, in the area where they had twice the number of cops, they didn't even recognize that they had more cops around, and that kind of blew away this notion of random patrol and omnipresence and all of the rest of that.

And that's why today we have directed patrol, you go where the stuff is. That's why today we have COPE, you know, a more intimate relationship with the people and particularly the victims. Because I can't tell you how many times, even in my own career, you know, a person is victimized, you make the arrest and the person doesn't feel any better. They feel •• they still feel that •• they're still afraid, they still feel violated, they still have lost their faith. So we need to do more when it comes to the victim, we're only just starting.

I'm happy to tell you that I was just with Judge Fitzgibbons yesterday for hours talking about restorative justice, which you may know a little bit about, sir. You know, it's more than just driving around. And I know you're not saying that, but it's more than just driving around, it's being plugged in to the community. You know, you go into these communities where the people are desperate, where the people are afraid, ask the people if they know the name of the COPE officer; they know the name of the COPE officer. Ask the people if they know how to get in

touch with the COPE officer, they'll give you the cell phone number of the COPE officer; that's the kind of people that we have in the Suffolk County Police Department. You can call them off •duty.

So interaction with the victim, targeted patrol, quality of life enforcement, bringing the other stakeholders in on solving the problem, not just the cops; the cops are not going to solve everyone's problems.

How about the community activists, what are they doing? You know, where are they in all •• how about the clergy? Public officials are always there, you guys are always at these things. You know, how about them? Well, that's what we're doing, so that's why it's hard. I'm not trying to defer. It's hard to say.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I'm sure it is and that's a question we have to ask during this budget process and that's what these hearings are for. Have all of those wonderful things that you've implemented, is that just keeping our head above water or is it really improving the Police Department by way of not so much an omni•presence but a level of service that the public is used to. We'll be asking that question and I'm sure you'll be getting back to us with more information regarding that, but it's something we really have to ask ourselves as the policymakers and the purse string holders as we move forward.

CHIEF MOORE:

Can I just give you one anecdotal story?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Please.

CHIEF MOORE:

I mean, this is my personal experience.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Through the Chair.

CHIEF MOORE:

I'm sorry; may I?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure, absolutely.

CHIEF MOORE:

Thank you. When I first started, when I was a Captain, I was the Commanding Officer of the Community Policing Services Bureau and that's when we really started with Weed & Seed sites in Suffolk County. At the time we had two, Huntington hadn't come on•line, we had the one in Wyandanch•North Amityville and the one in Bellport. And I started going to the meetings in North Amityville, and when I first started going to these meetings, what were people complaining about? They were complaining about gangs, they were complaining about drugs, they were complaining about violence, they were complaining about the things that you would expect people in a Weed & Seed site to complain about. And, you know, we worked with them, they were

Weed & Seed so they got money for community projects, we got money for police projects. About three years later I'm still going to these meetings and you know what they're complaining about? Litter. That's a win.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Big time.

CHIEF MOORE:

That's a big win. So, I mean, in my personal experience here in Suffolk County, and I've been all over the place, I've seen change. I've seen communities where people were afraid and felt disenfranchised and felt that they had no power at all now taking charge, and not only supporting the operations of the police but leading the operations of the police. That's great.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

And we all want that, we want that intercommunication between the police, government officials and that's what we strive to do.

I have a second question actually, Mr. Chairman. This goes to maybe hopefully a solution towards what we're going to work on in the budget and that is providing more cops. Where are we with the Feds, Budget Review or to the Chief, with COPS Ahead Program or COPS Universal which was so popular in the late 90's and early 2000's. Has that dried up? Can we go back to that well? I know there were a lot of strings attached to that grant as well, as you know, and it's a little expensive, but it does give us that start-up money to hire more cops and maintain more cops.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes, it does, and unfortunately that has not been available. The last time the Suffolk County Police Department applied for that grant was •• and actually received was October of 2003. That grant is no longer available. So we did hire •• it actually started in 1994. The first year that you were able to hire was 1995, we began hiring. We did not hire Police Officers every year and even when we did hire Police Officers, not all of them were COPS Ahead or COPS Universal, it's the same program, hired officers. But unfortunately, the Federal government no longer offers that program.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. I think that kind of covered it all. I appreciate you giving us that much information and I think, as Legislator Caracappa said, the key is going to be the flow of information ••

CHIEF MOORE:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

•• between us, the PBA's and you. Thank you.

CHIEF MOORE:

Thank you.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thanks, Chief.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I want to thank the other people that have cards for bearing with us, but as you know, this is such an important issue we felt that we wanted to give them as much time as possible. Nancy Marr. Yes, it is your time. Thank you for waiting.

MS. MARR:

Thank you. It's been very interesting and preliminary to what I want to say.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Great.

MS. MARR:

We appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Legislature, and I'm representing the League of Women Voters of Suffolk County. My name is Nancy Marr and I'm also the President of the League of Women Voters of Brookhaven Town.

We're concerned about several areas of crisis in our County. One in ten Americans suffers from

serious mental illness. Some suffer from substance abuse as well since there is a tendency in the mentally ill population to self-medicate, especially when supportive services are not readily available. The numbers suggest that these people are our neighbors, friends, family members. They require professional, informed intervention, supervision and appropriate housing if they are to have the opportunity for recovery or even survival.

Cutting services does not save Suffolk County taxpayers money. These residents don't evaporate. Sometimes they are sent out of county for housing. They may go to nursing homes. The cost of Medicaid reimbursement to nursing homes is double what it is to adult homes. They may go to private hospital psychiatric wards, another expensive alternative.

Without intervention, many recycle through hospital emergency rooms, are homeless, or reside in emergency housing or homeless shelters. They sometimes enter the criminal justice center system and often impact the perception and reality of public safety that we've just been talking about. When we deal in this way with our mentally ill population we are paying too much and getting poor results.

Alternatives to incarceration programs have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to aid many people build constructive lives. There are fewer re-arrests. Sixteen percent of the jail population is mentally ill. Specialized probation costs \$3,110 for each participant annually. Jail time costs over \$74,000 annually per inmate. The potential saving is clear.

The proposed 2007 Operating Budget for Suffolk County includes cuts to the majority of contract agencies, including many mental health service providers. As an example, Talbot House is the only substance abuse crisis center in Suffolk. It provides services to 1,700 clients per year. That's 35 beds, although New York State OASAS states that 70 beds would meet the County's needs. With the proposed \$40,000 cut in its budget for this year, it would be necessary to cut an additional eight beds.

In March of this year Suffolk County received \$11.6 million from New York State as a reimbursement for the County's Chapter 621 Eligibles, former State psychiatric patients from the closed mental health hospitals. When this money arrived in Suffolk County, it was, we feel, inappropriately placed in the debt services reserve fund. It has since been transferred to offset the need to raise property taxes.

The Budget Review Office believes that a portion of this money at least could be set aside to explore and find solutions for that part of the population for which it was intended. Those former psychiatric patients are among us, still requiring service.

The League strongly recommends that the 2007 budget provide adequate funding for this vulnerable population and suggests that this is a fiscally responsible position which will also result in savings to the average County taxpayer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. I'd like to ask Budget Review to just comment.

MS. VIZZINI:

In terms of the \$11 million dollars, the speaker's remarks are accurate. As you are aware, the 2006 adopted budget •• we were unsure whether we would get those recoveries or not and we adopted the budget with actually \$13 million in anticipated revenue in the debt reserve. In the event that it didn't come in, it was not used for programmatic or personnel or something like that.

What we write in our report is that we can revisit this policy decision. In 2006 that we •• March, actually, of 2006 we did settle with the State. We got the recovery monies. It is based on

Medicaid expenditures for formerly institutionalized patients that the State should have been paying for but the County incurred those costs.

And after a lot of documentation we were able to settle for the eleven•six.

Since we are at a junction where you can make changes to the 2006 estimated budget, you could do something with those monies or other monies if it is your policy discretion. However, those specific monies have •• in fact, they are part of a \$23 million transfer that is made to the General Fund to offset the need to increase taxes or that would have to be offset with other revenue or concomitant in expenditure reductions.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you. Questions? Legislators Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes. Thank you. I'm going to direct this to BRO just to go ahead and check on the numbers. I know we've heard about them earlier in other committees. The speaker spoke about Talbot House. Talbot House is, I believe, is for alcohol detox and it is operated by Catholic Charities. How much did the County Executive's budget reduce funding for either this •• well, we heard 40,000. How much did it reduce for Catholic Charities across the board?

MS. VIZZINI:

We'll get that for you. Yeah, Talbot House is •• you know, they actually spent a million four fifty •seven in 2005 and the recommended number is 30,000 less than what they actually spent in 2005. I'll get that number on Catholic Charities for you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Other questions? Okay. Thank you very much. Kevin Deagon •• {Dignon}.

MR. {DIGNON}:

Thank you, Mr. Eddington and members of the Public Safety Committee, for giving me this opportunity to address you. I'm a Sergeant within the Suffolk County Police Department and I'm a personal example of what Mr. Losquadro was talking about earlier about somebody who has studied for advancement. On the last Lieutenant's exam I received 102.1 percent on that exam. And I have almost 18 years on the job, I've spent thousands of dollars in study aids, and I've spent hundreds of hours studying, giving up many of my vacations to be able to further my career and advance by getting promoted.

Presently in the 2006 budget there's two Lieutenant openings and one Captain opening. They're about to promote probably one Captain, make the three Lieutenant openings, and my concern is that I don't see any plans on getting promoted even though I •• my position is there, the money is there, and from what everyone has been saying today, I know the need is there.

And I would just like to •• I don't •• I know the union and the Chiefs have been addressing the 2007 budget and beyond and about possibly eliminating positions. I don't agree with that, but presently, the position that I studied for, that I earned, is there and I want to know why I'm not •• why I'm not going to get promoted.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. And we did ask that question and we will be waiting for an answer. I appreciate you giving a face to the number and a position. Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I would just say, number one, congratulations on that very impressive score. And we appreciate and we know, I just want to reiterate, the work that individuals are doing within the department to better themselves and improve their knowledge of, as the Commissioner likes to say, the business of policing. We certainly appreciate your efforts and those of other members of the department and that's why we're addressing this. So, thank you again.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. {DIGNON}:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm going to ask John Desmond to come forward please, from Probation.

MS. VIZZINI:

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes.

MS. VIZZINI:

If I could respond to Legislator Kennedy. In the aggregate, those agencies that are identified clearly in the budget with the preface Catholic Charities in the aggregate, the funding is about \$50,000 less than the 2006 estimated.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. I'm just going to ask you to talk about positions that you would like to see filled and what your •• what your proactive approach to reducing the jail population is.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

In August and September of this year, the County Executive signed 32 SCINS allowing me to hire additional personnel. Of those 32, 10 were backfills to 22, others were for staff. That brought us to the highest number of personnel we've ever had in the department. Over the last year•and•a •half, we have redistributed staff to beef up our ATI's. We have implemented the GPS, which is a small component of the whole approach to the ATI's, but one that will probably grow in the future.

We have with the cooperation of the Sheriff, we're going to be moving our personnel that are currently at the jail doing the Bail Reduction Program, we're going to be moving those over. One of those, again, with the cooperation of the Sheriff, will be manning the District Court lockup to do a Bail Reduction Program there.

In addition, we've •• now have two supervisors that are working closely, not only with the District Court judges and the County Court judges, but with the town and village justices to identify potential individuals that would be eligible for ATI programs. We've done all of that under •• with the existing departmental resources.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So are you basically telling us that you agree with the staffing for next year?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Basically, we're as •• we can handle all the responsibilities that we now have.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Questions?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I think you know what my first one will be, regarding the facility in Coram. We've been hearing for some time that your move into that facility is eminent. What's the status of the repurposing of a County owned facility?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

We also have heard that our arrival there was eminent and we've been hearing that since March. I'm happy to say it actually looks like we're about to occupy the facility. The last of the construction was completed, I believe, last Friday. We're just waiting for some wiring and such to be done. But we hope to be in by the middle of November. And we'll have approximately 45 officers at that site.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

What •• I know there's been some concern raised on the part of the community and I've been trying to allay some of those concerns as to what the functions that would be performed by the Probation Department out of that facility will be. Could you just elaborate on what functions will be performed there?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

The major function that will be performed out of that site will be supervision in the Brookhaven Town and part of Riverhead Town areas. There will not be regular office reports conducted at that site. In other words, we will not be having large groups of probationers coming to that site to report to their Probation Officers. That will be done at existing sites throughout the County. The only other purpose that we'll be using that site for in the short•term will be some training and that again will be training of Probation Officers and Peace Officers from other County and town agencies.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Very good. That's •• that was part of the repurposing that I envisioned for that facility. And, unfortunately, the move being eminent and the last of the wiring being completed was information that I had unfortunately gotten two or three months ago. That was the last I had heard as well. So a little disappointed to hear that's the most recent information that's been disseminated regarding the status of completing the build out in that facility. I'll have to re•inquire with the Department of Public Works as to the Telecommunications wiring completion, because, to my understanding, that was the last component that needed to be done.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

What had actually happened was there had been a real problem purchasing the modular furniture to be used for that office, and that was a problem that arose at the last minute with the company that was supposed to provide the contract to the County was taken over by another corporation, voiding the contract. Purchasing had to go through a new contract and that put us behind close to three months.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Well, I would appreciate in the future, as I did not receive that information from the Department of Public Works, despite several conversations with them regarding this, if in the future you could keep me abreast of developments. We have James Bond leaving the room, by the way, Ian Fleming over there.

The other part of the question that I had for you was the SCRAM, the self•contained remote alcohol monitoring devices, legislation that I sponsored to purchase and to begin the use of those. Unfortunately, we had a situation that the contract •• and that was not your fault •• within the Executive Branch was not signed for quite some time, and when confronted with that, there really was •• they couldn't offer an explanation. It was a mea culpa that they had made, a serious

mistake in not addressing that situation earlier.

The contract was signed, and as of about a week and a half ago we were told that the merchandise was being sent to the County. Have you received it? Are you •• when do you anticipate receiving it, and whichever one of those it is, how do you plan to implement that program?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

As far as I know we have yet to receive the equipment.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

And as I said, that's no fault of your department.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yeah. We also had followed•up on our request for that equipment. Our intention, as soon as we get the equipment, is to utilize it immediately. It will be distributed to our Probation Alcohol Treatment Unit, which is the •• which are the group that supervises the probationers with two or more DWI's that we supervise. They'll be the priority recipients of those units. And the supervisor there will work closely with also our Day Reporting Center and our GPS Unit to identify appropriate personnel.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Excellent. I very much look forward to this. And for the record, and for the Newsday reporter sitting in the audience who ran a front page story regarding this program with the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, Nassau County found out about this program because of a press

conference that I held along with your officers, and Nassau County had not even contacted the company who manufactures this equipment and had to go through us to get that information and they are only now negotiating with that company. So we are light years ahead of Nassau County on this.

I think this will be a very innovative program and that is going to help the Probation Department immensely. We've talked about recidivism rates at length here and the fact that law enforcement, unfortunately, deals with many of the same people on an ongoing basis. And I think in an area like DWI with such a high recidivism rate something very innovative like this will be a great tool to you.

I look forward to discussing updates once that program takes effect. And if you could keep me informed on the Coram facility as well I'd appreciate it. Thank you.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I would like to invite you to come down and tour the facility as soon as it's opened.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Fantastic.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

And then also I'd like you to meet with the PAT officers once we have the devices working so you can observe them and make sure that they're meeting your specs.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Fantastic. Thank you, sir.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'd like you to extend the invitation to the whole committee also, if that's all right.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

It would be my pleasure. I'd also like to invite the committee to see our GPS operation. Again, it's small right now but I think you'll find it's very impressive in terms of its abilities.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Call my office and we'll arrange those two meetings.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

It would be my pleasure.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. No, I'm not on the committee. You know I find this •• these topics of interest. A couple of items I'm going to ask you to clarify. I know that the Chair asked you to go ahead and respond to the position matter, I guess, as put in the budget, but I just want to make sure that I understand what your comments are from what I read here in BRO's report. It appears that there were 64 new positions originally requested within the budget. Is that correct?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Correct.

LEG. KENNEDY:

It appears that the County Executive elected to put in three new positions.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Are we still on the same page?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

We're still on the same page.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And BRO recommended 11 positions being added to your unit in a variety of areas that are reporting and some of the other areas. Your testimony here today is that the three positions that the Exec has included is satisfactory?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I can do my current job with my current staff. Anything exists •• anything additional I will need additional resources for. The reason that I put in the large number of personnel was for the GPS. In case of some sort of miracle and the technology actually working effectively, I wanted both the opportunity to expand rapidly and also for both the County Exec's budget people and for the Legislature's BRO to be aware of what the cost of a good sized GPS electronic monitoring unit would look like. Realistically I did not expect that we were going to have a lot of success initially with technology, but I wanted to be on the safe side with the budget request.

I'm proceeding with caution and with good reason. A third of the initial units that we received to do the GPS did not function as to specs and had to be returned. We've had some problems with software, with the technology, with some of the cell phone locations. It is all teething problems. I think long-term it's going to be a very successful program, but I think slowness and caution is the way to go.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. With the Chair's indulgence, just two more areas and then just solicit a comment. The day reporting section. Our recommendations are •• I'm sorry. BRO's recommendations are that there be three •• I'm sorry •• four staff pulled in for that unit, and we've heard and we all know it, we've been at the {CPROC} meetings and everything else. The cost, the fiscal cost is far less when you're working with an individual in a community situation as opposed to housing in our jails. Why •• is there some procedural aspect to this that we're not looking to support these day reporting staff? I know you included them, the Exec elected not to, and BRO's requesting that

they be in.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Again, if •• if there is to be an expansion of my department's function I'll need additional resources. But I can provide the functions that we now have with the current staff. If we want to increase the number of participants at day reporting I'll need additional staff.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And I appreciate that. Then let me ask the next question then. Do you think that day reporting is a workable, prudent, viable alternative to incarceration for some individuals?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Definitely. Statistically it's been proven.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Two other areas. One just a question. Tell me about the Probation Officers assigned to the Sex Offender Unit and in particular did you not only have one officer handling all of the east end?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yes, we have one officer that handles all the cases on the east end.

LEG. KENNEDY:

How many staff do you have in total in the Sex Offender Unit, Probation Officers?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

We have eight Probation Officers, and one paraprofessional.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. And is that a sufficient number of officers to handle this population?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I can always use additional resources. It's sufficient for what we're doing now with the personnel that we have assigned. I could use a lot more things in different ways, but we have sufficient resources.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I appreciate that. In deference to the Chair I'm trying to keep this succinct and not be wide-ranging. That will be my last question. So let's stay on this topic of the Sex Offender Unit. How many additional Probation Officers would you suggest would be prudent or reasonable to add to address this population?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Realistically, if you want to have a significant additional impact on the sex offenders in terms of recidivism and everything, you'd have to make a good size commitment because we're doing a pretty good job now. I would probably look for three additional Probation Officers, additional consultant staff, and polygraph personnel, either contracted out or a trained polygraph Probation Officer.

And then if you're really going for my wish list I would need a computer specialist, because my own Probation Officers are currently working on the sex offender's computers, but the technology is such that to have a real specialist would be the most advisable.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, we have a wonderful IT Unit, John, here in the County and I'm sure they're going to be able to jump right in and help perhaps, through the Chair, if the Chair directs or asks or we do that in the omnibus.

Finally, my last question and it's a wider ranging one and I will yield. We've heard through several of these meetings as well as from the public about the funding associated with 621. And it appears, we talked about this, we know that there is perhaps maybe a 10 or 15% •• percentage of those individuals that are presently in Riverhead and Yaphank incarcerated who have a significant mental health component.

In your opinion, would it be viable to establish some type of an alternative for these individuals with a mental health diagnosis, to house them in an alternative situation? And is that something that could be worked with with the courts in your opinion?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I believe that's eminently doable. I think that what we need to do, and I've talked about this with the County Exec's IT people, is to develop a process by which the information that the Police Department develops in the course of their arrest is transferred to my department through the ROR Unit, which are the individuals that interview all of the prisoners coming in through District Court lockup.

We can then identify these individuals early on in the process. If necessary, transfer them out to the jail Mental Health Unit for five to ten days to be stabilized while a plan of treatment is developed, then have them brought back to court with a plan for them to go to local clinics, day programs, whatever is necessary. But I think that's something that can be done, it just requires some planning and some development of some additional resources.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. Mr. Chair, I'm going to ask, while I'm not a member of this committee, you and I have served on several committees over the past couple of days and have heard about the focus and the •• not only the humanity or the human aspect of trying to provide this alternative, but the fiscal prudence. So I'm going to ask this Chair and this committee to at least consider amending the budget or reflecting in the budget our desire to go ahead and move forward with this mental health alternative. Thank you. I'll yield.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

I just had a quick question. On day reporting, because that's something •• I, you know, I know we

have spent a lot of time talking on a lot of issues, specifically sex offenders, but day reporting. Say I have to be •• I have to report. Where do I go? Where are the locations?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I'm sorry. Are you talking about office reporting, the probationers coming in to report to their Probation Officers?

LEG. BROWNING:

Yes.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Or day reporting, which is a program that we have where specific individuals with high risk of recidivism come in and report and basically spend the day with us.

LEG. BROWNING:

There you go. The day reporting.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

The day reporting. Our Day Reporting Center is located in Hauppauge. Individuals generally get there by bus. There have been times that we have utilized vans when we have specific people in a specific location, a concentration of them. But generally we provide them with bus tokens. They come in, they report in each day. As soon as they come in they are tested for drugs and alcohol. We have an educational component on site. We also have mental health staff and substance abuse

staff. We also have dental/medical that are available periodically through the week. Also medication. And we also have •• the Department of Labor has an office just across from that site location to provide employment assistance.

Generally it's supposed to be a three month program. The experiential is that most of these individuals are with us from anywhere from six months to a year. They start out with us going full•time, five days a week. Probation Officers go out to their residences nights and weekends to make sure that they're in the right spot. We use some electronic monitoring with them, though not the GPS yet.

After "X" number of months with us, they're stepped down so that they come in evenings or on weekends and at that point they need to be working. And we do continual check•ups on them. Once they have done well enough for long enough we return them to regular caseload supervision. If they have a problem they can be returned automatically back to the day reporting.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, because when I think of day reporting there's also •• I've seen it done in other countries where say somebody has a DWI. I know that we have people sitting in the jail that got a DWI and just maybe just didn't have enough money to pay the bail and rather than them spend time sitting in a jail, they're able to continue to work. So now they're not losing their job and they can report to police stations every day on their way home from work, you know, at some point, where they have to take the breathalyzers and they have to take the tests. We don't have anything like that, do we?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Well, not at the precincts. The present are not set up to handle that kind of arrangement. We have supervised release, which is a small section of the Probation Department which handles

individuals that have been released to our recognizance, to our supervision, while they are waiting to take a plea. Those individuals report in to the Probation Officer on a regular basis, could be a day a week, couple of days a week, depending. They're tested and their status is checked. There is also some home visits and such that are done with that.

In addition, we have interim probation which is something that the District Court out here is very big with. We currently have 700 participants, and those are individuals that have taken a plea but have not yet had a formal sentence. They meet with the Probation Officer for one year. We do normal supervision, but it's not a normal probation case. At the end of that time, their charges can be rather dramatically dismissed or reduced if they do well.

LEG. BROWNING:

And one last one. You say you have eight officers for the Sex Offender Unit. How many sex offenders do each of them handle?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Each of them handles roughly 30.

LEG. BROWNING:

That's a lot. Okay. And how often do they see each of these 30 people?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

They are supposed to see them at least four times a month. In addition, they're supposed to also go to their residence and also check with counseling and such. The reality is that they often see

the individuals much more often than that because the Probation Officers also participate often in the treatment.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

On the lines of DWI I'm going to ask Legislator Kennedy to propose a last question.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. John, I happened to be reading the Bar Association News the other day. They had an advisory in it about the significant change that's going to come into effect on November 1st with the DWI laws. And in particular it mentioned, I guess, the ignition interlock and the mandatory, I guess, component of that, I guess, for multiple offenders. Is that something that your office is going to be involved with or will it have any implications for us?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yeah. My understanding is that that will probably result in probably a doubling of the use of ignition interlock, which is already pretty widespread in Suffolk. I don't truthfully know how we're going to do in terms of the vendors yet, whether we have enough vendors and enough equipment available for that to happen.

As far as I know, we haven't gotten any instructions yet from the State on the implementation of

all this. My Deputy Director, Tom Porter, is up meeting with State Probation the next couple of days and we're hoping to get a little more direction on that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Is this something that we should be taking note of somehow in the budget? Will it have any implications for you with the department? Do the individuals pay for the equipment?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yes. The individuals are responsible for paying for the equipment.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And for the installation.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

And for the installation.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Who does any kind of monitoring or observation?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

We do for those who are assigned to Probation. Whether the District Attorney's Office or anybody else is doing any of that, I'm not sure of. I don't think currently, but under the new law I think they may be able to. But currently I think we do all of the supervision of those people.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Again, I'm going to yield to the Chair, but I guess I'm going to make the suggestion by and through the Chair that if, you know, you become aware of any kind of implications for us fiscally here, John, since we have a small window associated with what's going on with the budget here, you share with the Chair and/or with BRO.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

It would be my pleasure. I just want to address one quick thing that we brought to BRO's attention within the last two weeks as well as to the County Exec's budget personnel. As you may or may not remember, we have talked in the past about the fact that we send a significant population of juvenile delinquents to the State for placement through the Office of Children and Family Services. We have periodically indicated both to the County Exec and to you our concerns, the fact that we're still being billed at the 2001 rate for those services. We informally received notification that the rate was probably going to go up to 2006 levels, an increase of at least a third. Again, we immediately informed the County Exec's Office and your BRO people.

In light of the political situation, the possible change at the gubernatorial level, we're not sure exactly if this is going to have a fiscal impact on the County or not. We actually don't know if we're ever going to get billed for this or not. We wanted to make you aware. We're talking about the difference between, what, 5.8 million and seven million •• another 1.2 million dollars that we may have to cover. And I would just point out that OCFS traditionally has been a very difficult State agency to work with and it's always been very, very difficult to get any kind of reliable information from them.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much. I will take that into consideration. I would like to invite, if anybody from FRES would like to come forward.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming forward.

MR. MAIER:

Thank you very much. Good morning, Chairman Eddington and Public Safety Committee. Thank you for allowing us to come forward today and meet with you folks. And we want to thank the County Executive's Budget Office and also the Budget Review Office for going over the budgets for us.

I brought with me today greetings from Commissioner Williams, who couldn't be here this morning. My name is Brad Maier. I'm the Deputy Commissioner at Fire Rescue. I brought with me today Chief Fire Marshall Warren Horst and Deputy Director of the Fire Academy,

Chief Dick Stockinger.

Through the Commissioner and what the department has reviewed the recommended budget

provided by the County Executive, and Commissioner Williams and the department feel that FRES can accomplish our job and our mission with the money that the County Executive has given us. The department has reviewed the Budget Review Office document and the items proposed to be restored could be used, but however, they are not necessary to accomplish or maintain our mission. So we're in fairly decent shape.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Then I would just request that if that does change at any time that you would let me or any member of my committee know immediately so we could respond to that with some type of offsets if that happens.

MR. MAIER:

That would be fine. I'll take that back to Commissioner Williams. He'll be returning to the office Monday.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Just quickly.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

One question from Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Hey, Brad.

MR. MAIER:

Good morning.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Just quickly on the {SUR} team. How do we stand as far as dollars, classes, etcetera.

MR. MAIER:

Currently we've had a very good grant approval from the State. We have currently two classes in class now and we have •• we're going to have two more classes out of the money that we got from the \$30,000 additional money, which, thank you very much, was a tremendous help.

We have approximately 200 people trained. There's about 40 more in class right now and proposed we should have about another 40 or 50 going through the classes for our winter classes. We've received approximately 70,000 •• let me see, I think it was 68 or \$70,000 additional money from the grant. It went up a little bit. So we're happy with that. And we should be able to maintain everything and if we need to come back for more money we'll certainly let you know.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So into 2007 you're •• the classes, you'll have •• you have two now, two in the fall, winter and then ••

MR. MAIER:

Yeah, and then the springtime we'll have two and then •• usually two or three in the spring, and then we'll have more in the fall again.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay. And you've got enough monies to do that.

MR. MAIER:

Right now it looks like we have enough money to take care of that.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Excellent. Okay. You'll keep me informed on the progress?

MR. MAIER:

Yes, we will. And like I said, we did very well on the grant this year. We put in for an additional funding and ours has been very successful and they did give us more money for that so that's •• we're happy about that. If you have any questions for the Fire Academy I'll yield to Chief Stockinger and training.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I have no questions. I would just like to thank your organization for the outstanding job you did during your hurricane preparedness. And I think that's the reason we didn't have a hurricane, because you guys got us so prepared.

MR. MAIER:

Well, I hope that stays in effect because we'd like to keep the hurricanes away from us. We're continuing onward with all the projects that we are going forward with. There's been a tremendous amount of cooperation between all the departments. We'd especially like to thank your Legislature and everybody involved in giving us a helping hand. It's very meaningful. And the County Exec's Office.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Great, great. Thank you very much for being here today. If there's no one else to come forward, I will ask to adjourn the meeting. Okay. Meeting is adjourned.

(The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 PM)

Legislator Jack Eddington, Chairman

Public Safety & Public Information Committee

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