

PUBLIC SAFETY & PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Public Safety & Public Information Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on March 1, 2007.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington - Chairman
Legislator Kate Browning - Vice-Chair
Legislator Wayne Horsley
Legislator Elie Mystal
Legislator Joseph Caracappa
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Lynne Nowick

Also In Attendance:

William J. Lindsay - Presiding Officer:
Legislator John Kennedy - District #12
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Robert Calarco - Aide to Legislator Eddington
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick
Jim Maggio - Budget Review Office
Jill Moss - Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn - Assistant County Executive
Brian Beedenbender - County Executive Assistant
Robert Kearon - Division Bureau Chief/District Attorney's Office
Richard Dormer - Commissioner/Suffolk County Police Department
Roger Shannon - Deputy Commissioner/Suffolk County Police Department
Robert Moore - Chief of Department/Suffolk County Police Department
Aristedes Mojica - Inspector/Chief of Dept's Office/SCPD
Ed Webber - Chief/Suffolk County Police Department
Robert Scharf - Lieutenant/Headquarters/SCPD
Dr. Scott Coyne - Physician III/Police Headquarters/SCPD
Joe Williams - Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services.
John Desmond - Director/Suffolk County Probation Department
Dennis DeValle - Vice-President/Probation Officer's Association
Hope Collazo - Director/Community Service Program-American Red Cross
Debbie Eppel - Public Information Office
Tom Muratore - 1st Vice-President/Police Benevolent Association
Tom Tatarian - Recording Secretary/Police Benevolent Association
Bill Mulligan - President/Superior Officer's Association
Vito Dagnello - President/Correction Officer's Association
Michael Sharkey - President/Deputy Sheriff's Police Benevolent Assoc.
Catherine Hoake - Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Mary McLaughlin - Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Randi Delirod - Chief of Staff/AME
Deborah McKee - 4th Vice-President/AME

Patrick Aube - Southampton Town Patrolmen Benevolent Association
James Madori - Newsday
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

*(*The meeting was called to order at 9:37 AM*)*

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I would like to start the Public Safety Committee meeting and ask Legislator Nowick to lead us in the pledge.

Salutation

Okay, I think what I'll do is start right off with the public portion.
We have Deborah McKee, if you would come forward. Thank you.

MS. McKEE:

Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity. I'm here to discuss briefly the possible attempt at privatization of maintenance and repair of the helicopters that the Suffolk County Police Department uses. They have mechanics in place. There was a bid put up briefly and then it was pulled, we're not quite sure why. I've requested to review the bid and I'm sure that when it becomes available they will forward that to me. However, there are several concerns here, but of paramount to us is the safety of the pilots while they're operating these helicopters.

Apparently they want to outsource maintenance and repair and what's been brought to my attention is we have mechanics in place who have been doing this for years. They are so in tune with these machines and the pilots that operate them that you really have an incredible resource in place right now. Also, it would seem to AME that perhaps hiring one or two more mechanics to offset sending a helicopter out of Suffolk County to a vendor who may or may not be completely versed in that machine, who will be only concerned with warranty as prescribed by a manufacturer, whereas you have the resource in place already to take care of this; we are vehemently opposed to this. So, you know, if there are any questions, if I can forward information to anyone, we would be more than happy to do that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. I'm going to have the Police Commissioner come up in a little while and I'll have that be put on his agenda also.

MS. McKEE:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Okay, I don't have any other cards. Is there anybody else who wanted to come forward? Oh, okay.

MR. AUBE:

Good morning. My name is Patrick Aube, I'm from the Southampton Town Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. I just wanted to briefly address the committee here.

Recently, I became aware of a resolution that was passed on February 6th with referenced to the Suffolk County Deputy Sheriff's Union in charge of the eastern portion of Suffolk County, everything outside of the Suffolk Police Department's jurisdiction, maintaining the sex offender registry. I'm not sure if the committee is aware that the resolution that was enacted most likely, I guess the best way to put it, conflicts with State laws. The Department of Criminal Justice Services under the

correctional law indicates that the Police Chiefs of the towns and the villages will maintain the records and the procedures referenced to the sex offender registry.

On top of that, the towns and villages on the east end, in particular with the other unions, have a problem with the resolution in itself. So I spoke briefly to Kate Browning and also Legislator Schneiderman and hopefully we can come to some sort of solution on this. Under the current way, it just seems like there might be a little bit of a conflict on that resolution. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Is there anybody else? Okay, I have -- I'd like Judy Panullo to come forward.

LEG. MYSTAL:

She's not here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

She's not here? I thought she was on my agenda here. Okay then, then we can move along with the agenda.

*(*Legislator Losquadro entered the meeting at 9:43 AM*)*

All right. You know what, why don't at this time then I call Police Commissioner Dormer and you can address a number of the items and we'll have that taken care of.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning to everybody. To the Public Safety Committee, thank you for having us here this morning. Hopefully, we can clear up some of the items that are on the agenda, give you some information that will be helpful to you as you deliberate.

I think I should first address the issue that was raised by the first speaker in reference to the mechanics, the helicopter mechanics. What we're doing, in conjunction with the Executive Branch, is planning for emergencies where we have an extreme emergency and our mechanics that we have on-site are over-burdened with repairs and upkeep and that kind of thing. We're talking about extreme emergencies and I think that that's part of our prudent planning in the Police Department, to prepare for any eventuality. And so we'd like to have a vendor that we could reach out to if we needed to because our resources were stretched to the limit.

We have no intention of laying off any mechanics or outsourcing our repairs that we do presently in-house. That's not going to happen, that wasn't the plan, it was just a contingency like an insurance plan. I think that that's the best way to explain what we plan to do with this.

I know that there is some concerns on the part of the mechanics that we may be looking to do away with our jobs and that's not the case; I can assure you that we're not planning that. They do a great job, we're very proud of the record of the helicopter fleet, and that, of course, goes back to the maintenance and the work that these people do. So I hope that that would allay some of the fears and concerns that you may have heard this morning or you may hear over time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right, I'll let Legislator Nowick just ask a question.

LEG. NOWICK:

It's not really a question, but I assume by what said, we just -- I think all of us here are always concerned that whenever we can, we work from in-house. And I certainly understand that a contingency plan is a whole different situation, but we always worry about that, just to make sure.

That is what you're saying, in essence.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No, I appreciate that, and we're very cognizant of that fact. That's why I'm very clear on that and, you know, we're going on the record with that particular item.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you, Commissioner.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I just have one issue on that. It seems to me that, again, I hear two voices in each -- in different ears and it's like why don't -- why isn't there more communication between the Executive Branch, your office and the PBA; why do we have to discuss it here and not have it dealt with? You know, if we've got pilots that are nervous, why didn't you talk to them, somebody, and alleviate that and not have to have it come here?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, Jack, the PBA is not involved in this. My understanding is that this is civilian mechanics, it's the AME union.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I think that's what the first speaker was alluding to. You know, this has been -- you know, you're bringing up a good point, that maybe we should have sat down with the union and explained what we were doing. It seemed like a very simple, normal type of business operation or procedure.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

And obviously the message didn't get clear to the people that were impacted by this. I can tell from the first speaker --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

-- that there's concern and anxiety and hopefully this will clear up some of that today. But your point is well taken, that the union should be --

*(*Legislator Caracappa entered the meeting at 9:48 AM*)*

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Whichever union, yeah.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, brought up to date on this issue so that they can talk to their members and explain what --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. I mean, I don't mind using my mediation skills, but I'd much rather avoid it, if possible.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No, no, I understand, yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. All right, thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No, point well taken. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, the next issue that you wanted to deal with; how about the polygraph issue, IR 1051.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yes, if I may. You know, from the outset, when this issue was brought forth and I was notified that this was going to be a resolution, I expressed my disagreement with it. I see no need for polygraph in the Police Department. I didn't ask for it; if I thought it was necessary I would have made an initiative to Public Safety to introduce polygraph with civilians. We don't think it's necessary in the Police Department.

And if I may, I should mention that according to the Department of Civil Service, unacceptable or negative results cannot be used to automatically disqualify a person, so just be aware of that. I think people are under the misconception that a polygraph is the end-all of an investigation, or an employee background check; it is not.

Civilian candidates, if the title does not stipulate a polygraph evaluation, has a necessary special requirement of the job. Local laws -- and I just mention this now, it's coming from the lawyers -- are not binding on Civil Service specifications, that's point two.

Three, the Suffolk County Police Department does not have any issues with our civilian personnel that would necessitate routine polygraph examinations. The current staffing of the Polygraph Unit, which is four people, would not be adequate to conduct the volume of exams that might be required if this resolution passes.

The training and certifications of polygraph technicians is a multi-year process, it's a very expensive and time-consuming process to train people that can withstand scrutiny in court, and when they do get challenged, which we would in court. I don't see the necessity for it right now in the Police Department. We're very happy with the quality of our investigations, we do a very thorough background investigation on the people that are hired by the Police Department and the caliber of the people we have working in the Police Department is top-notch, we're very proud of them. And we haven't had any issues with integrity or anything like that that would be above the norm. So I wanted to express that on record, that I don't think it's necessary for the Police Department.

And by the way, I know the way the resolution reads it says, "You may." And as I mentioned to you, Mr. Chair, when we spoke about this privately, that you can't start willy-nillying polygraphing one person and not polygraphing another. And you brought up the point that maybe base it on functions, and that really doesn't work in the Police, in our department anyway, because we move people around all the time. So you may be working in one department today and you get an upgrade and move to another department with different duties. So we are confident that the background check that we do on the civilians that we hire is adequate and is protecting the integrity of our records and our systems.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. On the issue, Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you. And Mr. Commissioner, I'm glad that you pointed out that this resolution does just give the option. When I did bring this to your attention, I have to say, I did not foresee this as becoming something controversial, I really thought that I would be giving these three departments another

tool to use at their discretion which is the intent of this legislation.

You used the word routine in your presentation, routine polygraph examinations; nothing of the sort could be further from the truth. This would simply be a pre-application or a pre-employment screening tool that the department could use at their discretion. And this is not -- no offense to you, sir, it's not just about you. If I may remind you and may remind the members of this committee, the District Attorney and the Sheriff both support this initiative and feel that it would be a useful tool in their investigatory process for new applicants. If the Commissioner of the Police Department does not feel that way then that's his discretion, he can run his department as he sees fit and he can choose not to use it for his applicants.

You made mention to the fact that this would be challenged, you said definitively this would be challenged in court; why is that so? Do we have much experience with our sworn officers who have faced polygraphs? You said this is -- people here are under the illusion that this is the be-all and end-all; I think I made it very clear in my initial presentations, there's nothing of the sort. This is yet another tool in the kit for investigators to use. It's very well established that polygraphs are not the be-all and end-all of any investigation. But in speaking to many investigators, they will tell you, and I'm sure you know and it's the reason that it's used when dealing with sworn officers, is that many times information is volunteered or individuals who have something to hide will willingly step away from the process knowing they have to face a polygraph.

I developed this of my own research. You may feel or others may feel this came from someplace else, but I presented this to you in the same way that I presented it to the other department heads and to the PBA and other unions. This was developed of my own research, I thought this was something that made a lot of sense, to give the various departments this ability and this option. If you choose not to use it, that's your discretion, it's your department to run and I won't tell you how to run it. And that's why I crafted the legislation the way that I did.

I'm sure you recall that this resolution passed unanimously, eighteen nothing. I was very disappointed in the manner in which your superior, our County Executive, vetoed this, the day after our Organizational Meeting. And Mr. Zwirn is here and perhaps he can explain why it was signed on December 29th and given to us January 3rd which would have necessitated a Special Meeting, I chose not to do that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And so then --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I'm not finished yet, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

If I may, I would look to regain my time. The reason why this is back before us today is I chose not to ask for a Special Meeting, not to impose upon my colleagues during a time where we had off, not to spend additional money from the taxpayers coffers to call that Special Meeting, publish the notices, have Deputy Sheriffs here as security for a General Meeting. So I put it back before us today during our normal cycle, and if the County Executive chooses to veto it again, that is his prerogative and we can take that issue up at a later date.

I ask my colleague to stay consistent with your previous vote. As I said, if the Police Department disagrees with it, that is their right to do so and that's why the legislation is crafted the way that it is. And the Sheriff's Department and the District Attorney's Office both are still in support of using this tool for their pre-hire screenings.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. What I'm going to do is I'm going to start with the agenda, and you can just stay there because you are very involved in most of the agenda so we can go through it as we do. First, Tabled Resolution --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

If I could, if I may, Mr. Chair. I think it should be pointed out to the committee that if the resolution is passed, okay, I believe that the Suffolk County Police Department is the only department in the County with a Polygraph Unit, so it does fiscally impact me if other agencies request polygraph. So just beware of that, that there is a fiscal impact, a very small unit but a very expensive unit and it would cost a lot of money if we do have to do polygraphs.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I understand that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

By the way, if there are appeals, and get them regularly, where we have to defend them through the Law Department in court, and we have the experience with Police Officer candidates, okay, it's time consuming and it's costly.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

Tabled Resolutions

IR 2173-07 - A Local Law establishing crime prevention requirements for scrap metal dealers (County Executive). This has to be tabled for a public hearing. I make a motion to table.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 2268-07 - A Local Law to strengthen ATV seizure and forfeiture provisions (Presiding Officer Lindsay). This also needs to be tabled for a public hearing.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Mr. Chairman, before you go further, I would like to be recognized.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Absolutely.

P.O. LINDSAY:

While I have the Commissioner in front of me, there was a disagreement about this ATV seizure bill. It was originally sponsored by myself after a meeting with your department and LIPA where a lot of the illegal ATV riding takes place, and Legislator Losquadro was with me when we both presented that meeting and we put in this bill. Since then, we have had the Park Police come forward and question whether it was needed or it's too strict or it should be reduced, and I asked both you and the Parks Commissioner if you could get together and come across -- come back to us with some kind of solution to this dilemma and I would just like to know if you have come up with anything as yet.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No. Mr. Presiding Officer, the answer is no, we haven't gotten together on this, but I remember the

conversation and it's something that we have on the schedule.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. If you could --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, to discuss the ramifications of the first offence.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, if you could, because we just want to effectuate some kind of policy that makes sense, that makes it safer for both your officers and the Park Police. All right?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I didn't quite finish with the motion, I had a motion to table, I need a second.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 2290-07 - A Local Law to require landlords to register with the Department of Probation prior to renting to sex offenders (Browning).

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll make a motion to table.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to table for a public hearing by Legislator Browning, I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?
Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).

IR 2514-07 - Requiring a detailed report on the progress of civilianization within the Suffolk County Police Department (Eddington). I make a motion to table.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Second.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Mystal. All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

One opposed. Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 6-1-0-0 Opposed: Legislator Losquadro).***

IR 1012-07 - Amending the 2007 Capital Program & Budget and appropriating funds for the purchase of speed indicator signs for the Police Department (CP 3100) (Presiding Officer Lindsay).

P.O. LINDSAY:

I'm going to make a motion to table at the request of Chief Moore. And I'm still waiting for the meeting that we could talk about this equipment.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, motion to table by Presiding Officer Lindsay, I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

Introductory Resolutions

IR 1022-07 - A Local Law to prohibit the obstruction of County roadways (Eddington).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion to table for a public hearing.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Table for a public hearing, I have a second from Legislator Caracappa. All those -- on the motion?

LEG. MYSTAL:

On the motion. Question for the Commissioner. Good morning.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Good morning, Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

On 1022 which is the loitering bill, how do you propose -- I really believe that this bill is going to pass, probably with 18-0, or maybe 17-1, Kennedy will not vote for it.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

John's going to vote for it.

LEG. MYSTAL:

John will vote for it?

LEG. KENNEDY:

See you guys.

LEG. MYSTAL:

How do you propose, how do you propose to enforce this law? It's going to pass pretty soon; do you have any plan in action?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I like the way you think, Elie.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I just want to know, how do you propose to, A, enforce this; and B, from your vast experience as Commissioner and in the Police Department, do you think this will stand muster when it gets challenged in the court?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

He's not a lawyer.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, that's above my pay grade. But I have to tell you that our position is that when this body passes a law we enforce the law, that's what the Police do. We do not decide which laws to enforce and which ones not to enforce, that's not our role. As a Police Commissioner and representing everybody in the Police Department, we're neutral when it comes to this kind of issue. If the law is passed, then we'll enforce the law.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I know we're going to have a public hearing on it on Tuesday and since I see Mr. Brown in the background -- no, you don't have to come up, I just want Mr. Brown to somehow prepare himself because I do want to ask him some questions about how the County Attorney's Office feels about the legal standing of that law. Please, for Tuesday, not today. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Caracappa.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Just for your information, Legislator Mystal, I, along with my cosponsor Legislator Eddington, immediately following this meeting we're going to meet with the County Attorney, the County Executive and the Chief Deputy County Executive in an effort to tighten up the language.

Because, you know, as I showed my concerns when we passed the loitering bill with the sex offenders, and so did you, I do have some concerns about a certain type of language within our own bill. So we are going to meet with them immediately following this and we're going to tighten up the language and make sure that it will pass constitutional muster when challenged, if challenged. Because -- and I don't want to say if it is challenged, I hope the people that do challenge this bill aren't hypocritical and they challenge both bills, because the language in the other bill is much more -- I wouldn't say offensive, but questionable by way of constitutionality.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I would hope so, too.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

1051-07 - A Local Law to permit polygraph examinations of civilian applicants to the Suffolk County Police Department, Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's Office (Losquadro).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

We have to do a public hearing, right?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Table for a public hearing, Legislator Losquadro, and I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 1094-07 - Accepting a donation of vehicles to the Suffolk County Police Department (County Executive).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Browning. I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 1095-07 - Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$25,480 from the New York State Governor's Traffic Safety Committee Grant (GTS FFY 2007) Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) with 100% support for Sheriff's Traffic Safety Initiative (County Executive).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion to approve and place on the consent calendar.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve it and put on the consent calendar by Legislator Losquadro, second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 1096-07 - Accepting the donation of an all-terrain vehicle to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office (County Executive).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Browning.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 1100-07 - Extending certain benefits to the Suffolk County Auxiliary Police Officers (Caracappa).

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Mr. Chairman, seeing that we're meeting again in two weeks, there's one or two little language items that I'd like to change, along with you, my cosponsor. So I'll make a motion to table for that purpose.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 1101-07 - Establishing a public education campaign to encourage residents to register for AMBER Alerts (Nowick).

LEG. NOWICK:

I'll make a motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Nowick.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. NOWICK:

Can I just --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

On the motion, Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah, I just wanted to take a minute to tell you what's behind this legislation, it's mostly an educational tool and I thought I would mention this. Most people don't realize that we can receive Amber Alerts on our cell phones, and while there are not that many, thankfully, in Suffolk County, what you do with an AMBER Alert is you register your zip code. And interestingly enough -- the phone is not on, by the way.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you.

LEG. NOWICK:

The phone is not on, it's not on for a ring cycle, but I wanted to get a moment to show all of you, I registered my phone in a different County and I received -- and I've received several AMBER Alerts. I have one on here right now; of course, I'm not so good with this phone, so I've got to go back to -- I got an AMBER Alert the other day and it reads, "Vehicle; red maroon, older pick-up truck, extended cab", this is all on my phone, "Child weight, height, hair color; suspect, Hispanic, mid 30's, 57, hair dark," blah, blah, blah; that was the AMBER Alert I received on my telephone.

I received another one ten minutes later, it beeps, it tells you, everybody knows. And as I said, I know this is a no-brainer, but I want this to be an educational tool to parents. I mean, had we had this maybe years ago when poor Katie Bear was abducted, that certainly would have helped. This particular child, it was all over the news, this particular child was abducted at a bus stop, out of State, I don't know if you heard about it.

LEG. BROWNING:

Just a week ago?

LEG. MYSTAL:

Tampa.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, right.

LEG. NOWICK:

Right. The next one that I received is another AMBER Alert that says, "Cancel AMBER Alert, the child was recovered." So it's an educational tool. I think it's very interesting how this comes. Hopefully one day we're going to see a photo of the child on these phones and each parent will know enough to register. So I think it's a great tool, it's an awareness.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Zwirn, yes.

MR. ZWIRN:

We also think this is a good idea, but I just -- we have a bill coming up in a little while which will be up for a public hearing, IR 1148 which bans text messaging while you're in a car. So while you're looking at your AMBER Alert, you may be breaking the law in Suffolk County if that bill passes. And I'm just saying that there's --

LEG. NOWICK:

That's very interesting.

MR. ZWIRN:

It's ironic.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes.

MR. ZWIRN:

And I'm sure that's not the intent, but --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

You just can't send them.

LEG. NOWICK:

No, I think you can't read them anymore either.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Let's burn that bridge after we cross it.

LEG. NOWICK:

You really have to get a look at this, you won't -- I mean, how much information is on this little telephone here, if you can read it.

MR. ZWIRN:

No, if it was a choice between the two bills, we would support this one.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I'm wondering, Mr. Zwirn, is it going to be possible for me to drive at all? Because we have no smoking in the car, we have no snow on the car.

MR. ZWIRN:

Are you asking me if you can drive? There's a question whether you can drive now.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Yeah, I know.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

MR. ZWIRN:

Call me Einstein again. I don't want to be called Einstein anymore.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Okay, I'll give you that one, Ben.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

IR 1105-07 - Approving the reappointment of Marshall Schwartz to the Suffolk County Citizens Corps Council (County Executive). Do I have a motion?

LEG. BROWNING:

I guess I'll make a motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Browning.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Horsley. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

IR 1125-07 - Appropriating funds in connection with the purchase of heavy duty vehicles for the Police Department (CP 3135). (County Executive). Motion to approve.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

IR 1126-07 - Appropriating funds in connection with the purchase of replacement hardware Fingerprint Identification System (CP 3508) (County Executive). Motion to approve by Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Mystal.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I'll second that, I just want to ask just a brief question.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. And on the motion, Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Commissioner or Chief, is this -- it's replacement hardware; this is the Optical Scanning System?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes, sir.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

The red glass, right?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Okay. Replacement, I thought those units were relatively new in service. Are we actually -- do we have to replace some that are at the end of their life or are we actually purchasing more units to expand the capability?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, the Chief just advised me that they're replacements, they're about 15 years old.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Oh, okay.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Time moves fast in this County.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yeah, I guess it does. Okay, very good.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

And the technology also --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

No, I mean, it's a great system, that's why I'm in favor of expanding it.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I just didn't know if this was purchasing more or just keeping our capability up-to-date. Okay, very good. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

IR 1127-07 - Appropriating funds in connection with the purchase of digital photography equipment (CP 3504) (County Executive). M.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll make a motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion by Legislator Browning to approve, second by myself.
All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

IR 1143-07 - A Local Law to protect children by prohibiting smoking in passenger vehicles within Suffolk County where children are passengers (Viloria-Fisher).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to table for public hearing by Legislator Browning, I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

IR 1148-07 - A Local Law to prohibit text messaging while driving (Schneiderman). I'll make a motion to table for public hearing.
Elie, did you want to second that?

LEG. MYSTAL:

Yeah.

LEG. BROWNING:

Of course he does.

LEG. MYSTAL:

No, I'm not going to second that.

LEG. BROWNING:

I will.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning will second that. All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I was going to text you a second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).**

LEG. BROWNING:

I have to learn how to do it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, you're right, I have to learn how to do it first.

IR 1162-07 - Directing the Suffolk County Police Commissioner to address Suffolk County's Emergency Psychiatric needs through improved staffing. Legislator Kennedy?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to go ahead and be here and appear on this, even though I am not a member of the Public Safety Committee.

And at the outset, for the purposes of some discussion on this resolution. Through the Chair, I'm going to request that this motion -- this resolution be tabled at this point. However, I would like an opportunity to go ahead and have some conversation on the motion, if it pleases the Chair.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, then I will make a motion to table and second by Legislator Losquadro. And on the motion.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I want to thank the Commissioner and Dr. Coyne, Chief Webber is here as well, Chief Moore, all the department has been very forthcoming in the dialogue that's gone on regarding what really has become an exacerbation of what is a difficult problem in this County which is the delivery and the provision and the receipt of mental health services.

CPEP, for those folks on the committee who don't know, is the only emergency facility in Suffolk County housed at the Stony Brook Emergency Room where psychiatric evaluations can be done for people that are known as emotionally-disturbed persons, EDP's. The department, actually Chief Webber and Dr. Coyne and myself and some others were at a meeting at Stony Brook yesterday and they confirmed that of the 6,000 individuals seen last year in Stony Brook, 3,000 of those people were by and through transports from our Suffolk County Police Department, from the seven precincts. For those who have seen the resolution, and actually my cosponsor, as a matter of fact, had the opportunity to go ahead and witness this firsthand by virtue of a ride-along with officers from I believe the 6th Precinct.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yes.

LEG. KENNEDY:

There is a tremendous amount of time that is involved in this activity with our Suffolk County Police Officers, upwards of 20,000 hours last year for those folks and many, many hours of time. As a matter of fact, during our tour yesterday, we saw two officers who were there with a person being transported, I'm not sure which precinct it was from.

My attempt to go ahead and address this issue by suggesting that a satellite be established at CPEP is crude at best, but it comes from having been involved with discussions on this, not only with the Police Department but also with Probation; I see Commissioner Desmond here, I know the Sheriff's Office is involved with transports from the jail. It is an issue that we need to go ahead and focus on and address. There are other groups that are vested in this and I don't believe that the solution is just to say the State has dropped the ball and does not go ahead and provide adequate funding. I know the department did some analysis on this and I guess I'm going to ask them to speak for a moment, but I still have some questions just as to what the department, I believe, poses as a significant cost to establish a satellite.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Commissioner, could you address that, please?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Thank you very much, Legislator Kennedy. We concur with your analysis, that this is a problem for the Police Department and for other police agencies in the County, not just the Suffolk County PD, as you mentioned. And it does take an inordinate amount of time to take care of special needs persons that have to be transported for treatment and that's where the crux of the matter is.

I mean, we under the law -- we're a police agency -- are required to bring them to CPEP at Stony Brook or to some of the satellite hospitals in the County, and I have a list of them, where if CPEP in Stony Brook doesn't have the capacity to handle it, we have to go elsewhere. And the delay starts when we get there because it's not an emergency, in most cases. At Stony Brook, the emergency room handles emergency cases such as MVA crashes and heart attacks and that kind of thing, they have to triage this system.

So I have to say, though, that since we came on board in 2004 and realized that there was an issue with this, Chief Webber with Dr. Scott Coyne, reached out to Stony Brook and sat down with them and they were very receptive to assisting us with alleviating some of the down time; and we have reduced the down time since 2004 by about 50% which is significant, but it's still pretty high.

Now, having said that, the resolution that's -- that we're discussing would require the Suffolk County Police Department to put personnel in Stony Brook at CPEP on a 24/7 basis, okay, and that's where the cost factors come in because we're talking about a double police car because we can't have one officer do it. Our rules and procedures right now that are written for officer safety reasons require two officers to transport and maintain an emotionally disturbed person and you can understand the reasons for that, because an officer cannot anticipate what's going to happen, so it's for the safety of the person being transported and the safety of the officers. So if a satellite post is fixed at Stony Brook, okay, we believe that the cost would be prohibitive, it would be even greater than what it's costing us right now. And I know that they probably shared the figures with you, Legislator Kennedy, and if you want me to go on the record with some of the figures that they have given me that this would cost --

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'm going to encourage you, Commissioner, to go ahead and actually make those statements, because by the same case, I have introduced some of the calculations into the resolution itself which

are actually less than what the actual hours are that were there; and in my opinion, probably two million worth of salary and benefits were expended from a departmental perspective. But I don't want to lose site of the fact that not only is this an issue associated with the Suffolk County Police Department and the fiscally prudent and right-thinking way to deploy officers and the impacts to precincts when multiple transports are going on, but to the individuals themselves and the inordinate amount of time that must be spent waiting in a facility that is severely impacted and clogged. And again, Chief Webber and I have spoken about this a lot, as has Dr. Coyne, waits that exceed 16 or 18 hours on occasion. This is a broke system.

So yes, there's a cost there that you've identified that may go beyond two million associated with what's being spent now, but that being the case, that's still not something that says, "Well, we're just going to have to continue to absorb this."

My intention in tabling today is to go ahead and work with yourselves to craft an amendment that points to a working group that will come back with recommendations within 90 days. But clearly, clearly, we have to go ahead from a cost perspective and just from a delivery of human service and a humane manner address this because it's not working.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Mystal wanted to add a question.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I think he --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Did you want to respond?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No. You know, I agree with Legislator Kennedy that the working group is a good idea and if we can get the State involved --

LEG. KENNEDY:

Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

-- that's crucial to this. Because I think we all know that, you know, again, Suffolk County and the Suffolk County Police Department and other police agencies are saddled with this problem not of our making and it's costing an awful lot of money for the Police Department. And I think that we have to sit down with the State and see if they can work out some system where they either take the person that we deliver to them and they take them at that point like we did years ago when I was a police officer on the street, we delivered the person to the hospital and they took charge of the person immediately and their security or police at the hospital assumed responsibility for the person and there wasn't down time for the sector cars. I talked to you about that and --

LEG. KENNEDY:

That would be Building 21, yes, and times have changed a little bit since that time.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah. I suggested that we go back to the old system, you know, and if we could work that out, I think that that would really help the taxpayers of Suffolk County and help the police services in Suffolk County. You know, and then the issue of beds and all the other --

LEG. KENNEDY:

The other side of this equation, though, Commissioner, is things have changed substantially in 30 years, as you know. And having the opportunity to tour CPEP yesterday and see the number of folks there, the size constraints and what can be an extremely volatile and sometimes dangerous situation, staff there can assist from and have benefitted by the presence of police officers when

there's a need for them to go ahead and assist and engage. And Chief Webber has indicated that, you know, that has happened on occasion, which I'm sure everybody is thankful for.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah.

LEG. KENNEDY:

But that is one of key elements, I guess, that the department may continue to go ahead and let.

Clearly, you're right, the State is a key player here. But nevertheless, as the statutes, as Mental Health Law is laid out at this point, the State, in their wisdom, has charged our local departments with this function of transport, so that's where we have to go as far as investigatory dialogue I guess. And Mr. Chair, I don't want to monopolize the dialogue here, but that's what the impetus behind this was.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

If I may. You know, I think -- and the law, I agree with you, the law says that the police will transport, it doesn't say they will now stay with the person while they're triaged. So I think that that's key, these are some of the issues we've got to discuss with the working group.

LEG. KENNEDY:

You should know, Commissioner, at the suggestion of Chief Webber and Dr. Coyne at our last meeting at Stony Brook, I did reach out to the County Attorney to ask her to define some of what the range of responsibility and liability is associated with the whole function of emotionally disturbed person transport, because I think it's a multi-faceted issue that needs to be addressed.

And I commend you and your department, in particular the work of Chief Webber and Dr. Coyne, in already making in-roads in reducing some of those EDP's. Conversely, in the Chief's conversation that we have just had, and this is beyond your control, the waits are spiking at this point. Unfortunately, particularly when you're going to community hospitals, you're experiencing many, many hours, beyond 24-hours; that's unconscionable, from a cost and from a care perspective.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I want to thank Legislator Kennedy for not monopolizing. Part of my question was already answered, I just wanted to go back to -- what I was going to ask you I think you already answered it, you know. I am a little bit older than most of the people around this horseshoe. We are in this predicament because of the State, you know, because of what I call do-gooder legislation which happened back in the late 60's, early 70's which made Geraldo Rivera famous. We started closing our psych centers because we thought they were inhumane so we started closing them and the money was supposed to come from the State to alleviate the problem. You know, if anybody wants to know, this is where the impetus for homelessness came from and people being dumped on the street and we started closing places.

The law right now, as it states from reading it -- not from his bill but from what I've read -- it says you only have to transport, it doesn't say you have to sit and baby sit the patients. Why can't we force the hospital to just say, "Here's the body, it's your problem, bye"; we can't do that?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, that's where we have to get a ruling from the Law Department on that. We have to be very, you know, prudent, we do not want to endanger anybody, that's one of our functions is to keep people safe. So our officers always act prudently and carefully when they deal with special needs persons, so this is something --

LEG. MYSTAL:

I'm not trying to be inhumane, but to me, if it's costing us a whole bunch of money because we're babysitting people who are emotionally disturbed, and I have a great deal of feelings for that, but by the same token, if it's not our responsibility to sit with them for six, eight hours while they're triaged -- I'm not being facetious, I'm not being, you know, callous -- you get to the hospital, you handcuff the person to a chair, you say, "This is your job," you know, the hospital will take care of it. And the State, I don't understand why somehow we have always become the dumping ground for whatever the State wants to do. Like they say, "Okay, let the County take care of it." Why can't we go back to what we used to do? Because what we used to do is to take the person to the hospital and say, "Hey Bellevue, this is your case, good-bye. I'm a police officer, I'm not a psychiatry person." Jack we can't do that?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Kennedy?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well, the Commissioner and I know firsthand how things have changed and in most cases in a very beneficial way. Unfortunately, one of the ways that you dealt with the ratio of police bringing volatile admissions to a psychiatric admissions center was to immediately medicate individuals to the max with things like Caldo and {Thorsine}. Psychiatry has progressed somewhat since that time, but the ratio there was not uncommon for one therapy aide to 20 to 30 acting-out individuals -- well, no, two, we had two or three.

Look, I hear what you're saying, Legislator Mystal. My intention is not to go ahead and take the State off the hook or cure the maladies of the world on our ticket. However, we have a multiple faceted issue going on, not the least of which is costing the department vitally. And also, as I might add, some of my desire to finally go ahead and introduce this came out of conversations with Precinct Commanders, and the Commissioner knows this. You know, our Precinct Commanders work mightily to go ahead and deploy and provide adequate sector coverage. However, when there's multiple transports going on, I witnessed there from the 7th three sector teams plus a Sergeant. Now, in the 4th Precinct, if you have a couple going, you have 17 sectors, if you have three transports going with two sector cars down per transport, you're dropping 33% of your shift deployment. So purely from a management perspective, it's a matter we have to move to. Does the State have to do something to go ahead and adequately staff its unit? Yes, they do, but we also have to look at our own use since we're 50% of the consumer, of the customer, by and through County transport.

LEG. MYSTAL:

That's why I do want the cost analysis of both, you know, a substation and what we presented doing. I want to see the cost analysis in terms of how much money it's costing us now, how much money it's costing if we put a substation there, what we would be saving in terms of sector car per precinct, because that may be more valuable to me in terms of the raw cost.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And by the way, Legislator Mystal, I'm pleased that you're bringing some of these facets up because the one thing I would pose back to the department is the cost analysis you present to establish a satellite we'll have an opportunity to discuss. But that notwithstanding, disfunction is going on right now. You could almost go ahead and take personnel from each sector and deploy them, if necessary, to go ahead and make up, if you want a rotating command and it would still probably be cheaper and more cost efficient than what's going on at this point right now. I don't necessarily say that I agree that this solution would require 15 to 20 new personnel, but that will be part of the discussion; my belief of course.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Of course we would not object then when the PBA union comes to us and says, "I need 50 more officers."

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Well, I think we've discussed this topic and I obviously need a working group to deal with this further. You've given one possible --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Mr. Chair, if I may.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You know what, I just wanted to finish my sentence.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

All right, I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I don't say that much often. We're clear here that we have one possible solution and that's what was presented, but we can find more possible solutions and that's what we're going to do. Yes, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Very briefly. You know, there would be an awful lot of down time if we had a fixed station at Stony Brook because they don't have beds all the time and the diversion kicks in, where now the officers are diverted to the other satellite hospitals, there's about five or six of them. So, you know, we know that this is going to be -- that would be a big issue with us, that officers would be sitting around and the beds, there are no beds in the facility and there are no people coming in there. So just be aware that that would be a cost factor that I don't think we want to absorb at this time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. And Commissioner, I would say this is what we need to discuss in the working group, all of these issues at one time when we're all together. Okay?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I have a table and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

IR 1163-07 - To enhance the requirement for consideration as a Suffolk County Depository Bank. I'm going to make a motion to table.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I feel the same way.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We'll get an explanation on that.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I will second the motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. On the motion. Yeah, I'm going to ask the sponsor.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Again, it's always a pleasure to be here with the Public Safety Committee --

LEG. MYSTAL:

And please, do not monopolize again.

LEG. KENNEDY:

All right, in the interest of brevity, this one is simple. This one comes out of apparently a function that the department did engage in in the past when I'm told that there was a robbery squad out of the department. And it occurs to me that, you know, crime occurs for a whole variety of reasons, but sometimes the best defense is a good offense. So if we could go ahead and work with bank personnel through a training program that the department puts together for them, and is sponsored by lenders who seek to go ahead and be Suffolk County Depository Banks because of the opportunity to receive deposits of hundreds of millions of dollars, to me it seems like it would be something that would be positive in the fact that it would be cost neutral and perhaps we would get some benefit from private sector branch personnel receiving the benefit of some Police Department training.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, thank you. Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah, Legislator Kennedy, have you had an opportunity to speak to any of these institutions?

LEG. KENNEDY:

I've reached out to some of the banks. I have not had dialogue with any of them yet at this point, I have spoken with the -- or made attempts to contact the Banker's Association, I've also had some conversation with our Treasurer. Again, I had spoken with the Chair as far as a request to table it. I am trying to fine tune it and look forward to see what the industry's input is; obviously the input will be important. Nevertheless, I think that it's incumbent on them to go ahead and, you know, participate to a certain extent.

LEG. NOWICK:

The reason I ask, Legislator Kennedy, is I was doing some research on this when I read it and I'm understanding that the banks themselves do incredible training of their employees and their staff --

LEG. MYSTAL:

They do.

LEG. NOWICK:

-- before these people can even take these position. And while there has been some bank robberies in the past, if you'll note, the personnel was trained in how to handle it. But just before going forward and before putting mandates on them, maybe it would be a good idea to get a representative from the New York State Banker's Association -- actually, we had one sitting on our committee -- but speak to them and see what their criteria is, I believe it's rigorous.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Well -- and I appreciate that, that's always good advice, particularly when we're trying to work through issues associated with this. Some of this does come from conversations again with the Commissioner, though, and also with Inspector Rhodes from the 4th Precinct. And while some lending institutions may elect to employ a whole gamet of strategies associated with thwarting bank robberies, some others apparently do not. And if there's an attempt to go ahead and bring all of them, at least those that seek to be Suffolk County depositories, up to that high standard, I think we owe that to our residents, our constituents.

LEG. NOWICK:

As I said, I think it probably would behoove us to reach out to the New York State Banker's Association and find out what they do.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'll make that contact and make sure I share it with the committee for the next cycle.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

That was basically my objection to this bill. You know, was going to call you Jack New York State Kennedy because, you know, you sound like another mandate. And I refuse to believe that if we do that it will be cost neutral, because it will cost us money. Just an example that we have a little note here, there's one branch bank for every 2,616 persons in Long Island as compared to 3,236 nationwide, so we have more banks. It will be a tremendous amount of people for the police to train. And in terms of cost neutral, even if they pay for it, we have to train it, take time from the Police Department where they could be doing something else. And if the banks are being robbed, you know, to quote a famous line, because of where the money is, and the banks should be taking care of themselves, I don't think we have to do anything. That's where the money is, if you have an increase in bank robberies, let the bank take care of it. You know, if they take my money I would do something about it. Why are we getting involved in that, you know, in trying to train bank personnel? Let them do it, they take my money every time I go and cash an ATM check.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Legislator Mystal. I would like the Police Commissioner to comment.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I may, Legislator Kennedy mentioned that we don't have the old robbery squad anymore, but the name changed, it's the Major Case Squad now and they do a tremendous job. If you read the newspaper, we've been catching the bank robbers at a high rate, so the clearance rate is extremely high in Suffolk County.

We noticed the spike in bank robberies, we get that through our system very quickly and because of that, we reached out to the FBI, NYPD, Nassau County PD and the Banking Association, the head of the banking in metropolitan area and we had a sit down with them last month to discuss issues related to hardening their targets, okay; and they were very receptive, by the way. And if you noticed a group that was involved here, the FBI, NYPD, Nassau and Suffolk, this was the major players in the metropolitan area.

I believe next week they have the second meeting where the head of the Banking Association is going to come back with a response to our recommendations to upgrade their systems, and when we talk about upgrading systems, we're talking about calling 911 when a bank robbery goes down rather than notifying the Assistant Manager who notifies the alarm company who now calls the police department; delay is an issue with us. We have no problem for safety in the bank that they allow the bad guy to leave the premises before they raise the alarm, this is good, prudent safety issues. We've asked them to -- everybody to have die-packs, everybody is aware of what a die-pack is, they have G -- they have other systems.

CHIEF MOORE:

(Inaudible).

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, I don't want to be giving out all our -- but anyway, the camera systems. I'm sorry about that.

LEG. MYSTAL:

There may be a couple of bank robbers in the room, so don't do that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I don't know if they watch TV or read it the paper.

LEG. HORSLEY:

We're contemplating it.

LEG. MYSTAL:

The way they pay us, we may be contemplating that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Anyway the point is, the point is that we reached out to the people that we think can help us with this problem and we think that this will be beneficial. And we can update you on the next meeting, Legislator Kennedy, we'll make a note of that and let you know what transpires from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you, Commissioner. As a matter of fact, we had discussed the fact that you were convening or participating in a monthly jurisdictional meeting because, as you pointed out, there's been a hundred percent increase in bank robberies from 2005 to 2006. And again, your department has been or your squad has been very diligent in apprehending and it seems that it's been a couple of individuals who have been involved, you know, with multiple robberies. But again, there were a rash of robberies in the Hauppauge area in late summer, early fall.

I guess we ought to talk a little bit more about what the benefits might be from this. While Legislator Mystal rightly says that we should not be bearing costs that are proper costs in the business community, by the same token I think we get to go ahead and effect a uniform high standard of protection and tools, some that you mentioned with us, others you may be aware that banks may elect to or not elect to go ahead and employ. And particularly, when banks are engaging in branch construction from the first instance, how the unit is laid out, what's employed as far as the various alarms, the video equipment and things like that; all of that may help to go ahead and move forward to make branch robbery a less attractive crime opportunity. And that's the purpose of the bill.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you very much. Okay, there is a motion and a second.
All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

Home Rule Messages

Okay, we have ***Home Rule Message No. 2 - Home Rule Message requesting New York State Legislature to allow Suffolk County to install and operate Red Light Camera Program (Assembly Bill A. 1314)(Eddington).***

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I would like the pleasure of seconding that motion since it seems very familiar.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes. Okay, second. All those in favor?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

On the motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

On the motion, yes.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

I would like to be added as a cosponsor, Mr. Chairman. And I know Presiding Officer Lindsay, this is something that you've tried to initiate over many years now, ever since you came to the Legislature. What happened with our original Home Rules that we sent up? And I know Assemblywoman Eddington was the prime sponsor in the State Assembly. Where did that ever go? Because I recently have had some constituents concerned about it.

P.O. LINDSAY:

There was -- if I might, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Go ahead.

P.O. LINDSAY:

There was different scenarios almost every year. There was one year that a bill actually passed the Assembly and passed the Senate but they were two different bills, and really because of partisanship and who's going to take credit for it they never got married and it's really a shame. I believe the Senate has passed a bill regularly, the problem has always been in the Assembly, but we actually did get an Assembly Bill passed one year.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And on the motion, when I checked with our BRO Office they said that it hadn't been put in this year and I didn't want it not to be put in this year, so.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Well, I couldn't put it in until the Assemblywoman sponsored the bill and I asked her to.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I guess that's why she asked me to put it in.

P.O. LINDSAY:

She didn't get back to me with a number.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I guess I failed to get it through to you.

LEG. MYSTAL:

There are some advantages to sleeping in the same bedroom with the Assemblywoman that you're talking about.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

When she says sponsor a bill, I sponsor it, that's all I can tell you. So we have a motion to approve and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, ***it's approved, Pat. (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

Okay. Motion to adjourn?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, second. We're adjourned.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM*)*