

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Operating Budget Minutes

A special meeting of the Public Safety 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 May 23, 2007, to discuss the matter of the 2008 Capital Budget.

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

Members Not Present:

Legislator Elie Mystal
Legislator Joseph Caracappa
Legislator Daniel Losquadro

Also In Attendance:

Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Linda Burkhardt - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick
Gail Vizzini - Director/Budget Review Office
Lance Reinheimer - Assistant Director/Budget Review Office
Jim Maggio - Budget Review Office
Bobby Doering - Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn - Assistant County Executive
Brendan Chamberlain - County Executive Assistant
Dominick Varrone - Chief of Support Services/SCPD
Robert Scharf - Lieutenant/Chief of Dept's Office/SCPD
Alan Otto - Chief of Staff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Joseph Rubacka - Deputy Warden/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Brad Maier - Deputy Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Tom Kost - Director/Suffolk County Fire Academy
Warren Horst - Suffolk County Fire Marshall
Kathy Malloy - Secretary/AME
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

*(*The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM*)*

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Will the sponsor of the DXM legislation lead us in the pledge?

Salutation

All right, why don't I ask the Police to come forward and just give us some feedback on what you saw in the budget. Did you guys get a chance to see the BRO report, too?

CHIEF VARRONE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

CHIEF VARRONE:

Good afternoon. Dominick Varrone, Chief of Support Services, Suffolk County Police Department. I have with me Lieutenant Robert Scharf, our Capital Projects and Budget Director, and I have Administrator I, Sue Veil from our Budget Section. The Commissioner -- I apologize on behalf of the Commissioner who really wanted to be here this afternoon who got called away to a meeting in Riverhead.

We looked over the program, I'm prepared, we're prepared to answer any questions that you may have on any of the items. The one item I would address, because I know there's some concern about it, in particular is the purchase of the additional helicopter, and the Commissioner asked that I just make a couple of comments in that regard. To remind everyone that in 2004, we only had three helicopters. In 2005, we procured a fourth helicopter, an A-Star, now we've replaced one of the MV-902's with this new EC-145 which was just received and actually will be in service as of next week. With the expected high reliability and proficiency of this helicopter, we think it will be probably available 50% more than the MV-902 it replaced. Although we are in agreement that we ultimately have to replace the other MV-902, given -- the Commissioner's feeling is given the fiscal implications of the cost of that other helicopter, he agrees perhaps that it would be prudent to wait. So basically, I'm saying that on his behalf and I'd be happy to address that issue or any other issues that anyone has.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, just a couple of things from me before I ask the other committee members. I think it's prudent to check out this helicopter before we look into purchasing another one, like what happened with the McDonnell Douglas. Tell me about the turnaround time for replacement parts for the McDonnell Douglas.

CHIEF VARRONE:

It all depends on the item involved. It's not a good situation; we have been having issues, as you all know, I think with the hub. And depending on exactly what breaks down and what the availability is, the turnaround time could be quite extensive.

However, the fact that we now have four helicopters, we think -- and with the increased reliability of the EC-145, even with the downtime, anticipated downtime with the 902, we think we'll be able to provide the service. In fact, we anticipate limited downtime, limited downtime service to the east end.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So are you saying, so I can get it in my head, that with this new helicopter, we'll actually have more air time than any time in the past?

CHIEF VARRONE:

That is the feeling, yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. All right, thank you. Anybody else?

LEG. BROWNING:

No, I'm okay.

LEG. NOWICK:

No.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

BRO, give me some feedback on the numbers there.

MS. VIZZINI:

Sure. The Police Department, in their original request, requested \$7 million in 2008 to move forward replacing the MD-902, the one you're talking about with the hub problems, and we're supportive of that. You know, we want to underscore for the Legislature, this is an area where the Legislature has expressed a lot of concern.

The helicopter, as the Commissioner said, is in the Capital Program but not until 2011 or 2012, it's in subsequent years, \$7 million. Our recommendation was to move it forward, at least to 2008 as originally requested by the department, this way we have a more firm idea of the price and the MD-902 has a better trade-in value, and you probably won't get it until 2009. So these are just things to consider. You know, another option would be to move the money forward to '09 to accelerate the replacement.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you.

LEG. NOWICK:

Just so --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Just so I'm sure about what you're saying, how many helicopters do we have in service right now?

CHIEF VARRONE:

We have -- as of next week when the EC-145 -- which has been delivered, by the way, and our crew has been trained, etcetera. As of next week, we will have four operational.

LEG. NOWICK:

And this is the one that you feel is going to be more reliable and in the air more often.

CHIEF VARRONE:

The new one we're putting into place, yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

And with the four, are usually two up and two down, is that how it works? I mean, or are they all working at the same time without --

CHIEF VARRONE:

Well, it all depends on the demand for service. You know, normally --

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay, maintenance.

CHIEF VARRONE:

Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

Just so I'm sure and I hear it from you, you feel that this is enough service for the east end where we're doing our job, protecting the people of the east end?

CHIEF VARRONE:

That is our position, yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay, thank you. I just wanted to make sure.

CHIEF VARRONE:

Anything you want to add? Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay then, thank you very much. Unless you have any other comments or --

CHIEF VARRONE:

No.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you.

CHIEF VARRONE:

Thank you. Thank you, all.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. I was wondering, Chief Otto, if you wanted to add anything from the perspective of the Sheriff?

CHIEF OTTO:

I think we're good to go. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, good. How about the Fire Academy; Chief, did you want to mention anything? You're good? Okay.

LEG. BROWNING:

Everybody is happy.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I did know, you did mention to me the concern about putting anything too close to encroach on the Police Academy and we're going to make a note of that to make sure. I know we've got some private homes being built around there, but we're going to look into that. So, thank you very much.

Anybody else want to add anything? Okay, then, I'll adjourn the meeting.

LEG. NOWICK:

Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you. Bye-bye.

LEG. BROWNING:

I think -- Jack, I don't know, I think he did want to say something.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Did you want to say something, sir?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MAIER:

Are you going over the FRES budget?

CHIEF OTTO:

Yeah, I think both of us were under the misunderstanding that you wanted some comments on what the PD's presentation was. We each have some comments that we think we want to put forward; is that correct?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right, then I will --

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'll make a motion to reopen, second by Legislator Nowick. Okay, I'm sorry, come forward then, by all means.

LEG. BROWNING:

I thought they were going to make it easy.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

When I was calling you up, I meant did you want to make any statements at all.

CHIEF OTTO:

We understand now; sorry about that.

MR. ZWIRN:

It better be good.

CHIEF OTTO:

I know, that was a close one.

MR. ZWIRN:

You better have jokes in there.

CHIEF OTTO:

Good afternoon. First, I have to apologize for the Sheriff's absence here right now; as we know, his wife is expecting any time and he did come to work today but he's out there now. So he wanted me to extend his apology for not attending this meeting.

First, we'd like to thank the County Executive, his budget office and Budget Review and all the County Legislators for their support of our Capital Projects. Rest assured that when the Sheriff submits a Capital Project for consideration, it's been fully researched to make sure that it is absolutely necessary and that there are no alternatives available and that there are no more efficient or effective ways in achieving our goals than what we state. The trust in our judgment that you

have all demonstrated by this support is truly appreciated.

At this time, I would like to briefly discuss each one of our five Capital Projects. Capital Project 3008 which is the construction of the new correctional facility and renovation of the existing dormitories in Yaphank. The proposed 2008-2010 Capital Program moves \$9 million for furniture and equipment from 2008 and places it in 2009; this puts the purchase of all furniture and equipment items necessary to operate the facility under an extremely tight and possibly unachievable timeframe.

As you know, the official correspondence from the Commission of Corrections who sets milestones for this project has established April 30, 2010 as the date that this new facility will become operational. Consequently, we have a little more than one year to have the funding appropriated, requisitions prepared, purchase orders established, bids awarded and all the new equipment received and installed. It should be noted that many items are specialized items, many of which the Health Department requires; these will need a considerable timeframe to be produced and delivered by the vendor once they receive the purchase order. When you have a large quantity of furniture and equipment, even if all County departments work together and prioritize the Sheriff's request to cut the purchase order, the vendors themselves will have a great deal of difficulty to produce all these items within the required timeframe.

No one wants to have the opening of the new and much needed correctional facility delayed due to the lack of furniture and equipment. It is, therefore, suggested that all, or at least 4.5 million which is 50% of the furniture and equipment for Capital Project 3008, be funded in 2008. The importance of meeting this April 30, 2010 milestone for having this new correctional facility operational cannot be overstated. At the present time, the administration of the Sheriff's Office is being conducted on a knife-edge, there's no room for mistakes and a disturbance involving damages has consequences far beyond the walls of the facility in which it occurs. If we equate our current overcrowding to the national security threat standards, we are now at code red.

On numerous occasions this year, the number of prisoners incarcerated in the Suffolk County Correctional System has reached 1,821. With the design capacity of 1,327 and with every variance utilized, we have a maximum capacity of 1,686; however, our functional capacity is actually 93% of that figure, or only 1,568 inmates. Once we go beyond our functional capacity, day-to-day operations teter on the edge of chaos as between 100 and 200 prisoners who have no other place to go are crowded into areas never intended as living quarters and are sent to other jails throughout the state at a cost of millions of dollars. Yesterday, the inmate population was 1,760, we currently have housed out over 135 individuals.

Capital Project 3013. This project provides funding for the two-story 3,740 square feet expansion of our Headquarters Bureau which is located in the Criminal Courts Building. This will include space for the additional administrative offices and an expanded squad room and locker area. The original space was designed for approximately 20 Deputy Sheriffs. However, in 1995 the expansion of our administrative offices at our main facility resulted in the relocation of the entire Deputy Sheriff Squad Room to the Criminal Courts Building; as a result, we now have approximately 80 Deputy Sheriffs assigned to this command.

New to this Capital Project is our request for an additional \$200,000 in the equipment line for the replacement and upgrade of the electronic gate controls for the prisoner detention area of this building. This equipment is now over 20 years old, and like the 1st District Court Detention Area which has had its obsolete security equipment replaced in 2005, repair parts can no longer be obtained. The proposed Capital Budget does include the \$200,000 and I urge you to support this funding and we appreciate the inclusion.

Capital Project 3014, improvements to the County Correctional Facility at Riverhead, is an ongoing project. The 2007 Adopted Capital Budget provides 1.1 million in funding. This Capital Project calls for numerous repairs to the Riverhead Correctional Facility. The maximum security of the building is over 38 years old and has been operating under severely overcrowded conditions since 1980.

Phase I of this project, which includes the replacement of the fire alarm system, the air handlers and flooring, has already begun. Under Phase II A, we are calling for the renovation of one of the medium security pods into a direct supervision pod as a pilot project for the new facility. There are many other components to Phase II B and Phase III which are all detailed in our Form 13.

Capital Project 3035. This Capital Project provides funding for the purchase of a closed-circuit television system which will be installed in key security areas throughout the Riverhead Correctional Facility. It is also a necessary component of the Direct Supervision Project, they go hand-in-hand. Funding for this project has already been appropriated. The plans will be reviewed for final approval by the State Commission of Corrections at their June meeting, so we're on our way on that one.

At this time, we're going to be handing out a handout which encompasses the entire presentation and a chart which goes with this last Capital Project which is Capital Project 3060. Capital Project 3060 is pretty complicated, it provides funding for the purchase of the communications equipment for the Sheriff's Office. We have prepared a chart to help explain the stages that the County Communication System will be required to go through over the next three years as a result of mandatory re-banding in 2007 and 2008, and the mandatory narrow banding in the near future. These projects will have a direct impact on the Sheriff's Office existing portable and mobile radio fleet.

First, during 2007 and 2008, all portable and mobile radios purchased prior to August of 1996 will have to be replaced, that's 176 radios since they cannot be re-banded. Nextel will cover the cost of replacing these radios. The replacement radios provided by Nextel will address both intermediate re-banding issue as well as the future narrow banding issue. However, the replacement radios provided by Nextel are missing key features which the Sheriff's Office now has on its newer radios and feels are extremely important; one of these features is a digital channel display. This enhances the efficiency of interoperability and is working with other agencies and knowing exactly which agencies you are communicating by being able to view the digital channel display. The importance of this feature has been realized since September 11th.

Consequently, for both safety and consistency, the Sheriff's Office may have to pay for the upgrades which are being offered at an estimated cost of \$400 per radio. This funding may have to come from our 2007 Operating Budget and is viewed as a sound, long-term investment since the radios will be capable of being narrow banded in the future, and we're prepared to do that. The second point, though, a total of 175 radios manufactured between August of '96 and 2002 also need to be re-banded; however, in this case Nextel will only have to modify the radios, not replace them. This upgrade will make those radios functional until the narrow-banding occurs. Consequently, we can add and we should wait until 2010 before addressing the funding for the narrow-banding capability. At that time, this Capital Project that you have in front of you, which anticipates the requirement for narrow-banding, will replace them, making all remaining radios narrow-banded capable.

This ends our Capital Program presentation and we'd be happy to address any questions or concerns you have.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I'm for sound, long-term investments, that's for sure. I guess what I would like to do is ask BRO, what's the fiscal impact of adding, I guess it was \$400,000 and then moving things down?

CHIEF OTTO:

The 4.5 million you're talking about.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah. Well, there was seven million, you want to use 4.5 right away is what I'm getting.

CHIEF OTTO:

We're thinking that it's better to put some, at least 50%, of the money in '08 instead of '09.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right, okay.

CHIEF OTTO:

This gives the -- spreads out the purchasing over two years instead of one.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So it doesn't really have an impact on this year's budget then.

MR. REINHEIMER:

No.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right, okay.

LEG. NOWICK:

Well, not on this year's budget, it's in the future.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, okay. I mean it's not coming out of our pocket this year is what I'm basically saying. Okay. Anybody have any questions?

LEG. BROWNING:

I've got a question.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Is that true; it wouldn't be coming out of this year's budget?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Explain to us when it's going to come out then.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, in our review of the jail project we also echo our concerns, but it really means the department is going to have to be very proactive. And all those things that the Chief said, you do need to solicit cooperation from the Budget Office and Audit & Control, etcetera, etcetera, to get things going, especially if the jail remains on target. However, part of that would be to have the due diligence to get the capital appropriation right away, in January of '09. So -- but even that, normally the department would prepare the resolution, it would go to the Budget Office, etcetera. So the money is in the Capital Program, it's just a question of what year.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MS. VIZZINI:

It won't hit the debt service until after we actually --

CHIEF OTTO:

We would be in a --

MS. VIZZINI:

The second year after we bond.

CHIEF OTTO:

We would be remiss if we didn't put on the record that yes, it is in there and yes, we would move forward, and if everybody does cooperate with us it works really well. My point is, it's my personal opinion also, you're not going to get everything in one year because the vendors you have no control over and you have specialized items, especially for the Health Department. And I actually am speaking for them on this. So that's my concern, because even though you might have a facility ready to go that opens in 2010, COC may not let you even occupy it if you don't have the right equipment in there. So I don't want anybody to be embarrassed, it's like a warning shot and I'm saying maybe we should move some of that money in a previous year so we can spread the purchasing over two.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator.

LEG. NOWICK:

Chief, you're right about that; it's just like building a new house, if you don't have anything to put into it you can't go into it. But just a question. So your request is to cut it in half, but would that allow for enough to put into the facility for what you would need to open up and operate? You know, that's a \$4.5 million difference, would that still be enough?

CHIEF OTTO:

We feel that -- it's the idea of spreading over two years, you're going to start getting the items in a year, you know, two years apart basically. So by the time it opens, you'll have everything and you'll be able to put it into the facility and be ready to go. You just can't get it -- it's like a bottleneck, you can't get it all into one year.

LEG. NOWICK:

Oh, I know, I know, it's like anything else. And not that I'm looking to increase this, but just knowing what we went through a few years ago getting this project started and knowing how the Department of Corrections is so firm on this --

CHIEF OTTO:

And that's our point.

LEG. NOWICK:

-- I'm just wanting to make sure that you can open for business. But thank you, your answer was fine. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Can we go back to your jail population? Currently, how many prisoners are in the jail at this time?

CHIEF OTTO:

Yesterday it was 1,760.

LEG. BROWNING:

Seventeen sixty total, between Riverhead and Yaphank. And how many are sent Upstate or wherever?

CHIEF OTTO:

It was 135 this morning when we checked.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Wow.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'm almost curious about when you have the prisoners in there, how many of them that would be eligible for the ankle bracelet program? You don't try and figure those numbers out?

CHIEF OTTO:

You can't figure those out once they become our prisoners, we don't --

LEG. BROWNING:

Well, yeah, but that could possibly have been eligible; you don't know those numbers?

CHIEF OTTO:

This is -- if you just look at the inmate population, I mean, I've been here almost 35 years, okay, the highest it's ever been was 1,851, we were at 1,760 yesterday. It's -- all our projections have come to fruition here, everything. I don't -- I think our programs that we're working right now with Probation are the best probably in the State, I don't know how many more you could take away.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah.

CHIEF OTTO:

I mean, that's something that we're constantly doing. And we have a very progressive Sheriff who is really on top of all of this, if there's anything we could do he's doing it now, even with the courts. So it's hard for me to say how many of those people that are currently in jail can receive ankle bracelets and be on the outside, I don't know.

LEG. BROWNING:

By the time you get them -- okay. My question may be more for BRO; how much does it cost to send a prisoner to wherever, approximately?

CHIEF OTTO:

It's approximately a hundred, it depends. You know, Riker's takes some, everybody takes them at different costs, you know, different rates, so you figure an average of a hundred to 110.

LEG. BROWNING:

A day.

CHIEF OTTO:

Uh-huh.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. And how much does it cost -- I'm just trying to figure out how much this all is. If a prisoner is on the ankle bracelet, how much does it cost a day to have a Probation Officer working with a person on an ankle bracelet?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I think it was \$50.

LEG. NOWICK:

Would you suffer an interruption.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'm sorry?

LEG. NOWICK:

Could you suffer an interruption?

LEG. BROWNING:

Sure.

LEG. NOWICK:

I believe, and I could be wrong, but I believe that that's not within the purview of the Sheriff to put someone on the ankle bracelet.

LEG. BROWNING:

No, that's why I'm asking --

LEG. NOWICK:

That would be up to the Judge and the Court, right?

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, yeah.

CHIEF OTTO:

Uh-huh.

LEG. BROWNING:

Just curious.

CHIEF OTTO:

And the other thing you have to take into consideration is the variances that we have, okay, being given to us because we're building this jail. I mean, when they're gone they're gone, and then your number, instead of 135, we wouldn't have that, it would be tremendous.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I think John Desmond said it's \$50, that's what it would cost for each unit to be monitored and stuff, but you need to increase it by ten people to man it adequately I think is what he said. Let me -- I'm sorry, did you want to --

LEG. BROWNING:

No, that's okay; you answered that, \$50 a day.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah. You said \$100, 110 to have somebody shipped over to Riker's. Now, doesn't it cost like 240 days to keep -- \$240 a day to keep somebody in our jail, approximately? So is that \$100 on top of that or are you telling me it's cheaper to farm them out.

CHIEF OTTO:

Go ahead, Joe.

DEPUTY WARDEN RUBACKA:

The \$240 a day is an average that we use, it's not an actual cost for a particular inmate. So what drives that price considerably up is inmates that have special needs, prisoner dialysis, you know, dialysis or suicide watch or any high-cost item will drive that figure up. An inmate that's going to

Riker's is the cream of the crop; he probably cost us \$5 a day if he's in our jail because we give him a pair of sneakers and three meals and he's good to go.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Gotcha, okay.

DEPUTY WARDEN RUBACKA:

So we really are losing by sending them out.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. All right, thanks.

Okay, any other questions? No. Okay, then, gentlemen, if you don't have anything else, thank you very much. And how about FRES?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MAIER:

Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good afternoon.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MAIER:

And thank you for having us here today. Commissioner Williams couldn't be with us today, he'll be returning to town tomorrow. And I have with me here Chief Fire Marshal Warren Horst and Chief Tom Kost, Director of the Fire Academy; and my name is Brad Maier, I'm the Deputy Commissioner of Fire, Rescue.

We've had the opportunity to review the County Executive's Budget and yours and we feel that the budget proposed by the County Executive covers all the items that we need to and we can survive with that, everything falls right into place.

We do want to just make one comment, that the backup radio room has a very high priority which is in his budget as well, Project No. 3230, and we're looking at several different locations at this time.

If you have any further questions about any of the projects, Chief Horst has been directly involved and Chief Kost has some information possibly for the Fire Academy.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Do you want to add anything about the Fire Academy?

CHIEF KOST:

Yes, I would. We agree with the Budget Committee and we're very happy with the projects that are under way and in planning.

I would like to talk a little bit now, though, about the encroachment of the homes. I was waiting for our turn to come up, and I apologize for not addressing it at that time, but there is a construction project going on directly across the street from the Fire Academy and they're building high-end, high-scale homes and several of them are already occupied and we feel it's just a matter of time before smoke issues and other issues of noise are going to start falling somewhere within either the town or the County. We're concerned about additional fifty homes that are going to be built in that same area. And what we've been asking, and we're getting some cooperation from DPW, they're going to do some signage for us stating that there is this particular unit there and we do live fire training and it's going to be smoke and there's going to be other things that they're going to see

back by us. Although we're way in the back of the property, it's still going to result in us becoming a nuisance at some time or another.

We have taken our case to the State to ask them to put signage on both the Expressway and Sunrise Highway at the respective exits and they are unable to do so because it would cost them highway funding, Federal highway funding if they don't follow the rules and regulations of the Federal government. So we just yesterday, myself and the Chairman of the FRES Commission, attended a meeting with Tim Bishop who's going to look into it and see if he can get some type of relief on that issue. So we are following up on it, but we just want to let you know that there is going to be a problem eventually with homes getting closer and closer to the Fire Academy.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

A question; you were saying that you're having trouble getting the funding for signs?

CHIEF KOST:

Well, we can't even put the signs up on the Expressway and Sunrise Highway because of the fact that the State would lose Federal highway funding money if they didn't follow the rules and regulations that have been given to them, because both roads are considered US Highways, not just State Highways.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, I see.

CHIEF KOST:

So the State has really no authority to put additional signage up.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

On the Expressway.

CHIEF KOST:

That is correct, but DPW is assisting us in getting signs on Yaphank Avenue.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

CHIEF KOST:

And we want to try to get some type of information to the people that are buying these new homes to let them know that, "Hey, there is a Fire Academy here and we do burn."

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

That was my second question; have you reached out to the Town of Brookhaven?

CHIEF KOST:

Yes, we have.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I mean, they have to give the building permits, correct?

CHIEF KOST:

That is correct.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

What's their response to this?

CHIEF KOST:

At this time, they cannot sit down with people that are getting building permits because I would assume it's the contractor that gets the building permits and then sells the home, but maybe even Legislator Browning could help us out a little bit with that.

LEG. BROWNING:

I did want to speak on that because I also contacted DPW about getting additional signage for you, and also with the new Yaphank development, I know we met on that about where the houses were going to be built. They're no longer going to put homes south of those power lines by the Police Headquarters, that's something that I brought up also with the Town of Brookhaven is they need to start looking at doing -- you know, forcing these developers to put a "buyer beware" when they're building these homes, because it's not just FRES, it's the jail. You have these half million dollar homes across from a bus stop where the prisoners are coming out of jail. So I think it's very important that the Town of Brookhaven does this because I don't want to hear it, you know, "Well" --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Another Trap and Skeet.

LEG. HORSLEY:

You will.

LEG. BROWNING:

You know, we're dealing with the Trap and Skeet Range where they keep saying, "Well, you know, the homes were there and you knew it was there," you know? I don't say that the Trap and Skeet Range, that the residents, many of them were not notified that that range was going to be reopened; however, you're open, you're still open and those residents need to be aware, when they come down Yaphank Avenue that all the proper signage is there so that they know what they're moving into.

CHIEF KOST:

We agree wholeheartedly. And we're not the only thing that's there, you have to understand, we do have Probation, we do have the jail, we have the Fire Academy, located just to our south is a compost place and --

LEG. BROWNING:

That's another problem.

CHIEF KOST:

-- and at some times of the day with the wind direction, it does get pretty bad. We have Grucci Fireworks, we have the Town Dump also within a certain area, and the Trap and Skeet Range. So it's really not a desirable place to buy a high-end home; unfortunately, it is happening.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

That's amazing. Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Tom, what would you suggest, other than the signage, that the County do about this? I feel your pain.

CHIEF KOST:

I think your hands are tied as well as ours, Wayne. And unfortunately, I think the signage would be a big help and --

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, "Caution, Jail Ahead".

CHIEF KOST:

You have to do something. If they put "Fire Training" or "Live Fire Training" signs out on Yaphank Avenue, I think that would be a big help. But we want to let the people know that are coming to look at these homes, they have to go past the signs, it might sink in a little bit, maybe.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Right.

LEG. BROWNING:

I've got a suggestion. When I was in Colorado, there's a jail right off the Interstate, they have signs, "Caution, don't pick up any hitchhikers" signs, there's a jail in the area; maybe we need to do that.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Don't pick up people in dark suits.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Maybe I'm wrong, but when you're riding out on the Expressway, isn't there a sign that says "Correctional Facility"; isn't there a sign off the Expressway?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Could you imagine buying a high-end house and missing a jail?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I don't -- it says "Suffolk Offices", I think.

LEG. NOWICK:

It doesn't say "Correctional Facility" on the Expressway?

CHIEF KOST:

We think it only says Public Offices or County Offices at this exit.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I guess what's scary to me is that we're talking about putting signs to alert people that are going to possibly buy homes of what's there. I mean, the jail is not hiding, I mean, you can't miss it. So, I mean, I hope signs will help, but I mean if you see these buildings and you don't put it together, it's scary.

LEG. HORSLEY:

What's the property going for, do you have any idea?

CHIEF KOST:

We hear that it's going between five and \$600,000, those homes.

LEG. BROWNING:

The Enchanted Forest, it's called.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm perplexed.

CHIEF KOST:

And we can just imagine, after the first group moves in and they're sitting there some nice summer night having a cocktail or enjoying dinner and the smoke blows over the horizon, that we're going to hear it.

LEG. BROWNING:

Or with the bus stops.

LEG. HORSLEY:

We know where the West Babylon, Lindenhurst border is.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I thank you for your presentation, it was most informative. And if we can add any assistance, please let us know. Thank you.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER MAIER:

Thank you. Have a nice day.

LEG. BROWNING:

Eventually it's going to be a bus stop on the corner.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Don't pick up people with orange suits.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Is there anybody else that would like to make a presentation or a comment? Going once, going twice. You still -- would you like to say something? You're still sitting, there's one person; you want to say something? No? Okay. All right, then, I will adjourn the meeting.

LEG. NOWICK:

Again.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 PM*)*

*Legislator Jack Eddington, Chairman
Public Safety Committee*