

PUBLIC SAFETY 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 September 6, 2007.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington - Chairman
Legislator Wayne Horsley
Legislator Elie Mystal
Legislator Joseph Caracappa
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Lynne Nowick

Members Not Present:

Legislator Kate Browning - Vice-Chair/Excused

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Ian Barry - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Katie Horst - Aide to Legislator Eddington
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Kara Hahn - Director of Communications for Presiding Officer Lindsay
Lori Murphy - Aide to Legislator Losquadro
DuWayne Gregory - Aide to Legislator Mystal
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick
Jim Maggio - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office
Diane Dono - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn - Assistant County Executive
Brendan Chamberlain - County Executive Assistant
Lynne Bizzarro - Chief Deputy County Attorney
Robert Moore - Chief of Department/Suffolk County Police Department
Aristedes Mojica - Inspector/Chief of Dept's Office/SCPD
Alan Otto - Chief of Staff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Mike Sharkey - President/Deputy Sheriff Police Benevolent Association
Michael Rando - Deputy Sheriff Police Benevolent Association
Robert Kearon - Division Bureau Chief/District Attorney's Office
Joe Williams - Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Belinda Pagdanganan - Deputy Comm./Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
John Desmond - Director/Suffolk County Probation Department
Tom Porter - Deputy Director/Suffolk County Probation Department
Tom Henry - Suffolk County Probation Department
Danny DelValle - Vice-President/Probation Officer's Association
Daniel Buckley - Suffolk Probation Firearms
Lara Watrous - Suffolk County Probation Department
Donna Vigilante - Suffolk County Probation Department.

Steve Larsen - Suffolk County Probation Department
Chris Saxer - Suffolk County Probation Department
Joan Jesinger - Suffolk County Probation Department
Laura Ahearn - Executive Director/Parents for Megan's Law/
Crime Victim Center
Bill Mulligan - President/Superior Officer's Association
Debra Alloncius - Legislative Director/AME
Deborah McKee - Association of Municipal Employees
Hope Collazo - Director/Community Service Program-American Red Cross
Debbie Eppel - Public Information Office
Catherine Hoake - Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Mary McLaughlin - Suffolk County League of Women Voters
Colette Coyne - Executive Director/Melanoma Awareness Campaign
June Huether - AHRC/Business Rep
Randi Dresner - Island Harvest
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

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

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I would like to start the Public Safety Committee meeting. If you would please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Horsley

Salutation

And I'd ask you to remain standing for a moment of silence for the men and women in uniform, overseas and at home, and in particular the lives that we've lost overseas this week. And in particular, Legislator Browning had a death in her family in Dublin, her brother, 41 years old, passed away yesterday and I'd ask you to keep him in your thoughts, too.

Moment of silence observed

Thank you very much. And for the record, Legislator Browning has an excuse for the meeting. Legislator Losquadro is stuck in traffic and he is going to be here, but he said don't hold the meeting for him, he will get here.

Okay, I'd like to start the public portion with Laura Ahearn coming forward please.

MS. AHEARN:

Good morning. My name is Laura Ahearn, I'm the Executive Director of Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victim Center.

The Suffolk Legislature has always made protecting our most vulnerable a top priority, as evidenced by the many policies and laws you've enacted over the past ten years. As an advocate, I'd like to thank you for your efforts and your courage.

Today, two bills are before you seeking to expand the Sex Offender Residency Restriction Law. In my role as an advocate, my first inclination is to support these initiatives. However, I'm deeply concerned that feel-good additions to residency restriction will serve only to fuel the ultimate overturning of the protections we currently have. I cannot support legislation that serves only to provide Constitutional challenges with little or no public safety benefit. Protecting children who are in libraries is certainly a better approach than preventing offenders from residing within a quarter mile of them.

At this time, I request IR 1482 and IR 1540 to be tabled until public presentations to this body can be made; first, demonstrating incidents, not hypotheticals, for the need of this legislation; second, whether or not the areas in question are covered by existing residency restriction laws; three, opinions by the County Attorney that expansions will absolutely not jeopardize our current residency restriction law; and lastly, that the Police, the District Attorney, Probation and Parole would fully support an expansion as they are responsible for implementing and enforcing this law. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much, Laura.

LEG. NOWICK:

Can we ask a question?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, sure. Laura, could you just wait one second? Legislator Nowick would like to ask a question.

LEG. NOWICK:

Good morning, Laura.

MS. AHEARN:

Good morning.

LEG. NOWICK:

As I always respect your opinion and your ideas, I just wanted to know, when you said that passing something like this could overturn existing laws, and that's -- I just wanted to know what you meant by that, how that could be.

MS. AHEARN:

In Binghamton, the city enacted a local city ordinance that was so restrictive that sex offenders basically couldn't reside anywhere within certain zones, they call these exclusionary zones. The law, even before it heard arguments in Federal Court, the city repealed their law and they have absolutely no residency restriction law at all now. You can't create zones that are so exclusionary that an offender can't live anywhere. And I'm certainly not an advocate for sex offender housing, what I'm advocating for is to ensure that the current law that we have right now does not -- is not exposed to any constitutional challenge, and the residency restriction law as it is right now is very restrictive.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you, Laura.

MS. AHEARN:

You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you very much. Debra Alloncius, if you would come forward, please.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Good morning, Chairman Eddington and members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Debbie Alloncius, I am the AME Legislative Director. I would like to read a statement into the record and submit it, because I think there is an incident that occurred that many of you are not aware of.

Violence at the DSS Wyandanch Center. Friday, August 31st, 2007. We were lucky again this time, there may not be a second time where we will have the same grace. Friday, mid-morning, in a crowded social service center, a shot was fired, but nobody heard; nothing in the news, nothing in the papers. Do you all know what happened? By the grace of God, nobody was physically injured but our AME members were emotionally traumatized, along with the mothers and their babies who came to us for help they so desperately need. This emotional scarring will take months, if not years, to get over, yet many of our members refused to go home to safety. This dedicated work force stayed on because they have made a commitment to serve people who are less fortunate than themselves, and they'll do it again and again because AME members care about their fellow human being. They care that people have food to eat, money to pay their utility bills and hopefully a safe place to rest their head when the day is done, but their safety is not guaranteed.

A shooter chased his target into the center -- it all happened so fast -- that shot rang out and destroyed whatever notion of safety our employees had. They hit the floors, applicants and workers alike. Chaos reigned, nobody knew what to do. Within an instant it was over, but the mothers were wailing, "My baby, my baby," and the AME workers set about to comfort them and to provide whatever safety they could for these horrified individuals, never putting themselves first.

Please tell me that you, their collective Legislative body, will do something to alleviate the trauma that has invaded their very being. Make the social service centers safe, every last one of them. Don't wait until you have a fatality. We owe these workers nothing less than a safe environment to

work in; in fact, it's memorialized in our contract. I know in my heart that each and every one of you would lose sleep over a worker being killed, but is that what it takes to react to our plea? Every day we service a population that is in dire need; some are so close to the edge because they just cannot go on, but we sit with them one-on-one and provide what we can for them. Sometimes that little bit of caring can make life that much easier. Are you willing to make our members' lives a little easier by providing bullet-proof glass and metal detectors?

We are requesting, not demanding, that you work with the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees in making our workplace environment a safe one. Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy must forget his draconian funds and find the necessary funds to ameliorate dangerous conditions that exist in the social service centers; we deserve no less.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Debbie. Just hang out there for a minute; Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL,

Debbie, I don't have any question for you, I just want to make some clarification as to the incident which happened at the DSS Center in Wyandanch what happens to be in my district. Although we do have a security guard at this center and the Police regularly patrol, the incident did not involve any clients, the incident involved two neighbors who live around the DSS center and they got into an altercation. One of the neighbors running for safety away from the other neighbor --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Correct.

LEG. MYSTAL:

-- ran into DSS, flew past the security guard with the other neighbor hot on his heels, so to speak, and when he got in there he just pulled out a gun and shot in the air. So it was -- I just want to make it perfectly clear that it wasn't somebody who is a client of DSS and it wasn't because we didn't have any security, it's just a question of the guy just ran past the security guard followed by the other perpetrator who just pulled a gun, and he was arrested at his home because he lives right across the street from the DSS. So I just wanted to clarify that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you, Legislator Mystal, because those were a few of the questions, but be that as it may, somebody was in danger. But a question, and I don't know if you can answer it, Debbie; have there been ever any other incidents in these DSS --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

In the Wyandanch Center?

LEG. NOWICK:

Or any other centers.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

I don't know that there's a gun --

LEG. NOWICK:

I mean, is that prevalent?

MS. ALLONCIUS:

I don't know that there's been any gunshots. I know we've had people jump through windows; you know, I was in a center where somebody came flying through a window one time because the door

was closed and he was absolutely ossified. The Coram Center is riddled with violence; I know the Coram Center they do -- in the new center that they built, they did put the bullet-proof glass.

LEG. NOWICK:

So this is common.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

These lobbies, our lobbies are full of weapons, and don't let anybody kid you otherwise. I've worked for many, many years -- in fact, one unit that I supervised many years ago, the Disabled Client Assistance Program, we got people on to SSI to get Federal benefits and come off our roles. That population, there were many of them that I had to assign cases to just the men in the unit so that they were able to do a body search because they always carried gun -- knives, knives are usually the weapon of choice. And at least with the metal detector, that guy coming through, you know, would alert something, some sort of a system. It could -- there was no way to stop that, I agree with you, Mr. Mystal. But the bottom line is when you go into that Wyandanch Center, straight on, he comes in and takes off a shot, the windows are right there, I've got people at those windows; everybody hit the floor, it was chaos. I had workers in the lobby. One of the EMP workers, the Employability Unit, she was in the lobby; you know, it was chaos.

One of the things we do need to do is come up with a better plan, and that's what AME will be working on with Commissioner DeMarzo as soon as we have the opportunity because we're undergoing many other things at this point. But we need to come up with some sort of an emergency plans because that's what my members came back to me and said to me that day when I went there. The minute I found out, two other workers and myself went there, my Health & Safety Officer and the AME Secretary, to let them know that I would present the information to the Legislature and let them know what's going on. They are aware that Coram does have the bullet-proof glass, they are aware that they're closing the center and we're building -- and that they're going to be going to a new one. I'm sure that you will be putting bullet-proof glass into those centers, you have to do something to just -- just so that -- just to allay the fears of the workers.

LEG. NOWICK:

Debbie, did you say that the Coram Center has a magnetometer?

MS. ALLONCIUS:

No, I don't think so.

LEG. NOWICK:

None of them do. So how many centers have bullet-proof glass?

MS. ALLONCIUS:

To my knowledge, I think only the Coram Center.

LEG. NOWICK:

And this is --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

And that's because it was probably built to specification.

LEG. NOWICK:

And these centers do tend to be a little bit dangerous, aggressive; you say there are people that come in with knives and weapons?

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Well, you have people who are at the end of their rope at times. You know, unfortunately the

economic climate is really horrendous, and just the areas that you're dealing with. Coram is always --

LEG. NOWICK:

Well, I appreciate you sharing that. I know there was nothing we could have done with that particular case --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Right.

LEG. NOWICK:

-- but now that we know also that there is violence there, and I didn't realize that, and thank you for sharing it.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

You're welcome. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Horsley?

LEG. HORSLEY:

One of my first questions that I was thinking about, you know, we need a plan and stuff like that, obviously you've jumped on this. The -- I'm concerned that this is the first time I've heard about this. And though it's not my district, it is my town, this is of great concern to all of us up here. How do we plug into this plan-seeking mode that you guys are in with the Commissioner?

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Well, we have not even approached Commissioner DeMarzo on this yet because, you know, we've been doing a million and one other things in the last several days. We will be approaching her -- we need to sit down with our Health & Safety officer and come up with some sort of -- look at guidelines in other places, but at least we need to have some sort of a metal detection system and the bullet-proof glass. They're not allowed -- to go into Family Court you have to have it, the people going in and out of there are half our clients.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Right. Debbie, are you comfortable that just the starting of this would be just with the meeting; you don't need legislation or anything like that?

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Oh, I don't think we're anywhere near needing legislation at this point. You know, I'm certain that --

LEG. HORSLEY:

I don't think you do either.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Right, right.

LEG. HORSLEY:

I just wanted to make sure that --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

I just wanted you all to be aware.

LEG. HORSLEY:

-- you know how serious we think this is. And also, the fact that we don't know anything about this;

is there a system to notify Legislators, you know, that an incident occurred? I don't think -- have any of -- did you guys know about this?

LEG. NOWICK:

No. Was it in the newspaper?

MR. ZWIRN:

It was in the newspaper.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I knew about it.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

No, I saw nothing in the news and nothing in the newspaper; I did look, I did not see any coverage at all.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay, all right.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

You know, nobody was hurt, I think had an injury occurred I think then something possibly would have happened, but nothing, but because we were saved again.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah. Well, we're a close-knit community in Babylon, don't -- you know, we want to know when something like that occurs, for both the employees and for everybody concerned. Okay, good. You're going to keep us informed, obviously.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Absolutely.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Thanks.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Just another comment. The incident happened on Friday, it was just before the Labor Day weekend, so there was very little coverage of it; you know, I don't think there was any coverage of it. Now, my office heard about it, of course, because I'm in the district.

The other comment I need to make to you, Debbie, is that right now the Town of Babylon is in a suit against the Federal government, because the Federal government wants to put a Post Office in Wyandanch and the proposed design for that Post Office has bullet-proof and barbed-wires, and the community is in an uproar because they feel that somehow government thinks of them as being lawless and violent. So the Town of Babylon --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

There was a shooting.

LEG. MYSTAL:

The Supervisor of the Town of Babylon and the Town Board, they are suing the Federal government to change the design and not to put bullet-proof windows and barbed-wire around the Post Office. So if you are talking about us as a County doing the same thing, I don't know -- you know, we're

going to build a new center, I don't know what the design is going to be, but it's something that needs to be explored and talked about, because you can get a lawsuit for --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

And Mr. Mystal, I would hope you would fight that lawsuit with tooth and nail.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Well, let me tell you what. I'm part of the last suit that the Town of Babylon is filing.

*(*Legislator Losquadro entered at 9:56 AM*)*

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Because when you -- if you can ameliorate a dangerous situation, which we do have, and it's just not the bullet, it's even the weapons that are drawn in the centers.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I think maybe like, you know, metal detectors or some kind of a plan of action in case something happens, that needs to be explored, that needs to be talked to Janet DeMarzo, but we'll keep talking about it.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. Mystal.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah, just a quick comment. I think, though, if we did decide on bullet-proof glass, we would not have to alert the media to tell them that we would -- I mean, that's something you can do very quietly. I don't know about a netting, I don't understand what the netting is for, but --

LEG. HORSLEY:

Banks have bullet-proof --

LEG. NOWICK:

Bullet-proof, you just put it in. You don't have to --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Yeah. I mean, you know, barbed wire is not a necessity.

LEG. NOWICK:

You can't tell when you look at it that it's bullet-proof; well, little that I know about bullet-proof glass. That would be a quiet thing, just quietly do it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Presiding Officer Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, I think we're getting way ahead of ourselves --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Yeah.

P.O. LINDSAY:

-- in terms of lawsuits and what could happen and what couldn't happen. I think we owe an

obligation to our County employees to protect them --

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Thank you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

-- at all cost. And I think what you have to do, Debbie, is you have to get together with the Commissioner and the department and come back with an action plan on how to protect our employees.

And I think there's a big difference between a Post Office and a social services center. And I agree with you, a lot of times there's very desperate people that come to your bureau for help and angry people and we can't expose our employees. But I think when you guys sit down and have the discussions that you have to have and you come up with a plan, come back to us with what you need and we've got to work up a number and find the money to protect our employees.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

We'd be very appreciative of that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much, Debbie.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And I would just like to add on this issue that I think that we have to establish some kind of notification to certainly the Public Safety Committee, and maybe the whole Legislature, when there is a violent act in one of our Suffolk County facilities. And I'm going to reach out to -- I think I saw the Chief come in, that maybe we can get some kind of numbers, you give us -- we'll give you our numbers and we can at least be called when there's something happening in the community so that we don't get called by constituents or the media and asked about it and go, "Ah-duh". So I will be talking to the Police Commissioner on this.

Okay, the next public portion card is Colette Coyne.

MS. COYNE:

Good morning. The first thing, of course, I want to do is say that I am representing issues regarding Melanoma Skin Cancer. I am the Executive Director of the Melanoma Awareness Campaign and we are affiliated with the National Council for Skin Cancer Prevention in Washington.

I would like to thank you for what you've done in the past. Whether you are aware or not, Suffolk County has the strongest law regulating tanning parlors in the whole country, and of that I am very pleased; however, my concern is the enforcement of the law. Recently I was part of a training through BOCES, Suffolk County, for our teens and some of the comments were kind of sad from the teens; "Oh, sure, the Legislators, they just pass the laws. You know, they want to please people, they really don't care, they don't see them enforced. I know plenty of teens who still go to tanning parlors and nobody does anything about it." So I promised them that I would come before you and share this message. They are our future citizens and certainly we don't want to add to their disillusionment.

I realize that money factors in to what department and the number of staff who will enforce this law, but it took months and months of your time and mine to pass this powerful regulation and I think we should try to figure it out, make it happen. How do we enforce it and how do we protect our young people?

The second issue I have is the protection of our lifeguards who are the role models on the beach for your young children. And this to me is a very important thing because if we don't set an example -- I've spent the summer at the beaches, we have a home in the Hamptons, I swim three, four times a week; it is very disheartening to look around the beach and maybe see one or two families that have hats on young children. Why? Because they don't know and I do think we have to help to educate them.

Now, Suffolk County passed a law in response to OSHA and that law was updated or amended in 1988. And at that time, the concern was people who are sitting at terminals, the concern was for their vision, worried about what kind of chairs they were sitting on, were they comfortable, were they good for their backs, Suffolk County shall furnish to each employee a job and workplace which is free from recognized hazards so as to provide responsible and adequate protection to the lives, safety and health of its employees.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

MS. COYNE:

We now know the sun causes cancer, it's time to amend that law and see that our lifeguards have covering. If they want a tan, get it on their own time, but at least as a County, protect them. Also take a look at our --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up, please.

MS. COYNE:

Okay. In the budget I would hope that maybe you would allot monies for shade covering on parks and recreation and also the signs that were erected last year, I don't know about anybody anyplace else, but they're no longer at Meschutt Beach.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

MS. COYNE:

So please do something about this growing cancer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

Okay, at this time, I'd ask Mr. Desmond, the Director, and Mr. Porter, Deputy Director, and anybody else you want to invite up to just make a little presentation. Basically, I'm asking for an update on Probation; what's happening?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Good morning. John Desmond, Probation Director; I have with me Tom Porter who is the Deputy Director. I thought that today we would just cover the questions that were raised last session on our Probation fleet.

The questions at that point basically were concerning the fact that the information available was that the equipment in the various vehicles in the department were not uniform. I checked on that and I just want to give you a brief report on our current status with our fleet. We have 59 vehicles, 21 of them are Crown Vics, 10 are Seabridges and three are vans, the rest of the vehicles are smaller cars that are used for routine home visits. The vans are used for our Day Reporting Center, Juvenile Reporting Center and for our summer programs for adolescents and juveniles.

Regarding the Seabridges, those vehicles all have lights; they do not have cages, they do not have

sirens because the vehicles are too small to utilize either type of that equipment. Regarding the Crown Vics, 18 of the Crown Vics have cage lights and sirens. Three, the new ones, are awaiting the arrival of the new type of cages, there's been a modification to the Crown Vics, they no longer can utilize the cages that DPW has in stock; when those come, those units will also be equipped with the standard package.

And as I indicated in my previous testimony, none -- virtually none of our units have radios. The only ones that do are basically ones that we acquired from other law enforcement organizations that came pre-equipped with radios; the reason why is because of cost. Each Probation Officer that's a field worker is issued a radio, that radio is -- allows that officer to not only contact the Probation Department, but virtually all of the law enforcement agencies in Suffolk County. It has, I believe, 20 channels.

In addition, each of the officers is given a charger for use at home to ensure that the radio is always fully equipped when the officer goes on duty. In case there's any problems, as I indicated before, there's a gang charger, as they're called, in each office for rapid recharge of a radio. What I believe led to the confusion in this is that much of the work that the Probation Department has done on their cars has been with outside vendors. Now, the requirement is that we fill out a voucher and a copy of that voucher goes to DPW; it appears to me that what happened is that those vouchers were not used to update DPW's records.

Regarding utilization, we average each vehicle between 1,000 and 1,200 miles per month, it works out to a little more than 50 miles per day. I'm very happy with this, most Probation Officers use the vehicles within a small work area; the 50 miles a day indicates that they're getting the job done in a local geographic area. Any questions?

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Losquadro.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, and I have a question.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Good morning, Commissioner. Is this one loud enough? Yeah, okay. I didn't think there was a great deal of confusion; I didn't have much trouble securing the information as to which cars were equipped with what. I did a little checking into what you told us last time and to the best of my information, the vehicles that are assigned to the GPS and the warrant units do not have lights and sirens, contrary to what you told us last time, and I think those are the vehicles that would absolutely need it most.

Also, in response to what you had just said about vehicles operating within small geographic areas; don't you have something with DWI offenders called "Project Intercept" or a project intercept for DWI offenders?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yes, we do.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

So in response to what we talked about at the last meeting with sometimes vehicles needing to operate in an emergency capacity or facilitate a traffic stop or things of that nature, I just -- last time I didn't want any of my colleague on this committee to get the impression that somehow officers who are out on the street had a limited need for this type of equipment. I mean, I think that

the officers on the street can encounter situations at any time, that's why it is imperative to have this -- all of the vehicles properly equipped. Now, you said -- how many Crown Victorias did you have? I missed --

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Twenty-one

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Twenty-one, and you said that 18 of those --

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Uh-huh.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

-- had --

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Have the lights, sirens and cages.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I would like for you to provide me with that list because that is not the most recent information that I have based on those vehicles and what they're equipped with. If that is the case, and if all of that equipment is operational, then we don't have as far to go as I thought. But I still firmly believe, and I know we just talked about the radios before, but battery life on those radios is something that is subjective. You may have one person who completely discharges their radio all the time and then completely recharges it and their battery life may be excellent, and you have another person, they may swap radios or battery packs. A battery in a radio could conceivably go dead during the day and that's why other law enforcement vehicles are equipped with a docking port in the car, as I explained at the last meeting. I still think it would be a good idea to have a docking port in those cars to be able to charge those radios and have a base station for them. I just think in the interest of the officer's safety and public safety and being able to ensure communications, that that's still a good idea.

As far as the equipping of these vehicles and whether or not all this equipment is operational, I look forward to getting that list with the vehicle fleet numbers and cross-referencing it with what I have, because the Department of the Public Works told me they supply that outside vendor. And I don't see where the confusion would lie because DPW told me that you would have to make that request and the outside vendor does it. So I really don't see a lot of opportunity for confusion there, I just saw a number of vehicles in terms of the list of equipment that were not completely outfitted. So I didn't see that many vehicles of the fleet that had all of that equipment operational. Are you aware of whether or not that equipment that is installed in those vehicles is operational or that's just what was put in them?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I believe at this point that the equipment is operational in those vehicles; I will check further on that.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Well, can you supply me with a list of those vehicle fleet numbers as well?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

I'd be more than happy to, right, yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Okay. Thank you.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Just to go back to the questions that you raised. The GPS Unit got one of the new Crown Vics which we're waiting on the cage installation. The Warrant Unit had requested an Explorer, a four-wheel-drive vehicle, not a Crown Vic, that can't take a cage; they seem to feel that that was the superior unit for their functioning.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Just to stop you for one second. The cage discussion is something that was just introduced into the mix today; the primary concern of myself and others was the package of warning equipment. So the cage is great, and I think the vehicle should be equipped with cages, but what about the other equipment; lights, sirens and -- well, we have a discussion ongoing about the radios, but my real concern previously was about properly-equipped with warning devices, safety devices.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Let me just ask, Legislator Lindsay wanted to ask a question.

P.O. LINDSAY:

No, that's all right.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, go ahead.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Just to go back, you mentioned Project Intercept; I think that you may not have a direct idea of how that program works.

The vast majority of the funding that we have used for Project Intercept has been to establish basically road blocks in areas leading up to our various Probation Department Officers. We do this for two reasons; the first one is to check on people coming into our office areas and to make sure that the cars are registered and insured. If the cars are driven by probationers and we have special conditions on them, we use that opportunity to check the vehicles; doing so, we've discovered weapons and drugs and illegal paraphernalia.

The other reason that we use the Project Intercept money and program for local use around our office reporting sites is because we have found that individuals that don't have licenses will park their vehicles off-campus, off-site and then walk over. We use vehicles not in a lights and sirens mode but just stationed as plain clothes vehicles in areas around the building site to track those individuals in, we use our radios. We then identify these individuals as people that are on probation reporting to a Probation Officer; when they go back to their vehicle, they're at that point confronted before they get into the vehicle and we determine why they parked off-site.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Then I understood it perfectly, these vehicles are operating on public roadways and facilitating these operations where they may have to impede the traffic movement of other members of the public; is that correct?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Well, we try very hard not to impede anybody's --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

It's a public roadway, is it not.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Generally where they're parked -- they're parked on public roadways but not on the main roads.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

It's yes or no, they're public roadways.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yes, they're parked on public roads.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Then my contention remains that these vehicles should be in the interest of the safety of the officers facilitating these operations and the public who are on these roadways, that these vehicles should be equipped with proper warning devices, and that's been my contention all along. So I did not misunderstand the Project Intercept; in fact, that's exactly what I understood it to be. So I thank you for the explanation maybe for other members of the committee who didn't know what it was, but these operations are being conducted on public roadways and that was my understanding. So I thank you for explaining that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I have one question. I know there is a -- there was a problem, a Bradley case where a sex offender was on My Space, and I've learned that you have personnel being trained in forensic qualifications and that it's a two part training, and I think you've completed the first part; when will a second part be finished?

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

What we've done is we have started training some of our Probation Officers that are in the Sex Offenders Unit to be Forensic Computer Investigators. The second part of the training is scheduled to occur in October, we'll be sending in requests for training attendants this month to both the Presiding Officer and to the County Exec's Office for them to attend that training.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And Probation Officers you're talking about.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

Yes, the Probation Officers.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. So when would the training be completed; it will start again in October and --

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

It just -- it goes for I believe two weeks October and then that will complete their training and they'll be certified as Forensic Investigators.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Excellent. The last request, and I guess you're responding to questions the next week, so I'd like you to tell me about the ability to train and equip all Probation Officers. You know, we don't send the Sheriffs to do their job or the Police Department or anybody else until they're all fully equipped and trained. I want you to tell us, what's the feasibility, because what I hear is, you know, three months later there's baton training and then two months later there's gun training; I'd like to know what the feasibility would be to have everybody go out in the field that is fully equipped and fully trained, okay? So if you could give us that information next week or two weeks or a month, whatever it is, I appreciate it.

DIRECTOR DESMOND:

It would be my pleasure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Question?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Over here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I missed it; so the forensic computer training is going to take place in October?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

October, it will be two weeks long and then we'll have a number of --

P.O. LINDSAY:

I'm sorry I had to step out of the room, but okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We'll have a number of people trained and qualified.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Good. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Okay, the agenda.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Before we get to the agenda?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, Presiding Officer Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Could I just take a minute of the committee's time? I wonder if we could ask the FRES Commissioner to come up. We're in the midst of hurricane season, I know there's been a lot of training going on around the County and I just wanted to see how it's going.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Absolutely.

P.O. LINDSAY:

How FRES is doing and if they need anything.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Commissioner Williams.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Good morning. To answer your question, Legislator, we've attended many, many training, we started our training last March. We've had numerous table-top drills, we had a major drill June 1st County-wide. We've also participated in a lot of regional training this year, it's been the push regionally because we realize if we have a hurricane we have a major event, our partners to the west, Nassau County, New York City, even Westchester, we would be all in this together.

We have also seen, I'm happy to report, a big upswing from FEMA. FEMA has been a lot more cooperative, FEMA -- we've had FEMA representatives in our office numerous times. New York State right now is going to have a staging area in Middletown, New York, for FEMA. FEMA has been reluctant to move anything into any areas, they are going to do this. The second thing we're going to be doing with FEMA, we hope to be putting some predetermined, prepositioned items into Brookhaven National Lab. We have tried to put that into the County Airport out at Westhampton, that didn't work out due to FAA problems; they were concerned about where the trailers were going to be parked so they would be going into Brookhaven National Lab.

The FRES people have been working diligently with everybody. We have had an average of about 22 presentations a month going out to the community. We have had -- this coming Saturday we have a major drill at our Fire Academy which involves the fire service, EMS service as part of a major disaster and part of that is going to be a hurricane drill. We've worked very closely with the towns, the villages, we're working on right now some grant money to -- a couple of years ago we had purchased radios and satellite phones for the towns, now we're out buying them for the villages where we have given one to each 32 villages. We're in the process now of meeting with the village Mayors along with the townships, FRES and New York State Emergency Management to go over their plans to make sure all their plans are coordinating with us. We started a series of meetings about two weeks ago with every town to sit down with every town and ask them what is their plan, for all houses, not only hurricanes but every single hazard to make sure that their plans coordinate with the County and our plans coordinate with the State.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I -- why I bring this up is I was at a community meeting the other night and there was a presentation from a CERT volunteer and someone from your office about preparedness, I thought it was really good, I thought it was informative. They talked a lot about a go-kit or a go-bag, I would be interested, maybe you could get to the committee a list of what should be in that. What it is, it's every -- every home should have one of these ready in case they have to evacuate, that you can just take it with you. But if you can get us some information on that, Joe, I think it would be something that we would probably would all be interested in putting in our newsletters to get out the information as best we could to our constituents.

COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

Absolutely. The one biggest thing that we're very concerned about in the County or the State or even FEMA is that the County can do what they can and we're preparing, the State is preparing. The biggest message we're trying to get out to people is self-preparedness, that's going to be our -- if there's going to be a week-link made, that's where it's going to be, with the self-preparedness. So we would definitely welcome that, we'll get you all the information to everybody's offices if you want to put it in your newsletter. What should be in that go-bag, what they should be preparing for and the major things that they should be talking about now, especially the people on the south shore, some of the north shore areas is what is their personal plan; if they're going to stay during an event or leave during an event, they have to decide that -- they should be deciding that now and make that move.

One of the toughest things we're going to have in the County, we've discussed this with Suffolk County PD, we've gone through evacuation routes, we've done it back and forth, is that if we start putting the word out, we're going to be doing it 72-hours to 48-hours before the event. If their plan is to leave, if their plan is to go to a shelter, that's the time to go and the most difficult time would be is the sun normally would be shining that day before. Our biggest concern is that person is going to wait until that 12-hour, six hours before the event and then they're going to try to say, "Now we have to move," and that's going to put a big strain on the system. So we will be pushing people, if they're going to move -- if their plan is to stay their plan is to stay; if their plan is to go, they need to move.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Commissioner.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you.

Tabled Resolutions

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, let's start with the Tabled Resolution ***IR 1409-07 - A Local Law establishing crime prevention requirements for scrap metal processors (County Executive)***. I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I'll second that.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Browning)***.

IR 1482-07 - A Local Law prohibiting sex offenders from residing in close proximity to libraries (Romaine).

LEG. NOWICK:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to table by Legislator Nowick.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Horsley. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Opposed.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Abstentions? One opposed.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Two.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Two opposed. ***Tabled (VOTE: 4/2/0/1 Opposed: Legislators Caracappa & Losquadro - Not Present: Legislator Browning)***.

IR 1503-07 - A Local Law to prohibit text messaging while driving (Schneiderman). I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

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

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

One opposed. Abstentions? *Tabled (VOTE: 5/1/0/1 Opposed: Legislator Caracappa - Not Present: Legislator Browning).*

IR 1542-07 - A Local Law prohibiting sex offenders from residing in close proximity to senior housing (Schneiderman). I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. NOWICK:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

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

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Opposed.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Two opposed. Abstentions? *Tabled (VOTE: 4/2/0/1 Opposed: Legislators Caracappa & Losquadro - Not Present: Legislator Browning).*

IR 1690-07 - A Local Law requiring registered motor vehicle dealers to release vehicles only to licensed drivers (Eddington).

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Is the public hearing is closed?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes. I'm going to make a motion to approve.

LEG. CARACAPPA:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Caracappa. And on the motion, I just want to mention that Mr. Brown did reach out and then did make some recommendations and I appreciate your coming forward to help out on this. And I'm going to try to approve it and then we're going to continue to be looking at this, so thank you very much.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Renee, cosponsor.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We have a motion to approve and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Thank you. *Approved VOTE: 6/0/0/1 Not Present: Legislator Browning).*

IR 1749-07 - Requiring all Peace Officer training to be conducted by Suffolk County Sheriff's Office (Eddington). I'm going to ask that to be tabled.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? *Tabled (VOTE: 6/0/0/1 Not Present: Legislator Browning).*

IR 1797-07 - A Local Law enacting a Social Host Law to deter the consumption of alcohol by minors (Montano).

MR. NOLAN:

It has to be tabled.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

It must be tabled for a public hearing, so I'll make that motion.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled (VOTE: 6/0/0/1 Not Present: Legislator Browning).***

Introductory Resolutions

IR 1855-07 - Adopting the Corporate Emergency Access System for the use during periods of restricted public access and execute related agreements as necessary (County Executive). Mr. Zwirn, please.

MR. ZWIRN:

I would just ask that this be tabled.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you. I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Losquadro. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Tabled VOTE: 6/0/0/1 Not Present: Legislator Browning).***

I have no other order of business, so I will take a motion to adjourn --

LEG. CARACAPPA:

So moved.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

-- by Legislator Caracappa; I'll second that. Thank you very much.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 10:28 AM*)