

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

Minutes

A regular 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 Thursday, August 14, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Jack Eddington, Chairperson
Legislator Kate Browning, Vice Chair
Legislator Wayne Horsley
Legislator Lynne Nowick
Legislator DuWayne Gregory

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Legislator Dan Losquadro

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Robert Calarco, Aide to Legislator Eddington
Bobby Knight, Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Caucus
John Ortiz, Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn, Deputy County Executive
Barbara LoMoriello, Deputy Clerk
Cheryl Felice, AME President
Lydia Sabosto, AME Executive Vice President
Debra Alloncius, AME Legislative Director
John Searing, For Joe Williams, Commissioner of FRES
Robert Anthony Moore, Chief, SC Police Department
John Blosser, Captain, SC Police Department
William Rohrer, SC Police Department, Lieutenant
Phil Goldstein, Ind. Thinkers
Suzanne McBride, SC Police Department, Emergency Unit President
Debbie McKee, SC Police Department, Emergency Unit
Lynn Shea, SCPD, AME Police Emergency
Maureen Kelly, SCPD - AME Police Emergency Unit
Amem Dilorio, SCPD - AME Police Emergency
Barbara Gordon, SCPD - AME Police Emergency
Alexis Nugent, SCPD - AME Police Emergency
Pat Dunn, SCPD Police Emergency
Noel DiGerolamo, SC PBA
Russ McCormick, Suffolk Detectives Association
Hope Callazo, ARC/CSP
Zabby, PEGLATM
Jeremy Sommeso, Suffolk County Resident

MEETING TAKEN BY:

Lucia Braaten, Court Stenographer

MEETING TRANSCRIBED BY:

Kim Castiglione, Legislative Secretary

[THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:38 A.M.]

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'd like to have everyone stand for a Pledge of Allegiance. We're going to start the Public Safety meeting and I'm going to ask our newest Legislator and member of the Committee, Legislator Gregory, to lead us in the Pledge.

*(*Moment of Silence*)*

If I could ask you to remain standing and dedicate a moment of silence to Correction Officer Andrew Reister, who lost his life and is being buried at this time.

*(*Moment of Silence*)*

Thank you very much. Okay. I'd like to start with the public portion. And I have Phil Goldstein.

MR. GOLDSTEIN:

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Legislature. Many of you are new faces to me, although I am not a new face to some of the older members of this body. Just to give you my bona fides, I am a founder of the Independence Party of the State of New York. I am a long-term political activist, and I consider it an honor that a former Presiding Officer of this body, Mr. Tonna, referred to me as Jiminy Cricket. I don't know if that rings a bell in your minds as to what roll Jiminy Cricket played in his relationship to Pinnocchio, but, unfortunately, my experience has been that we have in your ranks some Pinnochios.

I'm here to express thoughts, which I have done for many years. I had a program on Cablevision called Independent Thinkers, which made me somewhat infamous, and I have been a passionate speaker before this body on previous occasions. I want to address some issues which are relevant to the Public Safety Committee.

In the past, I had expressed concern over the fact that this Legislative body had prostituted itself with regard to its relationship to the unions that are part of Suffolk County's government. These unions are powerful forces. And let me add to my bona fides that I am also a founding member of the United Federation of Teachers. I helped to organize that body, which subsequently led to the organization of NYSUT, which is another powerful union that affects the lives of all of the citizens of the State of New York, just as the uniform forces in this County affect the lives of the citizens of Suffolk County. And I use the word "prostitute" or "prostitution" advisedly because to my mind, and here I am expressing my opinion as I have done on my television programs, you did a disservice to the people of Suffolk County when you pulled the rug out from under the current County Executive.

Some of you who are new may not have been participants in what was done, but prior to taking office initially, Mr. Levy was deprived of the opportunity of exercising greater control over the uniformed forces of this County by virtue of the fact that you did an unprecedented thing in granting a union contract for a four-year period so that it made it impossible for him to exercise control over the contractual features, which he wanted to change in order to increase what he felt was the effectiveness of the Police Department and, at the same time, save the taxpayers dollars.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Goldstein, I just wanted to make you aware you've already completed your three minutes. If you would just finish up. But I'd love to hear more of what you have to say, but we have a three-minute limit, so if you could just finish up.

MR. GOLDSTEIN:

That's part of the reason why I stopped coming to this Legislative body, it's because you deprive the public of an adequate opportunity of expressing their thoughts, but that's a whole other story for another time.

Okay. To briefly touch upon it, I believe that the uniform forces need to be re-evaluated, that actuaries ought to be brought in to examine. Every time the salary negotiations come up, we hear the heartfelt cries of the Police Department, their families, etcetera and so on, about they risk their lives. Thirty thousand people put in to become members of the Suffolk County Police Department and take the test, all right, because we are the highest paid Police Department in the entire mainland United States. It is only, I believe, Hawaii who exceeds the pay that is paid to Suffolk County Police Department.

You are driving up the rate of foreclosures in Suffolk County by virtue of the tax impact, and it's not just the County tax impact with regard to the Police, as I said, even though I am a teacher and I helped to form the union, the cost of education on Long Island is exorbitant.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, sir.

MR. GOLDSTEIN:

Something needs to be done to impose restraints. Just one moment more, I'd like to just finish. I suggest that study. I would like to suggest, since we have a number of excellent universities that we attempt to use interns from the universities to play a role in evaluating the uniformed forces of Suffolk County to determine to just what extent we need armed Police Officers, for example, in a DARE Program --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Mr. Goldstein. Mr. Goldstein.

MR. GOLDSTEIN:

-- which is an educational program and doesn't really need an armed officer.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Goldstein, as an ex-teacher myself, when class is over, it's over. And you've had your three minutes. You've had five minutes.

MR. GOLDSTEIN:

You might extend me, as a courtesy, a moment more. I'm just finishing up.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm going to give you a courtesy. I'm going to tell you my address is 90 West Main Street, Patchogue. You call me. You want to come in, I'll give you an hour, but I can't break the rules. Thank you very much. The next speaker is Zabby.

ZABBY:

Okay. Thank you. Okay. I thank Mr. Goldstein for that. And I just want to point out that Allan Binder, former County Legislature -- Legislator, is in the news; took an \$18,000 bribe, allegedly, and he follows in this corruption of the Suffolk County Legislature, follows John Powell, Fred Towle, Wayne Prospect, and now Allan Binder, and so I believe there is more corruption here.

There are 18 Legislators and one County Executive, and many, what, 10,000 employees in Suffolk County who -- and not to smudge all the workers, because they're doing a good job and many parties, party people, in fact, Democrats and Republicans who are the rank and file, expect more from the leadership, and they can't really talk out because they're threatened with maybe getting fired. And so I speak out and I speak out frankly and boldly and confidently, and they appreciate that.

And I, as an internal auditor, have looked at the organizational structure here at this County and I

believe that, interestingly enough, 17 of the Legislators, maybe 16, are superfluous. Superfluous being more than is needed, useful or wanted, surplus, excessive. Excessive on the budget, a drain, your salaries and your staff people.

And the committees, you see, we have are a sham. This Committee is a sham because you see, and I'm going to let you know because maybe some of you are not corrupt and maybe you -- you know, we have a Working Families Party, two Working Family Parties here. I hope to get a Green Party to replace one of the Republicans in 2009. And there's only now one-third of the Legislature that is Republican. But, you see, that's not good for democracy, not good for democracy at all. But, in any case, it would be better to get more parties and replace -- I'm looking to replace all of the Republicans.

But the thing is, let me just finish the point here, please, Mr. Eddington. All of you, the 16 who are now superfluous, and you are because there is so much power given to the Presiding Officer, Bill Lindsay, that he can come into any committee that he wants and if the vote is a majority, three to two, he can vote and make it three to three and make the resolution fail. He determines which resolutions get on the table. He didn't want to put the television, this committee on the television and for public safety the people should know what's happening --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

ZABBY:

-- as far as public safety goes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Daniel Ginty.

MR. GINTY:

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. My name is Daniel Ginty. I'm the brother of Kathleen Ginty, who was murdered in 1994, was here last week talking about that. I'm here in -- I understand this there's been some discussion about the 852-COPS number. When my sister was killed, there was a delay in contacting the Police Department using the traditional 911 system because the 911 system was overloaded. Back in '96, when I first came here, we proposed a three digit number for nonemergency calls. Two years ago, in 19 -- in 2006, Mr. Steve Levy came in and they created the 852-COPS number to handle nonemergency calls.

I understand there were some comments made about a week or two ago that made it into Newsday saying that basically Mr. Levy was playing politics. It's been my family's position that since we first started coming here in 1996, the Police Department has -- their response has always been we need more 911 Operators. They don't want to have a second number for nonemergency calls. And I'm just asking you to not -- to not let them kill this program. I think it's a good program. The answer cannot be that we need more 911 Operators solely. We need both systems, a 911 call number for emergencies and a nonemergency number. Otherwise, we're putting the same value on these calls when someone's calling up for an emergency and someone's calling up just because someone knocked over their mailbox.

And I'm just here to tell that you we've been doing -- going through this for a long time, reading the papers and writing letters, and just trying to promote a nonemergency number. I think it's very important. And thank you for your time this morning.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Ginty, I hope you'll stay, because we're going to have a presentation on the 911 Operators today.

MR. GINTY:

I will stay. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Okay. Is there anybody else that would like to continue the reality check for the Legislature today? Seeing none, I will close the public portion. And I would ask the members of Cheryl Felice's staff to come forward and enlighten us.

MS. FELICE:

Okay. Good morning, Chairman Eddington, and the rest of the Committee. On behalf of the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees, my name is Cheryl Felice. I serve as President of the over 7,000 members who serve you day in and day out to make this County one of the best counties I think in this country. We have a situation that is currently before us that we'd like to take the time to go through and help you understand just what some of the AME members who are employees of the Police Department go through on a day-to-day basis.

Before I begin, I would just like to extend on behalf of AME our sympathies to the Ginty Family and say that we admire their courage to continue to come to this body, to attempt to make constructive criticism, so that we can make proactive change, and we hope that's what this presentation will demonstrate today.

Also, I would like to thank the fine men and women of the Police Emergency 911 and Dispatch Unit. They have performed magnificently as you will see throughout this presentation. Without them, this County cannot function, and it is because of them and their input into this particular presentation that we're able to give you the information we have.

Also, we have a new Unit President of that unit, Suzanne McBride, who's to my left, and also from that unit an AME Executive Board Member, Deborah McKee, who is sitting to my right. They were instrumental in putting the information necessary that we needed for this presentation.

What we'd like to do is I will go through the presentation. Of course, if you have questions at any time we'd be happy to answer them, but we will have Debbie and Sue be available to you to answer direct questions at the end of the presentation, as they are the frontline workers who witness firsthand where some improvements are needed.

So, first, we'd like to start out by saying that some quotes from the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials have stated that in light of the events of September 11th, it is now even more important that we bring this issue to light about communication centers of our nation, because they are, in fact, the true first responders. If our centers are not prepared with adequate staff for normal day to day traffic, how are they going to be able to cope with the added demands of a major terrorist occurrence.

Now while we all hope and pray that the terrorist occurrences will not happen, we need look only in our backyard to remember the wildfires, the TWA Flight 800, storms, winter storms and the like, and currently in this particular region, we are under the threat of hurricane. In the event any one of those events happen, it's the 911 Operators and the Public Safety Dispatchers, along with a host of other County workers, we don't want to minimize their importance, but those workers, the 133 that are currently there, will be there 24/7, just as they always are.

So to point out the government workers in 911 and the Emergency Complaint Operators, this is where a call comes through first, and those calls for 911 are answered 24/7, 365 days a year. The shifts are currently a steady midnight shift and then a rotating shift between days and nights. They would work an eight to four or four to 12, but their days that they work and the days that they're off always change from week to week. If they happen to have a family function that is six months in the future, it is impossible for them to know at a moment's notice if they can even attend because they would have to look at the calendar to see what day and/or shift they are working on. So it's

important to note that they work a very aggressive rotating shift schedule.

Again, the County demographics that we have -- sorry. The Public Safety Dispatchers and the calls from the 911 sectors go between the First Precinct and the Seventh Precinct, the Highway and Marine Division, and the Aviation Division. Hang on, I just have to back up one slide. Okay. Also, there's a station for the Public Safety Dispatchers to serve as backup to the stations in the event there is an overload, in the event there are parades or another event going on. They also dispatch calls to other police departments and on aided cases such as the MTA and the Railroad, the Suffolk County Parks Department, and also for Suffolk County Sheriffs on emergency cases.

The County demographics that we have shown you before shows you the comparison between Nassau County and Suffolk County. Nassau County has 1.5 million residents, 287 square miles, putting 4,650 persons per square mile, while Suffolk County is much more spread out than Nassau County. Suffolk County has 1.4 million residents, 912 square miles, putting 1,556 persons per square miles to cover for emergency purposes.

Long Island police calls in 2006, as was identified in an earlier story by Newsday, Suffolk County Police 911 calls totaled 1.24 million, while 133 operators and dispatchers dispatched those calls. Nassau County, on the other hand, logged a total of 875,000 and was distributed between 193 operators and dispatchers. What's important to note here in our meetings with the Public Safety Dispatchers and the Emergency Complaint Operators, is that when Nassau County system is overloaded, those 911 calls come to Suffolk County.

Public Safety Employee Units, and through the Budget Review Office's own efficiency report, we reported on this earlier as well, recommended that the staff of dispatchers and operators needs to increase by 30%. We had made inquiries to the Suffolk County Police Commissioner who indicated that no, they felt the staff was adequate, and that no department is fully staffed, there are always vacant positions. While that may true, in this particular area more oversight is needed and more staffing is needed, as you'll see later on.

We also make -- take the time, AME does, to look over the Suffolk County budget and we look over all the testimony that's provided by the Suffolk County Executive. And one of the quotes that we pulled out that we think is very essential to what we're trying to say is in Mr. Levy's own words, the central theme of his administration is having the courage to say no to the things we want so that we have the capacity to say yes to the things we really need and this budget, meaning his 2008 budget, puts that belief into practice, and we need -- we believe the things we really need are more 911 Operators and Dispatchers.

Again, the union's analysis said that a budget is more than just a set of numbers. We must not lose sight of the fact that it is the function of government to provide services to its citizens and in doing so, we may not turn a profit. Suffolk County can become more concerned with ratings and surpluses -- cannot become more concerned with ratings and surpluses than we are with the welfare of our residents.

And, once again, only in October 2007, the Budget Review Office indicated that the recipients of Suffolk County services have another scale by which we are measured and our rating is not favorable. In fact, it is problematic.

Now this here is just for illustrative purposes to show you what the floor looks like up at P.D. This is a graphic that we pulled off the computer program, so it's showing four distinct pods. While it's showing you that there's eight at this particular pod or area in which the 911 Operators accept calls, the number of stations at each pod is only six, giving a total of 24 stations and 24 slots that would be available for Emergency Complaint Operators. I am told that the time of this presentation, however, that only 22 of those individual stations are working. But, as you'll see in later slides, there is never a full compliment of 22 or 24 individuals on shift.

The dispatching stations are separate and distinct according to the Precincts as we said earlier, and then also with Highway and Marine. And again, on the floor, this would be in a separate location from the area, the same general location, but two different sides of the floor of where the 911 calls come in.

Now the staffing levels, as I said earlier, call for 24 call stations but a maximum and only a maximum of 13 ECO's, or Emergency Complaint Operators, are actually taking those calls. You'll see in the package that we had presented to you the different levels of 911 Operators and Dispatchers that are on the various shifts and where at any one time the maximum that you will see for Emergency Complaint Operators is 13, and the maximum Dispatchers you will see is 12. And I may add that the dispatches include supervisors, so they are not necessarily on the radios dispatching calls.

Now, how calls go from 911 to dispatch. As I said, anywhere between eight and 13 ECO's are taking calls for the 1.4 million residents, and they transfer those calls through a computer over to the dispatch. And again, it goes to eight Dispatchers for the various Precincts. Debbie and Sue will give you the specifics of the questions that I'm sure you have as we go through the rest of this program and once we conclude.

Now, it's interesting to note, and what was raised earlier by our fellow Suffolk County Police Officer Union, is that the 911 calls and the emergency complaint calls are going in to the same operator and we will explain how that is happening. So we wanted to just remind this body that it was the United States Senator Charles Schumer who was able to secure the million dollars to establish the program, and in the comments that Mr. Ginty made earlier, it is not the intention of this body to have you scrap this program. It is the intention of this body to have you adequately staff both 852-COPS and 911. In Mr. Schumer's words, Senator Schumer's words, in August 2006, he indicated that establishing a communication management system in Suffolk County is a no-brainer, while it will cut down on the 911 caller volume ensuring it's only used for emergencies. That is not the case presently in Suffolk County.

Mr. Levy also made a comment in creating the 852-COPS number that it would be created to avoid waste and delays in 911 response time that can cost lives. We agree with that statement, and we agree wholeheartedly in why it needs to be adequately staffed.

Now we ask you, we're looking at proactive governments, and again, we like to look at the budget and what the budget says. We believe that you have to have the power of your own convictions and you have to stand behind your words. And in some of the words that were put into the presentation for the 2008 budget by the County Executive say and I quote, "I feel it is important for the County to take a leadership role in demonstrating that it is possible for government to meet budget obligations without the use of gimmicks".

Now I ask you, is this proactive budgeting or is it gimmicks, and if you look at who really answers all the police calls, 911 calls, one -- 852-COPS and 852-6000, which is the general information line, all go to the 911 Emergency Complaint Operator. Formerly, there was a switchboard that would handle the 852-6000 calls. There is no more switchboard and all those calls now go directly to the 911 Operator. And there is a computer system that differentiates what's emergency and what's not, but the operator has no idea when they're answering that call if they are answering an emergency call, if they're answering an 852-COPS call, or if they're answering a general information call.

The other responsibilities a 911 Operator has while they're not answering those three lines are when they have to translate foreign languages and have to dial in to the telephone company to get translations for the various languages of residents within Suffolk County. They also have to transfer any interdepartmental calls. They also are responsible for placing all long distance calls. Any long

distance call that is done throughout the Suffolk County Police Department has to go through 911 in order to place that call so it can be logged. Any time there's an automatic alarm those calls go directly to the 911 Operator, and also after DSS centers close and emergency housing is needed those calls go to 911.

There was a comment raised, I believe it was by Legislator Losquadro in an earlier committee meeting, that he is telling his constituents to call the Precinct first, and the group that helped put this presentation together wanted to impress upon you that that practice only logjams the system even more. And I'll ask Debbie and/or Suzanne to go into that practice and how it should be avoided.

So once again, now our members are working day in and day out doing a hard day's work and being mandated for overtime left and right, yet we're also being faced with this particular budget and being told that we're now going to be facing a General Fund tax, and we have to really look at what that means as far as everyone's property tax goes. In this demonstration here, the illustration came directly from the Suffolk County proposed budget of where money comes from and where it goes, and while I won't go into detail of what this pie chart represents, on the next slide I will go into detail of where the -- what pays for -- what property owners are paying for out of their tax bill. And out of their tax bill you can see only 1.3% of the total tax bill goes to the County General Fund. This body is certainly well aware of that. The public most times is not.

And in reference to the earlier speaker, in talking about the high cost of -- excuse me, labor unions, in Suffolk County, if you look at this particular tax bill, the largest portion of the pie, which is the blue portion and represents more than two-thirds of the pie, is attributed to school districts. Only 1.34% of this particular pie chart is for the County General Fund, and while another 10% is for the Police District.

So we took some time to look at what the General Fund property tax cut would look at if we're being asked to do more with less and being asked to handle calls that are nonemergency in nature. And if you look at the 1.34% of the tax bill which represents that General Tax Fund and where these tax cuts are coming down from the County, for the average homeowner the General Fund tax is only \$95, where the Police District tax is \$895. So, if our math is correct, the overall decrease in the General Tax Fund of .7% represents about 66 cents.

Once again, you know, our members are being asked to do more with less and we're asking you to look at, you know, are there gimmicks in Suffolk County and asking you to decide. The General Fund tax warrant decreased 16.9% from 2004. In dollars that translates to a little over \$16. If that means the difference between life and death in staffing 911 versus 852-COPS, we think \$16 over four years would be well spent.

Once again, the general property tax, although it's being advertised and promoted that there's a decrease, the Police District tax is increasing because it is a separate part of the tax bill. That's where these positions are funded by. So we ask you, if the budget is being given the money that it needs, why aren't these positions being funded?

Once again we talk about civilianization, and I want to emphasize that we're talking about balanced civilianization. In 1993 Police Officers used to dispatch all these calls and now 911 and Public Safety Dispatchers are staffed by civilian employees. We believe that was a good measure that was put into effect back then so that Police Officers were on the streets and protecting public safety, while the civilian employees were acting as a very supportive team member in dispatching the calls to those Police Officers.

So we have an additional problem that you also need to be aware of when we need to have SCIN forms signed off and that's the authorization to hire positions. Last year Suffolk County from time to time went through different periods of hiring freezes and the one most notably was when there was an issue with the Assembly approving the additional sales tax which was valued at \$300 million.

While the sales tax was finally approved, hiring was further delayed.

Why we wanted to point this out to you as a problem is because of the next slide which highlights to you what it takes to adequately train public safety personnel. They're not just brought on the job and being handed a phone and say, "Here, answer it". It takes a very long and protracted series of trainings to make sure they're able to handle the calls. And again, they are trained to handle emergency calls and emergency calls is what takes the time. Imagine yourself if you have to answer phones and you don't know what's on the other end. It is an emergency call, it is a call just to place a long distance call. There's an additional stress that's put on you because of that constant back and forth type of call that you're responsible for.

What it takes to successfully train personnel in public safety is they must first pass a Civil Service test. Those tests sometimes take a year or more for the results and the test to be published and then canvassing could take anywhere from six to eight months because working for a Police Department involves a background check. All civilians have to go through the same background check that Police Officers do.

There's another six to 12 month on the job training so that they are working side by side with a seasoned officer or a seasoned operator or dispatcher. In that period of time in each Precinct they are having to handle between 17 and 23 sector cars per Precinct. The starting salary for these jobs, again, are minimal at best, and have to include working nights, holidays, weekends, rotating shifts and midnights.

This slide is a favorite slide of ours that we like to point out to you because, again, in AME's budget analysis over the last four years the general surplus as it continues to increase, the amount of employees that are being staffed in Suffolk County continue to decrease.

We'd also like to emphasize, too, that we think that these issues of staffing wouldn't come as such a surprise to this body if you demanded more oversight. This union went to this body asking you for an agency oversight committee so that you could actually look and get more information than you already do about staffing issues, because issues like this could turn into disasters. That legislation was recently withdrawn and at the next budget cycle we will ask for that legislation to be resubmitted on behalf of the employees and taxpayers of Suffolk County who are the stakeholders in our area.

Now, the next chapter that we have to demonstrate to you is an issue that, as you can see, this show was about 32 slides, but we have an added problem that we were just made aware of that now ECOs and PSDs -- now the Emergency Complaint Operators are a Grade 13. The Public Safety Dispatchers are a Grade 15. There is a staffing shortage in another unit that works adjacent to this particular area called Teletype, and they are staffed by public -- by Police Operation Aides, who are Grade 11. There is such a staffing shortage in that area that now ECOs and PSDs are being asked to fill in for Teletype. So higher grades are being asked to staff lower grade titles because of staffing shortages.

And there's some other issues that are too cumbersome for this presentation, but one that we would like to present you perhaps the next time because it is significant with certain certifications that is necessary to actually work in Teletype. That is not part of the ECO or the PSD job description.

The aviation mechanics is also another area that we spoke to you about earlier. And again, we see there's an RFP out there to privatize the maintenance work on the aviation mechanics once again. It just came out this week. In fact, within the last couple of days, and I see a lot of you are shaking your head because you probably don't even know about it yourselves. Once again we demonstrated how privatization and contracting in is the better option. Certainly, you have more control over your employees, you can do background checks, as indicated earlier, and that we showed to you in a previous demonstration that some of those mechanics from private companies don't go through the stringent background check that you would like them to go through in your County. So we would like to give you another presentation on those two items the next time around.

And in conclusion, we also need to make you aware that the Emergency Complaint Operators, and I just see a typo in there, I apologize. The Emergency Complaint Operators have now been asked to change their identifier when they answer the phone from where formerly they were answering the 911 phone "Police Emergency", they are now being directed to answer it "Police Department".

And again, the workers who met with us to put together this demonstration have indicated to us that some of the residents who have used the 852-COPS number have -- were surprised when they were talking to an Emergency Complaint Operator and were distressed that they were bothering or troubling the emergency line when they really only wanted to call the information line. Again, the County website mistakenly says that operators on 852-COPS will serve also -- will also serve as backup to the 911 lines if they become inundated.

That is the conclusion of our presentation. And we are available to ask any -- answer any questions that you have.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. The Presiding Officer, you have a question?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Cheryl, the 852-COPS system came to us via a Federal grant of a million dollars. That was in your presentation?

MS. FELICE:

Yes, in 2006.

P.O. LINDSAY:

What was that for, for the equipment?

MS. FELICE:

Actually, that information I would presume was for the computer system --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

MS. FELICE:

-- that the calls come in through because the computer system did change, but I'll ask the two dispatchers to answer that question directly.

MS. McBRIDE:

Suzanne McBride. The way it was explained to me, before we got the new system that has just been installed recently within the past few months, there were additions added on to our old phone system. It was a square box with several hold buttons or what we would call park stations where we could actually park the calls, the nonemergency calls, and go to an emergency call and come back to the parked calls later. Those boxes have since been removed in lieu of the new system.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. But my point is simply this, it was for equipment. It wasn't for subsidy for staffing.

MS. McBRIDE:

As far as I know it was used for equipment, yes. I don't know what it was intended for.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Don't you think it would be envisioned by us setting up this new system that we would have separate operators to answer those calls to lessen the burden on the 911 Operators? I mean, isn't that the initial purpose of 852-COPS?

MS. FELICE:

That was our -- our initial understanding of 852-COPS, that it was going to be two separate and distinct systems.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So now the same call goes to the same operator, I mean 852-COPS, the switchboard, whatever. So, as a 911 Operator, you get a call. Things are slow and you get a call and you see by the equipment that it's an 852-COPS number, somebody has a question about generic -- about County Government or something to do with, you know -- what kind of calls would come in on 852-COPS?

MS. McBRIDE:

They will call for anything asking about laws, steps they can take for certain situations to a barking dog to a vehicle parked illegally. The current system, we have no way to tell if that call comes in from 852-COPS or if it comes in to 852-6000 or no way to tell if it's a Dispatcher calling over to the 911 station.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. I just want to follow this though. You pick up a call. You don't know what it is. After a few seconds you figure out it's an 852-COPS call and you're in the midst of a conversation that could probably take a while. What happens if an emergency call comes in in the meantime? Do you know -- is there any way of identifying it's a 911 call on hold if everybody else is busy?

MS. McBRIDE:

The screens have two columns; one flashes red for emergency calls, the other flashes yellow for nonemergency calls. You can see when there are emergency calls on hold. However, the current system, the way it's functioning, we are unable to put the nonemergency call on hold and go and answer those emergency calls. If we don't finish that call, we would have to tell --

P.O. LINDSAY:

So you're having a conversation about a barking dog and somebody could be getting murdered.

MS. McBRIDE:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And you can't put the barking dog on hold.

MS. McBRIDE:

No.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So what do you do, just hang up on them?

MS. McBRIDE:

We have to either finish the call or -- and that is our procedure. We would never tell a complainant that we have to hang up on them. We finish the call and then go on to the next.

P.O. LINDSAY:

That's --

LEG. HORSLEY:

That doesn't sound good.

P.O. LINDSAY:

No.

MS. FELICE:

Mr. Chair and Mr. Presiding Officer, Debbie would just like to explain to you the difference from the former system to the new system.

MS. McKEE:

Presiding Officer, thank you. Years ago, we had an older system where we commonly refer to it up on the 911 floor as split two versus 911 Emergency, and we would take turns depending on what day of the week it was. If you were on split two you took all the alarm calls, all the nonemergency calls. That system is long gone. Again, you couldn't see what was coming in, but you knew that you were assigned to that station, that nonemergency line, that you were going to be handling all those nonemergency calls. As I said, it's no longer like that. You can't see what's coming at you. You can't pick and choose.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I just have two more questions, but I would like either the Executive's staff or the Police Department after everybody has a -- to weigh in on this. Does it take the same training for a Switchboard Operator or an 852-COPS as a 911 Operator?

MS. McKEE:

911 and 852-COPS essentially need the same training. You have to be able to move them back and forth. However, switchboard is far lesser. The closest a Switchboard Operator comes to being trained as a 911 Operator, if you will, is there were times in the past, and I have done switchboard, the public will call the switchboard because they're not sure they want 911 and in her training she knows how to listen to what they're saying or "Ma'am you need 911" and switch them over to 911. It shouldn't be the other way around where 911 filters the switchboard.

P.O. LINDSAY:

See, my point is, I mean, probably for a lesser amount of money we could hire some Switchboard Operators that would in turn relieve some of the pressure on the 911 Operators.

MS. FELICE:

And to your point, Presiding Officer, a Switchboard Operator is a grade eight and a Clerk Typist is a grade nine.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. And, you know, I heard what your comments were before, Cheryl, about this body and the positions. It isn't that this body isn't aware of the vacant positions in the budget. We put most of those positions in the budget. It's a reluctance by the County Executive to fill those positions that is at the root of this problem.

MS. FELICE:

And we sympathize and recognize that dilemma, and you can see where it causes a burden overall, and ultimately the people that are shortchanged are the residents in Suffolk County.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Well, I think that we're playing with potential disaster here. I mean, a couple of weeks ago we saw in Nassau County where someone was put on hold for a little less than two minutes and -- but yet the response time amazingly was like ten minutes, you know, someone was at the door with an ambulance and a police car. I could see it being much worse here. That's all I have.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator -- yes.

LEG. GREGORY:

Good morning, Cheryl. Thank you for coming here today and your presentation.

MS. FELICE:

Good morning. Thank you.

LEG. GREGORY:

I have I think what may be a simple question, but I just need clarification on my part. You said 911 Operators, they go through a background check?

MS. FELICE:

Yes.

LEG. GREGORY:

Why is that? Do you know?

MS. FELICE:

Well -- and that's something that you could direct to the Police Department themselves, but they are working as civilians in a police agency. In handling these types of calls it would be presumed that one wants to make sure you have a caliber, an employee of the highest caliber. I happen to be a civilian of the Sheriff's Department and did have to go through that same background check to ensure that I was not going to be a risk to that agency.

MS. McBRIDE:

If I could just add to that. We do also have access to Department of Motor Vehicle records and warrant searches and such as that so that would -- I would imagine be part of the reason for the background check.

MS. FELICE:

Thank you, Sue.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. Has there been any type of study or have we looked into what the average time or response time for an emergency call is? Do we have that capability?

MS. McBRIDE:

I believe with the new system that they do have the capability to keep track of very well of response times, how long people are on hold. The one problem that should be noted is people who get put on hold for extended periods of time tend to hang up. We call those abandoned phone calls where we end up having to call the complainant back. I do not know if those figures have ever been taken into account when they've done their studies.

MS. FELICE:

And, again, if I may point out, another burden to the already overburdened operator in having to call back those who got frustrated in being put on hold.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

I'm trying to envision a central office where there's operators. So, both lines, 852-COPS and 911, come -- if I'm the operator and I'm sitting here they both come in to the same spot. And no way to identify or -- the red light and the yellow light identifies.

MS. McBRIDE:

The red light and the yellow light. It's a little tiny square on a computer screen, it's probably not even a quarter of an inch by a quarter of an inch.

LEG. NOWICK:

So when the operator would say -- if both phones ring, whatever the hotline was.

MS. McBRIDE:

Yeah, both phones ring. I would imagine that the computer system is programmed to flow the 911 calls through to the operators first and to hold the other ones. But when it comes into your ear, you have no way of knowing which one. I would imagine you'd assume if only the yellow light is blinking it's a nonemergency call, but there --

LEG. NOWICK:

Which one is the emergency, the red?

MS. McBRIDE:

The red.

LEG. NOWICK:

But then you said if you are on a yellow call and the red light starts to blink, there's no way to put the yellow call on hold?

MS. McBRIDE:

There is no way to put a call on hold. Right now the hold function of our phone system is not functioning. There is a hold button --

LEG. NOWICK:

How much money did you get from New York State for this system?

MS. McBRIDE:

I don't know that. I would not have that information.

LEG. NOWICK:

Because I have to tell you, see this phone for \$150, I can put this on hold, if I could figure it out. I know you can do it, I just don't know how. But I don't understand how you can't do that.

MS. McBRIDE:

Our old system, we used to be able to park calls, we used to be able to park, I believe it was four calls per station. The new system we cannot even put one call on hold for the entire system.

MS. FELICE:

And if I may, Legislator Nowick, just reemphasize the point that you were making. The operator does not know and does not have the ability to pick up a call and choose okay, I'm picking up this call. The computer automatically puts the call through to the operator who is wearing a headset. So the call comes through directly to them. They don't have the luxury of saying I'll pick up this yellow call or I'll pick up this red call. The computer does that for them.

LEG. NOWICK:

I can't believe with this technology and a grant --

MS. McBRIDE:

As Debbie stated earlier, the old system, there used to be a split one and split two. Split one was

911 calls, split two was nonemergency calls. We could actually assign an operator to just nonemergency calls. We do not have that capability at this time with the new system.

MS. FELICE:

And that's another good point that Suzanne raises, where the former system allowed one or two or several stations just to have the flow of the nonemergency calls go to that area, this new system does not allow that, doesn't have that capability.

LEG. NOWICK:

You know, and the other thing, I guess 852-COPS has been advertised, although I haven't seen it, and I don't know if my neighbors, so to speak, even know there's such a thing. I think basically it's still 911.

MS. FELICE:

Well, actually in a final point that I will make to the Legislative body is that a marketing program does need to take place in Suffolk County on the use of 852-COPS. But before that happens you first have to alleviate the overburdened system of handling both emergency and 911 -- and nonemergency calls by the same operator. But I will agree with you that a marketing campaign educating the residents on the use of both has to take place.

LEG. NOWICK:

And here's an idea. How about two phones, you know, one rings --

MS. FELICE:

Sometimes things are just so simple.

LEG. NOWICK:

Simplicity sometimes is the best.

MS. McBRIDE:

If I may just add one more thing. There has been a public service announcement on the radios. I have heard it for the 852-COPS line. In a recent conversation I had with the a Supervisor at 911 did indicate that they felt that 852-COPS has been bringing in more calls than in the past years, that people are learning that 852-COPS is out there, so people who normally would not have ever called 911 are now calling 852-COPS to get information. So it is actually bringing in what we feel are more calls than in the past.

LEG. NOWICK:

I'm sure there's some type of advertising. I'm just saying I have never seen it on billboards or anywhere. But I'll certainly -- of course we'll spread the word, but I haven't seen it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I would like to ask a question. You know, you did a great job with the service delivery system and showing us how it works. And I try to put in my mind a visual, like a flowchart, but I'm a little -- I know now we've got, you know, ECO Operators, so we have the people that the 9/11 -- the 911 receivers of the call. There used to be a switchboard person that did that?

MS. FELICE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Then we have the Dispatchers.

MS. FELICE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Then the next logical piece is they have to get to the police.

MS. FELICE:

Correct.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So that --

MS. FELICE:

Seventeen to 23 sectors, sector cars, in each Precinct.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. So, I mean, I'm hearing it, but it seems like there's a lot of time that's happening there. Because if you have these cop calls and it's really keeping you busy, and now we have the 911 on hold, which seems to be a regular occurrence, then it can't even get to the Dispatcher.

MS. FELICE:

Well, that is another issue. And also perhaps a slide that we could add in the next presentation to show you that some of those priority calls -- we didn't even get into the whole priority system and what's more of an emergency than an emergency.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MS. FELICE:

And those calls, so say a Dispatcher sends those calls over to the dispatcher, you know, there's eight to 13 calls, so maybe four calls or more are going to the same Precinct, and one is a barking dog, one is a burglary in progress, and another is, you know, a traffic accident with multiple injuries. The operator and the Dispatcher has to prioritize those calls and there is a system for that that we did not get into and could.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Because that's what -- I'm piggybacking on what Legislator Lindsay talked about, that could be -- I mean, once it gets to the Police Officer, we're seeing that it's, you know, they get there as fast as they can. But getting it to them is another obstacle so that it really delays response time.

MS. FELICE:

And these dispatchers, I may add, that these dispatchers are responsible to know where their sector cars are at any given time once they assign those calls and to know that, you know, and monitor to see that they have stayed safe and if they need more assistance. So there's a lot going on by that one dispatcher. And actually something I'll alert to you that also the group had made us aware that because there is such a staffing shortage there has been talk among the supervisors to the Dispatchers that they may assign on -- where -- when they deem that it's a slower time of the shift, one -- two Precincts to one dispatcher. That I think would be tragic and something that we will gather more information on for you, but something that would serve as a further public safety risk, nonetheless.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. Two more things. One is that it sounds to me like what I'm hearing is that if we had a couple of Switchboard Operators we could really relieve a lot of this pressure and move this along quicker; am I correct?

MS. FELICE:

I would absolutely agree with you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. The other thing is that, you know, I always try to look at from the other side, and I guess the other side would be the County Executive's Office. And, I mean, I'm picturing -- I know, I've been there twice now on tours. And I know that if, as we said, there's an accident on the Expressway, you could get up to 75 calls on the same thing and if you have let's put down the 13 operators, there's no way you can be dealing with all of those. And let's say -- but now let's change that. Let's say you have 13 people and it's like -- is there a time, I guess I'm asking you, where there's eight people working and the other five are sitting there? I mean, I want to think of what the other -- what the Dennison Building could be thinking. Are there people sitting there going hmm, what should I do next?

MS. FELICE:

Well, I'll have the members answer that directly, but we did point out in a slide, in an earlier slide, the additional duties that are the responsibility of the 911. That is placing long distance calls, if there is an additional burden of having to get a translator on line, transferring interdepartmental calls. You are going to find if you ask any ECO there is very little downtime between calls considering the volume.

And just to further expand on the need for either a switchboard or the ability to differentiate a nonemergency line from an emergency line, and if the nature of the 852-COPS calls has generated the need to have those calls answered by an Emergency Complaint Operator, and that may be the trend and may be the need for now, the system needs to be able to separate those nonemergency calls from the emergency calls to free up those true emergencies from those that we have shown you cannot be put on hold.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And that would be the duty of a Switchboard Operator.

MS. FELICE:

Well, what I'm saying is that formerly, especially the general information number, the 852-6000, was handled by a Switchboard Operator and that may be able to still be handled by a switchboard. But what I'm saying to you is that we really need to look further to say that if the nature of the 852-COPS line is more than the general information line and if it's determined that an ECO really does need to answer those calls rather than a Switchboard Operator, then what has to happen further is the system has to be able to, like the former system did, split the call so that only the operator is answering nonemergency and they know those calls are nonemergency, and the calls that are coming through 911 are being answered by only those people who have been designated to answer the 911. What I'm saying is that the nature of that line may have elevated the need for an Emergency Complaint Operator to be the one to answer those calls, but not at the same time they're filtering emergency and nonemergency at the same time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah. Just something that the Chairman mentioned about multiple calls on the same subject. It was in the Newsday article that with everybody having a cell phone now it has increased the volume dramatically of the calls that come into 911 and sometimes you'll get 25, 30 calls. And I'm not probably telling you guys something you already know on the same subject. The problem is you can't differentiate those multiple calls on the same subject with a fresh call that could be a true emergency. It's a subject of our world today.

MS. FELICE:

And, nevertheless, you're right, something that can't be ignored. While we realize that the operators do get multiple calls on the same issue, it is the nature of the society and can't be minimized in any way to say we already got that call, that can be put aside. Who knows if they saw something else or are reporting something else. You can't take that chance and just putting those additional calls aside. So the volume has to be -- the staffing has to be equal to the volume or able to handle the volume.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Just one last comment about, you know, Legislator Nowick talked about marketing the program. I disagree. Until it's properly staffed, I think marketing is just a PR gimmick, because 85 COPS cops really doesn't do anything.

MS. FELICE:

And I will agree with you and in my statement I believe I did reiterate that the marketing would have to take place only after the problems within the system currently are resolved.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Good morning.

MS. FELICE:

Good morning.

LEG. BROWNING:

You talked about -- say I make a 911 call, I'm put on hold and I'm impatient so I hang up, and I say you know what, I know my Precinct number. You mentioned Legislator Losquadro. Why are you discouraging -- I know you mentioned it's jamming up your systems.

MS. FELICE:

Yeah. I'll have Suzanne answer that for you.

MS. McBRIDE:

When you call into the Precinct and the Precinct finds out that you need a Police Officer to respond to your house they will transfer you into the 911 system. So the five minutes that you spent on hold and then hung up and called your Precinct, now you're getting put back on hold for another five to ten minutes.

MS. McKEE:

And the reason for that is because all the dispatching is done from the 911 dispatch center. The cars don't come from the Precinct.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thanks.

MS. McKEE:

You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

What I'd like to do is, based on Legislator Lindsay's recommendation, maybe we could get Mr. Zwirn

and someone from the Police Department to come up and answer a couple of questions.

MS. FELICE:

And thank you very much for your time. If there's any additional information you'd like us to present to you, please let us know. Our Legislative Director, Debbie Alloncius, spends as much time as you do at these meetings, and if you could share the information with her, we'd be happy to provide it to you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Excellent.

MS. FELICE:

Again, thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Certainly I don't expect, Mr. Zwirn, I don't expect you guys to be able to respond to everything, but I did want to give you an opportunity to respond, and I think Legislator Lindsay might have a couple of questions.

MR. ZWIRN:

Sure. I'd be glad to entertain any questions from the Presiding Officer.

P.O. LINDSAY:

The one question, what's the Teletype Division?

CHIEF MOORE:

You want to take that one?

MR. ZWIRN:

I don't know what it is.

CHIEF MOORE:

The Teletype is the communication system between the State of New York, the Suffolk County Police Department. These are the kinds of -- the information sharing that, for example, if the State Police was looking for someone they would notify us by teletype, and vice versa. It does other things as well.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So we've eliminated the Switchboard Operators and now we've merged them with 911; is that correct?

CHIEF MOORE:

Well, at one time, we had -- it was a Civil Service position, Switchboard Operator, and the ECO position is a far more flexible position. An ECO or Emergency Complaint Operator can do the function of 852-COPS. He or she can do the function of answering and responding to 911 calls, and two, they can do switchboard operations.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. So the answer is yes, we've merged the Switchboard Operators with the 911 Operators.

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes. Sorry.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. Now we'll be merging the Teletype Division with this 911 as well?

CHIEF MOORE:

That's not our intention, no.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. But they are using 911 to fill in there; is that correct?

CHIEF MOORE:

This is Lieutenant William Rohrer. He's with our Communications Section.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I mean, I just want to know. Is it correct or it isn't, you know?

LIEUTENANT ROHRER:

There's no plan. The current situation is there are some vacancies in Teletype.

P.O. LINDSAY:

There's vacancies in everything.

LIEUTENANT ROHRER:

And it's impacting on being able to keep the unit working 24/7. So in order to continue that operation 24/7 --

P.O. LINDSAY:

We're moving 911 Operators to fill it.

LIEUTENANT ROHRER:

We're training 911 Operators or ECOs to be able to perform that task. So should the occasion arise that we need to use one of them to backfill to keep the operation running 24/7, that's why we're training them.

P.O. LINDSAY:

The article about Nassau County, you fellas must be familiar with it. It was pretty in-depth. I learned a lot about the 911 operation from that incident in Nassau. The article had very specific statistics of how many calls were handled in a particular month, what the wait times were. Did you guys read the article?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So those statistics are available?

CHIEF MOORE:

Not -- there were some instances where the statistics that were produced for Nassau County I'm not sure that we can produce.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Well, they quoted Suffolk County stats in the article.

MR. ZWIRN:

We had a Public Safety Task Force back, I think, Legislator, now the Treasurer, Angie Carpenter was -- I think was on that and it was passed by the Legislature, and we had some of the information with respect to 911 calls.

P.O. LINDSAY:

No, but my point is, Ben, and I'm not giving anybody a hard time, but Newsday evidently had these statistics because they printed them in an article.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, we produced them for the Public Safety Task Force that we had. They were produced at that time.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Mr. Chairman, I would like a request from this committee to have those statistics available to us on a month-by-month basis.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Would that be -- can we just do that without legislation through a request?

MR. ZWIRN:

Sure.

CHIEF MOORE:

Sure.

P.O. LINDSAY:

If Newsday can get the stats, why can't we get them?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, just covering all our bases. Is that going to be a possibility?

MR. ZWIRN:

Absolutely. I mean, we provide all the information that we possibly can. Let me just take the --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I want to also add that if I remember the article, we did pretty good. So, you know, I mean --

MR. ZWIRN:

By saying we do pretty good, let me just say the 911 Operators in Suffolk County and Nassau, they do an excellent and wonderful job in a very high pressure situation. You can imagine, and we do, that if they make one mistake a life is in the balance, you're going to be hearing about it in the newspapers on the front page, and that's a great deal of pressure. And as a result, there's also a great deal of turnover among 911 Operators because it's just difficult. Even through the training session I know we lose people that we've signed SCINs for and they don't make it through the training session because it is difficult and we understand that.

I know there were some comments about, you know, we're understaffed across the County. The County Executive and everybody knows it, he manages the entire budget and the entire County, 12,000 employees. It is a balancing act that we perform every day. Child Protective Services, absolutely critical to the well-being and safety of children in this County. We've got to make sure that they're completely filled. We get requests all the time for more Public Health Nurses, Dredge Operators, projects in each individual district. The County Executive tries to balance it. I'm not minimizing 911 Operators. This is a life or death situation. We work with the Police Department to try to ensure that there's proper staffing.

The information that I think that I come out with today that I think has got to be really looked at carefully is that when the 852-COPS, which I think everybody would agree is a great idea, but if it's not coming up that way for a 911 Operator to make that distinction, then that's -- then that's troubling, because -- and you can't put it on hold or say I'll call you back because the 911 calls, the emergency calls, have to be taken first. And if there's a glitch in the system there that has to be

addressed immediately.

But the fact that the 911 Operators are answering the 852-COPS line as well, I don't find that as troubling because they are highly trained, you know, information intake providers in getting the information out, and I think they have been trained in such a way that as long as it's not going through to them and taking them away from their 911 emergency calls, then I think the system would work fine.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah. I think at the last meeting I may have heard it incorrectly, but I thought it was stated that you can tell the difference between the 852-COPS and --

MR. ZWIRN:

I'm not sure that that -- I'm not sure, because I know it flashes red or it flashes yellow, and I'm not sure who's making that distinction, how that's coming through. That's one thing, I think, we'd have to be very clear on, because then I think the 852 system, 852-COPS system would certainly be terrific by taking the load off. At least when you have an emergency call you handle that call, and if somebody is calling up about something that is nonemergency, then that can just be put on hold or get a call back at a later time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

It seems like that's everybody's concern. Legislator Browning brought up a good point about funding. We mentioned that Senator Schumer had gotten some money. How is the 911 Unit funded? Is it just County or do we get grants? Is there a recurring alternative source of revenue I mean, of money coming in?

MR. ZWIRN:

No. I mean, that's why we're always very careful when we apply for grants. If the grant is for a one year period for personnel, we're sometimes reluctant to hire people because we know the following year that money will not be there. Or else when the hires are made they're told that the position may not be renewed unless there is grant money.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So it's basically taxpayer funded, the 911 Unit.

MR. ZWIRN:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. ZWIRN:

It's not for the East End towns, it's for the Police District. The East End towns have their own 911 program.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Yes, Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Just on that point. I mean, if we accepted a million dollars from the Federal Government for this equipment, and we're not staffing the unit properly, are we doing a service to our constituents? Did we take this money fraudulently? I mean, if we have the equipment, I mean, there's certainly an obligation for us to staff it properly. If the same call is going to the 911 Operator that's overtaxed now, what are we doing? I mean, we're just making it worse on the emergency calls. You're not diminishing the role of the emergency operator, you're making it more severe.

MR. ZWIRN:

But you're giving them an absolute priority. If you know it's the barking dog call you put that on hold or call them back.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, but by us advertising we have this new system, 852-COPS, that sounds terrific. You know, you can call up about problems and it goes to the emergency operator. You're encouraging more calls to come into that group that's overtaxed now.

MR. ZWIRN:

A lot of those calls are coming in on 911 and what we're trying to do is give the operators there --

P.O. LINDSAY:

What difference does it make, though, Ben?

MR. ZWIRN:

It makes a big difference.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I doesn't make any difference.

MR. ZWIRN:

Absolutely it makes a big difference.

P.O. LINDSAY:

It goes to the same operator.

MR. ZWIRN:

You had a representative from the PBA here say that he had to wait six or seven minutes to get a call answered when he called 852-COPS. That's the system -- if that call had been picked up immediately then I think we would have had something to talk about.

P.O. LINDSAY:

We heard the testimony that the Switchboard Operators can't distinguish between the 852-COPS and the 911 call as it comes in.

MR. ZWIRN:

There was testimony that there's a red -- it flashes red or it flashes yellow. I would like to find out --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

When it goes to Dispatch.

MR. ZWIRN:

I want to find out if they can't -- if there's a glitch in that system where they can't tell if it's an 852 call or a 911 call, that I think has to be addressed immediately.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Ms. Felice, am I wrong? Was that your testimony?

MS. FELICE:

Our testimony was that the operator, the Emergency Complaint Operator, does not know if a 911 call or an 852-COPS call is coming to their ear. It's dispatched through the computer to their ear. At the time it gets to their ear then the commuter is lit either yellow or red and they know what kind of call they're on at that moment, but not as it comes in. They don't have the ability to distinguish I'm going to pick up the red phone or I'm going to pick up the yellow phone. The computer is

sending it to their ear and they do not know which call is coming in until the moment it is there.

MR. ZWIRN:

While Cheryl is here, if somebody could -- before it goes -- when it comes in, is there any distinction made at any time that they know it's an 852 -- it came in on 852-COPS as opposed to 911?

MS. FELICE:

No. No, there is no distinction at all before it gets there.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

We have to deal with that.

MR. ZWIRN:

That has to be addressed immediately. Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Does the computer pick up the yellow before the red?

MS. FELICE:

The computer will pick up whatever call --

LEG. NOWICK:

Or the red before the yellow?

MS. FELICE:

The computer picks up the calls as they come in. However, they do hold the nonemergency calls if there's an emergency call that comes in first. That's where I think Mr. Zwirn was speaking to, that if someone is on hold with 852-COPS it's because the computer did say let's send through the 911 first. However, if an operator is already on the phone with a caller on a nonemergency and there's a backlog of 911 and all the operators are taking at that moment nonemergency calls, the 911 calls cannot get through. And as it was -- also the testimony that was given by Debbie and Suzanne earlier, the former system had the ability to put that nonemergency call on hold so that the 911 call could come through. That service is no longer available to them.

LEG. NOWICK:

So it's really a toss up. If per chance the red phone rings at the same time as the yellow phone, then the computer picks up the red line.

MS. FELICE:

The computer -- and actually there is another computer board that shows how many calls are on hold through which -- through the various lines that's in the dispatch area.

LEG. NOWICK:

Which doesn't matter, because the operator can't put the phone on hold anyway, so.

MS. FELICE:

Correct.

MR. ZWIRN:

If I might. Chief Moore is indicating that the system is designed to pick up audibly on the computer. The computer -- if it comes in at 852-COPS it's supposed to have an audible signal to direct it as a low priority call versus a high priority call. There seems to be -- the glitch that's in the system is that the audible signals are fairly close and the computer is not always picking it up. That's

something that's being addressed with the vendor now, but that has been something that wasn't anticipated, but it's being worked on.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So let's just say when would you say would be a fair time to get us all back together to see if the glitch has been cleared up?

MR. ZWIRN:

At every committee meeting we'll be glad to come back and address the committee and give them an update. We're always here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Great. Thank you. Any other questions? Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

I do. My question is more directed to BRO. This recommendation of 30%, how many positions are we talking about?

MR. ORTIZ:

Currently I just looked through the payroll, about 10% of the ECO and Dispatchers are vacant. Increasing by 30% we'd probably be hiring about 30 to 40 new positions that currently aren't even budgeted.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. And it's a Grade 11, Grade 13?

MR. ORTIZ:

The ECOs are Grade 13's, the Dispatchers are grade 15's and the Switchboard Operators are grade 9.

LEG. GREGORY:

All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Just one last -- could you just give me that again? There are ten positions that aren't filled right now.

MR. ORTIZ:

I just went through the payroll and we have about 135 filled positions and about ten to 13 that are currently vacant, so about 10%.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. ZWIRN:

The County Executive just signed four SCINs. He signed eight last year, so part of the problem is that we lose people during the training phase.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure. No, I understand there's a huge turnover. I could see where they'd get burned out. And the recommendation of 30% would add another 20 people or something?

MR. ORTIZ:

If you take 30% of 130 positions, yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you.

MS. FELICE:

And the point I wanted to make is that the last ten that were hired, there's only one that's left because of the stress on the job. The individuals could not take it. And actually, according to the testimony that was provided to me by the members in putting together this demonstration for you, members literally in the middle of a shift just got up from their chair and said, "I'm out of here, this is not something I can handle". And bear in mind the time it takes to not only give the test, take the test, grade it, canvas, background check, and then train to get those people up to speed. So simply signing a SCIN form doesn't mean that tomorrow you're going to have a compliment of ECOs there. It takes an exorbitant amount of time. And even those who were hired, ten of them were hired, five of them didn't pass the psychological, five were on the job, and only one is left.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

So you'd recommend some stress reduction workshops.

MS. FELICE:

Stress reduction and you need to hire more at a time. You need to sign more SCINs so that you can cull through them a lot quicker.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah. Cheryl, just on that. I mean, what -- is that what you recommend, is just that you hire more and then we just cull through? Those that make it, make it. We'll just have a higher percentage, is that your answer?

MS. FELICE:

I think what has been demonstrated is that even though ten SCINs forms were signed, not all ten are going to make it to the end.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Right. I understand that. Okay. So, in other words, what you're suggesting, then, to correct this problem is we sign more SCINs -- more SCINs, put them through the rigors. We know there's going to be some falloff and we'll just have a higher number because we signed more SCINs. Is that the answer?

MS. FELICE:

Well, the answer is if you look at your track record, 50% didn't even make it past the first stage.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So do we double the amount of SCINs we sign or what is the, you know -- I'm trying to get your --

MS. FELICE:

That's going to be a work in progress.

LEG. HORSLEY:

How do we correct this is what I'm --

MS. FELICE:

That'll be a work in progress. You have ten, if I understand BRO correctly, there's ten vacant positions right now and the volume has increased how many times because we haven't been able to nail down those statistics.

LEG. HORSLEY:

You're recommending that we sign all ten so we can get two?

MS. FELICE:

If you sign all ten you'll be lucky if you get two.

P.O. LINDSAY:

If I might chime in.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Sure, please.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And the Police could correct me, but when we go through a police class we usually screen more because we know what the dropout rate is; right?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I mean, a class of 50 we would what, look for 60 or 65 applicants because we know there's going to be that kind of falloff?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So there would be like a prescreening prior to any hiring or signing of SCINs so we have a better number at the end of the day?

MS. FELICE:

That may be a viable solution because your, you know, your tracking has shown that 50% don't even make it past stage one. And then from that you only -- you know, out of five you have one that's left.

LEG. HORSLEY:

How many are on the list right now? Do you know how large this list is?

MS. FELICE:

I don't know what the list is right now.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Ben, is it a credible list? I mean, how often do we take this test? Is it an old list or how does this work?

MR. ZWIRN:

I think it's -- it's always a current list. It's always being updated.

MS. FELICE:

It's a currently list. I think it's two years old.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay. It's just like an Account Clerk. We take it, you know, every six months there's another test.

MS. FELICE:

I think it's every four years there's another test.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay. So then lists can get old and stale.

MS. FELICE:

Sure, and other people get other jobs and maybe aren't interested any longer. It takes a while to get -- I believe formerly that Civil Service said about 10% of people on the list actually apply for the jobs. So even though you may have a list of 100 there may not be -- there may not be many that even want the job, which is why it takes so long to canvas through a list.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It sounds like we need to improve the system on how to get at people so our numbers could be higher.

MS. FELICE:

I'm being told from Debbie that the list is currently expired.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It's expired.

MS. FELICE:

Exhausted, meaning they went through it all --

LEG. HORSLEY:

That's where I was going. Is this is a good list, everyone is going "Yeah, it's great, you know, they take it all the time". But now it is exhausted. So that is the case. You couldn't even approve it if you wanted to at this point.

MS. FELICE:

Well, no, you could approve provisionally. And then if you hire provisionally then those people have to pass within the top three of the test. I strongly wouldn't recommend that for this division.

LEG. HORSLEY:

I know that system. Okay.

MS. FELICE:

Now you get through the test, now you get through the training and you succeed, and you happen to, you know, come number five on the list instead of number three and, you know, you're out the door. Provisional is not the way to go, especially in an area that takes so much training.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Could we encourage Civil Service to be more aggressive in this particular issue?

MS. FELICE:

Yes, and from what I understand, that's merely the department requesting that a test be called if the list is expired.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It sounds like this needs work.

MS. FELICE:

Bear in mind you have to then wait behind getting the test graded and then going through the canvas and going through the background.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay. What I guess my point is, I guess it's not all, you know, the fact that we're not signing

SCINs. There's a larger problem at hold here. There's not enough people out there that are on this list and the list is stale and all those bureaucratic issues at play.

MR. ZWIRN:

There's intensive training and a high turnover rate. This is just not you take somebody off --

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, I can see that.

MR. ZWIRN:

-- a Clerk Typist off the list. This is a high pressure job, no question about it.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So is PD going to ask that Civil Service establish a new list?

CHIEF MOORE:

I wasn't aware that the current list had been exhausted. If that is the case, certainly.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah. I did used to work myself as a telephone operator.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Are you on?

LEG. BROWNING:

I don't think I'm on. Okay. I worked as a telephone operator in Ireland and did the 999 system, which is the same as 911, and I know the stress of being an emergency operator. And I'm looking at you have -- now these operators are not just being required to answer 911 calls, the 6000 number, the 852-COPS number, and you're saying that you're losing operators because of the stress. And I don't know if you can answer this or maybe somebody who's actually on the job that could answer it better.

Is there a way, and obviously bottom line it seems that you need more people, but is there a way to help relieve the stress that you could rotate, because that's what we used to do. We would rotate from where you would answer 911 calls, but then they would take you off for a time period where they could answer the 6000 number or the 852-COPS number. You know, that's -- I'm just trying to think, is that a way to keep, like you said, you have how many people, ten people, that came in and you've only got one. If you were able to pull them off that 911 for a period of time so they are not dealing with it.

MS. FELICE:

That may serve as a part of a solution, but the system won't allow those calls to be separated right now. The other problem that we do have is that once these jobs -- the salaries were considered, you know quite lucrative to the jobs at hand. That's no longer the case. You know, the amount of stress and the demand on these jobs and working rotating shifts, bear in mind. When people come into these jobs and they realize that it's four o'clock and now I've been mandated to work an eight hour double and I can't go home to get my child off the bus, this is not the job I signed up for. So the union does have the option of putting in a salary appeals package to try and get those salaries upgraded a little bit which may help the retention rate. It is something that we were in the process of doing. They had been upgraded before because of the same situation, and I think we're at that again. But the salaries just aren't commensurate with the demands of the job.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Just on reference to Kate's question. Now, who calls for the new list, who lobbies to get Civil Service to do that?

MS. FELICE:

I believe the department head needs to contact Mr. Alan Schneider to request a list and then that goes through the State in some fashion.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So it's the Police Department. So it's up to you guys. It falls back on in your court, Chief.

MS. FELICE:

If the list is exhausted.

LEG. HORSLEY:

That's it? So do you concur?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

LEG. HORSLEY:

We're on the job now with this one?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good. Okay.

MS. FELICE:

Thank you, Legislator Horsley.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I was just going to add before you go, I just -- my admiration for for Legislator Browning has just gone up. A 911 Operator in Belfast. God bless you.

LEG. BROWNING:

Bombs scares and everything.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Lindsay.

P.O. LINDSAY:

The other, you know, just looking at your letter in your packet you talk about the operators not being allowed to take their breaks and even a personal -- they are questioned when they have to go to the bathroom?

MS. FELICE:

Another problem because of the staffing shortages.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I know that it's been pointed out that I'm very sympathetic to working people, but this is awful, guys. This is awful. If a woman isn't allowed to go to the bathroom because we don't have enough

people, what the hell are we doing? Come on, what are we doing? You know, I know the County Executive is a fiscal conservative by any stretch of the imagination, but come on, it's going too far. If you're not allowing people to go to the bathroom, that's ridiculous.

MR. ZWIRN:

Can the County Executive let us go to the bathroom as well, can we make it a County-wide policy.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I think it's a basic human rights policy, Ben.

MR. ZWIRN:

Of course. I didn't mean to be flip about, but I mean, unless somebody tells me they are not allowed to go to the bathroom, that's hard to believe.

P.O. LINDSAY:

That's what I have in writing here.

MR. ZWIRN:

I haven't seen that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Here is what I am going to ask. We need a total review of the 911 service delivery system. I mean everything, including the toilet policy. I mean, you know, we've got to have a spare person to relieve. We did it when I was a teacher with regents otherwise you had to sit there for four hours. This isn't something that can't be fixed. I'm looking at this meeting as a lot of the issues have been brought out, ones that I want to be able were unaware by the powers that be, and now we all know them. Let's deal with them. Let's come back in a month or so or a month and not that people can't go to the bathroom. Let's just deal with these issues. I don't think we're talking about lots and lots of money to provide bathroom breaks. So let's just do that, all right? We're just going to review the whole system, get everybody together, and then you can come back to us and see what we've done. Is that agreeable?

CHIEF MOORE:

(Nodded head yes)

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

This is the sign for yes.

MS. FELICE:

If I may add, too, Legislator Eddington, that the position of the Police Operation Assistant, which is a Grade 11, is used throughout the department in areas that is probably the most flexible position. So perhaps the switchboard needs, where they're -- you know, the Switchboard Operator title may have become antiquated, perhaps the POA could be looked at in that particular area.

But in getting back to our follow-up, the deliverable to you that we'll give to you on Teletype, the POA is in the Teletype Division and we'll expand on that title and how it's beneficial to the Police Department.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right. Any other questions?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Different subject.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Different subject?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah. Chief Moore, what is this about, the RFP on the aviation mechanics that we're going to privatize that now?

CHIEF MOORE:

I'm not sure where that came from. There is a request in for a Mechanic Supervisor in Aviation, but privatizing -- I have Captain Blosser from our --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Are you aware of this RFP?

CHIEF MOORE:

Captain Blosser.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

Good morning. Would you mind repeating your question?

P.O. LINDSAY:

No. The testimony was that there is an RFP out to privatize some of the work of the Aviation Mechanics. Is that correct?

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

Well, the RFP that was put out was to give us the option to be able to outsource work when our mechanics just were over tasked. It would just give us a safety relief valve. You know, we haven't actually done that at this point, sent anything out.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And what is that, if, you know, an engine needs to be overhauled that you would send it to a shop or something like that?

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

Well, those things are done outside anyway, things like engine overhauls and transmission overhauls and components, those have to be done by outside shops. The intention of this one RFP that I believe you're referring to is just basically if we had an over-saturation of work that we would normally do inhouse it would give us an option to be able to send it out to increase the in service time on the helicopters.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So, I mean, we must have done RFP's in the past to select vendors to overhaul engines and transmissions and stuff in the past, right?

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

Oh, yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So this isn't anything out of the ordinary. It isn't like an RFP to say provide us with three mechanics to come in and work on our helicopters in our garage.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

It is different than in the past. It is work that we would normally be doing inhouse.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Are we down -- how many Aviation Mechanics do we have? Are we short of them?

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

Well, that will take a bit to answer. If you have a few minutes I'll be happy to answer you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah, please.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

We have four mechanics. Over the years, the operation has grown and the demands on the mechanical staff have grown. Specifically, if you turn the clock back to around 2001 when I was assigned there as a lieutenant, we had one twin engine helicopter and two single helicopters. One was a Jet Ranger, one of the singles. It was a very, very simple helicopter. A change was made in 2001 where we got rid of a single and went to a situation where we had two twins and a single, and that complicated matters somewhat more. And at that time the mechanic staff was increased from three to four.

Subsequent to that, in 2005 they increased the fleet of helicopters from three to four, so now the fleet was now two single engine, the Eurocopter AStars, and two twin engine MD Explorers. There was no concurrent increase in mechanic staff there, so that obviously increased the burden on the existing mechanics. Subsequent to --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. So we still have four mechanics.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

We still have that and actually --

P.O. LINDSAY:

We don't have a vacancy there, it's just that we've added another helicopter and the demands on the four mechanics have increased.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

We have. And then subsequent to that in 2007 we traded in one of the MD Explorers on yet a different model, an EC 145. So now not only are they trying to maintain four helicopters, they're maintaining three separate, distinct airframes. So the operation has grown and they have not -- staff has not grown concurrent with that since the one addition back in 2001.

So what we're finding is we don't have the helicopters in service as much as we would like to have them in service or perceived that we need to have them in service and we have to explore every option to try to keep them in service as much as we can.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So we really need another mechanic.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

I'll defer that to the Chief.

P.O. LINDSAY:

You don't have to answer that. You don't have to answer. I don't mean to put you on the spot.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I have a question on the aviation. My understanding was that the helicopter at Gabreski is closed down at night and then MacArthur flies patrol. Is that correct?

CHIEF MOORE:

Yeah.

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

Yes. The Gabreski operation is at 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., and then on the quieter hours overnight, they -- we just revert back to the single base operation coming out from MacArthur.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you. One more question, Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Your four mechanics, are the mechanics rotating shifts where you have a mechanic 24/7?

CAPTAIN BLOSSER:

We have mechanic coverage five days a week, 16 hours. There are four of them. Three of them work 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., then the fourth -- every fourth week one is assigned to work 2:30 to 10:30 on the weekends and over nights they're subject to call out if there's a need to have something done.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

All right. Any other questions? Thank you very much, gentlemen.

All right. Let's get to the agenda and we can get some money from New York State here.

Tabled Resolutions

Tabled resolution **I.R. 1499, A Local Law to require that Probation Department employees use County vehicles while conducting County business. (Losquadro)**. I make a motion to table for public hearing.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 5-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro)**.

Introductory Resolutions

I.R. 1694, Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$30,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to allow the Suffolk County Police Department to purchase a vehicle for use by members of the 4th Precinct Police Auxiliary while in the performance of their duties with 100% support. (Co. Exec.)

I'll make a motion to approve and put on the Consent Calendar. Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 5-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro)**.

I.R. 1696, Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$25,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to allow the Suffolk County Police Department to purchase a vehicle for the use of members of the First Precinct Police Auxiliary while in performance of their duties with 100% support. (Co. Exec.)

I'll make a motion to put on the Consent Calendar. Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 5-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro)**.

I.R. 1697, Accepting from New York State one (1) airboat, one (1) boat trailer, two (2)

outboard engines and related accessories for use by the Suffolk County Police Department Marine Bureau. (Co. Exec.)

And just for clarification, an airboat is those things you see in Florida. Okay. I make a motion to approve and put on the Consent Calendar. Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 5-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro).**

I.R. 1714, Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$25,000 in Federal pass-through funds from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for the Suffolk County Police Department's Second Precinct Community Support 2008 Grant Program with 90% support. (Co. Exec.)

I make a motion to approve.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 5-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro).**

I.R. 1715, Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$100,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for the Suffolk County Police Department's Bellport Task Force 2008 with 100% support. (Co. Exec.)

Legislator Browning made the motion to approve and put on the Consent Calendar. I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 5-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro).**

Okay. Before we adjourn, I'd just like to wish Legislator Kate Browning a happy birthday and have a good day for the rest of the day. Thank you.

[THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:20 A.M.]