

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

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

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, February 2, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Kate Browning, Chairperson
Legislator Robert Calarco, Vice-Chair
Legislator Lou D'Amaro
Legislator DuWayne Gregory
Legislator Kara Hahn
Legislator William Spencer
Legislator John Kennedy

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk, Suffolk County Legislature
Josh Slaughter, Aide to Legislator Browning
Marge Acevedo, Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Bobby Knight, Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Paul Perillie, Aide to Legislator Gregory
Justin Littell, Aide to Legislator D'Amaro
Lora Gellerstein, Aide to Legislator Spencer
Ben Zwirn, County Executive's Office
Ed Webber, Acting Suffolk County Police Commissioner
James Burke, Chief of Department, Suffolk County Police Department
Ted Nieves, Suffolk County Police Department
Anthony LaFerrera, SC FRES Commissioner
Noel DiGerolamo, Suffolk County Police Department
Russ McCormack, Suffolk County Police Department
Tracy Pollak, Suffolk County Police Department/Headquarters
Mike Sharkey, Chief of Staff, Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Colleen Ansarelli, Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Chris Brockmeyer, Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Laura Ahearn, PFML/CVC
Richard Meyer, AME
Suzanne K. McBride, AME Police Emergency Unit President
Mike Xirinachs, WCBS
Anthony Prudenti, DSPBA
Arthur Sanchez, DSPBA
Donald Grauer, Suffolk County Probation Officers Association

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Lucia Braaten, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Lucia Braaten, Court Stenographer
Kim Castiglione, Legislative Secretary

(*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:10 A.M. *)

(The following was transcribed by Kim Castiglione, Legislative Secretary)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Good morning. I believe we can start the Public Safety Committee meeting. If everyone could please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Legislator Calarco.

(*Salutation*)

And, like the Legislator prior to me chairing this committee, if everyone could please stand for a moment of silence for all of our law enforcement and also our military who have defended our country, and two minutes.

(*Moment of Silence*)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Okay. Good morning. And I'd like to say welcome to everyone this morning to the first Public Safety Committee meeting of 2012. As Chair of Public Safety, I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues here in the committee, and with all of the departments to make sure that the safety of Suffolk County residents is a priority.

As you all know, we're in tough financial times, which will make it difficult to provide our departments with everything they need, so we'll be asking you to work with us to find the best way to get the job done with the resources you have.

Not only are we in tough financial times, but our communities are in crisis. Too many of our young people are addicted to drugs, prescription pills and heroin, and we need to get tough on the dealers and help the addicts. The only way to win the war on drugs is to make sure that Suffolk County Probation, the Police Department, the Sheriff's Department are all working together.

An issue that I want to see resolved this year is the division between the Sheriffs and the Police Department. I know the new administration wants the same. But it can only be done if those differences can be pushed aside and the lines of communication are reopened. I'd like to see both unions sit together and resolve their differences rather than have the County Executive and the Legislature step in.

This is a new day and all things are possible. We're all in this together and unlike past years, I hope that we can have honest and open dialogue, because at the end of the day, it's all about Suffolk County residents, who are depending on us to keep them safe when they're on the roads and in their neighborhoods.

So I thank you all for coming today, and we do have a presentation with Ed -- sorry, I should say Commissioner Ed Webber and Chief Jim Burke. So if you'd like to come up and start the presentation. I do have a couple of cards. Would you indulge -- I have two cards. Would you -- okay. If you want to come up and get ready and we'll let the cards go first. I know we have -- is there anyone else? I mean, we do have a couple of other -- we have the FRES Commissioner, I see we have the Sheriff's Department, Mr. Sharkey, and do we have Probation here? I don't see him today. Okay. But I will do the cards first since we only have two and we'll do the presentation after that. The first card is Richard Meyer.

MR. MEYER:

Thank you, Madam Chair and good morning to all. My name is Richard Meyer. I'm representing

the Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees. We wanted to take a moment to comment on the one resolution on your agenda, it's Resolution 1010, establishing a uniform policy regarding answering the telephones at police precincts.

First of all, AME believes that the public of Suffolk County deserves to have their phones answered rapidly at every single department and agency. I'm sure you feel the same way. I suspect that every single department head in this County would tell you that their policy is to all their employees to answer the phone in a timely manner. However, sometimes practicality trumps policy.

In the recent past, many, many vacant positions have been eliminated in departments across the County. In addition to that, the few vacancies that remain really can't be filled in this fiscal environment. On top of that, there are filled positions that are slated to be eliminated certainly in the next four weeks, five weeks, as well as many positions in serious jeopardy in June. And yet, policy is presented saying answer the phones. We simply say to you that before any policies proscribing any sort of activities at departments are set it behooves everyone to take a real close look at the staff that remains and what can be done.

And I guess I need to conclude just by perhaps pointing out an example. In the 2012 budget, the budget eliminates most of the civilian staff answering the Crime Stoppers Hotline at the Police Department. Now, that came up in December and the Police Department I'm sure will figure out a way to get those phones answered. But what's that way going to look like? Is it going to be uniformed Police Officers? Is that a fiscal way to deal with the problem? Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. And I think the Police Chief and the Commissioner will have some comments for you on that, the phone system. Next speaker is Anthony LaFerrera.

MR. LAFERRERA:

Good morning. Anthony LaFerrera, Co-Chairman now, Suffolk County FRES Commission. Congratulations to you, Chairwoman Browning, on being the head of Public Safety. Everybody here, congratulations. I'm still President of the Suffolk County Fire Chiefs Council, will be looking forward to working with everyone here. And I want to thank you for attending our meetings, very important, coming to the FRES Commission meetings. That's basically what I want to say and congratulations to the new Commissioner and the new Chief. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you, Anthony. Okay. With that, Commissioner, if you would like to begin and introduce -- make sure everyone's introduced.

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

Good morning. Can you hear me? Am I pressing it down? I have appeared before this body many times over the years in my prior capacity as Chief of Support Services, mostly dealing with budgetary items, but for the new members I would just like to give a brief background of my experience. A 39 year veteran of the department, the last 19 years as Chief. Served in all three divisions, I was the Chief of Patrol for about three years, and basically have most of my information is in the administrative portion in support services.

To my left is Chief James Burke, who has a vast experience in patrol. He's our recent promoted to Chief of Department. He spent his last ten years of his career working for the District Attorney conducting complex criminal investigations.

We're here today actually to introduce ourselves and answer any questions you may have, but also to give our vision of what the policing will be like under the new Administration. Are there any

questions before I introduce Chief Burke?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, I don't think so. If you want to go ahead and maybe the questions will come afterwards.

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

Okay. This is the presentation he's about to give, Chief Burke, and the theory behind it is his work product, and he spent many hours on it, and I think you'll -- he'll answer all the questions that you may be open in your minds now on how we're proceeding in the future. With that, I'll give the mike to Jim.

CHIEF BURKE:

If I may, I'd actually prefer to stand.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. We'll need to get you a mike that's working.

CHIEF BURKE:

I believe I'll be able to carry it.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, we need you on the mike. Sorry.

CHIEF BURKE:

Actually, I could stand here and do it. Thank you very much for the opportunity to come and speak to the Public Safety Committee. First and foremost what I want to do is recognize the men and women of the Suffolk County Police Department. In the 32 days that I have served as the Chief of Department I am very, very impressed with the work that the officers do, be it life saving, arrests, the detectives -- the investigations they do is extraordinarily impressive, and I want to acknowledge the men and women of the Suffolk County Police Department. It is truly the biggest honor of my life to serve as their Chief.

I also want to acknowledge labor. The PBA, the SDA, the SOA and AME and my colleagues in labor for their assistance and their cooperation in us moving forward in these very, very challenging times.

And thirdly, I'd like to acknowledge the Legislature, and in particular the Public Safety Committee. And we, Commissioner Webber and myself, look forward to working closely with you, our partners, and as Chairwoman Browning said, making Suffolk County the safest place in America.

What we're about to present to you is an action plan, a vision for moving forward with respect to policing in Suffolk County. This presentation, of course, has been presented to the County Executive and his senior staff, the District Attorney and his senior staff, the Command Staff of the Suffolk County Police Department and the heads of the labor unions. So, if I may, I will begin.

Essentially, moving forward there are going to be three pegs: Intelligence led policing, enhanced community service, and on the top of the pyramid is accountability. Accountability by each and every member of this department from a Police Officer on the street up to and including Commissioner Webber and myself, to not only the County Executive and the Legislature, but to the people of Suffolk County.

Leadership. We are going to make our promotions and our assignments based upon a person's ability and performance. Politics will not play a role in advancement in the Police Department. We are going to provide clear policy and direction to our members. We are going to cut the red tape

and bureaucracy. We're going to try to make decisions as expeditiously as possible. If it works, it works. If it doesn't work, we'll try to find another solution. We're going to encourage innovative ideas and input at all levels of the department. We are going to empower our leaders to make decisions and we are going to base our advancement through the ranks and assignment to preferred -- or assignment to preferred positions will be based in large part on officers' demonstrated judgment and their ability to manage risk. This business is all about risk management. That's what Police Officers do every day and at all ranks. And we are going to assess an Officer, a Supervisor, a Detective's ability to manage risk, and that's going to count a lot in our placement of personnel in this organization.

Accountability. We are going to structure this department so that lines of authority and responsibility will be clear and exact. We will know who is responsible for doing what, and in turn, we will hold them accountable. Local Precinct Commanders and Investigative Commanders are going to be given the necessary resources and held accountable for efficiency and results. And this is what this means. If we have an incident that occurs in the Town of Babylon, there are two people that we are going to be talking to about that incident. That is the Precinct Commander and the Squad Commander -- Detective Squad Commander. They will be held accountable for results and action plans to address problems that arise.

Currently, our manpower and resource allocations are being analyzed so we can optimize local resources and broaden the scope of duties -- of the duties of Police Officers and Detectives. All right.

The Intelligence Led Policing Model, all right, is basically the nerve system. The central nervous system of the Suffolk Police Department is going to be our Criminal Intelligence Bureau. In concept it is a County-wide bureau that is head-quartered out of Police Headquarters. However, as you'll see, we will decentralize portions of that Bureau to have actual Criminal Intelligence Detectives working every single day in all of the seven precincts.

Essentially what our Criminal Intelligence Bureau traditionally does, and still does, is identify and track all criminal entities, including traditional organized crime and gang members. It is responsible for threat assessment and dignitary protection. It is responsible for the creation and dissemination of various intelligence bulletins due to the sensitivity of some of the ongoing investigations and incidents that we have going on. I can't share them publicly with you, but I'd be glad to share some of the intelligence -- the intelligence products with any of the members of the committee if you'd be interested. They are responsible for financial and cyber intelligence. We are tracking what's going on on the internet, we're tracking what people, criminals are doing on Facebook. We're tracking financial intelligence to assist line people with investigations.

And probably most importantly, they are our warehouse for crime tracking and analysis. And I'd like to get into some detail about how we are tracking and analyzing crimes. We are aggressively identifying trends and patterns. Okay? A trend would be there is a County-wide trend that there are scrap metal thefts throughout the County. That would be an example of a trend. A pattern would be perhaps in a particular shopping center or a particular neighborhood community perhaps there were cars being broken into and GPS devices stolen out. So we are going to identify aggressively, and have, aggressively identify trends and patterns on both the County-wide and the precinct level. And when we identify a trend or a pattern we push that information out to the local precinct and Squad Commanders and subsequently to all of our Detectives and Police Officers on patrol. So this way the entire Police Department is thinking about crime. It's a constant push out to all of our Supervisors, Detectives and Officers, think about crime.

Essentially, this is the structure of a trend bulletin. We would summarize the trend, we will number the trend, we will constantly revise the trend. There will be a starting date of the trend and there

will be dates indicating the revisions. It will identify the precincts involved in the trends. It will identify a summary of the trends and the document will essentially be a fluid report containing some of the following: In-depth breakdowns of incidents including entry points, items taken, methods of operation, maps of locations to identify and manage hot spots and hot times. And a listing of prior arrestees, parolees, probationers and recidivists in order to aid in targeting offenders. And essentially, that's going to occur in both the trend and in the patterns.

Okay. We will track, analyze and disseminate real time crime data to local precinct and Investigators commanders so they can react swiftly to crime trends. The information is available to them on a daily basis to both us, the police administrators, and the local commanders through our Criminal Intelligence Bureau. We are going to be standing up a County-wide arrestee briefing system. The best way to get a criminal is to have another criminal tell you who the criminals are, and all of that information is going to be entered into Orion ADS system, arrest debriefing system, which will enable us to connect the dots. If there are multiple criminals telling us the same thing, we will be able to connect those dots immediately and react to it.

Each precinct ultimately will have a Field Intelligence Officer assigned to it. That Field Intelligence Officer will be under the direct command of County-wide Criminal Intelligence, but that Officer will go to work every day in the precinct. He will be assigned to work in say the Seventh Precinct, and every day that will be his duty station. But he will be networked into the larger intelligence picture of the County.

The Field Intelligence Officer is going to be responsible for analyzing incidents and will be aware of trends and patterns on the local, County-wide and regional levels. He will also be responsible for debriefing arrestees while he is on duty. Of course, he works eight hours a day, five days a week. When a debriefing occurs and he's not on duty, he will be responsible for entering the debriefing information gleaned from arrestees into ADS, the arrest debriefing system. The Field Intelligence Officer will also develop targeted debriefing plans based upon our trends and patterns.

Okay. If you're arrested and subjected to a debriefing we want to know if you know anybody who killed someone, if you know anybody who robbed a store, anyone who's accepting stolen property, but because we're on top of our trends and patterns in particular locations, we'll be able to ask questions tailored to our trends and patterns. Do you know anyone in the Saint James area that's perpetrating or is trying to sell GPS devices and the like. So we'll constantly be honing our targeted debriefing.

That Field Intelligence Officer will work with the Precinct Commander, the Squad Commander and local precinct personnel to identify and target locations, groups and persons of interest. We're all going to know who the bad guys are. We're all going to know where our hot spot locations are. We're all going to know what organized groups are active, both within the County and within a particular precinct. The Field Intelligence Officer also will be aware of all recidivists, parolees, probationers, sex offenders and active narcotics within the command, and we will be able to utilize that knowledge in furtherance of our crime trend and pattern mitigation. All of the FIO's will meet on a weekly basis, along with our crime analysts, so they can share information about what's going on in the County. So this way if we have a trend or a pattern that is occurring in the Fifth Precinct, we may ask prisoners or develop sources with respect to mitigating that pattern in the Second Precinct.

Our Criminal Intelligence Investigators, in conjunction with the District Attorney's Office, will get a second bite out of the apple. In other words, they will conduct debriefings at the Central Islip and the Riverhead courthouses. Sometimes when an offender realizes the reality of his situation and he's sitting there with a Defense Attorney across the table from a Prosecutor, he may be more apt to tell us a truer picture when faced with the reality of his situation.

Criminal Intelligence Bureau Investigators are going to work cooperatively with Probation, Parole and the Sheriff's Office. Why? The information and the FIO's that exist in those agencies is extraordinarily valuable, okay, and those agencies and those entities are net -- are presently networked into our Orion intelligence database.

Criminal Intelligence also maintain our department's deconfliction system. That is a system that prohibits or works to prohibit us working at cross ends. It will let us know if a particular target is being worked on by another Police Department, another command, so this way we're not working at cross ends. It also maintains the department's confidential informant, search warrant and debriefing data bases. We also have a watch list capability wherein we're able to put particular subsets into our Orion system and the computer will let us know, say, if a sex offender has received a stop sign ticket. We'll be able to investigate that and determine where that stop sign ticket took place. Say it took place down the block from an elementary school, certainly we'll be able to put resources into it. Our Criminal Intelligence Bureau is going to be our primarily liaison with local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies. So essentially Intel is going to be the central nervous system of this Police Department.

Ultimately, our crime control and reduction plan falls down into four points. Accurate and timely reporting of incidents. We want to know what's going on and we want to know what's going on quickly. We're going to push that real time crime data out to local commanders and it is going to be data driven deployment of resources. When we have resources deployed we want them deployed to an end, primarily towards reducing crime. Okay? That's our number one priority. And relentless follow-up, relentless follow-up by police administrators that we want to know, we know that our commanders know the crime picture. We want to know what the strategies are and we will work with our commanders to develop strategies. If the strategy is unworkable, we will reevaluate, okay, but we are going to be -- and we have been for the last 32 days, relentlessly following up. Mr. Presiding Officer, it's good to see you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you.

CHIEF BURKE:

The second piece of the program is our enhanced community service. Presently, our community, our efforts with respect to community service are splintered among the department. We are going to create, similar to our Intelligence Bureau, a strong, County-wide Community Response Bureau. And essentially, just like community -- Criminal Intelligence is head-quartered out of Police Headquarters, there'll be a very small staff led by a senior staff member in Police Headquarters that coordinates and makes consistent the department's community service efforts. And like an FIO, community response officers will be deployed to precincts. They will work every day in the First Precinct. Though their command and control or their consistency will be monitored by Police Headquarters, they will be working in the precincts every day.

Let's take some of the tasks that they'll be performing. Many of you know them as constituent complaints. Someone writes a letter to a Legislator, a Town Supervisor, a Police Commissioner or a District Attorney. Presently, there is not a consistent way that those issues are dealt with in the Police Department. That's going to change. We have created a form and a format where all of those types of complaints get recorded and all of those complaints get entered into a central database. So we will be able to, on a County-wide level, track these things. You have to remember, oftentimes these types of complaints do not rise to the level of criminality. There is a different dynamic that goes on between someone who dials 911 with a cell phone over a criminal incident and someone who is upset enough about an issue that they take the time to write a letter to their County Legislator or they take the time to put an e-mail off to a Town Supervisor or a Precinct Commander, or they take the time off on a Saturday afternoon to walk into a police precinct because

they don't think that their problem rises to a 911 call. Those types of concerns are very important to us and it's very, very important to us that those types of issues get addressed, and they get addressed in a consistent fashion in which we, the administration, is able to follow-up.

So those complaints now will be entered into a County-wide database, they will be referred back to a Precinct Commander, and just like a Precinct Commander is responsible for crime in his precinct, he's also responsible for the mitigation of community complaints. And the Community Response Officers that are deployed to precincts will be the point of contact with the complainants. They'll engage the complainant on the initial interview, they will follow up with the complainant as to what's being done and they will ultimately report outcomes. So we'll have consistency throughout the County in the way that we deal with, I think, these -- though they may not be criminal, they are very, very important to the person who has taken the time out to write that letter.

Community Response Bureau's Officers would also be responsible for attending community meetings with the Precinct Commander or his designee. Okay? Essentially, what our Community Response Bureau Officers would be there would be there as the eyes and ears of police administration. When somebody raises a complaint at a community meeting, that complaint is going to be recorded by a Community Response Officer and the Community Response Officer is also going to be responsible for documenting any action that the Police Department has promised at that community meeting with respect to the mitigation of that complaint. And that report will be forwarded to Main Community Response and we will be able to follow-up and we will be able to hold local precinct personnel accountable for what goes on at the community meetings.

Community Response Bureau is also going to be delegated with drawing up the department's educational programs. We want a consistent County-wide message going on out to the public. And to that end, we presently on a varied of issues, either issues that have been brought up to us internally, issues that everyone knows about, issues that the community complains about, issues that any of the elected officials may complain about, we're going to prepare educational presentations. Take prescription drugs or hate crimes. Hate crimes for instance. We're in the process of putting together a hate crimes educational awareness. Now, generally speaking there are two types of offenders in the hate crime arena. You have your true hate groups, neo-nazis and Ku Klux Klan. Luckily, we do not have a lot of that here in Suffolk County. Then you have individuals who are between 16 to 24 years of age who engage in acts. Okay? Acts much like the type that would have -- that resulted in the death of Marcello Lucero.

We want to educate at risk people so in the hate crimes arena what we're going to do is put together a program for at risk, perhaps 9th, 10th grade kids, and deliver this educational program in an assembly type setting. We no longer have the resources to put a cop in a single classroom that has 20 kids in it. We will provide this training County-wide to any school that wants it, but we want to do it in an assembly setting so this way we can get to as many students as we possibly can.

And this is just one example. The first part of the presentation would be, "Hey, these are the types of acts that constitute hate crimes. This is what a hate crime is." Part two of the lecture would be someone who was actually arrested, prosecuted for a hate crime, who comes up to the at risk group and says, "Hey, you see what those Police Officers just told you? That was me last Halloween and I just got out of State prison for" whatever act I had committed. And then the final piece of the presentation, hopefully we'll be able to get someone who was a victim of a hate crime to talk about what their experiences were.

When we give an educational program to student groups, say, we will give -- or we will offer the same educational program to the PTA groups at night, so this way the parents know what we're telling their children and the parents can take some ownership in our efforts, our County-wide efforts, to mitigate these problems.

Of course, our Community Response Officers are going to work closely with our Field Intelligence Officers. Remember, they're all going to be assigned to precincts, and Criminal Intell and Community Response will coordinate efforts to identify trends and resolve issues on both the local and County level. Here's what -- here's how it works. Sometimes community complaints can actually forecast a trend or pattern. Sometimes community complaints can add insight to what's going on in a trend and a pattern, so we want to marry those two entities in the Police Department. And to give significance to the Criminal Intelligence Bureau and the Community Response Bureau, they would be assigned directly under me. Directly under my command, so that -- and that's how they would be structured in the Police Department. So this way when there was a Community Response Bureau issue or a Criminal Intelligence issue, it's coming from the Chief of Department.

We are going to establish liaisons to certain communities, religious organizations, minority groups, civic groups, schools and business groups, but it's all going to be monitored or it's going to be coordinated out of our Community Response Bureau. Significantly, and I think this is -- I think this is a good thing, especially for the elected's in the County, the CO of Community Response Bureau, Detective Lieutenant Robert Donohue, who many of you are familiar with, and has made community policing basically his careers work, he'll be the CO. The CO of community response is going to be tasked for directly responding to elected official's concerns. All of you will have his phone number and if you need services of the Police Department or constituent services, you can pick up the phone and get on the phone with Lieutenant Donohue and we can ensure that the complaint is handled in a timely and efficient manner.

Public image of the Police Department. There's two sides of the public image of the Police Department. The first is our image in the media. The County Executive has committed to, and it's working, an independence of the police press operation free from political interference. And I think if some of you have been reading the papers, if you've been reading the papers or watching News 12, the operation as we have it set up is -- it's working toward that end. We are going to be responsive and we are going to be transparent to the media. Ninety-nine and nine-tenths percent of what the police do is good. If there's a problem in the Police Department we're going to be responsive to it and we're going to be transparent with the media. And we are going to proactively engage all media outlets from the Facebook and the twitter, which I don't understand much about, to engaging the weekly's, a story of a cop who caught a kid spray painting a fence in a particular hamlet may not make News 12 and it's not going to make the cover of Newsday, but it certainly could play out prominently in a weekly newspaper. We want to let, especially the people who are interested in the weekly's, let them know of the work that their Police Department is doing.

The second part of the public image of the Police Department is a Police Officer or Detective's interaction with the public on the street. Number one, our appearance of our Police Officers and our Detectives. We're going to pay attention to appearance. We want people to look sharp, we want people to look professional. The attitude of the police in their daily interactions with the public. The responsiveness of the police, to make sure that we are responsive, that we are returning phone calls, that we are being responsive to our constituents. And ultimately, those three goals, or those three requirements, okay, will lay on supervisory accountability. First line supervision at the Sergeant, second line supervision at the Lieutenant level. And ultimately the utilization of discipline, be it positive discipline, which is training, or negative discipline, which is punishment, to make sure that we attain these goals.

Our priority issues, as we all know, as you all know and probably everyone in this room knows, two high priorities immediately have been the prescription drugs and the heroin epidemic that has swept across not only this County, but this region and, in fact, the country, and the gang problem that we face here on Long Island. Let me speak a little bit about the narcotics enforcement. Okay. Our narcotics intelligence is now going to be interwoven with our overall criminal intelligence. Heretofore that did not happen. Our narcotics intelligence stood alone. That is no longer the case.

We will look at narcotics enforcement as a means to certain ends, not as an end to itself. We are going to deploy our street teams, our street narcotics teams, to support trend and pattern mitigation. Where we have crime, we are going to -- where you have crime you generally have drugs, and where you have drugs we are going to deploy our street teams with a view towards a reason, a purpose for deploying those teams, and that is ultimately trend and pattern mitigation. We are going to aggressively identify and pursue open air drug markets. Luckily, there are not many of them left in Suffolk County. And crack houses. Now I realize and I'm sure that all of you are acutely aware of the problem of a crack or a drug house and what a blight that is on a community. Okay? And for a whole host of reasons it's going to be a priority for us to address those. Okay?

And to that end, aside from the enforcement angle, and a quick enforcement angle, we can't allow these to fester for months while a six month long investigation is underway. I would rather at times put them out of business in lieu of an arrest if the arrest is going to take me a year to make. So to that end, we are going to work closely with our County, town, and village officials to work on abatement, to identify problem premises, be they commercial or be they private, and engage in a partnership with towns and villages. To that end, we have assigned a Police Officer to the Chief of Patrol's Office who has an extensive background with respect to all issues involving housing. He was a former HUD agent for the Federal Government before he became a Police Officer, and he's going to be tasked to look at two sides of a problem location. That's the tenant side and the landlord side. On the tenant side there could be subsidies that the tenant is receiving falsely that may be able to be exploited on -- and other things. On the landlord side, we have a strong Tax Unit in the District Attorney's Office. We have a strong Mortgage Fraud Unit in the District Attorney's Office. So we kind of take an all crimes approach to knocking the problem location out, and that's going to be a big priority for us.

We're going to aggressively identify and investigate narcotic sales in schools. We're going to make it so that it is -- you can't sell drugs in a school in this County. We're going to make it very dangerous for drug dealers to operate in this County, and in order to do that, we have to take another approach because it's very difficult, it's not like 21 Jump Street where you can introduce a 15-year-old undercover cop. It doesn't work that way so different approaches have to be taken, different approaches have to be undertaken. Our first peg of that is outreach to school districts, parents, community groups and the student body by our Community Response Bureau. We're going to provide awareness and consequence lectures developed by Community Response and we're going to put it out to at risk kids. We're going to fully utilize our Crime Stoppers Program, which, in my opinion, heretofore has been underutilized in this County, where we want tips. Kids know who are dealing drugs in their school. Kids, in fact, sometimes come home to their parents and tell their parents that Joey is selling drugs in school. If that occurs, we want to know about it, and if need be, we'll take that information anonymously. And we will aggressively follow-up on each lead received. And if I can't get the drug dealer for actually a hand to hand drug sale, which is, in fact, is very difficult, if I get him on a misdemeanor and we publicize the fact that that particular individual was apprehended as a result of our no drugs in school effort, that's going to be a win for us all.

We are working and we have assigned an Investigator to the District Attorney Special Grand Jury investigation into the prescription drug crisis that we're presently dealing with here in the County. That Detective has a -- or that Investigator, rather, has a background in pharmacology. He's a registered pharmacist, he is actively employed as a pharmacist, and he teaches pharmacology. So we want to tap the resources and the knowledge of the people who work for us already and put them to good use. That guy should not be writing parking tickets in a downtown area, we should use his expertise on these types of issues.

Operation Medicine Cabinet. We're going to keep pushing Operation Medicine Cabinet. We were the first Police Department in the region that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, you can walk into a police precinct, no questions asked, and dump your unwanted prescription drugs into a receptacle. We all know that the gateway to addiction is the medicine cabinet, be it the kids themselves stealing the medicine, be it a worker who asks to use the bathroom or a guest in someone's home who takes those unwanted prescription pills. So we want to educate the public to get rid of those things and get rid of them in a safe manner. Twenty-four seven, seven days a week, any resident in this County or anybody can walk into a Suffolk Police Precinct and get rid of their unwanted prescription medication. Okay.

I just want to go back -- well, no, this is a new slide. We're going to engage with the Suffolk County District Attorney's Multiagency Heroin Task Force. Basically, there's been a Heroin Task Force that operates out of the District Attorney's Office. It's been very, very effective. In fact, I know the District Attorney is going to be doing press today on a manner that emanated out of that Task Force. We're going to fully engage that. And essentially what that enables us to do is identify street and mid-level dealers. And how do we do that? By arrest debriefing, and we do it by telephone analysis, connecting the dots on the people that we arrest, on who they are dealing with on the phone. Oftentimes it results in the identification of the middle level dealer and it's been met with great success for years now in the D.A.'s Office.

We wish to establish a major trafficking unit in our Narcotics Section to identify and disrupt major suppliers and neighborhood networks. Okay? Be it a smuggler that is delivering drugs directly to Long Island. In fact, we've not seen much of that, or it be, for lack of a better term, a neighborhood kingpin. Okay? We want to identify these particular people and we want to put them out of business. And in so doing, not only do we want to put them in jail, but we want to take their assets. The way that you do that is you assign real Detectives to those cases and in working conjunction with the D.A.'s Office you use essentially eavesdropping, court authorized ease -- wiretaps to effect those goals.

Gangs. Well, as you all at the horseshoe know, we decentralized our gang teams. We did an assessment and it was readily apparent that we needed those patrol gang cops back in the precincts. They know the turf, they know the players, and they need a constant presence there not only for enforcement and acquiring intelligence, but also as a presence in the community. For those of you who -- I know the Chairwoman and Legislator Spencer were at the thing -- they look different, these cops. Okay. They don't look like regular, uniformed cops, and gang members know they're special cops that are assigned to get them off the streets. And what we've tasked those gang officers to do is to work closely with our Criminal Intelligence Bureau to warehouse and make sure that we have accurately identified gang members, that we've accurately identified the hierarchies in the gangs, and that we have accurately identified locations.

And then after that assessment is done it's targeting time, okay, and develop strategies on targeting the gangs. Okay? And the most effective way to target a gang is to do an enterprise case on the gangs, to go after the gangs as an enterprise. And to that end, the District Attorney has a Gang Unit made up of Detectives, a centralized Gang Unit, that handles gangs as organized crime, much like you would go after the Luccheses or the Bonnanos, and that is an effective way to disrupt the gangs. So we're going after their hierarchy and we're going after them on the street.

Essentially, that's the general plan in broad strokes. I really thank you very, very much for your time. And I would be glad to answer any questions that you might have.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Well, thank you. I do have a couple of questions myself, but I know Legislator Hahn has a question.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you very much.

CHIEF BURKE:

You're welcome.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you, Suffolk County Police Department, the finest. The officers do a tremendous job. I've participated in many ride alongs with them as a civic leader and I look forward to doing more. It's just amazing the work that they do and your presentation was, you know, I'm looking forward to this, the implementation of everything you're talking about.

CHIEF BURKE:

So am I.

LEG. HAHN:

Over the years, the Legislature has really struggled with getting data so I -- from the Police Department in a timely manner, our Budget Review Office having to beg for it. Months later we get old data and -- if we get it at all. And so I'm hoping that part of this will be -- transparency will be for the Legislature as well to get data so that we can, you know, analyze when we're allocating resources.

Specifically, in narcotics enforcement category, I have a couple of questions. School Resource Officers, I think you touched on it, but I'd like to know a little bit more about how you plan to integrate them into everything you're doing. Because if I'm correct, the Sixth Precinct was down to one for the entire precinct, and we're talking a dozen high schools, maybe just under a dozen high schools in the precinct, and one School Resource Officer is just not adequate for that.

In addition, Operation Medicine Cabinet, phenomenal, but the precincts, there are only a handful of them across Suffolk County, and I'd love to see that expanded maybe to firehouses, those locked boxes in a place where the officers, you know, they switch cars -- you know, something like that. I'd like to see that expanded so that they're more convenient for our residents to get them -- to drop off the medicine, because that is the most important thing, is just getting them out of the medicine cabinets and getting that medicine off the street.

CHIEF BURKE:

If I may, Legislator.

LEG. HAHN:

Sure.

CHIEF BURKE:

I agree for broader utilization of Operation Medicine Cabinet. A little bit of problems that are presented with having drugs that are not guarded by, you know, 24/7 -- you know, you've got to worry about someone coming and jackhammering out the box, and also if there are not police there and people know that people are coming with prescription medication, it could be problematic, but we'll certainly look at it.

LEG. HAHN:

Can you talk to the School Resource Officer issue?

CHIEF BURKE:

Yes. School Resource Officers are going to get folded into community response, again, so we have

this consistent message. The School Resource Officers, depending upon what precinct you're in, we want to have consistency with respect to the School Resource Officers. Quite frankly, some are better than others. We've identified a model of a School Resource Officer. They're invaluable for a whole host of reasons. The obvious reasons of one, but their ability to provide intelligence to our intelligence section, their ability to get information, their interaction with the students, their interaction with the school employees is unbridled, so it's something that we're going to -- certainly we're totally for School Resources Officers and it's going to fold into our larger community policing effort, but we realize how important it is.

LEG. HAHN:

I mean, I would argue that there are some high schools that need a dedicated resource officer full-time in the school. And, I mean, I think that we need to identify those and have it be part of our response, but one for an entire precinct is just not adequate. And I'm hoping -- because the drug issue is so prevalent right now and it really is starting at, you know, unfortunately younger and younger students. We really need to see those officers out there and I hope to hear more about plans to expand that program.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Commissioner and Chief for being here. I physically have a headache. I'm on information overload. I'm not used to receiving information, you know, unless it's from Newsday so I appreciate you coming here --

(Laughter)

For telling us what you're going to do and what your plans are and your intentions. I really appreciate that. I just have a few questions, if I may. At your swearing in the County Executive had mentioned a priority of accurately reporting crimes. I just want to get a response from you and how -- what measures will the department employ to ensure the accuracy of those -- of criminal activity?

CHIEF BURKE:

Well, the measure is this, is we have first line supervisors who sign off on incident reports. So we are going to hold them accountable that incidents are reported accurately, whatever it is it is, and more importantly, timeliness. And that's essentially the first measure of that. And we, in -- on the precinct and in the Headquarters level, regularly look, randomly look to see whether or not something has been reported accurately.

What I think it is, Legislator Gregory, it's getting the message out and we are very, very, very clear with our messages to our Precinct Commanders. I mean, we have them in regularly. We're very clear and we're very direct of what our expectations are and we follow-up. So I'm very, very confident that that -- that that's going to be done. It's a big part of our program.

LEG. GREGORY:

Great. Thank you. Another interest of mine is ensure that there is diversity in the department. I know the one thing I will credit the former County Executive is promoting and advertising and encouraging people of color to take the test, and the results have shown that there were significant increases in people of color from minority communities taking the police exam. And the argument

was or the pitch was that well, we want to encourage people of color to take the exams so that they can patrol communities of color. And -- but the -- that didn't necessarily -- there wasn't a translation there. And as you go through the community you don't necessarily see those officers patrolling those communities. So I would like to see some more of that. And of course, diversity among, you know, women, as well as minorities in the ranks and opportunities for a promotion I think is important as well, that we reflect the community that they serve.

Thirdly, I want to go to the issue of crack houses and drug houses. How would you like us to address complaints? Because my office often receives complaints about an alleged drug house in a community. You know, I generally respond, I e-mail the Inspector, Inspector Gigante has been a tremendous help, he is very responsive. But is there a different procedure that you would like us to employ?

CHIEF BURKE:

Ultimately there will be, Legislator Gregory. Right now we're in this assessment process. There's a lot of things that have to happen, you know, internally and whatnot. We're in this assessment. For now keep it the way it is. However, ultimately it will be Lieutenant Donohue, and we'll get on it right away and we will make sure that these -- the resources are passed on because we want to know. We want to know. But we're in the process of standing this up right now. We're confident that it will get done quickly, but we're in this review and analysis problem.

And to just get back to you on diversity, we on our first week of the new Administration, Commissioner Webber and myself met with both the Guardian Association and our Fraternal Hispanic Society, and we discussed a whole host of matters up to and including diversity. We're going to engage the Guardians in assisting us in this effort, this diversification effort, and we actually have members of the Guardians and the Hispanic Society accompanying us to high level community meetings, because we have great cops to showcase. And we want to showcase these cops, and the more cops that we showcase in the communities and to the community leader I think it will help us in achieving our goals of diversifying the Police Department.

As you know, we have this consent decree that's imposed upon us by the Justice Department and it limits what we can and can't do with respect to hiring, but I know that we at the upper levels of the department, in conjunction with the County Executive's people, are trying to come up with some creative strategies to help us out now.

LEG. GREGORY:

Great. And just one last -- I really -- I love what you had to say. I think you're spot on taking the right approach, particularly as it relates to communities of color, where historically there have been distrust of the Police Department. And I've gotten a lot of flack for supporting the Police Department and our officers because of that historic distrust, and my response always has been if we're not satisfied with the crime, who's going to solve the crimes and lockup the criminals. We have to have a partnership with the Police Department. That's why I was really distraught with prior attempts to disband the COPE Unit, because those are the officers that really had a relationship with the community leaders and the community at large, and it seems like you're really taking the bull by the horns and you are going to be very proactive and engage with the community and that can only be for the better. So I look forward to working with you.

I have another issue offline that I'll address with you, a personnel issue about the attention -- attendance, but that's for another time. All right. Thank you for coming here today.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator D'Amaro.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, thank you. And good morning, gentlemen. Thank you so much, Chief Burke and Acting Commissioner Webber, for coming down today. I appreciate it very much. I want to first pick up on what some of my colleagues have said and thank you and the Police Department. Having been in office now for six years and working with the PD over those six years it's, you guys are second to none and I appreciate everything that you do and the dedication to the people of Suffolk County.

I want to just review a couple of things that you've already gone over. Intelligence led policing. It seems like a no-brainer. I mean, what but intelligence should really be driving your deployment, data driven deployment. But it seems to me what you're doing is you're reorganizing in a way where you're setting up a network in effect, which ultimately the data is -- you mentioned an Orion system of some kind. What does that do exactly?

CHIEF BURKE:

That's our criminal intelligence database. Essentially, what that does is it -- it's capable of many things. What it's able to do is basically it human proofs a lot what we do in policing where it connects the dots that may otherwise be missed. That is in addition to our standard SCPD indices so it's a separate database but it's an analytical database.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And it's supplemental to what you're already doing.

CHIEF BURKE:

Yeah, it's supplemental to -- but its basic function is to analyze and connect the dots

LEG. D'AMARO:

So what you're doing is you're in effect putting, I think you called them Field Intelligence Officers, into each precinct.

CHIEF BURKE:

Yes, sir.

LEG. D'AMARO:

You're creating -- these are new bureaus, the Criminal Intelligence Bureau, the Community Response Bureau.

CHIEF BURKE:

Criminal Intelligence has been in the department and existed since probably the department's inception.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay.

CHIEF BURKE:

So there's nothing new. Community Response is essentially consolidating and putting under one umbrella our fractured and splintered group, so this way we could be consistent and we could make sure that those community efforts, which are very, very important, are driven consistently and we're able to monitor them and monitor outcomes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I understand. And so the Field Intelligence Officer is going to basically be the eyes and ears within the precinct to feed data back into the analysis section. Once the analysis is made based on indices or computer software, or however you're doing that, you look for your trends and patterns, and based on those trends and patterns, then you're driving how you deploy the force. Is that what's happening?

CHIEF BURKE:

Essentially. The Field Intelligence Officer, he's going to be a very busy guy in that he's got a lot of things to do. You know, we -- in addition to -- because we have structure, we have an infrastructure to do analysis, to assist with it, he's not doing it on his own, but he is actually boots on the ground that's knowing what's going on in that precinct, knowing who the bad guys are in that precinct, and kind of taking it all and sewing it together to be a resource for the precinct and investigative commanders. He's the gateway to all of the resources Intelligence has.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Let me ask you this. This is on my mind while I'm listening to your presentation and, you know, I'm not a police professional so bear with me a little bit on this to get the concepts out. But sometimes I have the feeling, representing different communities and diverse communities within my district, that some of the problems are really idiosyncratic, they're very parochial to an area. Now, what happens if a problem or an issue in an area is not fitting into the trends or the patterns? I mean, how does that affect deployment? What mechanism is in place where -- I guess what I'm driving at is that I have this sense that some of the issues in various communities may not necessarily fit into those patterns or fall outside the patterns or the trends, and we want to make sure that they're addressed as well. So what mechanisms do you have in place to ensure that as well?

CHIEF BURKE:

Clearly, as you would imagine, a crime trend or pattern is a tremendous priority for the Police Department, but the other, the Community Response Bureau, where those complaints, the individual complaint, the -- that's how those things get addressed. And you're right, Suffolk County is this -- every little hamlet has its own section of problems, so we will know what those idiosyncrasies are and they will be addressed.

However, due to, you know, our problems with staffing and deployment, we necessarily have to prioritize. So certainly a robbery pattern is going to get more attention than a speeding vehicle pattern, but it will get attention nonetheless, and we'll still be responsible and we want to aggressively address these things because we think a lot of these idiosyncrasies if they are addressed in a timely, efficient fashion, they can be knocked out.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right, and I agree with you. That's why when, again, from my perspective when you look at policing and deployment from the precinct level, the theory being that the precinct and the commander on down really have the pulse on what's going on, they know where the criminal activity is, they have a, for lack of a better term, feel for some areas or for the people who may be involved or on the fringes of criminal activity and have resources in the community. I want to be comfortable that this new system, not necessarily new, but this analysis that's going to be made for deployment is going to capture all of that to ensure that the various areas within the County and even down to specific hamlets. I represent really diverse areas from Huntington Station to Melville to Deer Park. They all have different needs. I think right now if you went into one of the precincts and asked the Precinct Commander, you know, what are your issues, you went into every precinct and did that, you might get really diversified answers based on the various communities.

I understand what's being done here and using data analysis to drive deployment, and I think it's something that should be done, but I also just want to make sure that there are mechanisms in place that can address really specific issues for districts that may not necessarily come up in the larger picture.

CHIEF BURKE:

Yeah. And that, again, is largely going to be a role of our Community -- that's why we want to know what complaints are coming in from Dix Hills or Melville, or whatnot. We want to make sure that they're being addressed. The one thing, though, that I want to be clear on is this is our deployment. We're not -- sector coverage is sector coverage. Sector coverage we're doing what we've always done with respect to sector coverage. If we have the resources beyond sector coverage to start making deployments, that's great. However, even while a guy's sitting in his sector and his primary responsibility is crime fighting and responding to 911 calls in his sector, we want him to know everything that's going on. So if, you know, this is not -- we're not going to start moving sectors and taking them out. So sector coverage essentially at this time is going to remain constant.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right and that's very reassuring, and I didn't expect that you were changing that. So this new approach is really supplementing and augmenting the sector system that's already in place.

CHIEF BURKE:

It's all of us thinking along the same -- it's policing with a purpose.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. And the more information, right, the more information an officer has in the field the better it is. And as long as you can ensure that the information that's being fed in is accurate and there are not gaps in that information I think that could be very effective.

I want to turn a moment to a specific area for me, which is Huntington Station. And I know you were in there recently. And I certainly supported the decentralization of the special operations team I guess it was or the Anti-Gang Unit, I'm not sure what you call it. But I think that's encouraging, because going back to what I -- the point I was just making I think that even when it comes to gangs you kind of put them all in the same umbrella, but I would suspect that, you know, going through the different communities and the area hot spots that we have, that they may operate differently. There are different players, different mentality, different approaches to all of that, so I think it would be more effective to decentralize those efforts.

And I agree with you that -- and I've been saying this for quite some time, that the approach to gangs, in my opinion, has to be more like organized crime, because that's really what it is. I know that there are some trends and they're very alarming trends right now of, more of like homegrown, if you will, gang members, and I know that for example, the Community Response Bureau will now probably be targeting at risk youth and going into our schools and trying to discourage that as much as possible and we're all working towards that. But if you're really -- I believe if you really want to get to the gangs you really have to cut off the head, you know, you have to go to the top.

I know a few years ago we saw some high profile arrests of gang members, that was effective, but it certainly didn't stop, you know, ten gang members opening fire on a Sunday afternoon in Huntington Station. So we need to get from A to B. I think the way to do that is through really the undercover operations. So I'm very encouraged here today and hearing you bring that up and even term it as organized crime because that's what I've often been doing as well.

How is that set up? I mean, do we have -- without, of course, getting into specifics, but, you know, are we moving forward with that type of organization to go more after the gang leaders? Not to discourage or say we shouldn't focus on what's happening at the community level, we need to do everything, but are we really going to step up trying to infiltrate and put those gang members behind bars where they belong?

CHIEF BURKE:

Well, it's happening now as we speak.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay.

CHIEF BURKE:

And, again, my background, as the Commissioner said, I led all the investigations out of the D.A.'s Office for the last ten years, so I led those wiretap, those enterprise investigations. That's been my forte for the last ten years and I am very aware of how effective it is. Things are going in Huntington now, and again, we're doing, we're assessing, we're targeting and we have operations underway as we speak right now for that.

Just as an aside, and maybe perhaps off line. Huntington is a very unique area in terms of gang activity and in the County. It's really an anomaly essentially how the gangs form and operate in Huntington than what we see in different areas and you eluded to some of it with this homegrown type stuff. So in terms of how the gangs operate in Huntington there is a difference between the way that the gangs form and operate in other areas of the County. It's just -- it's an anomaly and it's something that we are analyzing to see if we can capitalize on it and exploit it. And there are things about the way the gangs operate and form in Huntington that are very exploitable. But you're going to see. It's happening.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, again, I appreciate that very much. At every level of government there are some real good efforts being made right now to try and deal with that situation in Huntington Station. I know the town is very focused on it as well, and Legislator Spencer and I are both members of what we call the Huntington Station Action Coalition, which also liaisons with the Police Department, and we are trying to do this from top to bottom. But I really do believe that, you know, we have limited ability, limited resources. It really has to come from law enforcement and, you know, the long-term in getting kids out of gangs and away from gangs and encouraging them into other areas, you know, we'll keep funding that, we'll keep working on that and I know you will, too. But I'm very encouraged to hear you today say that the police efforts and the investigative efforts against gangs is going to be stepped up and be part of this system and I appreciate that.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thanks.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Madam Chair, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Calarco.

LEG. CALARCO:

Good morning, gentlemen. Thank you for coming today. I'm going to piggyback on something that Legislator D'Amaro had touched upon, and that's the technology that you have in the department. You had spoken to identifying trends that are occurring in the County, and that is

something that I think we've found to have, at least on our side of the dais here, a problem getting that information. Last year when we had the murders at Havens Drugs in my district, the first thing we did was reach out to the Police Department. "Is this a problem that we're seeing? Are we seeing this kind of a thing at pharmacies?" The response that we received was we don't know, we don't keep track of robberies at pharmacies. And I don't know if that's a situation where we don't have the proper technologies in place to keep track and capture all of that kind of data going down to specific incidences of whether it's occurring at a pharmacy or other types of locations.

You mentioned the Orion System. Is that going to give you the ability to track all of these different trends? And it's not just obviously with the drug problem. We had a similar situation when we talk about hate crimes and, again, a murder that occurred in my district where it appears that maybe there could have been a way to see the problem developing beforehand. And is there technology that you need? And I pose this question because the way I look at my job as the Legislator, it's your responsibility to fight crime within the County and to try to address the problems we have. It's our responsibility to make sure that you have the tools and the resources to do that. So I'm asking you, is there a further technology, is there further tools that you need in order to accomplish that?

CHIEF BURKE:

Yeah. We're constantly -- as you know, technology is ever evolving and we, as you can tell, we are proactively utilizing every piece of technology we can to identify these trends and patterns, so we do have the ability obviously to identify trends and patterns. Is there constantly something coming out that may help us, yes. I have a staff that is constantly advising me on this, but trust me, I will not be shy. If I need anything, I will let you know. And technology, be it technology -- the utilization of technology in criminal cases in an evidentiary manner, and technology to assist, maybe assist me with manpower. You know, there's certain types of technology that helps me deploy manpower in other ways. But that is something that we're actively looking at and it's something that we're actively embracing and we'll -- we're on the right track with that, but it's a never ending process. It's going to keep going.

LEG. CALARCO:

I appreciate that.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thanks.

LEG. CALARCO:

One other issue that I wanted to touch upon, and we talked about intelligence like policing, and there's a couple of things here. One of the communities I represent is the North Bellport community, and I share it with Legislator Browning. And one of the things that we often hear in the community there is that there isn't a rapport, there is no -- the people who live in the community are afraid to go to the Police Department, basically, for a number of different reasons. And what I would like to see us do as much as possible, and I know this is partly a manpower issue and how we've addressed crime in the past in the County, we have to try to develop those relationships with the community leaders and the folks in the neighborhood so that we can actually get the information from them about what's going on and know who the good guys are and the bad guys are in the neighborhood.

And one last thing I just wanted to bring up, and Legislator Gregory touched upon this, and this is the crack houses. Something, again, that we've been looking at is implementation and use of the Crack House Law the County has, which is another tool that I think you can take advantage of. I recently had a meeting with the COPE Officers in the Fifth Precinct regarding some apartment complexes in my district in Patchogue. You have some very good COPE Officers in the Fifth Precinct that are a tremendous asset to us. And it was an issue where we have a building in the district

where they've had a couple of arrests for drug possession, drug dealing, a couple of assaults, robberies on the sidewalk in front of the building, known gang elements who are -- have basically taken control of this five story building and are using it as a base of operations.

And when we tried to do the follow-up to see if we ever actually went after the landlord through the Crack House Law to shut this building down, you're talking many apartments in this place, you've threatened the landlord, "Hey, we're going to shut you down if you don't clean up the bad elements." That's a tool that I think we need to take advantage of, and I don't think that we've been able to do that. I've had conversations with the new County Attorney already about this and I think this is something that we really need to further that communication between the Police Department and the County Attorney's Office so we take full use of that resource.

CHIEF BURKE:

As you saw, a big priority of ours, we're doing it. It's going to happen because that mitigates problems right away. So we are on board. We meet actually several times a week with the County Attorney, so he's on board with us, too.

LEG. CALARCO:

And, further, I think using -- communicating with the Department of Social Services and the various agencies to implement Section 8, as you had mentioned, with the officer who was involved with HUD enforcements, that's another tool to really shut down some of these problem locations.

CHIEF BURKE:

Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Spencer.

LEG. SPENCER:

Good morning and thank you, Chief, for your very informative presentation. A couple of things I wanted to touch on. One was just policy regarding reporting of crime and within the minority communities where you may have a crime that's particularly violent, but you have someone that may be a witness to that crime who may be fearful because of their documentation, their status. Is there a particular policy in terms of encouraging those that may not be documented and, again, I think that it's very important to follow the law at all times, but is there a way where crimes can be reported and people don't have to fear that their status would become an issue if they stepped forward or if they cooperate with the police.

CHIEF BURKE:

In terms of someone who is a victim or a witness status -- we do not ask anybody's status in terms of that. We'd encourage people to come forward. We realize that that is an issue, particularly with the Latino community, and we are going to aggressively engage not only the community itself, but the community leaders. We want to get that message out that we are here to protect everybody, regardless of their status.

LEG. SPENCER:

Thank you. I agree, I think that that's very important. I also, as I meet with these community groups, you know, would like to kind of spread that word. I think it would make a huge difference in terms of your investigation.

CHIEF BURKE:

Yup. We want to help you get -- we want to get that message out and we'd appreciate your assistance, Legislator Spencer, in doing so.

LEG. SPENCER:

Absolutely. The second thing, as we look at limited resources, and you mentioned the assembly model so that you could keep resource officers in school. The other thing that I wondered about, I've heard in other places like a student with student programs where I think one of the issues when we look at community policing, it's great that we are able to consolidate our resources and have a County Police Department, and while I was out and talking with some of my constituents where they, you know, discussed that there was a time where there was a particular officer who may have been in a community for 30 years, who knew all the business owners and when they were away on vacation. And I realize that that's not possible, but one of the things that I heard as a potential idea, as cadets are training for a portion of their training for them to spend some time in the community that they're training in. And when I say student to student where they may -- a cadet may be at a local high school where I think that would help in terms of some of the hate crime issues, where there's a familiarity with the Police Officers. I don't know if there's any initiatives like that currently, but it is something that I would like to investigate. Do you know of anything like that with the cadets or with training at this time?

CHIEF BURKE:

Not really, but again, we're open to ideas and suggestions. Lieutenant Donohue, you'll get to know him very well. We'll consider it.

LEG. SPENCER:

Great. And it's extremely important for me to work with you and to provide you with what you need and to follow your leadership. And I'm a huge fan of technology, and one of the things that was really big in Huntington, and in other communities with Jon Cooper, who I have the honor of succeeding, was very big in implementing ShotSpotter. And I understand with any new technology that there's what it's supposed to do and then there's actually what it does, and sometimes those things -- it takes time to kind of work those out. But I think it's important as I think of ShotSpotter and where there may be officers responding to this, the next step connecting the ShotSpotters to cameras where it could cut down on some of those false alarms. If there is a way where cameras that were currently installed could focus in and could see if it was really an event going on, but also improving the ability to identify suspects, which direction they went, what vehicles they're driving. And then also the instantaneous nature that a camera can turnaround and pan to a shot within seconds, whereas even with the best response it would take minutes. I think it would improve the ability to fight crime.

But, again, since I'm not the expert, and as I try to look for ways to support you, I don't know if there's any thoughts or policies or if there is a conference call or I'm investigating these other initiatives, just wanting to understand when the police would be involved or be interested in working with me.

CHIEF BURKE:

Well, because of the new technologies of ShotSpotter and its implementation, you're right, there are kinks that we're working on in conjunction with the companies. We dedicated a Police Officer to kind of oversee the project, so we'll be able to do is I'll have -- we'll put you guys together so this way we can communicate on it. But that's certainly -- it's a technology that we have, it's a tool in the toolbox, and it's something that we want to make the most effective use out of.

LEG. SPENCER:

Again, thank you for your time. And thank you, Madam Chair, for indulging me.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No problem. Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good morning. How are you, Chief?

CHIEF BURKE:

Good. How are you?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good, good. You're holding up well under this, I'm telling you.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

And thank you for the opportunity to reach out to me. We've had a couple of good conversations. And certainly, Commissioner Webber, it's nice to see you here today. I want to commend you with what you presented, and I just jotted a couple of notes, and if I can, let me just tick off a few of them and let's just get a little bit of an idea.

The narcotics. The narcotics piece, as you know, we've talked about this specifically. We've been involved with it in ways that I never thought my office would wind up being involved. I got to know about NSOT, something I never thought I'd ever go ahead and get to know some of the specifics on. I've specifically commended the efforts across the street here in the Fourth Precinct and the officers and the hierarchy there. Recently, that hierarchy had to get shifted as far as priorities go. Without naming names or numbering numbers, at one time that NSOT Unit was a combined five officers, and they've had great success in neighborhood apprehensions and have gone even so far as we talked about the ketamine bust over in Ronkonkoma. That was a huge, huge apprehension and it worked, I think, from a precinct level up to engage the Narcotics Unit out there in Yaphank. I'm hoping that initiative gets kind of like re-embraced with the officers and the ability to have the priority and target out of the precinct. Is that some of where, you know, your initial assessment thinking is?

CHIEF BURKE:

As I said, Legislator, narcotics -- where you have narcotics, you have crime, essentially. Narcotics breeds crime, so we are taking a very holistic approach to realizing that hey, where you have crime there's going to be narcotics. There's very few crimes that are committed in a vacuum. So we're presently assessing this. How we tackle narcotics overall, and particularly with a view towards the crisis with prescription drugs and heroin and how addiction drives crime. So we're in the process of assessing that, but of course, hey, it starts out at a crack house, at an open air drug market, and we're committed to knocking those things out right away, and utilizing our narcotics enforcement to lower crime. So we're assessing how that's all going to work, but certainly street level narcotics, the houses, the things that you were just talking about, tremendous priority. Why? Because it's an ability for us to knock down crime when we go after those type of people.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. When you've kind of done your once over and you've got some handle on how that's going to go forward, I'd ask to the best of your ability if you could share that with us. That's one of the themes that each one of us is speaking to you about and for whatever reason, sometimes people share that with us. We're out, we're about, we're talking to people all the time. And, you know, information is key as you've talked about, and I think a way for us or a single point of contact for us to convey that over to you is an important thing for us to be able to have and to share with you.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The other thing, I guess, and I just -- I don't want to beat a dead horse, but you and I talked again specifically about it, the work that D.A. Brown did, and, you know, that moniker of heroin highway and the disproportionate number of an arrests that came out of our area, my area, Smithtown. I think it's incidental to I guess discretionary income, and, you know, time and access, and the ability to go in and out there. You spoke about, though, the Task Forces, and let me make sure I understand. The District Attorney Spota's Task Force is going to be blended with the group that the prior administration has identified? It was my understanding that there were actually two separate Task Forces.

CHIEF BURKE:

Their efforts are going to be coordinated.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

CHIEF BURKE:

Their efforts were not coordinated under the previous administration.

LEG. KENNEDY:

That's what I had heard, and it was very distressing, as a matter of fact. So you're going to remedy that?

CHIEF BURKE:

We're going to work together.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Great. Neighborhood Watches. I'll just say it, I know out of the Fourth Precinct we have 21 of them, and they just work well. Everything that you've been talking about as far as ability to go ahead and move and ferret information. Inspector Rhoads has three officers, I guess, that are tasked to working hand in hand with the Neighborhood Watches. I'm hoping that tool is kept and kept in place and operated. As a matter of fact, we've had the opportunity to go to other precincts sometimes and talk about, you know, the degree of effectiveness and how they work well. I can show you the guy that does the Neighborhood Watch for right here south of Hauppauge. He literally puts up a website that actually details suspicious vehicles, a whole variety of different contacts and he's extremely, extremely effective at what he does. So I'm hoping that piece stays in.

CHIEF BURKE:

Actually, we may tap into it because if it's working and that's the model County-wide, we want to push that out County-wide. So Lieutenant Donohoue, again, will be coordinating the County-wide efforts. Because if it's working well here in the First Precinct, in the Fourth Precinct rather, and it's the way to go, well, let's try and let's do it all over the County and really ramp up our Neighborhood Watches. We want to do that.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I think it does fit the bill and do well. Motor Carrier Unit. You know that we've had the opportunity, as a matter of fact, thank you you've supported our resolution with the collaboration with the Town of Smithtown for the set up of the motor carrier inspection station right over on Crooked Hill Road. We had Lieutenant Geer and Sergeant Mallin, who will be force on Tuesday and also over at the community meeting. I -- these guys do great work. We hear -- it is a constant, constant area of concern on the western end of my district with the number of overweight trucks that are running up and down Commack Road. And as I come to find in speaking with Sergeant

Mallin, they play a key role in the Homeland Security piece as well, from possible hazardous material transport, radiation transport, drug transport and particularly something that we've talked about recently, illegal gas transports. Apparently, there is a whole trade that comes over the Verrazano Bridge from down in Jersey, unpacks fuel and is doing it off hours. It has happened in the past.

I'm going to ask you to consider it again that you deploy them for something like an off hours or an out of norm type of set up to get these people, because apparently it's millions and millions of dollars of sales tax that we're forfeiting with these, you know, illegal gas haulers. To say nothing about how dangerous they actually are. That said, please just consider in the mix.

CHIEF BURKE:

It's a great idea. And again, with my background in the D.A.'s Office and overseeing the Tax Unit over there, it's certainly something that I'm going to pay attention to.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good. I appreciate that. Thank you. EMT training. EMT training, Chief, we have spoken about that. I am just going to ask you, from my perspective, I want to see every one of our Suffolk County Police Officers at the very least at the EMT level. I know in our Marine Unit, and I see one of our Marine Police Officers here today, or he was here earlier, I know that they're providing primary care over on the beach, and so I'm hoping that we're going to continue to keep it that level.

What else. CPEP, the CPEP transports, the emergency -- the EDP transports. Has that ironed out and it's now operating with less of a draw on the precincts or do we still have an issue with that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

Yes, that's improved since we worked with it years ago. It's constantly improving now. We have Supervisors go down and check up to make sure they're being released, the officers are being released on a timely basis, that they're not there too long, overstaying. So, yes, it's being addressed and it's working better.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. All right. I guess just the last item, Chief -- Commissioner, I sent you a letter on those handicapped residences. That's something that I'd like to talk about offline, maybe coming up with some form of identification and some kind of protocol if we have an incident. Okay.

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

Okay.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Hahn, you have one more?

LEG. HAHN:

Yes. I've been waiting, I put my name back on the list because I had some more questions, but while I've been waiting some of it's been addressed. I do want to just -- my question's centered on whether or not the changes you are proposing will in any way affect sector cars, and you answered some of that by saying that you are not planning to change sector lines. But I want to make sure that we're really, truly taking back our patrol function and our ability to provide foot patrols in downtown areas, because I do believe, you know, Legislator Calarco and Legislator Spencer talked about the importance of relationships with community and community members. I think we have a number of downtowns where foot patrols would be extraordinarily valuable. And, you know, patrol

is just central to prevention and I want to make sure that we're not spread too thin and that we're just responding to one 911 call after another. And I understand that this is about manpower and resources, but we want the truth and I -- you know, we have a new Administration and we're hoping we're going to get to that. And if we're spread thin we need to know it.

So I just want to make sure that we're -- patrol is adequate and that we're truly patrolling in these sector cars, not just responding. Because we all know -- we always hear about the three legs of the stool; prevention, response, investigation. I think those are the three. I just want to make sure that the prevention leg is strong and patrol is strong.

CHIEF BURKE:

That's our top priority, is prevention. That's the ideal if we can prevent, and the sense of security in the communities. Patrol is where it's at. If everything else goes away, the last thing that stands is the patrol force. That's it. That's our -- that is truly the backbone of this Police Department and that has got to be our top priority, is patrolmen and women in police cars. Despite whatever else may happen, whatever else resources may dwindle, that's the primary objective.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. I have to say there was a lot of information. We definitely are on an information overload today. I'm pleased to see that. I'll give an example. I had an incident in my district where there was a person murdered. My son calls me from the library and says there's all kinds of police cars, there's ambulances and there's yellow tape. I get a call from a civic leader before I get a call from the Police Department to let me know that somebody was murdered in my district. So I'm happy to see that we're going to have a direct contact with somebody within the Police Department.

I know that Legislator Eddington had made many requests of the Police Department to at least let us know if something serious happens. I mean, the incident that happened in Patchogue, that somebody has a contact for all of us, certainly we will make sure that you have all of our cell phone numbers. But I think it's important that we're notified before I get a call from a civic leader and telling them I don't know. And I know that many times information is sensitive and you can only tell us so much, but at least a heads up works. So I'm very happy to see that Detective Lieutenant Donohue is going to be coordinating and communicating with the Legislators.

Communication, again, with our weekly papers. I just spoke two days ago with one of our weekly papers who, you know, she covers a lot of the issues in the North Bellport area. Very often there's frustration from her that she's not always getting the information that she's asking for or, you know, and again, they're not always asking for everything, but at least when an incident happens they don't want to hear it from the civic leaders, they'd like to at least get something from the Police Department; this is the incident and this is what we can tell you. So I'm happy with that.

The phone system, I would like you to speak on that. Legislator Cilmi's bill, if you can respond. I know Mr. Meyer spoke on it. Personally I've never had a bad experience. I've had to call the precinct on occasion in the evening and I've always received -- you know, I've always been able to get a call back and it's the front desk that I called. So what do you have to resolve this problem?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

Well, first, we realize any call to the precinct is important to the caller, so we understand where he's complaining. This complaint arises from time to time depending upon the workload of the desk. But we're establishing a new procedure using inhouse technology and hardware whereby we're going to republish the numbers to call for each precinct, both on our website as well as the local papers and the newspapers, phone books and so on. It will automatically bounce, not by rings, but if it's busy, to a set of three different phone numbers, up to and including the Desk Sergeant. The Desk

Sergeant, if he's busy also, which is possibly the case because we are very busy at times, they will actually convert the voice message to a text message and it will leave a message on the Desk Sergeant's computer telling them a call has to be made. We'll be asking for the name, the phone number, and obviously first we'll ask them if it's an emergency to call 911, but a basis of what the call is about and we will get back to them.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Sounds good. Okay. Another issue. Many of our gas stations, in fact, I was at a meeting in North Bellport with Legislator Calarco less than a week ago. One of the gas stations in their community seems to be -- it's pretty much a 24/7 operation. And the people in the community are saying, you know, we're not going to that gas station, the only people who are going to that gas station are the drug dealers. I know in the Mastic/Shirley area we have a few gas stations like that, too. What can you do to help us with that? Because I know that one of their requests was well, why do they need to stay open so late? They've asked the Town of Brookhaven to shut them down, telling them that they can only stay open until midnight. I know we can't do that on the County. But what can we do to -- the gas stations are definitely a place for the drug dealers to go and meet and do their transactions. What can we do to enhance protection for the community in those places?

CHIEF BURKE:

Well, I'd like to talk about -- because I'm not familiar with the specific area, but we will do investigative legwork on it and, you know, ultimately, you know, patrol presence over there, engaging in field stops in the area, if -- if that is, in fact, so. And also, you know, hey, one of the things that we are concerned about as a department is in any 24 hour operation the potential target of a robbery. So there's many different -- there's a whole host of reasons why we can justify an intensified look from our Patrol Division. But Lieutenant Donohue will get in touch with you to get -- we'll get that place and we'll take a look at it.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. You got your hands full. Another issue, when you are talking about the narcotics and the doctor shopping. I've spoken to some Probation Officers, I see Don Grauer is here, congratulations. They have such a great connection within the community. You know, they're visiting the probationers in their homes, they talk to them. You know, I just -- I know that you talked earlier about making sure, you know, you have that communication between the Sheriff's Department and Probation, but, you know, the Probation Officer's told me, we've known who a lot of these doctors are that they can go and do their doctor shopping. So I'm happy to see that you are talking about coordinating with them and definitely they are a very important resource when it comes to fighting --

CHIEF BURKE:

They can tell us.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Absolutely.

CHIEF BURKE:

Just tell them to call over and I'll direct them to where we can work together with that. But have them reach out and tell us.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And, again, talking about our sober homes in our communities. That's been one of my issues for the past six years. Again, our ambulance companies and our fire departments, they get the calls where the drug overdoses are. The fire departments get the calls on occasion. Will you have some plan to meet with our local fire departments and ambulance companies?

CHIEF BURKE:

Sure. If it's a community problem we'll address it as we address any other community problem, and if necessary, we will look at it from an abatement perspective as I discussed earlier in the presentation.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

But I think it's important for them to know that they should be working with the Police Department. If they see something, they should say something. Because they get into the home and they see a lot more sometimes than what they'd like to. I know it's hard for you, but at least it gives you another target in your investigations.

CHIEF BURKE:

And also their observations can be folded into a public safety and town code enforcement effort, search one applications and the like, so.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. One last question and then I'll pass it over to the Presiding Officer. Of course staffing is an issue. I know we have a graduating class. I'm sure that graduating class is not going to cover what you need as far as your resources and manpower. Detectives and Sergeants, I continually hear the shortage of Detectives and Sergeants. I know with my husband being in the police department he's always said the Sergeants are the guys who keep, you know, the patrol guys out of trouble making sure that they're doing their job. Do you have any plans as far as boosting staff, you know, dealing with that staff issue and making sure that we have the adequate Sergeants to do what they need to do? And also, when you have crime that's committed, you have -- you need Detectives, and are you going to be able to provide the adequate number of Detectives to do the job that they need to do.

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

As Jimmy mentioned, we are doing the analysis, but, you know, at first blush it would certainly appear that we could use more of all the ranks.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I'm shocked to hear that. I don't know about anybody else, for you to say we need more, that's a new one. That's the first time in many years. And I hope we can work together to do what is needed to do to fight the crime. So with that, I will -- Presiding Officer Lindsay, you have a question?

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah. Really, to both of you guys, and many of the notes that I took have already been answered, so I don't want to continue this grilling any longer. But I want to compliment you, Chief Burke, on the report. It was very extensive. I think I probably agree with everything in it. You guys are off to a good start, the honeymoon's started, it's not going to last forever. You know, there's going to be some rocky times. I just ask you, don't disappear on us, whether we agree to disagree. I don't expect to see both of you here every month, but we've had some communications problems in the past between the department upper echelon and this committee and please don't disappear on us.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you. We consider you our partners. I mean, we all have the same ultimate objective, and that's to make this County the safest place given the constraints, the reality, the fiscal reality, that we've all been dealt with. But thank you, Presiding Officer.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Commissioner Webber, back to the resources. You know, I couldn't agree that we need more

resources. I just don't know how the hell to pay for it. You know, we're in a fiscal situation that's a bear and I don't admire you two guys' position. You've got a tough job with limited resources. So along those lines, just some specific questions. The beginning of the year, we -- there was a number of chiefs that either retired or were let go or whatever; was it five? How many chiefs left the department?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

We had the Chief of Department replaced by Chief, we had chief of Patrol and Chief of Detectives, three star chiefs.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay, so just three. And they've all been replaced?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

No, there's no replacements as yet.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. Are we going to replace them? Do we need them?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

I'm sure they're necessary, but I don't know whether we'll wait for the new Commissioner to be chosen and let him pick his staff.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I see. Okay. Because I do agree with -- I don't minimize the importance of the chiefs, but I do agree with Legislator Browning about the importance of the guys in the field, the Sergeants and Lieutenants. How are we doing with retirements this year, do you have any idea?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

We're about our normal level at this time, about 28 either gone or going that notified us.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And that's normal for January?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

That's about the same as last year, the last couple of years.

P.O. LINDSAY:

How many retired last year all together? Do you know?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

Ninety left last year.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Wow. And how are we doing with -- at times we've heard rumors here about we don't have enough cars, we don't have enough guns, we don't have enough uniforms. We're not going to see our new patrolmen walking around with their sleeves down to their ankles, right, are we?

ACTING COMMISSIONER WEBBER:

I hope not.

P.O. LINDSAY:

That's honest. Good luck to you.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I guess with that, thank you. It was a great presentation. And I see a new energy here today, and I appreciate everything that you are going to be doing and we will definitely be keeping those lines of communication open.

CHIEF BURKE:

Thank you so much.

(The following was transcribed by Lucia Braaten, Court Stenographer)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. With that, we have -- is our FRES Commissioner, Joe Williams, is he still here? I don't see him. And I see Mr. Prudenti is here, the new President of the Deputy Sheriffs. Congratulations to you, and we look forward to working with you also. Who else do we have? Corrections, I guess, is -- Detective Investigators is here. Do you have any comments or any -- no? Okay.

For next month, I did speak with Sheriff DeMarco about having him come in and do a presentation from the Sheriff's Department. However, Mr. Sharkey, if you could come forward. We received some information this morning, two newspaper articles, and I also have another packet of information which we've also received referencing a member of the Sheriff's Department in Corrections. One is an accusation of a sex assault. And what disturbs me about this is that if, in fact, this is true, my -- you know, my husband, being in law enforcement, I remember when we went through investigations, we went through an unbelievable investigation, not just my husband's background, but my background, before he could even get the job. And if his name was attached to this, I know he would never have received a job in law enforcement, in any department of law enforcement, whether it be Corrections, Police Department. So I would like to give you this packet of information that I have received. Besides, I know that my Aide gave you the newspaper articles.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

He did, but I haven't had an opportunity to read them during the presentation.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, it's referencing a member of the Sheriff's Department who -- let me get my glasses. The person was convicted of a fourth degree sex offense charge and sentenced to twelve months probation. From what I can understand, that -- I have other paperwork here that obviously will have to be looked at to see if it is legitimate. There is a letter, a "To Whom It May Concern" letter, basically asking us to investigate this. And again, a person in law enforcement I think is held to a very high standard. And as far as I'm concerned, the County could be putting themselves in jeopardy to just ignore this information and not pursue it. I know the incident happened, I believe it was 1984, it said, I guess before Megan's Law existed. However, if that was to happen any time -- if that had happened within the Megan's Law, the time that it exists, this person would be a registered sex offender. And I think you know how that upsets me.

I have other paperwork here. It looks like the person was arrested -- I guess this must have happened in Maryland at a college. I can't tell you how disturbing this is and how upset I am to see something like this, and especially the person that it is. Are you -- have you ever seen this information? Are you aware of any of this?

CHIEF SHARKEY:

I'm not, and I'm not -- certainly not prepared to discuss something like this in this venue. I'd be

more than happy to take whatever you have available and follow up with you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Well, we just received this information. I certainly would request that the Sheriff's Department do a full investigation. There are Civil Service letters here. Again, if you lie on a Civil Service application, you don't get the job. And I want to know how this person got the job, if, in fact, any of this is true. So I will give you this information that I have, this packet. I will make sure you have it. My Aide will give it to you. I would like a full investigation, and I would also consider that we have an independent investigation with the Department of Corrections, with the State Department of Corrections, because this is -- it's outrageous and it's -- I can't tell you how upset I am to read this right now. So I don't know -- I know all of the Legislators have received a copy.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

Legislator Browning, if I might. Although I'm not directly involved in this, this is my first review of the information that was handed to me this morning, it was passed on to me that the Sheriff and the D.A. are already looking into this.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I'm glad to hear that. And I know this predates Sheriff DeMarco. It is quite some time ago. However, we cannot ignore this, especially the position that this person has, and the charges that he's had over the many years in the corrections facility. And I just want to know what the truth is. And if, in fact, it's true, then we will have to have some further conversation. Okay?

CHIEF SHARKEY:

Yes. As I said, I was informed that it is, in fact, being investigated by both the Sheriff and the District Attorney's Office.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Legislator Browning, if I could just say something.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Sure.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Chief Sharkey, I just read the newspaper article, and I agree that it's disturbing and I'm -- to ask you about it is really unfair. And I think all we're asking is that the Sheriff's Department do a thorough investigation, and I hope none of these accusations in that media outlet is correct. And I think it would behoove all of us if it can be cleared up quickly.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

I'm sure this will be taken care of expeditiously.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Thank you very much. I kind of feel bad that you got blind-sided with this. All right. Bye-bye.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I apologize that we dumped this on you, but we got this dumped on us this morning and I'm not going to take it lightly. I think it's very serious. However, do you have anything else that you would like to report?

CHIEF SHARKEY:

I don't at this time. If you said you were in communication with the Sheriff to request a presentation at the next meeting, I'm sure we'll be able to take care of that for you. I apologize, I did walk in a moment or two late into the meeting and I only caught the tail end of your comments. I did just want to say, I did hear your comment about lines of communications between the Police Department and the Sheriff's Office, and I have to say that, number one, I have the utmost respect for the Commissioner and the Chief of Department. And I can say that we have had an excellent line of communication prior to this and we fully anticipate having an excellent line of communication and inter-agency cooperating going forward.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And I don't know if you missed the part, but I do -- I know I spoke with Mr. Prudenti and, you know, I'm looking forward to the unions also sitting down and talking together, because I think it's also within the unions that there's been that separation and mistrust. And I think that, like I said, today is a new day and new administration, and I know that they can -- they can work things out also. So thank you for coming.

(The following was transcribed by Kim Castiglione, Legislative Secretary)

And is there anyone else in the room that would like to make any comments? No? Okay. So with that, we'll go to the agenda. One big resolution. I'm sure this will be a long meeting with one resolution. Okay.

Introductory Resolutions

J.R. 1010, Establishing a Uniform Telephone Answering Policy for the Suffolk County Police Department. (Cilmi)

LEG. KENNEDY:

Motion to table at the request of the sponsor, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Actually, I was going to recommend making a motion to table subject to call, because I believe he's had a conversation with the Police Department and is satisfied with their response.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The e-mail that I got from him was that I know that he was in discussion. I don't know if he -- if it was his -- he didn't indicate that to me in the e-mail, so that's why I -- his comment to me was to ask that I make a motion to table. I don't know that he was looking for table to call

LEG. HAHN:

I'll second your table subject to call.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I just think in deference to the comments we just heard, I wouldn't necessarily oppose subject to call, but maybe we should just wait one cycle to do that. I would really prefer to just table it at this point.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So we have -- did we have two motions to table, and a second. We had a motion to table and a second, did we? Do we have a second on that table?

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, I'll second that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And we had the motion to table subject to call and a second.

MR. NOLAN:

Subject to call takes precedence.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So I made the motion to table subject to call, there was a second, Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. So I guess it is tabled subject to call. ***(Vote: Tabled Subject to Call 5-3-0-0. Opposed: Legs. Kennedy, D'Amaro and Presiding Officer Lindsay).***

And I guess with that, motion to adjourn. Second, Legislator Calarco. We are adjourned.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:55 A.M. *)