

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

A 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, May 8, 2014, at 10:00 a.m.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Kate Browning - Chairperson  
Legislator Robert Calarco - Vice-Chair  
Legislator Kara Hahn  
Legislator William Spencer  
Legislator Monica Martinez  
Legislator John Kennedy  
Presiding Officer Gregory

**Also in Attendance:**

George Nolan - Counsel to the Suffolk County Legislature  
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature  
Lora Gellerstein - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature  
John Ortiz - Senior Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Josh Slaughter - Aide to Chairperson Browning  
Bill Shilling - Aide to Legislator Calarco  
Mark Malizia - Aide to Legislator Spencer  
Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy  
Alyssa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn  
Justin Littell - Aide to Legislator D'Amaro  
Lisa Santeramo - County Executive's Office  
Tom Vaughn - County Executive's Office  
Amy Keyes - County Executive's Office  
Ed Heilig - District Attorney's Office  
Robert Braun - County Attorney's Office  
Patrice Dishopolsky - Probation Director  
Anthony Schwarz - Chief of Department/Suffolk County Police Department  
Tracy Pollak - Suffolk County Police Department  
Bob Holley - Executive Director/Fire Academy  
Ed Johnston - Chief/Fire Academy  
Suzanne McBride - AME Police Emergency Unit President  
Joe Williams - Commissioner of FRES  
Anthony Laferrera - FRES  
Jay Egan - FRES Commission  
Lou Tutone - Second Vice President PBA  
John Becker - Suffolk County Deputy Sheriff's PBA  
Tim Morris - President/Superior Officers Association

Jim Bruenfelder - Superior Officers Association  
Jim Roddin - Superior Officers Association  
William Sanok - President/VEEB  
Dr. Alan Groveman - VEEB Board  
Peter Gunther - Nominee/VEEB  
Jerry Owenburg - Suffolk County Volunteer Fireman's Association  
All Other Interested Parties

**Taken By:**

Lucia Braaten - Court Reporter

*(\*The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. \*)*

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Good morning. We will start the Public Safety Committee meeting. If everyone would please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

*(\*Salutation\*)*

And a moment of silence for those who protect our country at home and abroad.

And also a special moment of silence for Bobby Knight, that many of you know at this committee; also, has been a long-time employee here at the Presiding Officer's Office.

*(\*Moment of Silence\*)*

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you. Okay. We have a couple of cards, and the first card is Jay Egan.

**MR. EGAN:**

Good morning. I'm going to be brief. There's two topics. I'll wait for my second topic as we get on, later on in the meeting, if I need to be called up.

However, the first one is you mentioned Bobby Knight. Bobby Knight, long-term -- longtime member of the fire service, as well as a longtime member as an employee representing this committee, as well as the Legislature. He was also a longtime liaison for the Suffolk County FRES Commission. He's going to be greatly missed. I'm glad you brought it up before I had the chance to. Every chance I come up here, in the past, I say I'm losing more and more friends. I come up here, I come out and I come to speak, and Bill Lindsay would come running out. And he'd come out -- he'd come running out because we had -- we always had banter and it was good. Bobby would sit here and we'd enjoy this meeting, and we'd be able to text notes back and forth getting things across. A great individual, great man, great Ex-Chief, great volunteer. And he also represented the Suffolk County volunteers, fire service and the organization immensely, and he'll be truly missed. I just wanted to put that on the record. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you. And next is Jerry Owenburg.

**MR. OWENBURG:**

Speaking about the appointment to the VEEB Board. I believe you received our letter from the Association. Hopefully, you read all that with our objections.

We interviewed the three candidates. We spent two nights interviewing them. We found that three of them were -- had the knowledge and that can handle the job, but the process comes down to trust. The person that we picked was a member of our association, came to our meetings, knew what our agenda was. The first -- as we said in the letter, this is the first time that the VEEB Board has picked somebody else other than the person that we recommended. We didn't think that they would do that, but that was -- that happened.

In the interim, we have met with the VEEB Board and looking forward -- they agreed to sit down and work out that process for the future. But the present time, they picked a person that is not a member of our association. And we've had Ed Carpenter for 18 years there, came to every meeting, reported what was going on, and we trusted him. And it's -- and that's what it's all about.

I imagine if the County Exec said we need a member of one of your staff to sit on the committee, you would pick somebody that you would trust and know. And if he picked somebody else that wasn't on your staff, you would be pretty upset about that. So that's where we stand at this time. And thank you for your -- listening to us.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you. Next is Tim Morris.

**MR. MORRIS:**

Thank you. I'm here today to speak about -- in opposition to I.R. 1390, introduced by Legislator Trotta. I hope you've all received the memorandum in opposition regarding this proposed resolution.

The SOA recently signed an MOA with the County Executive that was approved by this Legislature, which amended our collective bargaining agreement through 2018. That MOA addresses the requirement of Bachelor's Degree for all new hires. If you could simply legislate the requirements, there would not have been a need for the County to negotiate this section, which they obviously did.

The proposals in I.R. 1390 are clearly terms and conditions of employment, and as such, they need to be discussed with the SOA in the context of negotiations and cannot simply be legislated. While the overwhelming majority of our members possess Bachelor's Degrees and beyond, and, as stated before, any change in requirements would necessitate the County negotiate with the SOA, it should be noted that Mr. Trotta, in his resolution, attempts to establish standards and particular areas of required study without providing any source or authority that they should necessarily be required.

I urge the committee to reject this resolution. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you, Tim. And I don't think there'll be any questions today. But, you know, for yourself and anyone else who was interested, there is a public hearing on this on Tuesday. The public hearings start at 2:30. So, you know, if there are any other speakers who want to come and speak on the bill, we'd welcome that.

Next speaker is Ashley Zoller, I believe.

**MS. ZOLLER:**

Hi. My name is Ashley Zoller and I am on the Board of Directors at Unchained NY. I am also employed at Grady Animal Hospital, where we treat many of the dogs that have been left chained outdoors and the toll it takes on their bodies. This is the sad reality of so many of the dogs on Long Island. Left chained and alone, many of these dogs are left with no food or water for days at a time. These are dogs that are unable to get away from any danger or severe weather that may come their way. We are here today to speak for these helpless dogs who cannot do so themselves.

I have brought in a photo of a dog named Pup that was on our outreach program. Pup was left chained outside day after day, severely neglected like so many others. When the call came that Pup was sick, we raced over and got him to our vet. Unfortunately for Pup, it was too late. Due to his living conditions and being left chained outside, he was in organ failure. He was no longer eating or drinking and had discharge pouring from his nose. He was defecating all over himself and unable to get up and walk. Pup had to be humanely euthanized, but that was not the end. Only a few months later, the same household got another dog that was left chained outdoors that was mauled and killed by another dog, because he was unable to run due to being on a chain.

We ask that stricter laws are made so we no longer have to have these terrible and unnecessary stories about so many dogs. I am here to urge you to vote in favor of resolution 1276 -- Resolution, excuse me. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you. And next is Christine Connors.

**MS. CONNORS:**

Good morning, everybody. I am Christine Connors. I am a board member of Unchained NY. It's through our mobile community outreach that we work to improve the quality of life for chained dogs. Chaining a dog 24/7 is part and parcel with neglect and often abuse. Chaining becomes an acceptable and common practice throughout the communities.

Our new clients often have rotted makeshift shelters that offer nothing by way of relief from the elements. Dogs are not meant to live this way. I've tended to dog after dog in the summer months who are literally being eaten alive by flies and fleas. In the winter, I've dug dogs out of their doghouses, because they've been snowed in. Owners are not digging the dogs out after a blizzard, and we show up at a home and shovel in hand, and dig the dogs, literally, free from their enclosures.

Oftentimes, too, during the winter, their water freezes, and these dogs are forced to eat the snow in order to stay hydrated and survive. These dogs, because they live outdoors, are out of sight and out of mind, rarely receiving daily food and water, or relief from the elements or even boredom. Their short tethers mean they live, eat and sleep in their own feces and urine. They also do not have protection from rats who find the straw in the doghouses attractive nesting. They live amongst garbage. They live caught and tangled, preventing them from reaching food, water or shelter. I've had a dog who had a rake staked into the middle of the ground where he was wrapped around, and I don't know how long he was left that way.

Amending the current legislation means elevating the acceptable standard in the communities as a whole. I believe if you choose to own a dog, then you must be willing to accept the responsibility of caring for it in a humane and safe manner, and meet the dog's most basic needs. I thank you very much for your time.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Thank you. I just have a quick question --

**MS. CONNORS:**

Certainly.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

-- because I know that, you know, one of the issues that has been raised is, you know, about enforcement of this. And at what time is it not appropriate? I mean, obviously, looking at the picture here and the big chain that's put around this dog's neck is highly inappropriate. But at what point is it okay to, you know, put a leash on your dog and to tie them up outside? Should that never happen, or, you know --

**MS. CONNORS:**

I believe that there are circumstances if you have a temporary situation where your fence is down, or it's a short time period. This is not the way these dogs are treated. These dogs are on the back of the properties out of sight, out of the mind, and this is how they live 24/7. There's never grass, because the grass gets beaten down. The mud causes parasites. They're in their own feces and filth. And if there's a medical issue, they're not being checked on in any regular basis, because it

can be out of sight and out of the mind that they're outside.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

I'm, you know, just trying to figure out how would you perceive this bill would be enforced?

**MS. CONNORS:**

You know, I can say that there are numerous counties in other states that have really good models for how they're enforcing this type of thing with citations. If the homeowner is not home and an officer checks on the dog and the dog is still there six hours later, they remove the dog. The person would get a ticket and would need to appear. I think the other models are working and they're good and we can utilize them.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. I appreciate you coming to speak. It's -- I mean, when you look at these pictures, they're horrendous.

**MS. CONNORS:**

They truly are.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

And I've had many calls to my office about this situation, actually one just last week, about a dog being tethered outside all day, and, you know, it's not fair to the animal, you know.

**MS. CONNORS:**

I agree.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

So, anyway, I appreciate it. Thank you.

**MS. CONNORS:**

Thank you for your time, I appreciate it.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

There are no more cards. Is there anyone else who would like to speak? No one else? Okay.

We have Joe Williams from FRES and Bob Holley. If you would like to come up and kind of brief us a little bit on the agreement that was just signed with regards to the Fire Academy.

I'd like to say first, congratulations, and thank you for your hard work. I know it's -- it was a lot of work, and quite a while that it took to get to this point, but we're happy it's come to this conclusion. So if you'd like to go ahead and start, Joe.

**COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:**

Okay. Thank you. I can tell you part of me and Bob are very happy this is over also. But is that the -- just to let everybody know is that, if you haven't heard, we have come to an agreement with the Vocational and Education Board for a three-year contract.

I think it's important to mention that this is the first time in the history of the seven years of the County doing contracts with the VEEB Board, there's a multi-year contract. I think we accomplished a lot through that. The process started approximately about a year ago when we first started talking to the VEEB Board about a contract and a multi-year contract.

I want to thank the County Working Group that worked -- I worked with, the VEEB Board, Bob

personally, everybody. We all had a common mission when we sat down with this. No matter what side of the table we were sitting at, and that was more training for our firefighters in Suffolk County, and I think this contract is an example of that.

Some of the highlights of the contract. What we did was, again, the multi-year contract. The other thing we were hearing from this body, and we were hearing it amongst ourselves, and for the fire service, the Fire Academy is moving ahead with online training. I'm going to let the Chief talk about the success they just had with one of their programs. I think he has a right to pound his chest for that. I'll let him talk on that.

The other thing that we looked across the country was that there's a lot of other academies across the country where our firefighters, on some of the courses that the Fire Academy teaches, will get college credits. Myself, along with Bob and his office, we're working with New York State, that we will certifying some -- the State will be certifying some of those courses; that when they do attend the classes, which are required for their firefighting, they'll also be receiving college credits in the future. It's very similar to the NYPD Academy, the FDNY Academy, and numerous other academies.

The other thing that we looked at was a reduction in administrative costs. We realized that, you know, the cost of operations, anybody, was going up. We all realized it in the County. We did sit down and we have come to an agreement. There is a 5% per year reduction in administrative costs with every penny going back into training. Nothing is being taken out of their budget whatsoever.

The other thing was the field training on the field. This is the type of training where it's live fire training. This gives the new firefighter or the seasoned firefighter experience, gets his skills up. In this contract here, it calls for seven of those classes offered to every 109 fire departments in the County, if they wish to take care of that. Those were the biggest missions on ours.

Again, I'll turn it over to Chief Holley, but the -- I want to thank everybody involved in this. And I overemphasize that when we started this whole process a year ago, the whole main thing was training for firefighters. We -- I feel that we accomplished that. We brought some new initiatives out. I thank the VEEB Board, I thank everybody that was involved in this. And I think at the other end, we have -- we're moving into a different century now with the Fire Academy.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Bob.

**MR. HOLLEY:**

Good morning. I want to echo the Commissioner's sentiments as far as the cooperation between FRES, the County, the VEEB Board. We all worked hard. It was extremely trying on every single one of us, but we persevered. And we do have an agreement now which I feel benefits everybody.

I do want to say thank you to Legislator Hahn, who over a year-and-a-half ago proposed legislation for us to get into online training. We took that, we ran with it. We partnered with IFSTA and we created an online training course for both our Firefighter II, and our Firefighter I programs. The Firefighter I program, which is our busiest program, we get the most students into that, we were experiencing two years ago a failure rate of anywhere from 12 to 20% of the students failing out. A number of reasons come into play on that, but by going with this online hybrid class, the first class we ran, we dropped that down to 6%. And a tremendous goal achieved there. We are seeing enthusiasm from the students who are participating in this program, and I know going into the future, it's going to serve the firefighters and the citizens of this county in a much better fashion with their -- the training they're getting.

Again, I do want to say thank you. We are working closely -- I am working closely with the

Commissioner right now looking at future training opportunities. And you, Ladies and Gentlemen, will be hearing from us, because one of my priorities is to try and get increased funding from the County. We're going to make it this year. We have a lot of lofty goals for yet next year, and the only way we're going to be able to accomplish them is with increased funding. I understand the situation the County is in, and to that vein, we are looking for outside funding, grant money. But anything we can get, any help we can get from the County would be beneficial. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Are there any questions?

**LEG. HAHN:**

(Raised hand).

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Kara.

**LEG. HAHN:**

I'm pleased that we're at this place now, finally. Two questions: Seven classes, the live field training classes that are offered to every department, refresh my memory. That's up from what had -- we had been at eight, and then we were dropped down to six, and now we're back up to seven? Or remind me what it was.

**MR. HOLLEY:**

I do not believe we were ever at eight. Eight was proposed by, I believe, the County Executive in his initial proposal when the negotiations began. We looked at that and we just don't have the infrastructure to offer eight training sessions to every department. We don't have enough burn buildings, we don't have enough instructors to do that. Looking at it with seven, that has maxed us out. We are comfortable where we are right now. Prior to last year, we were fluctuating between five and six. So we are up to seven right now, and we'll be able to maintain that. We are now looking at hiring additional instructors. I know the County has been talking the possibility of constructing a new training building out of capital project money. If that be the case, we may be able to increase to eight.

**LEG. HAHN:**

All right, good. And then we also had talked about potentially getting the Hazmat recerts online. That would be helpful, I think, too, and some other -- looking into other types of possibilities for online training.

**MR. HOLLEY:**

We are addressing that right now. We had been working with County IT. We've run into numerous problems in that area that -- they're not insurmountable, but we have now turned to the people who helped us develop the Firefighter I hybrid class, and they are assisting us and possibly getting something online in a timely fashion. But we have not given up with County IT, you know, coming -- bringing that to fruition, but right now we're experiencing some problems.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Okay. Hopefully I can help with that. Thank you so much for both of your efforts on this front. And now that -- because I know there were complaints -- I was receiving complaints when we were at five to six training classes per department. And so, you know, getting to seven is a big step forward, and hopefully, if we are able to support the capital project, we can eventually get to eight, and thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Doc Spencer.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

Congratulations on the agreement. We have another tissue, that we're looking at the nomination of Pete Gunther to the VEEB Board. And I, you know, looked at Pete's credentials and his history, and his positions, and he seems to be someone that's just very much involved in the community, and knows the issues, and has been instrumental. Could you comment on -- I don't understand the concerns or the controversy. Do you support his appointment to the VEEB Board?

**MR. HOLLEY:**

Doctor, with all due respect, I work for the VEEB Board, and for me to make comments as to someone who may or may not wind up being my boss I think would be inappropriate. We do have gentlemen here from the Vocational Board. If I could ask one of them to come up and answer your question with your permission.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

That would be important, because for me, you know, I feel that he's a very strong candidate that I thought everyone would be excited about, and I just want to make sure I understand everything that's going on, because I think he should be approved.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

If you want to hold off, I know we have a couple more questions with regards to the Academy. So, if you want to hold off and we'll get back to that, but, John, go ahead.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Thank you, Madam Chair. And I echo Dr. Spencer's comments, and we'll be happy to go ahead and hear from Chairman Sanok, or whoever the VEEB Board appointments are.

And I guess what I want to do is, is I want to congratulate you two gentlemen for working very, very diligently keeping me apprised, actually both of you, as to the progress through the process, and ultimately coming to a point where I think it's -- well, I think, Joe, you made the comments that it's somewhat unprecedented that we actually have a 36-month contract now that actually puts a strong degree of certainty in place about the continuance and the operations of the VEEB Board. I know everybody rolled up their sleeves, sharpened your pencils. The admin piece, the whole controversy that we had had about that, got put to bed. We now have a good understanding as far as the fact that most of the staff out there in one form or another were involved in direct programming, and, ultimately, the County's commitment to this function is being expended in the most prudent and cost efficient manner. I think that's really the point that we got to, isn't it?

**COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:**

Yes. Yes, we worked with them. They've -- we've sat down and talked about that, and we came through negotiations, realizing certain parts, and I believe the content of what you say is yes.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Sure, sure. And also, out of this has grown the -- Legislator Hahn's talked about it, a number of us have talked about it. You know, in this day and age where, you know, I can do my CLEs off of, you know, a PDA, or something like that, we really needed to move beyond just the in-class instructional component and really facilitate, you know, for our vollies getting those pieces of information that are in Firefighter I and Firefighter II, and especially the specialty trainings. That's the thing that I heard consistently when I talked to departments. They liked the opportunity to pick up those pieces of the curriculum that can be done online; it's efficient. I know we've talked about it, Bob. You had a good graduation rate, I think, with the vollies that came through. But I think that there's also still

that desire to see some of the specialty, whether it be, you know, electrical, fire, or gas, petroleum products, or the whole gamut of different specialty components that you do to try to freshen up that curriculum as well.

**MR. HOLLEY:**

As I mentioned to you before, as we move forward, we are looking to bring back the, as you just called them, specials, and that's what we called them also, which are the requested specialized training that we receive from the departments. Those were the first things we had to push to the side when we had all of the budget cuts. We're hoping in the near future to start offering them again to the departments. I know it's my goal and the Commissioner's goal to give every piece of training that is requested to all 109 departments in this County. By getting grant money, by continuing to tighten our belts and watch the budget, I feel we'll get there. It's ongoing work. But the short answer to your question is, yes, we do want to offer those classes also.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Just for my own knowledge and edification, up here in Smithtown, as you know, Bob, we -- and, Joe, both you know this, we have a training center right over on 347 where Smithtown Town departments can do some basic types of trainings, I guess. They don't replicate what goes on with you guys. You certainly are, you know, operational at a higher level of complexity. But do we have instructors that will go out to the various townships or physical locations in order to deliver some of that training sometimes?

**MR. HOLLEY:**

Yes, we do. We have offered to every township, should they require instructors, if we have the availability in the budget, which I will make sure we do have, we will supply instructors to them. The other thing that we hear from the townships and the individual departments is that they want the training to qualify people in their departments to become State instructors. Those are very, very expensive classes to deliver. We're working with OFPC to try and have them put it on down here at no cost to us, you know, with the State footing the bill. And moving forward, we will get more people trained to give those instructions on the local basis.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Okay, that sounds good. Madam Chair, I do have a couple of questions for Mr. Sanok, or whoever is here from the Board, our appointees, to talk with them as well, so I'll defer.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Yeah. And, you know, again, when you're talking about additional classes, because I know we had a conversation quite a few months ago about some classes that were cancelled, and basically they were due to lack of interest, just not enough participation. And, you know, I think about the fire departments as far as Montauk, and then you go out to Huntington area, Northport, and to have them come all the way to Yaphank, sometimes it's a hike for them. You know, this isn't their full-time job, it's their volunteer job. And to require them to come all the way out to Yaphank, and I know that there's some fire departments that have created like a little training facility of their own, have you looked at now taking your trainers and sending them out? Are you going to be sending them out to -- rather than have Montauk come to Yaphank, you'll go to Montauk or wherever, maybe have a couple of fire departments with the training?

**MR. HOLLEY:**

We do do that now. As long as it does not require us to utilize the structures that we have at the Fire Academy, we will take the training out to the local departments, or utilize their training buildings, if they have one. I believe it was Dix Hills just -- if they didn't dedicate it, I saw it in the paper, they will be dedicating their new training facility. They, I do know, have qualified instructors, but the offer is there for them and for every other department in this County, that if

they need instructors from the Fire Academy, we will be glad to send people out there. And, yes, consolidating classes, we're always trying to do that. We have a minimum that we place on any classroom class, that if there are not at least 10 students there, we will not provide the training, because it just becomes totally cost-ineffective.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. And there was some -- the County Executive mentioned some infrastructure improvements, a new capital project for the Fire Academy. Can you go back on that one?

**COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:**

Yes. In the new recommended -- from the County Executive, he has recommended, which I think is a very good thing, is the -- talking about a new type of burn building at the Fire Academy. Right now, it's going to be representing like an apartment, which is a lot we're having right now in -- built in Suffolk County, so we're looking forward to moving that forward. We've been working with the Fire Academy on some needed repairs on some other money we have from capital projects, which was for improvement under the Fire Academy, which was already approved, but the new one's coming up. I think it's a great idea, that we're going to be moving things forward. And I look forward to working with Bob and the County in getting that done, because right now what happens in Suffolk County, an awful lot of Suffolk County departments are going to Nassau County for that same type of training. And what they're doing, they're actually paying to go to that. So I think there's definitely a need in Suffolk County for that new expanded thing, which is going to be in the Capital, recommended Capital Budget.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay, good. I'll be looking forward to that. I believe our first meeting is Monday, correct? Capital Budget, I think.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

So we'll be staying in touch with you on that project. I don't believe I have anymore questions. Does anyone else have any questions? No? Okay. And I guess, you know, Mr. Gunther's here. Did you want to --

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Well, I was just going to ask if Mr. Sanok can go ahead and speak to us, or whoever's here from the Academy, one of our appointees, Madam Chair. Dr. Spencer asked for them to kind of opine on Mr. Gunther. I just want to get their takes on the negotiations as well, since they are our appointees.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Sure. You want to have a seat?

**MR. SANOK:**

Thank you for the opportunity to be here and speak on behalf of VEEB. I'm fortunate being elected president of the Board, but we also have a -- there's eight other members on the Board, and we've asked Alan Groveman to address the issue that we're talking about with recommending the appointment of Peter Gunther.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Thank you, Sanok.

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

I want to thank the Board, the Safety Board, for all the support over the years, and especially through this contract negotiation. It's made quite a difference and we really appreciate it.

We have a nine-member Board, and of that nine members, three come from the education community, three come from the farming community, and three come from the fire community. That's historic, and the legality behind the Board. However, what people need to know is that the Board is actually comprised of nine firefighter members. Every member of the Board is a Suffolk volunteer firefighter. We have basically gotten over the years all firefighters on the Board, and, as a result, the Board is different than it may have been in the past.

We have gone through an interview process that we do each time we have a new membership, and as you can see from the resumes in front of you, we had three very qualified candidates. In looking at where we want to go, and especially in light of some of the issues on the Island recently with the hurricanes, and snowstorms, and the Countywide disasters, if you will, it was especially helpful to have someone on the Board that has a Town Highway experience and can help us work out communications very easily with those agencies and other agencies in terms of training that we can do, specialized training that we can do, for the membership. Most of our -- most of our chiefs understand they can call a safety coordinator, and that's valuable, but a lot of the firefighters and junior officers don't understand how that process works, and we'd like to provide some specialty training for them.

So what seems to be our biggest issue here is that there is a concern on the part of some of the firematic groups that we have not selected a person who is specifically a member and representative of their organization. To that end, while it doesn't resolve the problem in their eyes immediately, I have just joined one of those groups. I volunteered to go on a regular basis. The Board also authorized me to sit down with Mr. Owenburg and work out an arrangement for their future involvement in the review of candidates. And what, again, he may not realize at this point is we'd like to do that with all nine candidates. While they have to come with a certain background, for the most part, we have managed to get, as I said, nine candidates on the Board who are all firefighters and that's been very helpful.

So, while we looked at the candidates, and you can see from their resumes the various strengths they have, there is no weakness among the candidates, the Board, not unanimously, it was a vote of eight pro, none against, and one abstention, recommended that Peter Gunther be the candidate of choice recommended to this committee.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

And thank you. Thank you, Dr. Groveman. And thank you, actually, for bringing your expertise and knowledge. I know you spent many years as a Superintendent, I believe, in Connetquot, so having a contentious room on occasion is probably no new thing for you. But education is the key, and your experience bringing it forward I think is important to us.

One of the things that I had suggested to the Board, and I'm going to just put it out to you again, is that you consider taking a look at the authorizing legislation. As you know, it's State Education Law which actually lays out the format that was adopted back in the '40s. Suffolk County was a much different place back then. We were a much more agrarian County than we are now. And over time our Academy seems to have moved from a multi-purpose type of an entity to really very single function now for instruction for our volunteer firefighters.

So there may be some validity or merit asking the State Legislature to revise or modify or amend the underpinning, the authorizing legislation. I think the Board does a great job. I'm proud to have you as our appointees. With 11,000 volunteer firefighters throughout all of Suffolk County, I

know it's certainly something that's important to me, and really to every Legislator here. Every one of us deals with our fire departments in so many different ways. So we want to see you not only survive, but thrive. And I thank you for bringing your expertise to this process, and thank you for explaining about the selection process with Mr. Gunther. I'm going to be happy to cosponsor.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Dr. Spencer, do you have questions?

**LEG. SPENCER:**

I did have questions, but the explanation that was given was so comprehensive that my questions have been answered.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Anyone else? No? So I guess no more questions, but --

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

So I'll make a motion, then, Madam Chair, if we can, since we have the elected official here, Mr. Gunther, let's move to that and taking it out of order, if we can, sensitive to his time constraints.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Sure. I was going to recommend that next. Oh, Mr. Egan, you'd like to come up?

**MR. EGAN:**

If I could, please. I just want to add the next piece of -- that was left out. The Joint Commission -- the Joint Councils were given the three resumes to review. We had interviews on two nights. In fact, one of the nights one of the individuals couldn't be there, so we set up a special meeting to go bring them there, to make sure that everybody had equal representation. We talked, asked everybody the same questions, went through the process identically with each one of us. We were sent those resumes from the Academy in order to do that process. As time went on, we sent and submitted a name. Obviously, as Jerry said, it was -- this is really Jerry's fight, because it's Jerry's organization. The rest of the Joint Councils are supporting it, supporting the Suffolk County vollies.

The rest of the presidents are at the point of why ask us to do something and we waste our time if you're just going to overlook what we were asked to do? We went to the VEEB Board meeting, asked the same question. We were told, "Well, usually, we do a joint interview process." Once again, why did you ask us to interview if we're going to do a joint. That being said, I asked, "Can we then go back to square one and let's do the joint interview process?"

This position isn't something that is that dire that needs to be filled today, tomorrow or the next couple of weeks. I will go to the next thing, and I've openly said numerous times, the candidate that was chosen by them is an excellent candidate. I have nothing against the individual. What we feel is, it's the process, that we were asked to do something and then just completely pushed aside.

The Fire Academy contract opened up a lot of wounds; they've been healed. We have a contract and everybody is so glad that this contract is moving forward and we can get on with all our lives. This kind of opens the wounds again. We're in a very bad position. The vollies are in a bad position. I went to their meeting because I'm a member, to the point they felt strong enough to take an ad out in the fire paper stating they have no representation.

As Al said, there are nine positions, three from -- three are from education, three are from agriculture, three from the fire service. At some point, whether it was a gentlemen's agreement or not, it was determined that one would be from the vollies, one would be from the districts, and one

would be from the Chiefs. Okay? It's their position, meaning the vollies, and I'm not speaking for them, because I think Jerry had said in his letter that Ed Carpenter had 18 years representing the volunteer firemen, or the Volunteer Firemens Association on that board. They've now lost that. When someone new starts, joins the organization tomorrow and becomes a member and starts answering questions, there is no confidence level from someone they don't know. Just like if someone comes as Chiefs for the districts, we want our confidence level, too. Obviously, there's other Board members that may turn. When Barz came, he came from the Chiefs. That process was done, it was presented. The Chiefs solely supported Mr. Barz. He came to this committee and was appointed, and it was done jointly, that's what we asked them.

I think at this point, what we asked at that meeting is if it could be tabled, the vote, and let's collectively interview all the process -- all the interviews again, start from scratch. That's up to you individuals. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you, Jay. Well, I guess, there was a nine-member board that was present, and three of that nine-member board were from the Volunteer Firemens Association, correct?

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

Correct.

**MR. EGAN:**

No, no.

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

They're from the fire service, not from --

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

From the fire service. I'm sorry.

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

Right, not from any particular association.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Right, right. And this is the slot that we're talking about filling, is from the fire service.

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

Right.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So there was only one member from the fire service who voted that night?

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

No. I'm sorry. The question --

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

I thought there was two.

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

-- that is being raised is whether or not there is an agreement or a requirement that each of those three fire service positions be designated to a specific organization, such as the Suffolk vollies, the Suffolk Chiefs, the Suffolk Commissioners. We don't believe that's the case, we believe it's the fire service as a whole, and that's how we treated this. The recommendations we got from the Joint

Commission was that all the candidates are excellent, although they did recommend -- I'm sorry, my glasses are not on me -- Gary Schaum, but they did say all candidates were acceptable, and we didn't interview all the candidates and made the recommendation.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So I think it's becoming more confusing as we go along. And I -- because what I'm trying to find out is, is, obviously, there's three from education, three from the farming community, and three from --

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

Fire community.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

The fire community.

**MR. SANOK:**

Education.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

But all nine of them are.

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. And, however, the ones who are more associated with FRES, I'm assuming, and with the Volunteer Fire Association, that person voted for Mr. Gunther, correct?

**MR. GROVEMAN:**

One of the Fire Association group did not, and the other two did.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So two out of the three did vote for him. I mean, I did see Mr. Gunther's resume. I did see the other resumes. I have to say, I'm impressed with all of them. I was extremely impressed with Mr. Gunther's background. He does seem to have a very extensive knowledge, background, having been also a former trainer at the Academy. And, you know, again, this is not something I wanted to be here. I was hoping this could all be resolved, and the disagreement, before we would get to this point, because, again, it's -- he's a fireman, first of all. And I think when it comes to the needs of our volunteer fire departments and what's needed at the Academy, I think that, you know, Mr. Gunther is certainly not going to not support anything that's needed for our fire departments, for our volunteers. I think he's going to be equally concerned. Another question is, is there a possibility -- is there another position that may be coming up soon again on the VEEB Board?

**MR. SANOK:**

The answer to that question specifically, we do have some turnover. Some of us have been -- I've been on for one full term, I'm just beginning my second term. We've asked members that have been on for 30, or 25 to 30 years. But I think we will be having a vacancy in the near future, and I think what we have decided at the last Board meeting, especially when Chief Owenburg and Jay Egan were there, that we need to look at the policy again, make sure the procedure, to make sure that we cover these things so we don't have these kinds of conflicts. We don't need these kind of conflicts.

We interviewed three people that were recommended to us, and some had additional supporting

letters, that were recommended to us. We interviewed these people. We picked what we thought was the best candidate at the time because of the things that Alan Groveman had just mentioned, his activity, his current position in the Highway Department, and the things that we think we need. That's the reason we have this kind of a procedure.

In the near future, we've asked Alan Groveman and Jerry Owenburg to look at our procedure again, come back to the Board and make recommendations how we may modify it. To my knowledge, there was not an agreement. I didn't know of the agreement of the three separate fire services, you know, one from the Chiefs, one from the vollies, and so on, so we didn't know that that existed. That's why we recommended who we thought would be the best fit at this time.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Kara, you have a question? It has to be a question.

*(\*Laughter\*)*

**LEG. HAHN:**

Did we bring forward the bill? Are we --

**MR. NOLAN:**

We're not on the bill yet.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Go ahead.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Are we on the bill yet?

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

We're not on the bill yet.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

I thought we were. I thought --

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Well, I don't know.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

I made the motion to take it out of order.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

He made the motion. I don't even know. Did we --

**LEG. HAHN:**

On the motion to take it out of order.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Did we -- we made a motion to take it out of order, yes or no? Okay. John did, so I'll second it. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's taken out of order. So --

**LEG. HAHN:**

I have a question.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

You have a question. Okay. I thought you were done.

**LEG. HAHN:**

No.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay.

**LEG. HAHN:**

I didn't have a question for them, because I thought we were on the bill. Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Well, we're not on the bill yet.

**LEG. HAHN:**

You are now, because we just took it out of order.

**MR. NOLAN:**

You made a motion.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So --

**LEG. HAHN:**

Motion.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

How about a motion to approve.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Do you have a motion to approve? Motion to approve, Doc Spencer.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

Motion to approve.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

And second by Legislator Kennedy. Okay. On the motion.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Okay, on the motion. I really -- it's really unfortunate that this process is getting in the way, so -- but putting the process aside, I think that there's incredible value to having a representative from the volunteer group as it was -- as it was spelled out. I think that, clearly, all nine members are firefighters, so there's no question that any one of those nine individuals is going to act in what they see is the best interest of the fire service, I have no doubt about that. And I'm not in any way questioning this current candidate's intent or anything of that nature. But I really think that having a member of the vollies' association, they meet regularly, they talk amongst -- if not all of the departments, most of the departments, knowing what's happening from the East End to the West End, from the north to the south, from the little districts to the big districts. And I just think that there's a real value with that, and we've had a longstanding history of having that, that I'm

struggling. And again, not anything to do with this particular individual's resume, and with absolutely no offense to this individual, I would struggle to support it because of all this history, and because of what I think is a really valuable representation from that association that needs to continue.

So, with that, I just -- I think I'm going to wind up not supporting this nomination, and I struggle to do that, because I don't want to put forward any offense to this individual, and it looks like he has a really great background. But I do think that there is a history of us having a representative from the volunteer association and I think that should continue.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Rob?

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Thank you. I just have a question regarding the process, and we've heard a lot from you folks out there in the audience about what the process on selecting this individual is. But I'm going to actually ask our Counsel what the law prescribes for this, so that it's a little bit clearer to me, because my understanding is this is a Legislative appointment that we make and that it's our decision on who we appoint. So I just want to know what the actual law prescribes. Who -- what are we required to do? I know on other commissions like FRES there are specific individuals that are selected from specific organizations. So perhaps you could give us a little more enlightenment about what the law prescribes for this.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Yeah. Unfortunately, not much. You know, the State authorized the County to establish this Board a long time ago and we did by resolution in 1943, and the resolution that established the Board really did not set forth the parameters. There are some guidelines in the State Law, but from my understanding, talking with people, it's basically just been the practice that has evolved over time that, you know, it's three representatives from agriculture, three from the firematics, three educators. And the way it works, it has worked, is that we get a recommendation from VEEB as to, when they have a vacancy, who will fill that vacancy. That may be the only Board, County Board I'm aware of where that's the process, where the Board actually suggests a name to us to put in, but that's the longstanding practice.

In terms of the fire component, the three representatives, there's nothing anywhere that says they have to be from the volunteers, or the chiefs, or anything like that, just from the fire service. So that's my understanding of it. It's really just been the practice that's evolved over 75 years.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Okay. And to the gentleman -- so, for the past 75 years, the only real thing that is stipulated under State Law says three folks from the fire service, three folks from the educational background, and three folks -- three people from --

**MR. NOLAN:**

Well, the State --

**LEG. CALARCO:**

-- agricultural background.

**MR. NOLAN:**

The State Law actually says, you know, that we're empowered to create this type of board for the purpose of giving instruction in agriculture, in home economics, and such other special subjects as may be approved by the Commissioner of Education. And then later, it says at least three members

of the Board should be appointed upon recommendations made by the Farm and Home Bureau Associations of the County, and that is like the -- basically, the only guidance that I can find statutorily as to, you know, how this Board is appointed and that they get nine-year terms. But, like I said, it has evolved into a three, three and three.

In terms of the fire appointments, I have no personal knowledge of how those appointments have been made, but there's nothing in our code or State law that says one shall be from this, one shall be from this, one shall be from this. That may be something the Legislature may want to consider doing to clarify the process so there's something in our code that we can use when this situation arises.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

So, basically, what we're operating under here is a longstanding tradition in terms of how this process has been worked out. So, to the current Board Members who are here before us, this particular position that we're being asked to appoint somebody to, the tradition has been that that position has been filled by someone from the Firemen's Association, is that correct, the Volunteer Firemen's Association, because that's what's being represented here, at least that's my understanding of what's being represented here.

**MR. SANOK:**

The individual that was -- that had this position until now is Ed Carpenter. Ed Carpenter is well known within the whole fire service. He was very active with the Volunteer Firefighters Association, and he attended all the meetings. If you look back in the minutes, he's quoted in almost every minute, because he did report back and forth. So that's --

**LEG. CALARCO:**

So they saw that as their appointee to the Board. And how long did he serve there for?

**MR. EGAN:**

Eighteen years.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

So he had two terms, 18 years, two nine-year terms, right?

**MR. SANOK:**

He did.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

So the sense from the Volunteers Association is that this was traditionally their slot to fill.

**MR. SANOK:**

That's their position. I can't argue with it.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Well, we're all basing everything on tradition here. The only thing the law actually tells me I have to do is that we make the appointment. And we have a tradition here in the Legislature, at least among my colleagues in the majority here, that we screen people that come through us for appointments, and we actually make those decisions. And so I'm being told that we have a board that is asking us to appoint people based on who you screen. And I'm not saying that you're picking bad candidates. In fact, Mr. Gunther has a very impressive resume, and appears to be a very qualified candidate, but now I'm being put into a position where I have competing traditions, it sounds like, and now I have to sort that out. And, unfortunately, I don't think we're going to be able to sort that out today. And I don't want to disqualify Mr. Gunther just because of whatever

competing traditions we have here right now, and I'm hoping, and as the Chair said earlier, I was hoping that this could be sorted out before we got here, so that you guys could figure it out and we could all get behind one person, and, clearly, that's not happening.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

Kate.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Go ahead.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

I would like to ask if Mr. Gunther could come forward, please, because we are discussing him.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Do you want to let them go?

**LEG. SPENCER:**

No, I need them.

**MR. GUNTHER:**

Hi, thanks for having me.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

Pete, good morning. Thank you for being here. And I just wanted to say a couple of things since we are debating this particular bill.

Now, this Legislature, we do appoint to dozens of boards, and there are some key positions that we do screen for, but there are other positions that we traditionally put forward qualified candidates, and there are a lot of -- a lot of times where we'll follow kind of usual and customary things, but we really look for qualifications.

Now my Legislative office is in Centerport, right besides Centerport Fire Department. And Pete, over the last few years, with Super Storm Sandy, with the negotiations with, I guess, the VEEB contract, he's been someone that's just been instrumental in Huntington and in Centerport. Now, again, I apologize, I know that the Association is important, but as far as being a volunteer and being loved by the volunteer firemen in my entire District, this man is -- really, probably has close to 95 to 100% support of all of the rank and file and the volunteers who are there.

So, when I heard about this particular situation and his interest, and you have his credentials, when I hear volunteer, he's been a volunteer since I was born. He's been a volunteer since 1968; I was born in '67. You're looking at a man that's been a volunteer firefighter, has been a Deputy Chief, he's coordinated all the volunteer activities in Suffolk County. He's been a New York City Fire Department member since '84, a Suffolk County Fire Academy member from '81 to 2003, a member of New York City Police Department, a Member of the Centerport Fire Department from '79 to '82, the National Air Guard, he's a veteran. He's someone that has gone -- he has every single credential that you could ever imagine with anything related to fire fighting, and he's a Highway Superintendent, as someone that can bring direct resources to coordinating. He was actually instrumental in the negotiations on these particular contracts.

So I know that we run into these situations. Nothing but my utmost respect goes out to the Association, and I think it's -- you know, I'm trying to figure out the internal politics. But this is what we're looking at as elected members in Suffolk County, looking at Pete Gunther being qualified to serve on this position, coming out of the current Board as someone that they recommend, and

then we have kind of -- you know, I wasn't aware that there would be this dissension to his candidacy, but we start to get into a situation -- I don't know the weight or the gravity of this particular discussion that the Association should play, but if we have someone that has put themselves forward, has every single credential imaginable, is supported by the current Board as a candidate, I just feel like I'm almost on another planet here, that we're actually -- you know, this is political and it shouldn't be political. I understand that there are traditions.

Pete, with that being said, could you help me and my colleagues get some clarity? I mean, will you join the Association? What -- Pete, you're a very logical guy that I've known for a long time. You deserve a chance to speak on this issue. Thank you.

**MR. GUNTHER:**

Doc, first of all, thank you for being so gracious. You're a gentleman. I appreciate that very much.

I'm sorry to see some of the dissension. For the 40 years that I've been involved with the volunteer fire service, and all the people that I've worked with and helped over the years, I'm pretty disappointed in what's been going on. And, unfortunately, I think that it may be involved that some people think that their recommendation means more and that's all it is.

I've -- four times I've interviewed for the Board's position, and the four times that I've interviewed, first, I would interview with a group of different organizations of the fire service, and they would make a recommendation to the VEEB Board. The VEEB Board at that point would make a recommendation to you people. The Board either took the recommendation of the volunteer fire service organizations or they didn't. There was no set and hard fast rule on anything. And I'm very disappointed that some of my colleagues, that I'm very active in all the organizations, very unfortunate that I missed one. If you look at it, I'm probably in every organization there is, and I guess I missed one, probably because I don't have much time.

But in the interest, and the best interest of the fire service, I'm going to ask you kind people to withdraw my application at this time, hold it in abeyance and see if the VEEB Board and the fire service, that we can work it out, so that it's best for the fire service, and I would appreciate that very much.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Wait. Hold on, hold on.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

No, no. Hold on a minute. I am going to ask the committee to take a short recess. And I think maybe, Commissioner Williams, we may want to speak with you. I don't know if this is anything to do with FRES, but we'd like to take a few minutes recess.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

I think, Madam Chair, I think we should -- I interpreted Mr. Gunther's comments in several ways. I think I can interpret it as we should table this until there's something that's worked out, or he's withdrawing his name, so there's no confusion, and that leads to another whole search process, so you can move forward.

**MR. GUNTHER:**

I'll straighten it out. And I'd like to table this for this time.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Okay.

**MR. GUNTHER:**

So that in the best interest of the fire service and all involved, that it gets straightened out so that you good people don't have to -- have to make a difficult decision whether it's me or somebody else.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Madam Chair, listen, I feel strongly and I want to be heard on this, too. Pete, thank you for being here. You're hearing what some of the process is, but don't let what some of the conversation at that podium or even at the table reflect that there's any kind of ambiguity here. Dr. Spencer made the motion, I seconded it. There's no ambiguity on his part, there's none on my part. And, as a matter of fact, I couldn't echo or concur better with what Dr. Spencer said about a 40-year record of service. And, quite frankly --

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. John, we're going to recess.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

All right.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay?

*(\*The meeting was recessed at 11:12 a.m. and resumed at 11:25 p.m. \*)*

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. We are back. Can everyone please have a seat? Okay. So we did have a motion and we had a second to approve. Do we have any other motions?

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Madam Chair, I'm going to make a motion to table.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

And I'll second that motion.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So the tabling motion takes precedence. And I will tell you, I'm likely to support the tabling motion today, but it does not mean that I will not support Mr. Gunther if it comes up again.

I have to tell you, I'm really -- when I look at our fire departments, our volunteers and the camaraderie and the brotherhood that's going on, we went through this with the Fire Academy, the dissension and the breakup that it caused when everything started with the Fire Academy. I can't tell you how disgusted and how disappointed I was to see how that brotherhood was divided, and again I'm seeing it, and it's extremely disappointing.

I did see the resumes of all three individuals, and I looked at Mr. Gunther's resume, not only as a volunteer fireman, but also a veteran, a man who has dedicated his life to community service, and I'm very disappointed that we have come to committee and it has not -- you know, it's not a clear decision to support him.

I appreciate Mr. Gunther requesting that we hold off. We have, I think, two weeks before the next committee meeting. I am not -- I am telling Mr. Gunther do not walk away from this. I believe you should stand your ground. You certainly have a resume worth holding up and saying, "I'm qualified."

I will request that we sit down with FRES, with VEEB, and that we have a discussion over what we're going to do and how we're going to move forward, because I never want to see this again. I just think -- I just think it's horrendous what's happened here.

So, with that, there was -- go ahead. Doc, you want to say something?

**LEG. SPENCER:**

I do. And I'm not going to -- I'm going to stand by my nominee, but even if this gets tabled, I'm confident, and I've seen him do it before and his ability to work with everyone, and he's been able to do it, he can negotiate.

And, Pete, I just -- again, I'm honored that you're here, that you took your morning, and I know you are a busy man. And I know that during very, very difficult times, when I was elected, that you gave me the lay of the land with regards to -- just really with the fire departments and the chiefs, and really the men and women that constantly put their lives on the line.

And we recently had a pretty big fire in Huntington that a lot of businesses were lost, and thousands of firemen came out, and we recognize their bravery. And Pete has always been someone that has been able to work with all the commissioners, all the chiefs, all the volunteers, and he works on many other levels. So I think that it was very brave that he was willing to let this be tabled.

I'm going to stand by my motion to approve, but I think that when you look at his record of service, that we really are missing a great opportunity here. And I hope that the internal politics can be sorted out.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

John?

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Madam Chair, I am going to stand by my second to approve. And despite being in the minority, we weigh in from time to time on occasion as well, particularly when it comes to qualifications of appointees.

I had the opportunity to speak with Pete Gunther. I know Pete Gunther. I know the amount of service and dedication and time that he's done. Quite frankly, I am appalled that we would treat a volunteer in this fashion. We consistently ask individuals to come forward and to serve in specific capacities on our behalf. He's our appointee, and the other eight of our appointees on this Board went ahead and said that he appeared to have what it takes in order to fulfill the mission of that Board, our appointees. I see no ambiguity. I see nothing as far as concern regarding the Volunteer Association. There are 11,000 volunteer firefighters in this County. Pete has indicated that he would be willing to work with them. He works with multiple organizations. I can tell you, I checked with the Council in Smithtown, they're 100% on board as far as him, as far as an appointee. I see no ambiguity. I think that it's unconscionable that we do this to him, he's a stand-up guy, to say that we should table it to work it out. I see nothing to work out. We should vote it and vote it in the affirmative.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Thank you, John. And, like I said, I would like the two weeks. And we'll have a conversation, and I expect that in two weeks time, there will be absolutely no discussion and it will be a clear-cut decision.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Good.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

So, with that, the tabling motion takes precedent. There was a motion by the Presiding Officer, and a second by Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed?

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Opposed.

**LEG. MARTINEZ:**

Opposed.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

Opposed.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Abstentions? So where are we? That was -- okay. So the tabling motion has been approved. *(Vote: Tabled 4-3-0-0)*

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Monica's no to table. Legislator Martinez is no to table.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Oh, okay. Sorry.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

It's four to table.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Who else?

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

So there's one, two --

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Four to table.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

-- three, four tabling.

**MS. GELLERSTEIN:**

Four-three.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

It was 4-3. You voted. Okay, I thought so. It was 4-3.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

I'm counting me, you and Kara.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So it will be tabled until our next committee meeting two weeks from now, so okay.

**MS. GELLERSTEIN:**

Four-three, right?

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Yes, it was 4-3. Presiding Officer voted. Okay? So, for the moment, it is tabled. And again, Mr. Gunther, I apologize for what occurred.

**MR. GUNTHER:**

It's not your fault.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So where was I?

**LEG. CALARCO:**

We're back at the beginning.

**MR. NOLAN:**

1027.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

We're back to 1027. And before I go anywhere, I know that we have -- we have a new representative from the Police Department, Sergeant Schwarz, am I correct, who's replacing Captain Waring. I keep forgetting the titles. And we have Patrice. I don't know if we have any new answers on Probation, new hires.

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Actually, yes.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Tom? Patrice?

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Good morning.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Good morning.

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Yes. I have been given the -- to understand that we will be authorized to hire a class of Probation Officers starting in September, approximately 10 people, although the matter of need is still under discussion. So the particulars will be worked out, but we do expect to start a new class of Probation Officers in September.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. And that will take what, about six months?

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

No. There are various portions to their training. Before the end of the year, they will be in place in the positions, although they are trainees for a full year. So, at the end of that time, they are completely fully functional. But they will be able to be used in various places before that time.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. That sounds good. Anybody have any questions? No?

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. Well, we're glad to hear it. I wish it was sooner, but I shouldn't -- Tom, I'm not going to say anything.

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

No. Actually, that's a question of the process, because there is the --

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

The investigations.

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Yes, the investigation, the testing, psychological, agility, etcetera, it does take a period of time for that to be accomplished.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay.

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Well, we appreciate and we thank you.

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

And thank you to the County Executive for --

**MS. DLHOPOLSKY:**

Indeed.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

-- listening to our needs. We don't have anyone from the Sheriff's Department, and anybody, I don't know if there was any questions for the Police Department, and I don't want to put Sergeant Schwarz under the gun yet. Next time (laughter).

But no other questions? Okay. So we'll get to the agenda.

**TABLED RESOLUTIONS**

So ***1027 - Adopting a Local Law to amend Section A13-10 of the Suffolk County Administrative Code to authorize donation of property held by the Police Property Bureau (Co. Exec.).***

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Motion to table.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

That's motion to table by Legislator Calarco for public hearing. Second? I'll second it. All in

favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled. **(Vote: Tabled for Public Hearing 7-0-0-0)**

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

And John is in the room.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Count me on the table.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Where's Doc Spencer? Oh, he's behind me. 1045-Adopting a Local Law, a Charter Law to provide for fair and equitable distribution of public safety sales and compensating use tax sales -- use tax revenues (Schneiderman). I'll make a motion to table, Legislator Hahn. Second? I'll second that. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Opposed.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

It's tabled. And there is opposition by the Presiding Officer, and Legislator Spencer. **(Vote: Tabled 5-2-0-0)**

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

**1276 - Adopting a Local Law, a Local Law to further strengthen the County's regulation on the outdoor restraint of pets (D'Amaro).**

**LEG. HAHN:**

Motion to approve.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Motion to approve? Motion to approve Legislator Hahn; second Legislator Martinez. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's approved. **(Vote: Approved 7-0-0-0).**

And I did want to ask questions, but I think I'll save them for Tuesday at this rate.

**INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

Introductory Resolutions: **1324 - Directing all County departments and agencies to update multi-line telephone systems to directly dial 911 (Trotta).** And I see Mr. Vaughn. There was a motion to approve, Legislator Hahn.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Madam Chair, if I can, the sponsor has indicated that at the request of the Administration, he's willing to entertain a one-cycle table. Thank you for the support. And I just wanted to make sure, through the Chair to Mr. Vaughn, we did have a conversation. There are two resolutions here. Which one is the one that we spoke about, Tom?

**MR. VAUGHN:**

Thank you very much, Legislator Kennedy. The resolution that you and I spoke about was actually I.R. 1324. And while the Administration does support I.R. 1324, what we would like is the cost estimates that Verizon said that they should have back to us. I would hope that they could get it back to us as soon as possible. I understand that there was -- that that was communicated in an email. They did set -- the timeline that I saw was that it would take them six to four weeks to put the cost estimate together. But I would certainly appreciate a tabling motion at this point in time.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Okay. Yeah, so I'll make a motion to table.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

So you made the motion to table?

**MR. VAUGHN:**

Wait. May I just -- pardon me, I apologize.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay.

**MR. VAUGHN:**

There was just one other thing that I wanted to add to it. Very similar, Legislator Kennedy, to the way that the Administration worked with you on the carbon monoxide bill.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Sure.

**MR. VAUGHN:**

And, as I said, it's something that we support. I certainly think that during an emergency situation, you don't want to have to really think about where you're dialing 911 from.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Yes.

**MR. VAUGHN:**

You don't need to add any other thought process when you're dealing with an emergency. You want to just be able to dial 911, have that call go directly there. We certainly think that it's an important initiative, and it was actually an initiative that one of our staff members had thought of as well. I think Legislator Trotta just beat her to the punch. So it's a good thing, we support it. We just want to know what it's going to cost us.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Okay, that's fine.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. So we have a motion to table and a second. So that will --

**MS. GELLERSTEIN:**

I'm sorry. Who?

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

I'll make the second. That takes precedence. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled.  
**(Vote: Tabled 7-0-0-0)**

**1325 - Adopting a Local Law to ensure access to emergency services via telephone (Trotta).** That needs to be tabled for public hearing. I'll make that motion.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Second, Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?. It's tabled for public hearing. **(Vote: Tabled for Public Hearing 7-0-0-0)**

1387 we did. **1390 - Adopting a Local Law to amend the Administrative Code to expand the requirements for appointed officers of the Suffolk County Police Department (Trotta).**

**LEG. HAHN:**

Motion to table.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Motion to table for public hearing, Legislator Hahn.

**LEG. CALARCO:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?. It is tabled. **(Vote: Tabled for Public Hearing 7-0-0-0).**

**1403 - Appropriating funds in connection with Countywide System Enhancements to the 800 MHz Radio Communications System (CP 3241)(Co. Exec.).** I'll make a motion to approve.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

And second, Legislator Hahn. No questions? Good. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's approved. **(Vote: Approved 7-0-0-0).**

**1408 - Accepting and appropriating Federal funding in the amount of \$20,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, for the Suffolk County Police Department's participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Fraud Investigation with 79.33% Support (Co. Exec.).** Motion.

**LEG. SPENCER:**

I won't accept 80, it's too low.

**(\*Laughter\*)**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Okay. With that, Dr. Spencer is making that motion to approve; second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's approved. **(Vote: Approved 7-0-0-0).**

**1446,** I guess we'll be tabling that. I got the message, and that was **Approving the appointment of Michael J. Caplan, M.D., as Chief Medical Examiner (Co. Exec.).** He's unable to be here today. He's got some loose ends he needs to tie up, so we'll table for this session. Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled. **(Vote: Tabled 7-0-0-0).**

**1448 - Authorizing the Vocational, Education and Extension Board of Suffolk County to participate in the County Self Insurance Program (Co. Exec.).**

**LEG. HAHN:**  
Motion.

**CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:**

Motion to approve, Legislator Hahn, I'll second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's approved. **(Vote: Approved 7-0-0-0).**

**1449 - Amend the 2014 Operating Budget for the Suffolk County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services (FRES) (Co. Exec.).**

I make a motion to approve; second, Legislator Kennedy. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved. **(Vote: Approved 7-0-0-0).**

And with that, there is nothing more on the agenda. So I did want to mention for anyone who is here, for those of you who do know and did know Bobby Knight, there is a memorial service tomorrow from 4 to 8 at the Sayville Fire Department, and again on Saturday, from 1 to 5 at the Sayville Fire Department Firehouse. So he was a good friend to all of us and will be sorely missed.

Thank you. We are adjourned.

**(\*The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m. \*)**