

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on Thursday, June 11th, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present:

Legislator Kate Browning - Chair
Legislator Robert Calarco - Vice-Chair
Legislator Kara Hahn
Legislator Leslie Kennedy
Legislator William Spencer
Legislator Monica Martinez

Also In Attendance:

Legislator Robert Trotta - Legislative District No. 13
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Jason Richberg - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
DJ Russo - Legislative Aide/Office of Clerk of the Legislature
John Ortiz - Budget Analyst/Legislative Budget Review Office
Josh Slaughter - Aide to Legislator Browning
Bill Schilling - Aide to Legislator Calarco
Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy
Alysa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn
Katie Horst - County Executive's Office
Lisa Santeramo - County Executive's Office
Kerri Suoto - County Executive's Office
Bill Doherty - Lieutenant/Chief of Department's Office/SCPD
Michael Sharkey - Chief Deputy Sheriff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Joel Vetter - FRES/Coordinator of Emergency Medical Services
Russ McCormick - Sgt-at-Arms/Suffolk County Detective's Association
Lou Tutone - 1st Vice-President/Suffolk County Police Benevolent Association
John Becker - President/Deputy Sheriff Police Benevolent Association
Arthur Sanchez - Secretary/Deputy Sheriff Police Benevolent Association
Ron Barz - VEEB/Board of Directors
Casey O'Neill - Suffolk County Legislature Page Program
Kristen Lomando - Suffolk County Legislature Page Program
George Basil - Suffolk County Legislature Page Program
Haley Parisi - Suffolk County Legislature Page Program
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 10:11 A.M.*)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, good morning. We will start the Public Safety Committee meeting. If everyone would please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Hahn.

Salutation

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

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you. Okay, I don't see any cards. There's no cards?

MR. RICHBERG:

No, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Would anyone in the audience like to speak? No? Okay.

We have no presentations this morning. We do have an Executive Session which will be held after the meeting, and I guess we'll move on with the agenda. It looks like a good day.

I did send -- I know the committee members received my e-mail with regards to the letter dated May 13th, and I got a response from Jon Schneider. I'll be happy to provide them all with the information that I received. Our Budget Office worked very hard in providing the information with regards to retirements and our Police staffing levels. I was disappointed I couldn't even get an answer on when the next class is going to start, but obviously we are going to have some critical drop in numbers. And again, when it comes to public safety, I think this committee is very committed to make sure that the safety of the Suffolk County residents is of importance to all of us and that we will do what we have to do to make sure that they are safe.

I did make -- I know Katie is here and I believe Lieutenant Doherty is here; I think I see him. I made a request. It was Bill -- if you -- I could just let you know, I think I cc'd you on the e-mail also with my request for 911 calls. Memorial Day Weekend I received some information from not just my constituents, but people who live outside of my district who were down at Smith Point Beach and they had some concerns, and there were some issues with some people down there at the beach, you know, at the camp site. There's families there and they made mention of people, you know, using illegal drugs on the camp site, a few other issues that I need to know who exactly is doing the responses to all of the 911 calls. Are the calls going to the Park Rangers, or is it going to the PD? When they call 911, who's getting that message?

LIEUTENANT DOHERTY:

I believe the 911 calls go through our dispatch, at our dispatch to a 7th Precinct Police Officer.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Because one of my concerns is that I know the 715 car covers Mastic Beach, and I'm assuming whoever is available will respond to the call, but I don't want to see sector cars being taken out of certain areas in my district that I know it's important for them to be where they are. So Mastic Beach needs that 715 car paying attention to Mastic Beach. And the 713 car I know has a very big area to cover.

I don't want the 713 car having to go to the beach too much over the summer. So that's my concern. I've asked for a weekly report on 911 calls to Smith Point Beach.

LIEUTENANT DOHERTY:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I've spoken to the Chief, because I think for the season, I want to be aware of what's going on. And geographically already, the 7th Precinct is probably the largest. So I don't want to see my district getting shortchanged because of calls to the beach, and that's something I will discuss with the Working Group come that time. I don't know if I'll be on that, but if we are going to have to now add Smith Point Beach to the 911 calls, I know, Rob, you're probably going to be on the Operating Budget Working Group, I think it's time to start looking at adding a sector to the 7th Precinct if it's going to create more work.

So anyway, if you could help me with that information and getting all the 911 calls that are -- the season's just starting. And I know that there's five nights a week there'll be a band placed down there and a lot of people attend that event. Generally, I believe overall it's not too bad, but again, the camp site, I want to know what kind of calls are going to the camp site, what kind of calls are going to the concert nights, and that would help me to be able to make a decision and I think our committee, Working Committee to make a decision on the budget process. Okay? Thank you.

LIEUTENANT DOHERTY:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Kara?

LEG. HAHN:

I want to go back to the Police class issue. So I -- Jon Schneider, Deputy County Executive Jon Schneider, copied the Public Safety Committee in his response to you, and I was pleased to see that, you know, he found the information that you provided extremely helpful, and he did invite you, maybe us, it was hard to tell if he was inviting all of us, to meet to discuss, because they have to decide that before the Operating Budget. So I really encourage you to take him up on the offer to meet to talk about this, because I think it would be good that we all have input into this. It's a huge decision, it's a very important decision, and if it's something that we can work out before the proposed budget, I think that's in everyone's best interest.

So, you know, I encourage you to take him up on that offer and I'd like to be there, if possible. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Sure. I think, you know, anyone who sits on Public Safety Committee, I think each and every one of us would like to participate in that, and I don't know what stage the Executive's Office is at when it comes -- you know, when it comes to public safety and our law enforcement, but definitely 65 -- a class of 65 is not going to be sufficient for next year. I don't know, John, if you could give us an update. I know about a month ago you told me we have 40 retirements to date, and I'm just curious how many more retirements, potential there's going to be. Yeah, I think there is going to be about another 30 come July, so if we have a class of 65 starting any time this year, we're already still in the negative.

MR. ORTIZ:

Based on year-to-date data that the Police Department provides us, we are ahead of last year's pace, so our projection of 65 to 70 is probably going to be 75, maybe 80.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

LEG. HAHN:

In terms of retirements?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

In terms of retirements, yeah. I think the class is going to be 65, that's what I'm hearing.

MR. ORTIZ:

We'll know better after July.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right, right. And I know that a lot of the SOA members, there's quite a few SOA members retiring, I believe there's quite a few Detectives retiring. And my concern is so we need to promote up to those positions, but how do you promote up when you don't have the Police Officers on the street? You know, you have to have enough people to move them up, so we're just constantly being in the negative. So there has to be some serious discussion about our numbers and what we're going to be doing for next year up until '18. So anyway, does anyone else have any questions about anything?

LEG. CALARCO:

Yeah, I'll just follow-up on a point. This is for the officer. I think, you know, we had some conversation not too long ago as well about potential shifts in sector cars, and Legislator Browning was talking about the need to have a car servicing Smith Point because of some of the changes that have been made there, but we heard about potential shifts in 6th Precinct, potential shifts in the 5th, and I know when issues came up a few months back, we were told it was all very preliminary, it was just kind of -- it was the department doing its internal workings, which we can appreciate. But as we do move forward towards the Operating Budget, if there's something that we're seeing that there are needs to create new sectors within certain precincts because of just demand, that we need to be aware of that so that we can be aware if we need to be increasing coverage in certain areas, whether it's in the 7th or the 5th or the 6th or what have you, so that we're able to provide adequate coverage across the districts, the entire Police District. If that means we need to add a car someplace, then we need to know that, so that going into the budget we can make sure we have the resources to do that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I don't think it helps to say anything.

*(*Laughter*)*

LEG. CALARCO:

No, that's okay.

LIEUTENANT DOHERTY:

Sir, was there a question in there?

LEG. CALARCO:

No.

(*Laughter*)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No.

LIEUTENANT DOHERTY:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

It's just take the no. Okay. Anyone else? No, okay. Well, thank you. I don't know if there's any issues on the agenda that -- or nothing.

LIEUTENANT DOHERTY:

I'll be here.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Everything's good? Great. I thought I saw Sheriff DeMarco here. I did, or I did not.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

He slipped out for a minute, he'll be back.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Is there anything that you would like to report to us? You know, I know that Budget Review hasn't come back with information on the -- I guess the bill for the Correction Officers. Was that discharged without recommendation?

MR. ORTIZ:

Yes.

LEG. CALARCO:

They said this afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, so we'll have that today. And Mike, I also have some concerns. Can you let us know when you're getting a new class going? Do you have any --

CHIEF SHARKEY:

I'll come up.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, please.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

Our intention is to submit for a class of approximately 50 Correction Officers towards the end of July, or maybe the first week in August. We'll submit ahead of time the SCIN forms, but that's our intention.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So you have people ready to start?

CHIEF SHARKEY:

We have a pool of candidates that are ready, we're just finalizing their background investigation, so we will be ready by the end of July.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

What I would like to know is, again, pending this new contract -- because while it's not a significant amount of money, I kind of look at that salary start and say, *Okay, I hope that we have still some candidates who will accept the position.* But, you know, based on the pay scale, how many might potentially decline the appointment? So I think it would be a good idea to kind of maybe keep track of that.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

Yeah, I mentioned that at committee yesterday, that this will be our first experience under the new contract rules. We have a good size pool of candidates that are ready, more than I would normally need for this size class. So I will be -- we're going to have an informational meeting for those candidates, because the conditions of employment will have changed for them since they began in the process. And I will report back to this committee after we've started the class and let you know what the results were and what the impact of the changes were.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I would appreciate that. That's always been my concern. I know they dropped the pay scale in the city a number of years ago and they saw the impact of doing that, and I don't want to see that happen in Suffolk County. We're going to say it bit us back, where we're going to have to go back in a few years and, you know, relook at it.

So you will be able to get that information, obviously, with the candidates, if they decline the nomination or the appointment, that you will be working to get that information; is that the reason why -- the new contract is the reason why they're not taking it.

CHIEF SHARKEY:

Yeah. I mean, we have a fairly good track record in the past knowing how many candidates we need to fill a class. If I was going to fill a class of 50, I would probably use maybe 55 candidates to do that. So I have roughly a hundred candidates ready now, so I will be able to tell you, *Okay, it took me 55 or it took me a hundred candidates to fill the seats,* and clearly that would be responsive to the change in the condition of employment.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I'm seeing you're going to have a lot younger population possibly taking it, because unless -- if you're living at home with Mom and Dad, so you might be able to take the job. So if you're married with children, that's not going to be a job you are going to be able to take. So anyway, I appreciate it. Thanks, Mike.

I know that Probation, Patrice reached out to me, she's unable to be here today.

Commissioner Williams, I don't believe he's here today. Joel, you're here. Okay, is there anything you need to report?

MR. VETTER:

No. The new radio staff started the 1st, so the seven are in training.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right. You've got to put it on the record.

MR. VETTER:

Your new radio staff of seven started the 1st of the month and they're in active training.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. That -- and again, we need to make sure we stay in touch with you guys on that, because I'm hearing that there are more people that are going to retire this year than what you anticipated also.

MR. VETTER:

That's a correct statement. We're actively working with the County Exec's Office on the SCINS and have a pool of candidates in the wings.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, great. Thank you.

LEG. HAHN:

(Inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Get them signed ASAP, right?

LEG. HAHN:

Yeah *(Laughter)*.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Did I miss anybody? No? Okay. So we will move on with the agenda.

No Tabled Resolutions.

Introductory Resolutions

***1452-15 - Appropriating funds in connection with the purchase of Custom Fitted Ballistic Soft Body Armor Vests for the Police Department.
(CP 3153) (County Executive).***

LEG. HAHN:

Motion.

LEG. CALARCO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Motion to approve, Legislator Hahn. Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

1456-15 - Amending Resolution No. 1187-2014 (County Executive).

I guess I'll make a motion.

MR. NOLAN:

It's corrected.

LEG. CALARCO:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Motion by Legislator Calarco.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I'll second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

1464-15 - Accepting and appropriating \$5,500 in sub-granted funds from the Citizens Campaign Fund for the Environment for a prescription drug reclamation initiative sponsored by a grant from the State of New York Department of Health with 79.14% support (County Executive).

LEG. SPENCER:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

That was a motion by Legislator Spencer. Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

1465-15 - Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$455,500 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for the 2015 Motor Vehicle Theft and Insurance Fraud (MVTIF) Program with 78.04% support (County Executive). Motion by Legislator Kennedy. Second, Legislator Martinez. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

1466-15 - Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$66,745 in Federal pass-through funding from the State of New York Division of Criminal Justice Services for the Suffolk County Police Department's Stop Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program with 75% support (County Executive). I'll make --

LEG. HAHN:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

-- the motion. Second, Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

1494-15 - Transferring 100% grant funding in the amount of \$35,000 awarded by the US Department of Justice to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office, Suffolk County Police Department, Suffolk County Probation Department and District Attorney's Office (County Executive's Office). Motion by Legislator Hahn. Second by Legislator Martinez. And place on the Consent Calendar. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is ***approved and placed on the Consent Calendar (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

With that, we have nothing more on the agenda. Okay. So I'm making a motion to go into Executive Session.

LEG. SPENCER:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second. To discuss litigation, I'm sorry. Second, Legislator Spencer. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, ***we will now go into Executive Session (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).***

(**The committee was moved into Executive Session at 10:30 A.M.**)

***(**The committee came back from Executive Session
& was reconvened at 11:45 A.M.**)***

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

We're back on the record, out of Executive Session. And I make a motion to adjourn.

LEG. HAHN:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second, Legislator Hahn. All in favor? We are adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 A.M.*)