

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
of the
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on Thursday, February 4, 2016 at 9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Legislator Kate Browning - Chairperson
Legislator Robert Calarco - Vice-Chair
Legislator Bridget Fleming
Legislator Kara Hahn
Legislator Monica Martinez
Legislator Tom Cilmi
Legislator Leslie Kennedy
Legislator William Spencer

Also In Attendance:

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory
Legislator Robert Trotta - Legislative District No. 13
Legislator Kevin McCaffrey - Legislative District No. 14
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Jason Richberg - Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Amy Ellis - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
John Ortiz - Senior Budget Analyst/Legislative Budget Review Office
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Gregory
Josh Slaughter - Aide to Legislator Browning
Eva Greguski - Aide to Legislator Calarco
Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy
Elizabeth Alexander - Aide to Legislator Spencer
Elizabeth Sutton - Aide to Legislator Fleming
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Trotta
Brendan Chamberlain - Aide to Legislator Muratore
Greg Atherton - Aide to Legislator McCaffrey
Alyssa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn
Seth Squicciarino - Aide to Legislator Hahn
Lisa Santeramo - Assistant Deputy County Executive
Katie Horst - Director - Intergovernmental Relations/CE's Office
Kerry Suoto - County Executive Assistant
Jason Hann - County Executive's Office
Dennis Brown - Suffolk County Attorney
Robert Braun - Deputy Bureau Chief/County Attorney's Office
Patrice Dlhopsky - Director/Suffolk County Probation Department

Tim Sini - Acting Commissioner of the Suffolk County Police Department
Michael Caldarelli - SCPD/Inspector Commissioner's Office
Michael Sharkey - Chief Deputy Sheriff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office Kristin McKay - Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
John Becker - DSPBA/President
Artie Sanchez - DSPBA
Laura Ahearn - Parents for Megan's Law and the Crime Victims Center
Lou Tutone - 1st Vice-President/Suffolk County PBA
Tim Morris - President/SOA
Jim Hughes - 1st Vice-President/SOA
Jim Rodden - SOA
Jim Gruenfelder - 2nd Vice-President/SOA
Anthony LaFerrera - Chairman/FRES
Ed Moltzen - FRES
Tom O'Hara - FRES
John Jordan - Deputy Commissioner of FRES
Bob Holley - Director of Suffolk County Fire Academy
Eddie Johnson - Deputy Director of Suffolk County Fire Academy
Suzanne McBride - AME Representative/Police Emergency Unit
Jodi Pagel - Police Emergency Unit/PSD
Lissette Pagan - DiIorio - Police Emergency Unit/911 Operator
Amem Pagan-DiIorio - Police Emergency Unit/PSD
Christina Marr - 1st Vice-President/AME
Mary Wolfe - 3rd Vice-President/AME
Catherine Brady - Deer Park Community Association
Gilda Gricka - West Babylon Community Association
Jay McGraw - West Babylon Community Association
Patrick Donohue - Project9Line
Dennis O'Donnell - Project9Line
Terence F. McSweeney - Parkdale Civic Association/North Babylon Chamber of Commerce
June Margolin - Huntington Matters
Matt Harris - Huntington Matters
Curtis White
Reverend Martir Benavides
Jason Star - New York Civil Liberties Union
Foster Maer - Latino Justice
Kenneth Osman
Pastor Julio Carrion
Teri Kroll
Reverend Ruben Cruzate - One More for Jesus Church
Shahid Ali Khan - Muslim Community
German Huaranga - Make the Road NY
Frank Sprouse - Make the Road NY
Jason Starr - Long Island United for Police Reform
Dawn Ruggiero - Police Emergency Unit
Roland Dooze, Jr. - New York Community of Change
All Other Interested Parties

Taken By:

Lucia Braaten and Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographers

*(*The following was taken and transcribed by
Lucia Braaten - Court Reporter*)*

*(*The meeting was called to order at 9:47 a.m. *)*

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Good morning. I'd like to start the Public Safety meeting. If everyone could please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance, led by our Deputy Presiding Officer, Rob Calarco.

*(*Salutation*)*

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

*(*Moment of Silence*)*

Thank you. Okay. Good morning. Again, Happy New Year. I know it's February, but this is our first meeting for Public Safety. And I know we have a couple of Legislators. There's some issues on the roads. We do have a lot on the agenda, we have a lot of speakers, so we are going to continue. They should be here shortly.

Again, I hope that this year is a better year for many of us, and that moving forward, Public Safety, that we will have a brighter future in Suffolk County than what we've past, in the past had. And, again, I see we have our representatives from the Sheriff's Department and Probation. I can only hope that there will be a contract for them very shortly.

With that, we do have a lot on the agenda. Again, I said we have a lot of cards. I don't want to hold up. I know we have people from FRES and Probation, and I'm not sure from the Sheriff's Department, so I'd like to kind of get the issues for them out of the way.

We do have our acting County -- I don't know if he's here, is he here? Is Mr. Sini in the room or -- I don't see him. Okay. I guess he's in the building. So we'll try and get -- taking care of some of the other stuff before we get there.

So with that, I just would like to know, Tom, you have a meeting or something that you have to get to, right? Tom O'Hara. I'm sorry.

MR. O'HARA:

Whatever --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

You're okay? Because I have the cards, but I can get to the agenda to let you guys get out of here. Agenda first? I can do that for you.

Okay. Let me find the bill for them. Yes, okay, it's 1016. Okay. So I will make a motion to take **1016 out of order.**

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

And 1016 - Adopting the 2015 Suffolk County Multi-Jurisdictional Debris Management Plan prepared in conjunction with a FY2013 UASI Grant and approved by FEMA on December

14, 2015 (Co. Exec.). Motion to approve.

D.P.O. CALARCO:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved. Thank you.
(Vote: Approved 7-0-0-0)

Do you guys have anything you'd like to report to us, anything?

MR. JORDAN:

Nothing, unless any of you guys have questions.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No. I think we might want to wait until the next meeting, okay? Thank you.

Okay. Patrice you're here. Is there any issues for you guys in Probation?

DIRECTOR DLHOPOLSKY:

No.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Nothing? Sheriff's Department, anything? Okay. So I just don't want to hold you up. Okay. We do have some speakers. The first speaker is Patrick Donohue.

MR. DONOHUE:

Hi. How are you today? Thank you for having me. It's an honor to be here to speak in Tim Sini's behalf.

Just a little background about myself. I'm a Combat Veteran from the 101st Airborne, and while I was overseas, my job was to be the bodyguard and assistant for my Colonel. He was in charge of about 4500 troops. And one day, I was actually in charge of General Petraeus' convoy. That being said, I saw great leadership being had and I learned a lot from it.

Fast forward to a little over two years ago, we were in the beginning stages of forming an organization called Project 9 Line. Mr. Sini has been with us since the beginning and has helped us achieve great things here in Suffolk County. He has been both a volunteer, has offered his legal advice, and him and his family have been with us all the way through. Because of his help, we have created literally 14 programs for Veterans and their families here in Suffolk County. It's really amazing.

On a personal level, Tim Sini is what I'd like to call a "Veteran Whisperer". They're a very rare breed of individual and they do exist, but not very often. And the reason I say that is because at times, I have had, you know, situations, personal, professional, and I've come to him because of how I feel about him as a person and his ability to, you know, help me manage these things, both personally and professionally, and he understands those situations.

I was someone who was very much impacted by my experiences overseas, and today I'm now a healthy, happy, functioning member of society. But that could have went either way when I returned home. And at a few different times Tim Sini has been there as a shoulder for me to talk to, with no judgment, and offered me great advice. That being said, I think, you know, for the position he's going for, that's a very fitting trait to have. And I can only speak on the things that I know, which, professionally and personally, Tim Sini is a great man and he deserves, you know, whatever is coming to him. So thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next is Dennis O'Donnell.

MR. O'DONNELL:

Good morning. My name is Dennis O'Donnell. I'm a resident of East Moriches, New York, Suffolk County. I've lived throughout the County, but I spent my first 30 years in Nassau County, so I've been all over this Island. I'm here this morning to speak on behalf of Tim Sini.

A little bit about my background in relationship to law enforcement. I am not law enforcement and I am not military. I'm the parent of a soldier, and I do sit on the Board with Project 9 Line as a volunteer Board member. Patrick described Project 9 Line to you. We provide Veterans services, and advocate for Veterans as they assimilate back into the community, which it's common knowledge, it's in the publications about what a struggle that can be. So I volunteer with this organization as I have with Wounded Warrior Project and several other programs that do benefit Veterans in Suffolk County.

My involvement or relationship to law enforcement has been as a family member. I have several family members that are law enforcement from New York City to Suffolk County. I'm not here speaking on their behalf officially, but as a family member who sits at home and worries about them, and as a family member or as a citizen who sees the Police Force being battered about week in, week out in the press and in the media, I'm very concerned for them. And I look for leadership within the law enforcement ranks that has an understanding, or at least yearns to understand the public that they are responsible for caring for, and I see that in Tim Sini. I see that in that my experience with Tim has been, pardon the first name, comfort, but in Mr. Sini, in that through Project 9 Line, he has come to our assistance time and time and time again to advise this young 501(c)(3) Veterans advocacy group, trying to get on its feet and provide service to what I call first responders and warriors overseas. He has a sensitivity to their needs, to our needs. And he has volunteered his time, time and again, and in the middle of his campaign even to come and meet with us, to spend the time that it took.

We have had -- I have -- my family has had two encounters in that we had to -- we suffered a homicide in Nassau County, and I will never forget the compassion with which the law enforcement in Nassau County took care of my family and my parents. And I would like to see that same sensitivity, that same humanity, that same compassion in the leadership within Suffolk County Police Department as I have on other occasions when I've seen -- when I've had to call Law Enforcement in Suffolk County to come to the aid of my family.

So the two words that I'd like to say most about Tim Sini is he is compassionate, and he has a sense of humanity that is sorely needed in this day and age. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next is Terence McSweeney.

MR. MC SWEENEY:

Good morning. I'm here just to offer my support for Tim Sini. My name is Terence McSweeney. A little bit about me. I'm a New York City fireman, I'm a North Babylon volunteer fireman, and I also sit on the board for the North Babylon Parkdale Civic Association, and the North Babylon Chamber of Commerce.

So working with Tim, you could tell he's a great leader. His experience and track record in the war on gangs and drugs, I think in this day and age, especially on Long Island, seems to be a lot of what's going on here. And I think that Tim is the right man because of his age. I know he is young, but with presenting new ideas, I think he's the right man for the job. And that's about it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next is Catherine Brady.

MS. BRADY:

Good morning. My name is Catherine Brady. I'm here in support on behalf of Acting Deputy Police Commissioner.

A little bit about me. I'm a wife of a 9/11 retired First Responder. We currently live in Deer Park. Our children are grown. We have one nine-year-old daughter, and my main concern is the growing drug problem in Deer Park. Time Sini's Office got in touch with em. I'm president of Deer Park Community Association and we are currently trying to tackle that drug problem, which he has put us in touch with the drug awareness program called "The Ugly Truth". He has helped strengthen our ties with the Suffolk County Police Department, which was pretty weak, because all we were doing was doing community watch. Now we are implementing the program. We are in the process of forming a drug coalition in Deer Park with his help. So I believe he is a great asset to all the surrounding communities, and we couldn't be more happier with everything that we have and speaking about, so -- but he's just a good man. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is June Margolin.

MS. MARGOLIN:

Looking for the green button. Okay, there it is. Good morning. My name is June Margolin. I am the president of Huntington Matters, Incorporated. We are a community organization of volunteers with over 3,000 members, and growing, representing a culturally and economically diverse community across the Town of Huntington.

Huntington Matters formed in November of 2014, after the murder of Maggie Rosales, one of our high school seniors. Maggie's murder was the fourth in just over a year of violence in Huntington Station. I found myself repeatedly asking, "Why are the criminals so comfortable here?" Huntington Matters immediately began collaborating with our Police, Town, County and State officials to bring safety and health back to our community.

The Second Precinct has been by far the most responsive of all, with 95% of the community's requests fulfilled. Our first project was the Huntington Matters Neighborhood Watch Program. Over the last 15 months, I have worked very closely with Officer Angela Ferrara, former Inspector Brady, and our current Inspector Hatton to educate thousands of residents in neighborhood watch awareness skills and reporting suspicious behavior. Our success in this collaboration is measurable. There have been zero murders in Huntington Station since Maggie's death. The last murder for a year we had was 10 years ago.

In 2015, the Second Precinct also reported among the lowest crime rates in Suffolk County. Huntington Matters is an example of the positive transformative effect that an approachable relationship between law enforcement and residents can have on an entire town.

Today you have a great responsibility selecting our new Commissioner. The Commissioner's leadership influence walks into every home in our community, often during our weakest and most vulnerable moments when we're leaning on our police for support. In the past, that influence has been, "Stay inside and shut your door," and, "What do you expect, you live in Huntington Station," or 911 calls that went completely ignored. Together, we have fought completely to change that.

Our communities need a Commissioner who is approachable, honest, transparent and creative. The right candidate must be an advocate for our needs and seek wise counsel from several sources. Most importantly, our Commissioner must be worthy of the honor and respect of the thousands of

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Police Officers under their command, putting themselves in harm's way for us daily.

I was pleasantly surprised with a phone call from Acting Commissioner Tim Sini's Office requesting to meet with us. That shows he's approachable. We expected 30 minutes and he gave us two-and-a-half hours of undivided attention. He wanted to hear every issue our community has, our ideas for solutions and improvements to our local precinct. That shows he's invested. Acting Deputy Commissioner John Barry was also in attendance. As we shared, they spontaneously brainstormed some encouraging solutions. He seeks wise counsel. Acting Commissioner Sini's recent announcement about moving the drug house investigations into the hands of the local precincts can be a game-changer for our community. It has taken nearly two years of complaints for some of these houses to be addressed. That shows creativity.

I fully support Commissioner Sini's reinstatement of the Federal Gang Task Force, as their prior work had a dramatically positive impact on Huntington Station. I lend the enthusiastic support to his ATF Task Force as well. We will all benefit from fewer guns on the street and more aggressive prosecution tools.

I have prepared a summary of the topics Huntington Matters discussed with Acting Commissioner Sini for your review. I gave -- I'll be providing one for every Legislator, not just here today, but for the entire Legislature.

Thank you all so much for your time and assistance in addressing our needs. And a special thank you goes to Doc Spencer's Office and his staff for being an invaluable resource for our Board. Have a good day.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Curtis White.

MR. WHITE:

Good morning, all. I'm Curtis White. You have to excuse me, I was injured on the job in 2004 and I was electrocuted, so I am lucky to have my life and be here today to speak on Tim Sini's behalf.

One of the things I love about Mr. Sini is he's not like any other politician. Most politicians, they promise you things and they say things and you never see them again. This man knocked on my door one day and asked me for his support. I was surprised. No one has ever knocked on my door to ask for support. But the most amazing things were he asked me about the problems and the issues going on in the neighborhood. I'm from Lindenhurst, Long Island. Within the last 18 years, I've seen a lot of changes in that neighborhood, and most of them hasn't been positive, they've been very negative.

My daughter, her friend died in school, 16 years old, from a heroin overdose. How do you explain that to a 16-year-old kid that you lost your best friend because of heroin?

Another problem I had when I was speaking to Mr. Sini, I said, "I have a problem here. I live on a corner house and I have hedges. So everyone parks their car up there at nighttime and they shoot up their heroin, or whatever they're doing." And it's sad, because it's hard to approach a car that's parked under your hedges at night and you wonder if there's a weapon in the car and they're going to shoot you. So many times I don't even approach the car. When I see the car, I go out to get my dog and we head out to run these people away.

Mr. Sini came in the neighborhood and right away all the heroin needles that was under my hedges are now gone. It's a funny thing how I go out to clean up the hedges with my daughter, I hold the bag so she could throw everything in, which we couldn't do because of all the needles. Now we could have fun. We could talk like a family and we could discuss things that's going on in the neighborhood and school, which is very important for every parent to talk to their children to find

out what is going on in your school, because this heroin is going to kill us all. What I mean by "us all" is if our kids are doing, it's killing us, because we worry about them. And believe me, everybody have kids that they love more than anything in the world.

Tim Sini has helped me rest a little. Now, when I go outside, it's amazing. He said, "I promise you more police presence. There'll be no cars up under your hedges." The funny thing is when I go out, I see no needles, I don't even see bottles like there used to be. There's no more cars under my hedges. Funny, there's a politician that actually cares and not just speaks.

I'd like to thank Mr. Tim Sini very much for his caring, love and affection towards the community and people in general. I meet a lot of people, but I never meet people that really, really care and truly say what they mean. Thank you, Mr. Tim Sini. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next is Reverend Martin Benavides, yes.

*(*The following testimony was given through a translator*)*

REVEREND BENAVIDES:

Good morning, Legislators. He has been, you know, working with Mr. Tim Sini. My name is Martin Benavides, Pastor of the Ministry Iglesia Roca De Salvacion, and president of the Organization of Pastors in the County of Suffolk.

I come to this place because I know that we are concerned about our safety. Mr. Sini attended to our invitation to one of our meetings. And we did a lot of questions and he answered very sincerely about the job that he wants to do for our community, because it's not about working just for one community, it's about in generally. It's not about color or religion, it's about rights. And we want to have a relationship between the community and Police Officers, because we don't want our people to be scared when they see police. We want them to see -- to be -- to see them as -- you know, and feel protected by them. When the police and the people feel scared about Police Officers, the community start not feeling secure with them. We need a Commissioner to bring security, confidence to our youth. We are willing to work, preventing our youth in different -- in different programs to our community. We want the crimes to be resolved, not just to live just like -- that's why we need a Commissioner with character, brave, that he's not going to defend interests, interests of someone, but the political interests of our people. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Matt Harris.

MR. HARRIS:

Yes. Good morning, members of the committee. My name is Matt Harris. I'm a 35-year homeowner/resident of Huntington Station, and I'm here to support the appointment of Tim Sini as Police Commissioner.

As many of you probably know, Huntington Station has in the past been plagued with more crime than it deserves and a bad reputation. We had four murders in a very short period of time, only one of which has been -- the perpetrator has been caught, plus the unsolved shooting of my good friend, Gary Melius, at Oheka Castle. I found that former Police Commissioner Webber was somewhat unresponsive to many of our requests. I spoke, along with my president, June Margolin, with Mr. Sini a few weeks ago and I was very impressed with the way he has given us a lot of hope for many of the problems we face.

We've had, as you know, a lot of shootings. I want to thank all of you for supporting ShotSpotter. That's just another tool in the toolbox. We need leadership at the top to make things like that work for us. Certainly, I have found that Mr. Sini is approachable, he's honest, he's transparent and

creative, and, most important, he has the compassion that we need to solve many of the problems we have in Huntington Station.

Thank you very much for your time, and I hope you support Mr. Sini as our next Police Commissioner. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. I don't know if Mr. Sini is in the building or anywhere. I think it would be appropriate that he would be in the auditorium to listen to the speakers. Is he here?

MS. HORST:

He is. He was doing some police work, so let me go see if I can find him and pull him in.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I think it would be most appropriate for him to be in the room. Thank you. Next speaker is Jason Star.

MR. STAR:

Good morning. My name is Jason Star. I am an attorney and the Long Island Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union. I am here on behalf of Long Island United for Police Reform, a campaign to end discriminatory policing practices on Long Island. We are a movement of community members, lawyers, researchers and activists organizing for reforms that will promote community safety, while ensuring that the police protect and serve all Long Islanders.

Today, of course, this committee will consider a resolution from the County Executive to confirm the appointment of a new Police Commissioner. Our coalition reached out to both the County Executive and all members of the County Legislature by letter on January 21st of this year to express our deep reservations with proceeding with an appointment without conducting a nationwide search and selection process that includes input from a community of stakeholders, and an opportunity for meaningful community engagement.

Four years ago, a rigorous national search process was conducted by the County to find a new Police Commissioner. During that search, applications were received from 75 diverse candidates around the country. Given the complexity of the demographics and architecture of Suffolk County and its overlapping municipal entities, it is only fitting that a similar process would be followed now.

Further, given the profile of recent cases of misconduct and corruption within the Department, it is absolutely critical that the County leadership take this opportunity.

Many large, highly sophisticated departments similar to Suffolk County, for example, Denver, Colorado, and Seattle, Washington, have established a committee of stakeholders in the process to discover the qualities desired in a new Executive, as well as develop recommendations for the process for selection. Best practices endorsed by academics and professional organizations with expertise in policing and police accountability include the selection of a search firm or individual well connected to the national law enforcement community, and early solicitation of public input.

I am including in my written submission a memorandum prepared in May of 2014 for the Seattle City Council summarizing research conducted to identify best practices related to a search, selection and confirmation of a new police executive. The Seattle City Council sought the guidance of the Police Executive Research Forum and the International Association of the Chiefs of Police, both highly regarded experts in the law enforcement field, and those recommendations included they represent the gold standard for transparency and engagement.

A more inclusive process would serve the County government, the new Commissioner, and the rank and file of the Department well in starting a new chapter with the community on a foundation of

trust and cooperation. It is a real opportunity for Suffolk County to demonstrate that it is committed to open government, because this is what our democracy is all about, more people, more voices engaged in the process of government, building and, most importantly, buying into the institutions that govern them. A proper search and selection process is a win/win for community and for government.

You're going to hear from other advocates and community members today on the importance of meaningful engagement in this process. I urge you to consider their testimony carefully, and ultimately to table this resolution and work together with the County Executive and community members to come up with a process that we can all move forward with together. Thank you so much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Foster Maer.

MR. MAER:

Good morning. My name is Foster Maer. I'm an attorney with LatinoJustice PRLDEF, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect the civil rights of Latinos. Latino Justice is a signatory to the letter that was sent to this committee on behalf of Long Islanders United for Police Reform, LIPR, that Mr. Star was just referencing.

Over the past two years, I have sat at a table with high ranking officials in the New York City Police Department in what's called the "Negotiations Over the Stop and Frisk Case". There were three different lawsuits involved, and about two years -- well, almost two years ago a process was set up to negotiate a settlement. I walked into those settlement negotiations very pessimistic as to what was going to happen, but was pleasantly surprised on how professional, how productive, and how successful this process has been. You have advocates on one side and you have the Police Force on the other side, and usually you kind of think of these two folks don't getting along so well. This has been a very productive process and we're about to announce a settlement.

The reason I raise that here is that I believe a large part of that is because Chief Bill Bratton. He is a cop's cop. He was a -- he started as a patrolman in 1970, worked his way up, and then became the Commissioner of New York City Police Department in 1995, and has since then taken on commissionerships and different positions since then, and now has gone back to New York. It's his leadership and his knowledge of policing from a cop -- being a cop on the beat, from being a Precinct Commander, to ultimately becoming a successful Commissioner in both the City, Los Angeles. He knows what it takes to run a police force and how to move it ahead.

Needless to say, the Suffolk County Police Department right now is in crisis, the corruption scandals, and perhaps more to come. And it's so critical right now. This is a rare opportunity for change to come to the Suffolk County Police Force at the very time it most needs it. And what is needed here is an open, independent process to make that decision to bring in someone like Bill Bratton, who really knows what it's like to do policing, and can speak to those people on the force, much less their leadership, and get the changes done here that are so necessary.

On that -- for that reason, we think that the selection process should be expanded such that candidates from across the country, hopefully independent from what's gone on in the County here, so that you -- we really know that the changes are coming and that they'll be good, and that they're going to move this County ahead. And I think this committee owes it to the County to make sure that the candidate that's selected for this critical position is the best possible candidate and do the type of search that's necessary to make sure that happens. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Kenneth Osman.

MR. OSMAN:

Good morning. My name is Kenneth Osman. I'm a resident of West Babylon, Suffolk, New York. I'm also a full-time seasonal summer rental resident of Cherry Grove on the barrier island of Fire Island, Suffolk, New York. I'm here this morning to speak on behalf of Mr. Tim Sini, seeking appointment as Police Commissioner of Suffolk Police Department.

How did I come to speak on behalf of Mr. Sini's appointment? In April of 2013, a resident of Cherry Grove succumbed to a heart tack, causing great attention and alarm to the residents of Cherry Grove. The Cherry Grove Fire Department does not have an EMS service as its first response like most Fire Island -- correction, most Long Island Fire Departments do. Our first response to all medical emergencies is the Suffolk County Police Department's Marine Bureau. Let me be perfectly clear. The Suffolk County Police Marine Bureau does a fantastic job of providing EMS to the isolated areas of Fire Island. Without EMS response, accessible only by boat, helicopter or car along the beach year-round. This response, however, can be affected by weather conditions, time of year, time of day, and manpower concerns. In the height of the summer months, when population is high, it becomes even more concerning.

The residents of Cherry Grove wanted to bring a home approach to EMS response, like our communities on the mainland of Long Island. We wanted our own paramedic to supplement the response to Suffolk County Police Department, a team working together to save lives.

At the Cherry Grove Community Association meeting in September 2013, I was appointed the Chair of the Committee to bring a community-based EMS to Cherry Grove, along with the funding aspect, based on my knowledge of Suffolk EMS as a volunteer firefighter, and EMS provider and a retired NYPD Sergeant. Over the Fall of 2013 and Winter of 2014, we raised as a community almost \$100,000 to make this a reality. Suffolk County and State EMS gave us permission to operate as a one-year pilot project in 2013. This funding allowed us to contract through the Cherry Grove Fire District with the Sayville Community Ambulance Company to provide EMS service housed in Cherry Grove as our first responder. Again, this was only a pilot project. I was, however, tasked with making this EMS service a permanent tax-funded reality.

In our pilot Summer of 2013, our paramedic, in fact, saved a resident's life with her quick response, providing the value -- improving the value of this service, yet, still I had no permanent way of keeping this service, nor securing permanent funding. Based on the life-save, Suffolk County and the State EMS gave us permission to operate again in 2015, as long as we could show permanent progress in making EMS a reality in Cherry Grove.

How did I come to know Tim Sini? I'm fortunate to be friends with Pat Halpin, the former Suffolk County Executive. While talking to Pat one afternoon, discussing the problems and successes of his program, I asked for his advice and some direction. Pat gave me a cell number and asked me to call Tim Sini for help. I called the number, not knowing anything about Tim or his position in Suffolk County government at the time. After leaving a message, within a few hours, Tim called and asked what and how he could help me. I explained the situation. He asked for a few days to gather information and organize a meeting. Tim organized meetings with Brookhaven Town officials, Suffolk County EMS, and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Commissioner, Joe Williams, all in an attempt to make EMS service permanent in Cherry Grove. Through Tim's efforts and those of the team he put together to meet, we were again granted permission to operate in 2015 while working on a permanent solution.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Your time is up. It's a three-minute time limit and your time is up.

MR. MAER:

I wasn't aware. I'm almost done now.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. You need to finish up. We do have quite a few cards.

MR. MAER:

Say again. All right. I'd just -- I'd just like to thank Tim for his service to the community, what he brought to Cherry Grove. Without his direction, it never would have happened, and I urge the Legislature to appoint him as its next Police Commissioner.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Suzanne McBride.

MS. MC BRIDE:

Good morning, Madam Chair and Members of the Legislature. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Suzanne McBride. I am the AME representative for the men and women that work at the 911 Center at the Police Department.

First, I have some good news. We started four call-takers' training on Monday. That's the end of the good news.

*(*Laughter*)*

Unfortunately, our dispatcher staffing level is back to the level it was in 2012, when I first appeared in this committee. We lost four employees since December. In the next month or so, we have two more employees leaving. To give you an idea of what this means, in order to meet minimum staffing on a daily basis going through the summer, just in the dispatcher position, we'll have 10 over spots -- overtime spots per day. That's 70 spots of overtime in one week before anybody is out sick, before anybody else resigns, and before any unforeseen emergencies we may face.

The severe staffing shortages, along with the pending lag payroll, the requirement that these members work more days than any other County employee, the stressful nature of the job, and other issues facing the employees on a day-to-day basis are causing stress, killing morale, and causing employees to actively seek employment elsewhere. All the money and time spent hiring and training is walking right out the door.

Excuse me. We all know the County is in a fiscal crisis, but how in good conscience can we continue to ignore one of the most vital functions of public safety? 911 is the lifeline to the public when we have a crisis. They're the first first responders. Will it save the County money when Police Officers have to be used to backfill vacant dispatcher positions? I think we all know the answer to that.

According to the County, the performance of Suffolk's Call Center exceeds national standards. It exceeds those standards because of the hard work and sacrifice of the AME members I represent. They deserve the respect of this County and the ability to go home to their family at the end of their regular tour.

The County has abused these employees by refusing to staff the center adequately and deal with outstanding issues. The County has caused irreparable harm to the employees and their families by denying them the ability to plan their lives for the past five, going on six years. We once again ask this body for any help possible, for the County Labor Relations, and the Police Department and AME to work with our members to find solutions to the issues this face -- this group faces; to find ways to retain the employees that we already have; to sign SCINs for the dispatcher position, and expedite the hiring process, so that those employees might see some relief by the Christmas season of 2016.

I do want to take a minute to thank Acting Commissioner Sini. He did spend over two hours with my members and myself discussing some of our issues already. That is a very positive step, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Okay. I may be wrong, I may be right. Jay McGraw. Am I correct? Oh, okay. Thank you.

MR. MC GRAW:

Good morning. My name is Jay McGraw. I am from West Babylon Community Association. Just bear with me, I left my glasses home.

I am here today on behalf of Tim Sini. He is a good friend and a family man. I met Tim in April of 2015. I worked with Tim with issues in my community and on his campaign for County Legislator. Where am I? In my community, Tim has always been a hands-on guy. I know Tim is the right person to hold the office of Police Commissioner. He has already made some changes in the Department with the issue concerning the Ex-Chief. Tim has integrity, he is a stand-up and honest person. I know Tim will give 100% to the Police Department and the County residents.

I also know Tim was a former prosecutor in the Eastern District. He understands what needs to be done in the Department, and the tough decisions that he will have to make us safe in the County and the men and women that serve us and protect us every day. Tim is the type of guy that would call me at one o'clock in the morning and say, "Hey, Jay, I took care of the problem. Talk to me tomorrow, and I will give you the rest of the information." Tim is 100% a stand-up guy with integrity. He's honest and he doesn't lie.

I have lots of friends in the Suffolk County Police Department. They all think Tim is the right guy for the job. He will defend every resident and every person and police officer in this County. He is the right man for the job. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Pastor Julio Carrion.

PASTOR CARRION:

Good morning, everyone, and thank you for having me. This is my very first time here, and I would like -- I'm standing here today as a Pastor, as a father, as a husband, to offer my strong support to Timothy Sini.

So I would like to tell you a story just for a change. So there was another Timothy back in the day, many years ago in the Bible. And at the time, there were many, many challenges, very difficult circumstances, very difficult, so they were trying to figure out who is going to be the man for the job to solve all the issues they were facing. So who was in authority then, his name was Paul, he actually appointed Timothy then back in the time with all the struggles and circumstances. This guy Timothy back then, he was about -- the Acting Deputy Police Commissioner now, he was about his age back then. Now the question is why, with all the struggles and circumstances back -- it's like old history repeating itself. He got appointed to the job. So what got appointed Tim, Timothy to the job back in the day was his character, integrity, his diligence, he will get the job done. And now, obviously, back -- just as today, there's people against and there's people in favor. Back in the day, there were also people against and were people in favor.

Now the question is what were the words of the men in authority told Timothy when he was appointed to the job? And I want to quote. "Don't let" -- and this is actually for Tim. I think he's here now. This is for you, so listen to this. "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

So, again, I'm standing here to offer my support to him. I'm standing here as a Pastor of "One More for Jesus" Church in Farmingville. He actually called us for a meeting several weeks ago. We thought it was going to be a half hour meeting, turned out to be a two-hour meeting. He actually

cared. He wanted to know what the problems of our communities were.

So I think in -- if he gets appointed to this position, he will work with us, not just to help the church, but to better our communities, so -- and to -- like the other Pastor was saying, the Reverend, to make our communities feel safe.

So, again, I -- Tim, I offer you my support, your family, so we are with you. And thank you for having us, and God bless everyone.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Teri Kroll.

MS. KROLL:

Good morning. As you know, I'm Terry Kroll. I've become an advocate for change in Suffolk County, after having lost my son, Timothy Kroll, to a heroin overdose, which was a direct result of a prescription addiction to opioids, which was prescribed by a drug dealing doctor who was eventually arrested and tried and convicted after my son had reported him.

Tim Sini worked closely with the coalitions in Suffolk County, of which I am a very active member, and he has helped to make changes and educate the public of the epidemic of overprescribing and that has helped to feed this horrible addiction epidemic. He's worked with the community on the Heroin Task Force, to institute programs in our communities and County, in particular, the Vivitrol Program within the jail in Suffolk County, to help inmates suffering from the disease of addiction and substance abuse to get help before they are released and help them to get into treatment after they are released. He helped -- he helped to get the Narcan training program to the Police Department and Fire Departments within Suffolk County to be trained and armed with Narcan, which, unfortunately, has become a necessary tool for all first responders, much like an AED is. He would often attend a town meeting in the general -- when the general public was being trained to use Narcan, and he would inform the public of the efforts from the County office, always keeping the public informed.

When the County was considering changing the protocol for accepting items at pawn shops, Tim called some people like myself to join him to push these changes through and make it safer for the pawn shop dealers, and, more importantly, difficult for someone who may be stealing to support a habit to sell at a pawn shop.

The loss -- as the community is trying to handle this epidemic it has created, Suffolk County has taken an approach to sue the pharmaceuticals for what their lack of control and their irresponsibility has created. Opioids need to be controlled from the point of sale all the way through to the -- all the way through the community and the legal system. I agree that this is a necessary step, and I'm very happy to know that Suffolk County took this approach. Tim had a pivotal role in the decisions to initiate this lawsuit on a contingency basis, therefore, not costing the residents of Suffolk County, but helping to curb some of the activities of the pharmaceuticals, which has led to this epidemic.

As I lovingly call Tim Timothy, because he reminds me of my son, he has been a constant support to me and many of us who fight this, until recently, silent war. He's brought things to the public's attention and always been taking them to fruition. I've always appreciated that Tim is a member of the community and sees the problems, and works with people like myself, who, unfortunately, I'm in a club that is growing. And Tim is one of, like many of you, a very important -- in a very important position to close the membership for that club. Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next is Reverend Ruben Cruzate. I hope I'm correct.

REVEREND CRUZATE:

Good morning. My name is Ruben Cruzate. I'm Pastor of "One More for Jesus" Church in Farmingville. I'm the Chair of Community Relations in Farmingville Association, and a community representative in the Town of Brookhaven.

All right. Today I'm going to begin from the end. You got the right person for the position. I want to tell you why. Being young is a good thing. I hope I can be as young as he is right now. All right? But being young and wise is something different, we cannot find easy. This man, Tim, is not only young, but he's married and he's wise. He's surrounds himself with good people all at once, all the Chiefs in the Police Department, some of them like Thomas Palmieri, which is Chief, the Chief, Robert Oswald, Inspector Murphy, Inspector Silva, all of them. We know them very close, we're working with them very many years. And these Chiefs are of integrity, of experience, real good men that work very close in the community, and he's surrounded with these people.

As one of the special qualities in Tim is that he knows how to listen. You hear how many hours he dedicate to all these communities, I believe, that are speaking here. I don't know if he got a life or family, but he is giving up everything here to make changes that are reforming the Police and their relation with the community. One of the things, he's crazy, completely crazy in the way I see things, he gave his cell phone. Unless he got four cell phones with different numbers, he gave his cell phone to all the community leaders. You know, he's giving up his life, his private life, because these people call 24 hours a day. I'm a Pastor and people call me two o'clock in the morning, two o'clock -- unless he got three different numbers. I'm going to try to call later on, see if he answers the phone. But he's giving his cell phone, right? So he got the desire to make changes. And you can see in every meeting, every meeting he's listening. He's sitting there listening to all the complaining, which is crazy, listen, because most of that is complaints. So I says, "Tim, you got a white page, you start writing a new chapter in the relation between the community and the Police Department.

And believe me, it's a good Police Department we got here in Suffolk County, really good. We appreciate the good cops. Like in any other group of people, there's good and bad, but we focus on what is good, because this is how we become better, seeing the good things in people, not just to see the bad things in people. All right. He's got the desire and the creativity to do changes and reforms. He got the guts to do it, because go against the system is something difficult to do, and especially here in the way Long Island works.

To end with this, there's something caught me by surprise in a politician. We start talking and he dedicated like two hours, I believe. He's patient enough to listen. But at the end, I says, "I'm sorry. I'm going to pray for you, because I'm a Pastor, this is what we do all the time." And he says, "Yeah, I was waiting for you to pray before we start our meeting." So this man believe in God. And at the end, at the end, will we be -- we'll be accountable to a higher being, to our Lord, and this is how we are going to respond for whatever we do today. I will say give the opportunity to this young, wise man to do the job. He got the desire to do it and we're a team. Thank you. Sorry if I passed the three minutes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Your time is up. I guess your finished. Okay. Thank you. Okay. Next speaker is Shahid Ali Khan.

MR. KHAN:

Good morning. My name is Shahid Khan and I'm the Chairperson of the Muslim Advisory Board and a community leader. I have had the utmost pleasure to meet Mr. Sini on a few occasions. Mr. Sini extended the invitation to the Muslim community leaders to meet at the Police Headquarter for the community outreach. The meeting was very morale-boosting and helpful, as Mr. Sini made it clear that he would not tolerate any hate or prejudice against any Muslim living in Suffolk County.

And as a fond memory I have with him as -- is at the Proud to be American Rally, which was held at the Noor Mosque, Huntington. The Muslim community invited Mr. Sini to stand in solidarity with them against all acts of violence going on in America and around the world. Mr. Sini promised to keep each and every resident in Suffolk County safe, and promised that he would not tolerate any hate or prejudice in this -- in Suffolk County.

During these interactions, Mr. Sini was nothing but kind and respectful. I hope to see him achieve things, big things. We're glad to see him as a Police Commissioner. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next one, I'm going to definitely destroy this one, German Huaranga. You have your translator?

TRANSLATOR:

Yeah, I'm going to translate.

*(*The following testimony was given through a translator*)*

MR. HUARANGA:

Good morning, Legislators. My name is German Huaranga and I live in Brentwood, New York. My remarks are in reference to the resolution and appointment of the new Police Commissioner.

I'm a member of Make the Road New York. I ask you, our Legislators, as a member of the community, especially for the immigrant community. As a community, we are so very concerned of the corruption and lack of professionalism of agents in the Police Department, as the cases of Sergeant Greene and James Burke. This has been very clear, and we don't want that to repeat it -- to be repeated. At the same time -- at the same time, the process through which Tim Sini and future Police Commissioners will be appointed does not build trust in the community. I ask you, our Legislators, to continue with the process of election in the case of Tim Sini. That these Legislators here enact a system for selecting future Commissioners that will ensure the process is open to community members, and allows for candidates to be able to go through a transparent process -- in a transparent process, as I said before. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. And the next speaker is Frank Sprouse. Is there a Frank Sprouse in the room? Okay, good.

*(*The following testimony was given through a translator*)*

MR. SPROUSE:

Good morning. My name is Frank Sprouse from Bay Shore. My remarks are in reference to the resolution on the appointment of the new Police Commissioner.

I'm a member of Make the Road New York, and have lived in this County for more than 10 years. This morning I'm not here to testify against Mr. Tim Sini as a candidate, but to demand that this County create an open and transparent process to select future Commissioners for our Police Department. The community needs to feel assured that we will truly consider the most qualified candidates for a position as important as this one. We also need to have the certainty that the future Commissioner will have to present their ideas to be accountable to our communities. We need a process in which a selection of the Commissioner of the Police does not depend on the County Executive, but of the community.

As recent history has demonstrated, that there can come a time when we will have a County Executive who can be very bias to our community. We need to have a democratic system. We need a system in which we, as community, have the right to elect the person that looks after their

communities and safety, that will develop a good relationship and trust between the community and the Commissioner, especially given to the recent occurrence of corruption on the Island. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. I do have -- I believe, Jason Starr, you already spoke, right? I have two are cards, but you can only go once, so just so you know. The next speaker is Dawn Ruggiero.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to speak today. My name is Dawn Ruggiero. I'm employed in the Suffolk County Police Department. I have been with them for the last 15 years. I am a Public Safety Dispatcher. I am here today because my position is essential to the County.

I have been working with severe contractual issues that have affected my health, which, in turn, affects the safety of the public, as well as the sworn personnel that depend on me each and every day. Are you aware that I am required to work more days than any other County employee, including those working under the same job title in other County agencies? Those extra days I work are called "Ex Days". Those of us that work up in Communications are required to work six extra days per year, which we do not get paid for. Now, keep in mind, since 1993, the Police Communications employees have worked 138 days for free. Members of my unit have been advised the "Ex Days" violate the FLSA, and that we should be filing a lawsuit against the County. In addition to these "Ex Days", I will most likely be getting a two-week lag as well, so now I won't be getting paid for 16 days this year.

The County has not hired a Public Safety Dispatcher since October of 2013. The overtime has not really let up at all this year, and it looks like, once again, Suffolk County Police Dispatchers will be facing another brutal summer of constant mandates.

I thank you all for your assistance in getting the 911 Operators hired and trained, but the public safety, as well as the officers' safety, is going to be in jeopardy this summer under the current staffing levels. There is only so much a person can take before they break. Twelve to 16-hour shifts four to five days a week is too much for anybody to handle, not to mention our emotional health. Do you know how stressful it is to dispatch a gunshot, a robbery, a stabbing, a violent domestic, or a child drowning or not breathing, or a police pursuit, or being on the radio when an officer keys up for help and you're unable to clearly identify who they are, or when you get silence when you're trying to check on the officer's safety on a priority call, and not being able to have any down time and decompress? Now, please, don't get me wrong, I love my job, but it is quite stressful.

I am here today to ask the Legislators to intervene on behalf of the Police Communication Workers. I am asking you to encourage Labor Relations, AME's Executive Board and Suffolk County Police Department to sit down and work on these contractual issues specific to Communication's needs. Unfortunately, only being 150 in a unit of 5,000, our specific issues are not being addressed.

Members of my unit have approached the last three Executive Boards of AME with our issues to no avail. It is my hope, with your assistance, the County -- the current Executive Board of AME will have the opportunity to work on behalf of our very small unit with Labor Relations and the Police Department. Thank you for listening and considering my request.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, thank you. And, again, thank you to you and all your coworkers for your hard work, we do appreciate it. I believe we have one last card, Roland. Okay. Roland stood up. I do not want to crucify your name.

MR. DOOZE:

Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

If you could give us your last name on the record.

MR. DOOZE:

My name is Roland Dooze. I'm from NYCC, New York Community of Change. I'm here representing the communities of Brentwood, Wyandanch, Bay Shore, all the communities that crime is high, the poverty level is definitely high, and, you know, police relationship is not at best.

I'm here to ask them that we have a transparency in voting, a fair chance that the community could, you know, get to know who we're putting in charge of the Police Department. And nothing to say about Mr. Tim. You know, today I just found out that there's no one else in that position or could be -- have a chance to, you know, have that job, which that's not fair. You know, as long as Suffolk is, we should have a couple of people that we could choose from, or at least have a chance for that job.

So I'm here just to say that if we could give the community a chance, or they could, you know, pick somebody from the community, somebody that knows about, you know, the state of Suffolk, you know, with the crime and everything that's going on. So I'm here just to say if we could have a chance, you know, to have not just him. If he's the man for the job, yes, no problem, but I'm sure there's other people also that could be in the run for that job also. Thank you very much. Have a good day.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Okay. There are no more cards. So there are a couple of bills, but I think we're going to just hold off on them anyway. Is there anyone else in the room? I'm sorry. Is there anyone else in the room who would like to speak? There is no one else in the room who would like to speak. Okay. With that, Mr. Sini, if you'd like to come forward.

Okay. No. If you would like to sit, because I think you're -- I don't want to call it the hot seat, but you might want to sit and be more comfortable.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I don't sit until I get permission from the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, no, you're more than welcome, have a seat.

P.O. GREGORY:

Are we in Supreme Court?

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, Tim. First of all, I'd like to thank you for being here. I'm sure you know that this is not going to be an extremely easy process for you. I don't think anybody is going to sugarcoat anything here. I have to say, I do want to say that I have worked with you, and I've probably worked with you more than most, because -- as Chair of Public Safety, and, you know, participating in CJCC with you. However, I think I've been very clear in my position. I believe in process, and that's where my issue is, is that the process was not complied with. Four years ago there was a process, and, for whatever reason, the County Executive did not choose the selected person. And I encourage the County Executive to continue to move forward with the process, whether -- and that you should apply. But we are here to make a decision on your appointment.

I guess I will leave it to you to basically introduce yourself. I'm sure probably everybody already knows you, but tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, and then we'll open it up for questions.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you very much, Madam Chairwoman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before everyone today. This is a tremendously humbling experience. I've spent approximately two months in the Suffolk County Police Department surrounded by just an unbelievable deep pool of talent, men and women of extreme integrity, work ethic and competence. It's been an incredible experience, and I'm fortunate to be a part of it.

Just briefly, a little bit about myself. I grew up in West Islip. After graduating from West Islip High School, I attended American University in Washington D.C., where I studied Criminal Justice. After graduating college, I went to law school, Brooklyn Law School, where I concentrated in Constitutional Law and Criminal Law, graduating at the top of my class. After law school, I spent approximately two years in the private sector. I also spent approximately two-and-a-half years working for two different Federal Judges, the Honorable William C. Conner, the late Honorable William C. Conner, who was a District Court Judge in the Southern District of New York, that's a Federal Trial Judge. And I worked for the Honorable Chester J. Straub on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which just to explain the structure, that's the Court one below the United States Supreme Court. And while working for these two Judges, I worked on a variety of Federal cases, including criminal cases, Constitutional Law cases and Civil Rights cases, and do consider myself an expert in the fields of Criminal Procedure Law and Constitutional Law.

After clerking for the two Judges, I had the honor and privilege of being appointed an Assistant United States Attorney in the Southern District of New York by U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara. I spent four-and-a-half years in that office.

While in the AUSA in the Southern District of New York, I concentrated mostly, but not exclusively, on violent crime cases, particularly murder cases and gang cases. I prosecuted one of the largest gang cases in U.S. history against the Trinitarios. I prosecuted some novel cases. Specifically, I was the first, to my knowledge, the first Federal prosecutor ever to charge the drug known as bath salts, which is a designer synthetic drug. At the time I charged it, there was no drug -- there was no statute outlawing bath salts. We used a creative legal theory called the Criminal Justice Analogue Statute.

I also prosecuted a very large internet pharmacy case, where greedy doctors and pharmacists were selling addictive pain medications over the internet, and we used a novel theory to bring that case as well, the first of its kind in the United States to do so successfully.

I worked with the Leadership Team in the United States Attorney's Office, including the U.S. Attorney, to establish best practices to best to collaborate with our local law enforcement partners. I worked hand in hand with the top brass of the NYPD, in forming several different initiatives, including fine-tuning a program called Trigger Lock, which we may talk about a bit if we talk about some of the programs I'm starting here. But, essentially, it's just a firearm offense program, a collaboration between the states -- the State and the Feds.

I also worked on a Cold Case Murder Task Force with the NYPD, where when NYPD started hitting the wall on certain murder cases, developing a process and protocol to bring those cases Federal.

And I worked on a Criminal Intelligence Sharing Program, essentially just increasing collaboration between the NYPD and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and all of our law enforcement partners, which include FBI, DEA, ATF and other Federal agencies.

Public Safety 2/4/16

After having the pleasure to serve in the Southern District of New York, which is one of the highest honors I've had in my life, I came over to work for the County as the Assistant Deputy County Executive for Public Safety. As the Assistant Deputy County Executive for Public Safety, I essentially served as a liaison between the County Executive and all of the law enforcement agencies in the County, which includes FRES, the M.E.'s Office, the Police Department, Probation, the Sheriff, the District Attorney, and I advised the County Executive on law enforcement public safety matters, and had the good fortune of working with many of the great law enforcement officials in this County on some exciting crime initiatives.

We worked -- I worked very closely with Sheriff DeMarco on alternatives to Incarceration Programs. I worked very closely with Probation with Director Patrice Dlhopsky, who has been a tremendous partner. The Sheriff and the Probation Director have been tremendous in the movement to decrease our jail population. One of the programs that I had the pleasure of working with Director Dlhopsky on was the Enhanced Supervised Release Program, which directly led to a decline in jail population, which was part of the reason we were able to make such a forceful argument to the State when we successfully negotiated lifting the mandate to build a third jail.

I also had the pleasure of working with my partners in the region on several opioid heroin-related initiatives, including with Sheriff DeMarco and Art Flescher. Unfortunately, he's no longer with the County, which is a huge loss. And we piloted a program in the jail where we connected inmates who were suffering from opioid addiction with a medicine assisted treatment program using a drug called Vivitrol. Vivitrol is an opioid antagonist that blocks the opioid receptors, so it prevents you from getting high for 30 days. It's essentially a way to give individuals 30 days of sobriety, stability and clarity so they can stay in treatment. And then the program connected to these individuals are community treatment providers when they were released from jail. The program has been very successful in that jail inmates are being educated and guided in signing up for the program. So this is a very good thing that Sheriff DeMarco and I are continuing to track.

I worked on a number of initiatives. We can talk in more detail throughout the process about those things. I also got -- I had the pleasure of working on several crime initiatives with the Police Department, including the Violent Crime Task Force in Huntington Station, as well as the Violent Crime Initiative in Wyandanch. Both programs led to a direct result in the decline in violent crime in those communities.

I think it's -- you know, one of the things that I've tried to do while serving as the Assistant Deputy County Executive for Public Safety is collaborate with all my law enforcement partners, all of the public safety individuals in the County. You know, collaboration is key. Oftentimes, we work in silos, which doesn't benefit County residents. And, you know, I think one of my -- one of the things I'm most proud of is my ability to collaborate and bring certain people together in the County that otherwise wouldn't have sat at the same table.

I've been over at the Police Department since the end of November, first as Deputy Police Commissioner, and now as Acting Commissioner. And, as I said, the work that I get to see done and the people I get to interact with is humbling. There's no other way to put it. The men and women of the Police Department are tremendous, and I know this Legislature knows that. This Legislature is, despite being appropriately critical in many areas, is extremely supportive of the Police Department, and the Police Department appreciates that.

I've gotten to work on a number of different initiatives over at the Police Department. I think, you know, the first thing I'll say is just, you know, what our vision for the Police Department is moving forward, and it's pretty simple. We need to be rolling out crime initiatives that focus on the problems in the County, namely, firearm violence and drug -- and drug offenses. We need to bring down traffic fatalities, so we need to roll out an enhanced traffic enforcement program, which we've already done. We need to find ways to increase efficiencies in the Police Department and employ technology that comports with 21st Century technology to fight crime and make the Department

more efficient. And we need to increase transparency and public accountability for the Department, so that the people know how great the Department is, and so that the people can rely on the Department. And that so we build that trust with the communities, so many of those individuals that we heard from today, so that they trust the police. Without the trust and relationship with the community, we can't fight crime. We need partners to fight crime, and whether it's so that we know what's going on in communities, or it's because we need someone to cooperate in a murder investigation, we need to have that trust with our communities. So those are the broad strokes of things that Chief Cameron and I will be focusing on.

Since I've been over at the Department, I've conducted over 50 interviews. I've met with over -- well over 100 individuals in the Police Department. I've toured every single command. I've asked for and received a command analysis on every single command. I've met with over 20 community groups. I've met with half the Superintendents in the Police District. I've met with every single one of my law enforcement partners in the region. And if I haven't met with some of the East End Chiefs, they are on the calendar already. That includes Federal to local.

And Chief Cameron and I have identified several things that we need to do, some of which we've already done. And we're very excited about this new era to move the Department forward. It's important that we move the Department forward now and not six months from now, and I think Chief Cameron and I are beginning to do that.

One of the most important things we needed to do and we are doing is personnel decisions. After speaking to -- you know, speaking to a lot of the officers in the Department, to put it in terms that you all will understand, it's like knocking on doors during a campaign. You essentially solicit feedback from individuals, and you have to, you know, understand where they're coming from and understand the context, but it's invaluable. And there are a lot of different things that people say, ranging from staffing levels to morale, to, you know, "I need this piece of equipment." But there were some consistent themes, so the interviews and the interactions were invaluable, and we've taken steps to deal some of those things, and personnel decisions was one of them.

So Chief Cameron and I knew that we had to put a team in place right away, and we had to put a team in place that was unquestionable in their integrity, competence and experience. And that's why -- first of all, that's why Chief Cameron is the Chief of the Department. I don't need to belabor the point, because I know everyone in this room respects him. I often joke with Chief Cameron and I say I want to be him when I grow up. He's a man of integrity, he's a man of experience, and he's a man of just extreme competence. And he happens to be an expert in traffic enforcement and Homeland Security, and those are two things that we need to be focusing on right now, so it works very well. He also has a reputation, unlike former leaders of the Department, to work well with others. He's collaborated to the extent he could with other law enforcement agencies in this County, so he's the perfect man for the job.

And then we have the three divisions, the Patrol Division, Detectives Division and the Support Services, and we have three star Chiefs in charge of each Division. Chief Meehan is our -- is our Chief of Patrol. Unbelievable amount of institutional knowledge, integrity and competence. Chief Cassagne we promoted to Chief of Support Services. The man is a walking encyclopedia about the Department. And Chief Gigante, who was promoted from a one star to a three star, is a man who -- and he's Chief of Detectives. He thinks out of the box. He's incredibly innovative, I think has been stifled throughout his career, because he is so innovative, and now he's out of the box, and he's helping me develop very innovative programs. He's one of my -- he's one of my few point people that I use to have all my meetings with my Federal law enforcement partners. I can't be in two places at once, and Chief Gigante has been one of the guys where I can send to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and not worry about how the meeting is going to go.

So, you know, we have a tremendous leadership team in place. We have tremendous Commanding

Officers in the precincts, and we're going to be making some further personnel decisions, but we're moving in the right direction.

You know, there's been some talk from Legislators to me personally, you know, "You're not a cop. How are you going to earn the respect of the men and women of the Department?" One of the main ways I'm going to do that is through personnel decisions. What cops want to see in the Department is a fair process. They want to see people promoted and transferred based on merit. They want the opportunity to succeed, and they want the Department to move forward. So when we're making over 50 personnel decisions in the course of, you know, several weeks and they're all solid, that sends a very powerful message to the Department. It also is good operationally, obviously, to put the right people in the right spots for the right reasons.

So I'm not going to go into all the different initiatives that we've rolled out. We've rolled out an incredible number of initiatives that are already having a significant impact on the safety of Suffolk County, namely our traffic enforcement. I don't know if you all realized, I know I have, when you drive into work, there are more police patrolling our highways. We're out there in force. Traffic fatalities are down. We're targeting -- we're targeting traffic accidents that cause death, and mainly speed and distracted driving. We've rolled out initiatives dealing with gun violence, we've rolled out initiatives dealing with drug dealing, and that's just the beginning.

And I look forward to working with everyone in this room on whatever issues that affect the public safety and quality of life of our residents. And with that, I look forward to answering any questions.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I'm sure there are a few. I was looking at your resume, and it says you developed a pilot program, prevention program in Wyandanch, North Bellport. Is that the CODA (phonetic) Program, or what is that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

No, ma'am, that's the -- this is a gang prevention program that I worked with Jill Porter on, and Patrice, and Director Dlhopsky. This is an evidence-based gang prevention program targeting students at a very young age. So we can do everything we can on the suppression side. We can, you know, collaborate with our Federal law enforcement partners, we can increase patrols in areas where we're seeing high crime, and we should be doing those things. I created a new initiative called FAST, Firearm Suppression Team, that's going to be targeting gangs. And all those things are important, but the best way, and this is -- this is true with the drug epidemic as well, that the best bang for our buck in terms of public safety and finances is prevention. And we all know that someone who ends up in a gang, it doesn't happen later in their life, typically, and it doesn't happen overnight. It's a process of being assimilated into a certain culture, and as a result of that, we have to get to them at a very young age.

Some of the evidence suggests, and this program is based on that, that third grade is the optimal time to start talking to children who are at risk. So what we did here is we piloted a program using a gang prevention not-for-profit, as well as an evidence-based program called Why Try, and we are beginning to implement that program in those school districts. And Jill Porter is really the point person on that and the brainchild behind much of that, but, certainly, it was a collaborative effort. And, you know, I think in terms of prevention, we need to do more prevention work. I mean, we should have a drug prevention program in every single school district. And now, when we have, you know, the President of the United States and Congress talking about the opioid epidemic happening throughout the country, there's more and more opportunities for grant money.

I sit on the White House's Office of Drug Control Policy, New York, New Jersey HIDTA Regional Team as the County's representative, and we're doing some very innovative things there. We're analyzing, we're using a CompStat model to analyze data regarding opioid related overdoses, and we're putting public health and law enforcement people in the same room to collaborate on best

practices to bring down opioid related overdoses. It's sort of a think tank for prevention work based on data. We need to do that for gangs as well. So under the leadership of Chief Cameron and I, we will do whatever we can to assist the various agencies and Legislators to launch any prevention programs that are feasible.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. I know there's going to be a lot of questions, so I'm going to not say anything. Again, you know, we are pretty much under a microscope right now because of the Federal investigation, which I'm pretty confident is not over. So I think what's important is that the decision that's being made here today is to show that we are going to be a better Police Department than what we were in the past four years. I will not sugarcoat it. I believe that the decision that was made four years ago was basically a screw-up, royal screw-up, which has caused us to be under a microscope, and there's one person responsible for that. So you are coming in to a Police Department, and, again, I continually say it's not the Police Officers who are on the job, it's not the people who are working on a daily basis. But because of the actions of one individual appointed by another individual has caused this entire Police Department to be embarrassed. And that's what bothers me, because I know the guys in the Seventh Precinct, I know the guys in the Fifth Precinct. I deal closely with each and every one of them from the Inspectors down. And I have a lot of respect for what they do and how they respond, but I've heard from many of them how embarrassing it is for them what happened. And you have one hell of a challenge to prove that things are going to change for the better, and I'm going to leave it at that. But with that, I guess I'm going to let some other -- I do have some questions, but I'm going to hold off. Legislator Spencer, you have some questions?

LEG. SPENCER:

I do. I was the one that was the first on the list.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yup, you are. And I guess I'll start taking the names. Okay.

LEG. SPENCER:

Good morning, Tim.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Good morning.

LEG. SPENCER:

First of all, thank you for just the hard work that you've done and going through this process. And I appreciate the time that you've taken to meet with me and answer my questions privately, and also meet with members of my community. So I guess where we're all starting, I do have several questions. I think it's going to be quite a process.

I think that initially being skeptical with regards to just perhaps how young you are, but I have found that you are extremely talented. You're good at what you do, and you answered those questions for me as far as, you know, there are -- sometimes there are more officers who have experience on the job than you have years of life. And you had indicated that one of the things that you -- your role is, is to sort of bring people together, and process information, and show them a fair process. How have you so far been able to address a department where there are officers there that have many, many years your senior skeptics? How have you handled that process? Have you run into any skeptics, and what are your thoughts on that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I assume everyone I interact with is a skeptic, and I assume that because, like you said, many of these have been Police Officers longer than I've been alive. As I mentioned when I started, you know, this has been a humbling experience. And one of the reasons I've been able to successfully

earn the respect of so many people in the Department, even those who -- even those who I know were skeptics in the beginning is I've been very honest with them. I don't pretend to be a cop. I don't pretend to be -- to have 50 years of experience. I am who I am. I bring a certain skill set to the table, and I'm going to use that skill set to best serve the Department, and then I need to put together a leadership team that is able to assist me in making the right decisions for the Department and the County. And I think the ways in which I've been able to win people over, and, trust me, I know my work is not done in that sense, but the way I've been able to so quickly win over so many people is honesty and transparency.

The interviews that we've conducted in the Department are unprecedented. Police Officers have not been historically invited to the Commissioner's Office to sit down and tell him whatever they want. And to the extent that there are skeptics on this Legislature that they weren't honest, I assure you they were, and they were honest about problems in the Department, and they were honest about me. And the reason they were is because I created the culture from day one where that was encouraged. That is a 180, a complete 180 from the culture that existed in October of 2015, and I'm not going to shy away from that fact, and that's very important to understand.

So when you come in from day one and you promote transparency, you're having conversations, you're doing interviews, you're doing command tours, you're promoting the right people for the right reasons, you're putting people in control in positions of authority who have universal respect, who have significant substantive experience, who have clean Internal Affairs records, that's a good beginning. And as I said, there's more work that needs to be done, but my leadership team is tremendous. I tease them, I call it the "Dream Team". It really is stacked, and we're all reform-minded, we're all energetic, and we're looking forward to bringing this Department forward.

LEG. SPENCER:

Tim, I'm going to switch gears now talking a little bit about the district that I represent, Huntington, Huntington Station. And I'm very fortunate that I feel that I have one of the best communities to represent, and every Legislator will say that. But we've all had our challenges and -- within Huntington Station because of the concerns with the heroin issue, gangs, and then even seeing some issues with gun violence and murders.

And I know that there's been a lot of work that's been put into the community, but the community in and of itself as a result of this, where you have longstanding citizens that have raised several generations that are there that have said, you know, "Enough, we're not going to take this." You know, Huntington Matters was borne out of that, and I appreciate you sitting down with them. From your meeting with my constituents, and Huntington Station being one of the critical downtown areas that have had this concern, what have you learned so far, and with regards to some of the things that have currently gone on? Do you have any thoughts or things that would kind of put my constituents at ease with a commissionership under yourself?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I think the first part is making the Police Department accessible to the community groups. And I've met with several people in your area, and generally speaking, they're -- they have a positive perspective on their relationship with the Police Department, not without some criticism, but, generally speaking, it's positive, and I think that is a great step forward from where it was not too long ago. With that said, your -- the constituents I met in your district and the community groups I've met in your district, they require the highest level of service, they demand it, and that is -- I just have so much respect for that. And I know it probably makes your job even more difficult, but it's very -- it's uplifting to see such civic involvement in that area, and it's a great thing. So, one, you know, we'll be continuing to meet with them and picking their brain about ways we can make Huntington safer and better. They have direct access to the Precinct Commander and they all know that.

We have a new -- I'm sorry, I just got confused for a moment. We -- you know, we talked about

ways they can communicate with the precinct. One of the things I did when I had all these meetings, I said, "Look, here's my cell number, you can talk to me open door," but that doesn't mean -- you can do go to the Precinct Commander, or whatever other channel you have to the Police Department. You know, I want the community to be able to interact with officers that they've developed relationships with, whether it's the CO or someone in the precinct at a lower level. But one of the things that I heard from your -- from your constituents is the Five Corners. So, you know, I think what we should do, and I think it's all about collaboration, is sit down and speak to -- speak with the Town. I've already spoke with the Town about ways in which we can collaborate. Sit down with the Town, yourself, my -- the -- you know, the Second Precinct and develop a strategy to deal with some of the quality of life issues on the Five Corners.

I think, you know, it's -- I'm not of the mind set that the small things don't matter. So illegal loitering and public intoxication, those are things that we need to address. So I'm looking forward to working with you, I'm looking forward to working with the Town on working on some of those issues.

On a bit more serious note, there are open homicide cases that come out of the Huntington area. Open homicide cases is -- solving homicide cases is one of the top priorities of the Suffolk County Police Department. As a Federal Prosecutor, that's what I specialized in. I specialized in cold case murders, so, you know, I understand the -- you know, whenever we lose a loved one, the trauma is unbelievable, and when it's from homicides, it's from a murder, it's even worse. And then when it -- when it goes unsolved for a significant period of time, the emotional trauma to the individuals who knew the person and loved the person, as well as the community, is immeasurable. So it's obviously about bringing a murderer to justice, but it's also about repairing our community. So I say all this just to convey that we're going to do everything we can to solve those murders, including collaborating with our Federal law enforcement partners.

LEG. SPENCER:

And, you know, you met with the Town Board officials, you met with the school district, you met with my civics, you met with my community activists, and I will say this, that when your name was first announced, that I got a flurry of emails that were saying that you -- you know, "How can you support this? We need a bigger search." And you've been able to win over those people. But I'm going to ask you this question, and I'd rather it come from -- you know, really from someone that has a heart to have a constructive process. When you look across the country and you look at large cities, and you could do like a Bratton or big names where you see challenges at the top, what would be in your mind a reason for us not to say, you know, "Tim, why don't you be interim and why don't we go out for a national search?" Is there -- I would just love to hear your thoughts about that.

And my next question following up to that, and this is going to be, again, and I ask this with all sincerity, if I look at you and what you've done, and again, I'm impressed. You definitely won at least my commitment to work with you and to try to see that you do the -- you know, get the support that you need. But my question is, is that if you were the Deputy County Executive in charge of being the liaison with law enforcement, with some of the things that's brought us into like the national spotlight happening at the top of our Department, where were you? You know, I have to --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I was in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, that's where I was. So let me take the latter question first, and then I'll go to the -- I'll go to the former question.

So let's just talk about some of the facts. The -- we're all talking about here, obviously, referring to former Chief James Burke and the Federal indictment of James Burke for allegedly beating, assaulting a person in custody and then covering that up. That happened before I was in the County, and by the time I got into the County, the first wave of the Federal investigation was over. When I came to the County, I didn't know who James Burke was, didn't know who Christopher Loeb

was, and didn't hear the name Christopher Loeb for some time.

The second wave, if you will, of the Federal investigation occurred, to my knowledge, shortly before James Burke left the Police Department. The moment I was in a position to assist the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, I did, and I'm very comfortable with the decisions I've made.

Now on the -- on the former -- on the former question, I think, you know, it's important to have a confirmed Commissioner to move this Department forward now and not months from now. We've already -- Chief Cameron and I have already begun the process of doing that. And I think it's important to have a leadership team who's not going to be an interim leadership team to restore stability and continued forward-moving for the Department.

LEG. SPENCER:

Thank you. And then I'll just -- and I know it's going to be a long process, but I -- you know, you could see, obviously, I'm an African-American. And last night I was at the Police Promotion, a wonderful ceremony. I knew a lot of the officers that are there. They know that I am committed and dedicated to working with them and my door is open. I'm committed to working with you. And I don't tend to necessarily notice proportions and numbers of things, but I saw an auditorium filled with almost 2,000 people, a stage that had 300 officers on there. And I saw three women, and I saw in all of those promotions of hundreds literally moving up the ranks, I saw one African-American individual. And, again, I'm a big person that believes in qualifications, in process, and I know that there are challenges there, but when we start to look at a County that is -- you know, and I'm speaking just in proportion of, you know, where 50% women, there's a percentage of Hispanic people. And when I saw all of those promotions, literally hundreds of promotions, to see one African-American, I could be wrong about the women, I thought maybe two Hispanic, that's -- that's got to be a concern. It's a concern for me, because we know that there's, as well as the actual execution of the duties of public safety, there's the perception, there's a community perception. I just need you to comment on that.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I agree, that we need a Department that is more representative of the community it serves. We do not have enough African-American officers in the Suffolk County Police Department. We currently do not have enough Latino in the Suffolk County Police Department, although we're making significant progress on that front. I will say, regarding yesterday's ceremony, roughly half of those promotions were made under my leadership. The only female above the rank of Captain that I could promote was promoted, and she deserved it, obviously. But, you know, I think diversity and advancement and opportunity is going to be the main priority of this Department.

You know, last night we had three Hispanics, so you weren't off at all, you were pretty close. And, you know, I think it's very important to make sure that all people in the Department who are worthy of promotion are considered and properly advanced. That's why one of the things that I was stern about from day one was every single promotion or transfer gets advertised. So if we're moving guys from Criminal Intel to Narcotics, or whatever, creating a new team like we did with the FAST Team, it gets advertised and people can put in for it. And, certainly, diversity of background and experience is going to be considered in those -- in those decisions. Since I've been making personnel decisions, I've made personnel decisions regarding seven individuals of color or females, and I want to keep considering transparency and diversity in personnel decisions moving forward. The next class coming in is more diverse than the last, so that's good news. Again, it's not -- we're -- the number of Latinos in the next class is close to being exactly the number of Latinos percent-wise in Suffolk County; African-Americans, not so much. So we need to do more work on recruitment, and not only recruitment, but also mentoring and other assistance in terms of getting individuals through the testing prior to the academy, and then -- and then during the academy.

So the general -- my general response is I agree with you 100%. Making the Suffolk County Police

Department more representative of the community it serves is a top priority of this administration, and we need to do that both at the recruitment level and the advancement promotion level.

LEG. SPENCER:

Well, there have been, you know, really significant gains, and I'm looking forward. You know, it has to be an active process. We can't count on it being passive. And so when we say that recruitment, there literally has to kind of be a plan in place.

And, you know, tonight is a Black History program that I'm one of the speakers at, and one of the things that we've looked at is historically the relationship in Suffolk County and law enforcement and with the whole African-American relationship. There's been significant gains, if I could say it that way, over the years, and I do think that things are getting better, but I do think that we have a ways to go, and I hope that in addition to recruitment, that there can be an active program, because the community really needs that. I think it really breaks down a lot of barriers, both with regards to communication and just an important perception.

Definitely have a lot more questions, but -- and I have spoken, I guess, 20 minutes already. So with that, I'm going to defer. Tim, thank you. I really appreciate you going through this process. I appreciate you working with me, and, you know, I'm looking forward to working with you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I appreciate it, and I look forward to working with you. And you certainly live and serve in a great community.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Cilmi.

*(*The following testimony was taken & transcribed by
Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer*)*

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks, Madam Chair. Tim, good morning; it's still morning.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Good morning.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you for being here. You'll please forgive me in advance, I didn't really come with a prepared set of questions, so my thoughts may be somewhat scattered here.

I wanted to start by saying that if indeed you are appointed or approved today, and then appointed officially on Tuesday, I look forward to working with you. We have really profound, profound public safety oriented challenges here in Suffolk County, as you know; none bigger than the heroin epidemic throughout the County, none bigger.

In my mind, that epidemic should be the number one priority of this County. We spend perhaps a billion dollars or more on public safety in this County when you consider the cost of the Police Department, Probation, jails, District Attorney, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Fiscally speaking, from a tax perspective, it is profoundly important. Of course, from a personal perspective, to listen to the pain of parents or siblings or children of addicts is -- to say heart-breaking is an understatement. The money that we spend in public safety, in my mind, is chiefly a result of the drug problem that we have in this County.

So you are taking the reigns, you may be taking the reigns of a department that may have and should have a substantial impact on that issue. Unfortunately, over the past years, that I've been here at least, while I have turned to the Police Department on occasion to deal with drug-related

issues, I would say that the department hasn't been as proactive as I would have liked the department to be with those issues. And so I hope that that's something that you change.

We heard a lot today from supporters of yours. Today was -- would make for a wonderful character reference for you. But we're not debating here whether to appoint you father of the year, we're not debating whether or not you are -- you know, your qualifications as a political candidate; I know you have some experience with that. Lots of what we heard go to those things, they're character references. We heard about you being a stand-up guy, we've heard about how you helped connect a group with The Ugly Truth Program, we've heard you're compassionate and a veterans whisperer and a good man. We've heard about the need for change in this department. One of the questions that I have is -- and answer this as honestly as you can. If your objective here is to begin moving the County or the Police Department forward as Commissioner, what direction was the County moving in in the last four years in the Police Department? Based on what we know today.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

It's a mixed story. I mean, in terms -- if you look at crime, there is no denying the fact that crime has been dramatically reduced from 2011 through 2015, and that's because of several different things, mostly the hard work of the men and women of the Suffolk County Police Department. Also because the implementation of an intelligence-led policing model which, by the way, needs to be enhanced.

However, on the other side, and I alluded to this a bit in my opening statement, there were certain decisions made within the department that were not good, and a lot of those involved personnel decisions and other decisions to allocate resources in certain ways that we're going to change and we're going to move -- we're going to capitalize -- the objective here is to keep doing the things that are working and do them better, and find areas in the department where we can improve and just dig in and really work at that and improve the department in every way possible, whether it's finding efficiencies, whether it's focusing on crimes that weren't focused on, whether it's making right personnel decisions. You know, it's important to both recognize that the Police Department is an incredibly effective force in Suffolk County while simultaneously understanding that there's still room for lots of improvement.

LEG. CILMI:

The department is an effective force, but the department is only as good as the leadership of the department, and the County is only as good as the leadership of the County. And one of the greatest sources of my apprehension with your appointment is the person who's making your appointment.

Our County Executive fully embraced Chief Burke as the leader of our Police Department right from the start, and made it clear, in fact, to other members in the department that if you could not work with this Chief, you are not welcome in this department. Now we have the same County Executive who appointed Chief Burke and who then went on a national search for a Police Commissioner based on a number of very objective criteria. We have that same County Executive now, without any public search whatsoever, appointing you, a gentleman -- and I say gentleman with all candor -- a gentleman who has some experience in the U.S. Attorney's Office for sure, who I'm sure has a good heart and I'm sure will do -- you know, will put more than a hundred percent into the job; no one's questioning that. But without any search whatsoever and with an abandonment of the criteria that the County Executive himself stood on in making his first Police Commissioner appointment, he's now asked us to support you as Police Commissioner.

And so I'm asking you to convince me -- and you're not going to convince me today, to be honest with you. But I'm asking you, if you are appointed over the next year or so, please convince me that, you know, that you're different. Please convince me that you're able to manage a department of 3500 employees, according to the County Executive's own search criteria when he last appointed Commissioner Webber, a department that's budget is about half a billion dollars, if not more.

There are a couple of questions I have for you, though, today. You spoke about the appointments that have been made to the hierarchy of the department over the last several weeks -- Chief Gigante, Chief Cameron and the others -- and you specifically talked about them having clean Internal Affairs records. Was that something that was looked at when you made those appointments, or when whoever -- was it you that made those -- which of those appointments did you make as Commissioner and which of those appointments did the County Executive make, or the former Police Commissioner make?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

The leadership team of Chief Cameron, Chief Gigante, Chief Meehan and Chief Cassagne, I believe the personnel directive may have been signed by Commissioner Webber, but I take full responsibility for those personnel decisions.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So in taking full responsibility, have you actively sought information from Internal Affairs to ensure that they don't have the same types of problems that others may have had?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

When you were appointed Deputy County Executive for Public Safety, was any of that information available to you?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Deputy -- Assistant Deputy County Executive?

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

No.

LEG. CILMI:

So that wasn't part of your job description. You weren't really in charge of the public safety agencies in the County?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

No, I did not run --

LEG. CILMI:

You sort of described yourself as a liaison at that point.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yeah, I had no access to Internal Affairs records of any department. Prior to being --

LEG. CILMI:

Did the County Executive?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I'm not aware of his access to Internal Affairs records.

LEG. CILMI:

Do you think -- I mean, clearly -- you just said that you've looked at to insure that the current

appoint -- the most recent appointees had clean Internal Affairs records.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

And just to be clear --

LEG. CILMI:

Do you think that should have been done when others were appointed?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

And just to be clear, when I say clean Internal Affairs records; listen, aggressive cops, cops who make this County safer, are going to have Internal Affairs complaints.

LEG. CILMI:

Sure, absolutely.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

So we have to make -- we have to look at the Internal Affairs records and make a judgment about whether or not an unsubstantiated complaint should be relevant at all.

LEG. CILMI:

No doubt.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

And whether or not a substantiated complaint is -- really should hold someone back who could be a great three-star Chief. But the question as to whether or not Internal Affairs records should have been consulted with respect to any personnel decision in the Police Department, of course they should have been.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. I appreciate that. I appreciate that honesty because I agree with you. You talked in answering some -- in answering Doc Spencer's questions, with respect to your ability to gain respect from members of the department. You talked about making sure that appointments that were made were made based on a certain level of experience, people who had years of experience and developed a resume that's respected in the department. You specifically talked about going forward, that appointments of that nature would be advertised. How do you -- how do you reconcile that with what seems to be a contradiction in the way you've been appointed?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

When I was asked to serve as Deputy Police Commissioner with the understanding that I would become Acting Commissioner, it was a humbling request and it was a call for me to step up and serve my County and I said yes. I said yes not because I'm under some false illusion that I'm a cop or some false illusion that I know everything about how the way government agencies operate, I said yes because I'm confident in my own ability and I knew that I would surround myself with extremely competent individuals and that I have integrity and I can make the right decisions for the department.

LEG. CILMI:

And I don't fault you for saying yes, by the way, at all.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

My decision making process moving forward in the department is my own, and so when I explained to you the things that I did when I made personnel decisions, which was conduct interviews, review statistics of the person's police history, like arrest stats, review the Internal Affairs files, those are decisions that I made.

LEG. CILMI:

So I guess that begs the question if you were County Executive, some day you may be.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

(Shook head no.)

LEG. CILMI:

(Laughter). If you were County Executive, would you conduct a search with set forth objective criteria for an appointment such as a Police Commissioner?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I think every circumstance requires a different approach. And I certainly understand why the County Executive proceeded in the way he did, and that's primarily because you had essentially the leader of the department arrested and indicted and a Commissioner who clearly was planning on retiring, and he needed someone to get in there and hit the ground running and he needed someone in there who he did not -- who he knew had the integrity to do it, who he worked with and had confidence in. And he also wanted, one of the top priorities of the department is to reengage our Federal law enforcement partners, and he understood that I would be able to do that. I don't think he understood that I would do that in two months, but he knew I'd be able to get it done quickly. And on that note, you know, this is something that the department should be very proud of.

You know, at the end of November we had virtually no relationship with our Federal law enforcement partners. And let me just preface this by saying I don't believe that partnering with the Federal law enforcement agencies is a panacea, but as many people on this Legislature understand, it is a huge step forward in fighting crime for a variety of reasons. And since, you know, I've been over there, we've reengaged every single Federal agency. We have healthy relationships with every single Federal agency and we're rolling out new, exciting crime initiatives with many of them, including the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. You know, the irony is not lost on me that while some of their AUSAs are prosecuting James Burke, some of them are working with me. So it's, I think, the combination of the fact that he needed someone over there who he trusted, who he didn't question in terms of integrity and someone who could reestablish the Federal law enforcement relationships quickly is, in many respects, what drove his decision.

LEG. CILMI:

Madam Chair, I have two last questions. Thanks for being so forthright, Tim. One of the -- one of the things that you talked about in terms of your priorities was to increase transparency. Do you believe that requests by members of the Legislature for information that relate to precinct-specific issues should need to be kicked up to the Police Commissioner's Office for a response, or do you think that your Inspectors should feel comfortable and confident and free to discuss concerns with Legislators?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I've told all my COs that they should provide information to their respective elected officials to the extent permitted by law, and that is consistent with public safety. And I also emphasized that an elected official, you may be able to give an elected official more information than you can give to the general public. Absent national security issues, which is not what you're referring to I know, we should be sharing information with our elected officials, and not because we want to be nice or we want you guys to like us, it's because you're partners with us in fighting crime. In a lot of respects you drive what we focus on because you're on the ground listening to your constituents and feeding

us tips or feeding us general information. And my Precinct Commanders, I have 100% confidence in my Precinct Commanders to make those decisions on their own. And I also trust that if there's a gray area where they're not sure, that they'll kick it up the chain and they have full authority to make those decisions. They're grown men, hopefully we'll get a woman in charge of a precinct soon, and I think -- I think you'll see a notable difference in transparency.

LEG. CILMI:

Good to hear. Last question. So in the County here, the two departments, from an expense point of view, that are the largest departments in the County are Department of Social Services and the Police Department. These are departments in which the slightest of a percentage of reductions in cost could mean millions of dollars of savings to the County. So if the Police Department, for example, costs us, let's just say half a billion dollar a year, \$500 million a year, some say it's more than that; if we were to be able to save 1% in that department, that's \$5 million a year in savings.

As a Commissioner, I would view one of your roles as the Chief Fiscal Officer of the department. What do you envision and what can you do and what will you do in order to control costs in the Police Department?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

As you know, the vast, vast majority of our budget is to personnel. We need to do everything we can to find efficiencies to save money, and that's why I've developed a team to be doing a top-to-bottom assessment of areas in which we can find efficiencies and reduce cost; that includes people with performance management background and also budget. I'm looking forward to implementing any reforms that can save this County money.

The main driver of a lot of our costs are personnel which is in some respect out of the control of the Commissioner. However, there is one thing that isn't and that's overtime, and our overtime in 2015 was over \$40 million. We need to get a handle on what's driving the overtime and take steps to address that. And I look forward to working with my own team, with this Legislature and the County Executive on ways to reduce costs for the County.

LEG. CILMI:

I have many other questions for you, Tim. And again, if you are fortunate to be appointed to this wonderful role in a great department, with fantastic members, I look forward to working with you. And I would ask you, after Tuesday, that you call my office and we'll set up a time where we can both get together and have a more in-depth personal conversation about some of these issues and some others that I have as well. But for now, thank you for being here. I really appreciate your responses to my questions.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you.

LEG. BROWNING:

Thank you, Tim. And I will remember -- remind everyone, we actually haven't gotten to the bill, so if we can try and stick to questions rather than comment, because we do have the bill where we can comment all we want.

Can I jump in real quick? Because when we talk about openness and accountability with what's going on, I do remember ten years ago when we came in, we actually did have a meeting on Homeland Security issues. We have never had that meeting I think in probably nine, eight or nine years, and obviously that is not for public consumption.

There was one other issue that has been, and I'm sure all of my colleagues will share, asset forfeiture funds. There has never been any accountability or response to any of us with regards to asset forfeiture. How are you going to handle that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

So asset forfeiture -- well, first I should say, and I commend the Suffolk County Comptroller. I know what he's doing over at the Suffolk County Police Department. I don't know -- I can't speak in detail about what he's doing with other agencies, but my understanding is that he's dealing with other agencies as well. The Comptroller has taken a very active role in many aspects of the department's finances, and the Suffolk County Police Department welcomes that. We think that the Comptroller can be instrumental in moving the department forward with respect to how it manages its finances.

Since I've been in the PD, we've already instituted numerous financial reforms that have saved some money; I mean, when you think of the big picture it's small, but nonetheless, it saved bank fees and other administrative costs. We've added internal controls on how -- when we authorize checks to be paid out of the department. And in many respects, this is the result of working with the Comptroller, so I want to thank the Comptroller for his work.

With respect to asset forfeiture and the reason I brought -- the reason I thought of Comptroller Kennedy is because he's also auditing our asset forfeiture account, which is a good thing. The public should know generally how asset forfeiture works and where we spend the money. It's obviously not taxpayer money, but it's the result of action by individuals being paid by taxpayer money. And, you know, I look forward to working with this Legislature about how we can increase transparency surrounding asset forfeiture. You know, our asset forfeiture accounts, if anyone has any questions about our asset forfeiture accounts, obviously the door is always open. But I look forward to working with this body in a more systematic way on that issue.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay, I appreciate that, and definitely we will follow-up with that. Legislator Fleming.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you, Chairwoman Browning. Good morning. Sorry I'm not --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Good morning.

LEG. FLEMING:

I'm not feeling too well, so excuse my voice.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Good afternoon.

LEG. FLEMING:

I was just going to say, it is the afternoon, so good afternoon.
I appreciate your being here and being willing to serve, Mr. Sini.
Is it Seni or Sini?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

It's Sini like *I see your knee*.

LEG. FLEMING:

Okay, we got that straight now (*laughter*).

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

It's frequently mispronounced and I never have the heart to correct people.

LEG. FLEMING:

Well, now we know, on the record. So as a former criminal prosecutor, first I want to say I appreciate that you asked -- you waited for the Chair to instruct you to sit before you took your

seat. I know -- I was a prosecutor in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for almost a decade and I understand the lessons you learn about who's boss in professional courtroom are ones you don't easily lose, so I appreciate that. I think you and I operated in courtrooms very close to one another in downtown Manhattan.

My district, like my colleague Mr. Krupski, is by and large a district that has its own police departments. I do have an important but very small part of Brookhaven, but for the most part, East Hampton, Southampton and Shelter Island are policed by districts that are funded by our own taxpayers; they're very small districts and they cover very large geographic areas. So my interest, of course, in the larger issues is still -- I still have an interest in those larger issues, but certainly with regard to representing my constituents, I need to just ask you a few questions about how you view the relationship between the Suffolk County PD and the small Police Departments out east.

We rely on Suffolk County PD for a number of cooperative functions. Certainly the homicide function, very important to us. Luckily we don't have many homicides, but when we do, we need the Suffolk County PD to step in. We've recently had -- fairly recently had a couple of missing person's cases that turned into homicide investigations, and when you and I met privately I didn't have a chance to talk to you about it, but certainly we need to revisit the timeline -- and I'm talking as a former prosecutor here -- between when something is picked up by homicide and when it's carried by our local PD as a missing person's investigation. Specifically with regard response to the community with recent cases, we need to know and the community needs to know that we have the most professional homicide teams looking at missing person's cases if and when it's appropriate. I understand there are resources that have to be allocated there and that's important, but just so you know, that's a very important thing to our constituents.

Secondly, with regard to training, obviously we rely a great deal on Suffolk County PD; our cops come through the PD Academy, the Suffolk County Academy. And we have instituted in our Police Departments certain forward-moving training issues and protocols and I'm hoping that they'll be supported by the County. You've talked about community policing, the importance of getting into the community, certainly the witnesses who came and talked to us about your qualifications have reflected focus on community policing is something that I think works, especially when we've got these big drug cases and we need to investigate and prosecute. Can you just talk a little bit about how community policing fits in your vision for the Police Department and how training might roll out in a way that would effect our local PDs?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I think there are two benchmarks to the model of Suffolk County Policing, and certainly those are the two benchmarks that we'll be investing and moving forward and that's intelligence-led policing and community policing.

So community policing is paramount to the success of the Suffolk County Police Department. It's important for a variety of reasons. It's important that County residents feel comfortable interacting with their officers, they feel that they are receiving the service they deserve for the money they're spending to live here. They feel that it's their department. It's also important from a law enforcement perspective, if we want the community to help us identify crime and to cooperate in criminal cases we need their trust, and the way we do that is through community police. Whether it's through the SRO Program, which is critical, because there -- you know, as we talked about the gang prevention programs earlier, we're getting the kids at a very young age. They're learning that a police officer is their friend at a very young age, so the SR Program -- SRO Program is something that we need to continue to invest in. And we also need to keep our COPE Officers and have our precinct community meetings. And the leadership of the department needs to be reaching out to community groups and community members and being visible.

You know, one of the -- I've encouraged all of my Precinct Commanders, and most of them didn't need any encouragement, but to get out there in the community and talk to the folks that they're

servicing. Particularly in the communities of color because that's where some -- that's where you'll see the mistrust more. And that's partly for historic reasons, but also because the department's not representative of the community it serves, we need to increase diversity.

So community policing is incredibly important. Under my leadership, I'll do everything I can to invest in our community policing model and the SRO Program and our COPE Program is part of that.

We also recently rolled out some reforms regarding Internal Affairs, and I think that's going to go a long way in terms of community policing. Because if people have more confidence that the Police Department is responding to their complaints, that will increase public accountability and improve relations. And part of the reforms that we've rolled out were both substantive in terms of how we deal with cases, but also communicating with complainants; when somebody files a complaint with the Suffolk County Police Department, how we then follow up and keep in contact with them.

LEG. FLEMING:

I should note also -- I appreciate that. And with regard to information gathering, intelligence gathering and building confidence and trust in the community, I would echo Legislator Spencer's comments with regard to hiring and promoting folks who have a cultural affinity with the people that they're interacting with on a daily basis.

I just want to note that I appreciate your commitment to getting an excellent level, a top level team in place right away. I can appreciate considering that the PD is, I think we all agree, in crisis, that it's critically important to move very quickly and at the same time to ensure that the folks that you're putting in place are people who are going to be able to handle the job and do it well and have the experience to do it. I think we may also be facing that same kind of balance that we have to strike. And I appreciate, from my private conversation with you and what you've described, it seems as though you've been able to do that pretty well and I think it's super important and I applaud you for that.

Just one other area. You described the timeline briefly, I think, in response to earlier questions, of when you arrived at the County and relative to the Federal investigations. I can appreciate, as a former prosecutor, that you probably can't talk very much about any communications that you had or what you -- what participation you might have had in interactions with the Federal authorities at that time. But could you just describe generally how you feel relationships that you've already built with the Federal authorities and sort of your experience in how Federal investigations work might actually assist us in this time when we really need an independent, top-tier kind of criminal investigation happening with regard to what's going on in our Police Department.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, and just to go back to just an earlier comment you made in terms of intelligence sharing. I've met with many of the East End departments and one of the things we can do better is share intelligence with the East End departments, so it's going to be an initiative that we'll work on. I had attempted to reach out to Legislator Browning on this as well. We want to build a more technologically advanced intelligence center. I had the pleasure of visiting Nassau County Police Department's Intelligence Center and was very impressed, and I think we can improve ours. And what we want to do is essentially create an intelligence center where we invite other agencies to sit in it, or at least liaison with it, and that's going to include the East End departments.

In terms of our Federal relationships, you know, the State of the Union they say, you know, I'm happy to report that the state of the union is strong. You know, we're in good shape and I look forward to any questions regarding that.

When I first came in as Assistant Deputy County Executive for Public Safety, one of the first things I did was reach out to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. I had worked with an AUSA there on the Pagan's motorcycle case, so I had known him so he had set up a meeting

with me and the head of the office in Central Islip. I didn't know what was going on at the time, but now I look back on it I realize. I went there and they were polite, but I felt like they were sort of having fun at the notion that I was there trying to establish relations with them and to work with them because I think they understood how bad the relationship was between the Suffolk County Police Department's leadership and the U.S. Attorney's Office and other Federal agencies. Since I've been over at the PD, we've been able to completely change that.

I want to thank all the Federal law enforcement agencies for making that happen. They could have easily told me to take a hike. You know, we've historically had poor relations and, you know, *We're not going to just open the doors and embrace you now and work with you. There's, you know, been years of mistrust, etcetera, etcetera;* they did not do that.

The FBI, the ATF, the DEA, the U.S. Marshalls, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York were all gracious and excited to reengage the relationship. So I'm happy to report we have healthy working relationships with every single Federal agency in the region. We have -- we've restaffed our Federal task forces and we'll be doing some additional personnel movements with respect to the Federal task forces. With respect to the FBI Task Force, they had specific personnel requests that we were able to comply with.

With respect to ATF and DEA, we made additional personnel moves. We've also rolled out programs in conjunction with our Federal law enforcement partners. So we've created a FAST, a Firearm Suppression Team, which in part will liaison with ATF and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. We're creating a program called Trigger Lock with the United States Attorney's Office where when a Suffolk County Police Officer has a gun collar or a firearm case that makes sense to go Federal as opposed to State, we're developing protocols to get that case over Federally. And as you know, sometimes it makes sense to go Federal when the sentencing enhancements are stronger or for other reasons; that person may be a target of a Federal investigation and the gun arrest is what gets the guy to flip.

We're rolling out an Overdose Task Force. There's fortunately a Federal Statute that provides for a 20-year mandatory minimum if you can prove that a drug dealer caused the death of an individual. So we're working with the U.S. Attorney's Office on creating the right protocols to bring cases Federally under the appropriate circumstances.

We brought on the FBI in the Gilgo serial killer case; that's huge. We had a meeting with the FBI and the FBI, before I could say anything, before I could even say hello, you know, the question was essentially is this a real reengagement or is this, you know, a horse and pony show? We showed our commitment and I'm glad to say that the FBI is now fully assisting us in the Gilgo case. They're assisting us both with personnel and technical expertise.

With respect to crime initiatives moving forward, I think there's enormous potential to take advantage of the Federal resources and expertise, particularly in some of our high crime areas like Brentwood where we're seeing recently -- although crime is still down, we are seeing some recent incidents of violence. And that's -- you know, to the extent it's gang related, bringing in the FBI Task Force is just a huge asset because of their resources and the expertise, so we'll be doing that. So, you know, things are going well on that front.

We're going to be working also, and Legislator Hahn had brought this to my attention, you know, we've talked about human trafficking in the County. The Feds are in the best position to handle that case, those type of cases, so we're going to be partnering with Homeland Security, hopefully, on that issue, and I want to thank Legislator Hahn for bringing that issue to my attention.

There's just -- you know, the possibilities are limitless. And as I said before, working with the Feds is not a panacea. But as many of us know, when you bring some of these large RICO cases and when you bring the resources and expertise of the Feds to the table and you marry that with the

unbelievable investigative skills that our Detectives have and the unbelievable amount of intelligence that our guys have on the ground, it's just an awesome marriage and there's a lot of potential for driving crime down even further in Suffolk County.

LEG. FLEMING:

That's great. And just on the level of cooperation, I just wanted to ask briefly with regard to the East End Drug Task Force. When I first joined the Southampton Town Council, one of the first things I did was get a resolution passed to ensure that we, the Town, would cooperate and be a participant in the East End Drug Task Force. We have very small police departments out east and we all know, especially with the heroin epidemic, that drugs do not recognize political boundaries. We need the East End Drug Task Force to get drugs under control on the East End. I just want to make sure that you're committed to continuing that cooperation and that you're committed to -- I know Kate spoke about the forfeiture monies, I certainly appreciate that the forfeiture monies have to be carefully accounted for, but we have a sharing agreement with -- that is the town Police Departments have a sharing agreement with the County. I want to make sure that your commitment is strong to ensuring that the towns get the forfeiture monies that they have coming to them for the participation of our Detectives in the Drug Task Force.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Addressing the Opioid epidemic will be one of the top priorities, literally one of the two priorities of this department moving forward.

LEG. FLEMING:

And will that include the East End Drug Task Force?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, it will. And I also think our new relationship with the DEA Task Force will provide benefits to the East End.

LEG. FLEMING:

And with regard to the forfeiture money?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, we'll continue our commitments and I look forward to working with you on future initiatives.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you, I appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Kennedy, you had questions?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Sini. How are you today?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I'm doing well. Good afternoon.

LEG. KENNEDY:

We just had a discussion earlier, so you're aware of what I'm going to say.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, Ma'am.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Most of the Legislators have covered my other questions. First let me say that I am aware that the

choice of a Commissioner by Statute is the County Executive's choice. I personally feel that we should have sent out nationwide in there, but that is nothing against you. You have an excellent prosecutorial resume, I just think that it should have gone out farther as the precedent was.

We talk about openness, we talk about honesty, we talk about transparency. My fear is that our police force, which is now under the stigma of cover-up as a routine way of functioning that I know is not the case, needs to have strong leadership. I am thrilled with the majority of the people that you have chosen and the County Executive has chosen, and the reason I'm thrilled is not because I know them personally, but because when I ask Police officials from the bottom up and regular police officers, they all repeat the same things about the individuals that have been put in charge, so that is a good thing.

Last night I attended the promotional ceremony, I noted the same things Doc Spencer spoke about. I am sure that they will be changed later on and we will get additional minorities in there.

***(*The following was taken and transcribed by
Lucia Braaten - Court Stenographer*)***

LEG. KENNEDY:

I was thrilled that we have the three Spanish-speaking people to increase communication in the Department, but we need more. How can I put this? At this point in time, I do not have the full trust that there won't be political interference in the Police Department. The Police Department should function as an entity unto themselves that is responsible to the County Executive, the entire Legislature, but more importantly, to the citizenry. Whoever becomes Commissioner is going to have to prove that to me.

I will tell you, I left that promotional ceremony feeling very comfortable. And on the way, I was counting the number of Chiefs and the number of Inspectors, and I jokingly said to someone I know in the force, "Are we getting new precincts I don't know about?" And he said, "No, they're already placed." So in the car ride home, I'm wondering where they could they possibly be placed? And as I was getting ready to go to bed after 10 o'clock at night, I got on this little thing and popped on Newsday, where I found out that a large majority of people already knew where they were being placed.

You had a meeting with the County Executive and with two members of Public Safety, if not more. I'm on the Public Safety Committee, so are others. I don't know if anybody else was notified or invited, I wasn't invited. To me, that's a political thing that should not go on. We should all know about changes. And while the Newsday article did not go into as much detail as I would have asked for, I would like to know additional information on that.

I am hoping that, should you be elected, and you probably will be, that there will be an increase in trust, that you will realize that the Legislature and the County Executive are equal levels of government, and we cannot be selective in what we choose to share. Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you. And I do look forward to working with you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Krupski was up next, but I guess I'll have to move on. I'm not going to eliminate his opportunity to speak, but, Legislator McCaffrey, you're next.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Tim, it's nice to see you again. You know, probably me and you know each other better, more than most. And, listen, there's -- a lot of people come up and, you know, we went through a -- you and I went through a tough campaign against each

other, but there's no question, you're a -- as these other people have said, you are definitely a good person, hardworking, smart. You're responsive, you know, to the people you deal with, and I'm sure you would bring that same effort to the job as the Commissioner, if you're appointed.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I appreciate that, and right back at you.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:

Thank you. And so we had a discussion shortly after you -- you were courteous enough to come to my office, and, you know, you expressed your interest and you wanted to hear what I had to say. And, you know, my concern was specifically over the process, you know, and I still have those concerns, you know. And the question was asked before about whether or not the County would be better served if we reached out to other people to see if there may be somebody else that is more qualified than yourself. You know, you -- we had looked at -- four years ago there was a selection process in place. There was a committee set up of different people from the community and different walks of life to evaluate the different candidates. We did a nationwide search by putting an ad in the New York Times, and some of that criteria was education, which you clearly qualify for and -- but there's two other components and one was the law enforcement. And I know you've talked about, you know, your background as a Federal prosecutor. But what I want to really ask about is the managerial and administrative aspect of this. You know, we ask for eight years of administrative experience in law enforcement, and even when putting that aside together, can you talk a little bit about what your really hands-on managerial, supervisor, administrative experience has been in your career anywhere? Can you let us know about that?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Sure. And, you know, I think in many respects, I have a unique blend of experience that makes me well suited at this time to lead the Department. But that's not to say that I'm under some sort of illusion that I have tremendous managerial experience, or I have led departments the size of the Police Department. So I'll answer your question, but I just want to preface it with I understand the implicit point being made and appreciate it.

You know, with that said, when I was at the U.S. Attorney's Office, you know, I did have the opportunity to lead large teams of investigators and prosecutors from various agencies and jurisdictions who often had turf battles and had to manage those teams. I also worked with the leadership of the U.S. Attorney's Office to adopt best practices to make the office even stronger. And, you know, I was selected to work on those issues because of my ability to collaborate with others, my ability to communicate with people, my ability to convince stubborn people to do things. And, you know, when I came over to the County, while I wasn't a manager of any Department, I think I slid into that role similarly, where I was a bridge-builder between agencies and individuals. And, you know, I think the combination of my independent Federal Law Enforcement experience, my experience in Suffolk County, where I got to learn about all the issues that affect Suffolk County residents, and learn all the players in Suffolk County, provides me with significant experience, but I still can have that fresh perspective, because I haven't been here that long, I haven't been entrenched.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:

In today's Newsday, I'm not sure if you saw it, Julie Brown had an article about this, the whole thing, the whole process. And she pointed out the fact that we kind of short-circuited, you know, the last decision that the County Executive made without doing a search, and that was -- that was the Chief, and we all know how that's kind of working out for us now. And what I'm really concerned is the reflection on, you know, these hardworking men and women of this Police Department, and we don't want to see that again. And I'm not concerned about your background in terms of that, but it just brought out the need to do the selection process.

And there's a lot of people that talk about it. In fact, people from the, you know, Hispanic

community came up here and the minority community came up, and people, Civil Liberties Union came up and said, "Look, I think we need to take a hard look at the process before we do it." And we had that discussion when we sat down, and I told you if we -- if we didn't do that process, I couldn't support your nomination. But if we did that process and you turned out to be the best person for the job based on whatever, you know, certain criteria, I would be the one to make the motion to confirm your appointment, you know? And so I kind of still feel that way, but had it -- so my question to you is, if you were sitting in this seat, which could have possibly happened by just a few hundred more different votes going a different way, would you also be insisting that we -- as I am here today, that we -- for the people of Suffolk County and looking out in their best interest, that we should at least take a look to see who's out there?

You know, Nassau County had an Acting Commissioner for a year-and-a-half, and I would not be opposed to having you in that position while we do the search, and give you more time to show what you have, basically, and put you in a better position to be in there. But at least we can say we have done that process.

And so my question is do you think that serving the residents of whatever district or the County, that we better serve, not just your department, but any Commissioner's job that we had, that we do the search and see who else was out there?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

If I were you -- if I were you, I would vote for me.

*(*Laughter*)*

I think -- I think it's important to have a confirmed Commissioner, and I think -- I encourage you to talk to Nassau about that. You know, I think there are some drawbacks of drawing out the confirmation process and having an Acting Commissioner in the position of authority for too long. And I think I've hit the ground running and I look forward to moving the Department forward.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:

Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, Legislator Krupski, you were next.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. I'll say welcome to the Committee, even though I'm not a member. And I appreciate, Madam Chair, the opportunity to speak.

So picking a Police Commissioner, and I know Legislator Fleming was a Police Commissioner also in a small town, and when you -- when a police officer responds to something, the people don't ask, "How big is your department," or, "Who's your commissioner, you know, they need help. So a lot of the -- I am familiar with what the Commissioner does and should do, and I am familiar with a lot of the processes of the Police Department and how it should operate.

And I had an opportunity to speak to you earlier this week, and we spoke about a lot of different things that relate to police work. Some of the things that people are very concerned about, drugs, and gangs, and immigration, and we talked about things that are basic to police work. But no one really talks about much like fleet management and license plate readers, and things more mundane, processes of the Police Department and functions.

And I do have a question, a couple of questions, but I'm -- just in the most generic terms, I did speak a month ago to the County Executive and I asked him, you know, why he didn't conduct a -- cast a wider net, because I don't know you, and I think we met once before this process, and why he didn't cast a wider net. Sometimes you have someone that's very obvious for the job, and sometimes you don't have a good candidate. And his -- you know, his explanation was that he had a lot of confidence in you. So that's -- because I know when you hire people that you don't know, and I don't know you, and if you cast a wide net, we'd have a wide range of candidates to vet the question. And in the end, if you don't know they of them, then it is sort of a pig in a poke. So if you have a good reference, it is -- it is very valuable.

I would like to -- and I'm glad, you know, Bridget asked questions about the East End. I have spoken to both of my Chiefs about this, because they have a relationship with Suffolk County Police Department. I do cover part of Eastern Brookhaven. Every time I've called or my office has called about an issue in the Police District, we've received, I think, very good service, very good response, so, you know, I have no complaints about that.

One of the questions I have is about the Federal -- and just to follow up on what Bridget said, it's your cooperation with the Federal people, because, right now, just kind of as a parallel, a lot of us are concerned about Connecticut dumping contaminated or unconsolidated dredge spoil in Long Island Sound, and who's behind this? So it's not -- it's not like the government is going against private industry. This is the government at one level, EPA Region 2 and Connecticut DEEP advocating for dumping this dredge spoil in Long Island Sound. So it's really up to New York State Department of DEC and New York State Department of DOS to go after these people and try to stop this.

And so at that level, it's kind of a ridiculous waste of taxpayer money, and that's the concern. So could you -- could you kind of outline the way you plan on work with the -- have worked and are working with the Federal authorities? Because when you cooperate, you end the duplication of work, and you do get, I think, a much better product for the taxpayer.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, absolutely. So one of the things we've been able to do already is because we've reengaged our Federal law enforcement partners in such a meaningful way, we've been able to change the focus of our Narcotics Division, I should say Unit, to drug homes where drug dealing is occurring. And we've -- historically, we've been focusing on high value targets, and we're doing -- we were doing a really good job. We were not executing a ton of search warrants, but we were seizing a lot of drugs. Under my leadership, we're shifting that to concentrate on homes where drug dealing is occurring, so we're going to be executing more search warrants, and maybe not, you know, the king pins, but, you know, houses that really affect the quality of life, public safety of our communities. And I'm able to do that with confidence, because I know we're not going to neglect the larger drug dealers. Why? Because we've engaged our Federal Task Forces, we're working with the U.S. Attorney's Office, so we're able do both with -- you know, I'm not going to -- I'm not going to commit to say it's cost neutral, but, certainly, it's not a matter of developing a whole new team. Moreover, the opportunity to receive asset forfeiture money as a result of Federal cooperation increases.

We get our asset forfeiture money from a variety of sources. Our two main sources is the Federal Government and the State. So the more Federal cases we do, the more asset forfeiture money we can receive. Now the bad news on asset forfeiture money, just when we reengage our Federal law enforcement partners, the Department of Justice has frozen their Equitable Sharing Program out of the Department of Justice because of a budgetary crisis. But I'll say two things about that. One, we still have money coming from the Treasury. Two, I think, and this is sort of a call to action, if anyone's listening, I think, you know, local law enforcement agencies should be working together right now to lobby the Federal Government to end the sequestration of those funds.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. And I know it's kind of been asked before, but it's the overtime issue that's been troubling a lot of us here, and it's -- I know, being involved before, overtime is sort of a balance between how many new officers you're going to hire and pay them forever, versus if you can get by with some overtime today and have, you know, proper coverage of every area that you want to cover. How do you -- how do you plan on making that balance?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

You're absolutely right, so it's finding that sweet spot. And so what we're doing right now is we're doing an in-depth analysis of our command staff -- I'm sorry. We're doing an in-depth analysis of our commands to determine what exactly is driving overtime; to what extent is it personnel shortage, to what extent is it other factors. And even when we talk about personnel shortage, does that mean we need more guys, or does that mean, you know, we're not managing time off in an effective way? So we need to really take a hard look at this and get at the root of what's driving overtime.

I look forward to working with this Legislature and the County Executive to hire more Police Officers. The question is what's the appropriate number, and that's the analysis we're going through right now.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

You're good?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Yes, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Martinez.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Hello, Tim. How are you?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Good afternoon. I'm doing well.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

First of all, thank you for being here. You've been here a while now, and I'm surprised you haven't gotten up to go to the bathroom with all that water you're drinking. But I just wanted to say, first of all, thank you for coming into my community and speaking to different groups, speaking with me. And if appointed, you know, I do look forward to working with you.

The questions I do have for you stem from community concerns that have been brought up to me as the elected official in the 9th District, which is Brentwood, C.I., North Bay Shore. And you actually just mentioned Brentwood and increase in crime. In the last 35 days, I believe, there were four violent acts, okay?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yeah. It was -- you know, although crime is down, it's -- we've had a -- several incidents that are of concern in sort of rapid succession.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Yes. And the concerns right now that my community has are valid, okay? They are of major

concern, especially a lot of it has to do with our children, okay? So what they would like to know is what are your plans on tackling this issue, one, right now, and then two, later on, when the summer months come across, you know, the kids are out, so what are your plans on that? I have several questions, so, you know, we'll go one by one.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

So one of the areas of focus that the Department will be honing in on like a laser is firearm violence and violence in general. And, you know, I just want to take note, you know, Chief Cameron and I didn't list the 10 things we want to focus on, because that would be unrealistic and ineffective. We're really going to hone in on three main categories of problems in the County, and that's firearm violence, drug dealing and traffic fatalities. And the firearm violence is driven by the -- when you have a trigger pull or a shooting, and certainly a homicide, it's driven in large part by gangs. A lot of the firearm crimes are driven by the robberies, which is a mix of the opioid epidemic and gangs/street crews.

So what are we doing about violence in your community? We just created a new team, and this is, the way -- the best way I can describe it, it's sort of the Department's new Navy Seals. We recruited the best and the brightest. It's a mix of Police Officers and Detectives. It's in part, but not entirely, modeled after a previous program called PSOT, so if anyone on the Legislature is familiar with that, and it's going to enhance patrols and investigative steps in connection with violence in high crime areas, including Brentwood. And it's also going to leverage Federal assets by partnering with our Federal law enforcement partners, namely FBI, ATF and U.S. Attorney's Office. We're already collaborating with the Feds in connection with your community on multiple fronts. It's very new, both the collaboration with our Federal law enforcement partners and the FAST Team. It literally was started up I think last week, if not the week before.

So it's -- I am very optimistic about this. I think they're going to liaison with our Intel, they're going to liaison with the Feds, and we're just going to hone in on problem areas like a laser. And it has both the patrol and the investigative side to it. So that way we can engage in evidence-based policing practices, like hot-spot policing, which that's a fancy word for putting a cop where there's a problem. And we can engage -- we can make sure that our highly trained Detectives have the resources they need to focus on the violent crime.

One of the things that I would love to do in your district is more community outreach with respect to children and how we actually conduct police work. With need to do a lot of work on community policing, and some of it is, you know, community events and having meetings. But I think, you know, at your -- you know, this is something that you raised the other day. This is, you know, something that you came up with, and I really want to take you up on it. The idea of having children work with Police Officers, like reconstructing crime scenes, getting them interested in the Criminal Justice System, is something that I think could be yet another tool in our community policing toolbox.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Oh, thank you, and I appreciate that. I think -- look, I love my district, you know, I love the kids that are there. I was there for 14 years in the education system. They're awesome kids, you know, and they need more programs, you know. But, at the same time, we also need more cops on the streets. But then at the same time, you're saying we need more programs, you know, in the schools, but then we have too much overtime, you know. So, you know, yeah, you do have to find that middle ground where you could satisfy -- you know satisfy the different, you know, facets that we're trying to really hone in on.

And one of the other things that is very dear to me is I represent a very diverse community. You know, we have about 19 languages, dialects spoken in my district, okay? And one of the other issues that my community faces is the fear of speaking to P.D. because of the language barrier, or even in terms of how they are received certain times. And I, as you know, and Commanding Officer

of my precinct, the Third, I've become a liaison between the community and the Police Department, which I think it's great. But I also feel that they should feel comfortable enough to go to the precinct and say, "This is what I have, this is my problem, how can you help or where should I go?" And with that said, when -- even when they go, I mean, I know we have the language accessibility, and they have the option of speaking into a phone, but that also delays time and the efforts being made, not only by the person itself coming in, but P.D. as well.

So just in that, you know, I just want you to also be cognizant of the different districts that you're going to be overseeing. Every single district on this horseshoe is completely different, you know, with different problems, different makeups, different social makeup, economic makeup, you name it, okay? And that's why we make Suffolk County so great, because we're so diverse.

But my question with this is, are you committed to conducting consistent community service in different languages, all right, to see how P.D. is creating certain relations in the district? And then are you willing to make that data public in order to continue with that transparency?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Receiving feedback from the community can only strengthen the P.D., so that's -- this is something that I'm committed to working with you on. You know, it's important that we know how the community perceives the Police Department, because in many respects, perception is reality, particularly when you're dealing with the Police Department, because if people don't feel they can trust the Police Department, we can't effectively partner with the community to fight crime. So I'm committed to working with you on these issues

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Thank you. And, look, we've gone to several community events, you know, where you have been there with faith-based leaders, our school districts, and I think it's great. I really have not heard too many negatives, you know. Yes, your age, but I don't really think that's -- age is just a number, I think. And, you know, you have brought great ideas forward and I do appreciate that. And I do appreciate whenever I've called, you know, even if I get your voicemail, you call back immediately. And whenever there's something going on in my district I was not aware of and you knew about it, you also let me now, you know. So I do appreciate that communication that we're also having.

And my other question, which has kind of touched base. You know, I think Spencer touched base on it and a couple of other individuals, and that is making up the gap in terms of representation of racial and ethnic minorities in the P.D., and how you plan to address that gap.

And my concern, too, because we were just discussing about how, you know, it is a civil test, you know, it is a Civil Service job and there is a test, and a certain amount of number has to be reached in order to even be considered. But my issue with that, too, is, and I would like to see how you plan on moving forward with this, not everybody is a good test-taker. You know, not everybody learns the same way, you know? Differentiating instruction is what leads everyone to, you know, higher positions in life. So how do you plan on, one, increasing, the minority-based -- which I know you already mentioned that a little bit, but we're so tight into this test, and I know changes have been made to this test, but, yet, we're still relying on a number.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Right. And the test that's coming in, although we saw significant improvements in the number of the class, I should say, coming in, we saw significant improvements in the number of Latino individuals. I'm not too impressed with the number of African-Americans. So, of course, as your question hits right on the head, we need to do a better job of recruiting people, and then we need to make sure that they're -- they have the tools to succeed during that process.

As you know, we have a consent decree with the Department of Justice regarding recruitment and

hiring of Police Officers, and, you know, under the new administration, we have a very different perspective on some of these settlement agreements with the Department of Justice. We have two. We have the consent decree that dates back to the '80s, and then we have the settlement agreement that came in on the heels of the Lucero murder in Patchogue. And, essentially, it's an opportunity for us to brainstorm with the Department of Justice, who is very valuable, because -- not because they necessarily know how to run a Police Department, but because they are working with all these different agencies in the country to improve hiring practices. So they essentially have -- you know, they're essentially a pool of resource for best practices.

And I think what we need to do is we have our team together who deals with the Department of Justice in connection with that consent decree, and we really need to start thinking out of the box. And we also, frankly, we need to invest in recruitment. You know, we need to recruit people, and we're doing some good things. You know, we're recruiting from the military, we're recruiting from African-American universities and colleges, but we need to step up our game, and we need to use social media. And there's a lot of -- this is -- this actually makes me laugh a little bit, because this is where my youth certainly is a strength. You know, the Command staff doesn't understand Twitter. They say they do, but they have no idea.

*(*Laughter*)*

They think Nixle is Twitter, and reposting Nixle on Facebook or through Twitter is not effective, and I'm going to convince Chief Cameron of this within a couple of weeks. But we need to -- we need to invest in social media and use that also as a recruitment tool.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

You see, now I find that very offensive, but I'm not that good with Twitter either, so the fact that you just said that.

*(*Laughter*)*

But I have two more, two more questions. One is, one of -- you know, one of your goals and your objectives are to increase efficiency, and with that would be introducing new technologies and things of that nature. So how do you plan to include or utilize new technologies in improving our Police Department?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I think, generally speaking, we just have to be open-minded and study other departments. The -- like our relationship with the Federal Government, we can stand to improve to increase our collaboration with Nassau County, which we've already done since I've been there. I had a meeting with -- and I apologize if I get his rank wrong, but I think it's Detective Sergeant Patrick Ryder from the Nassau County Police Department. Some of you, I know, have met with him. And, you know, in some ways, and maybe this is not, you know, typical of an Acting Commissioner to say, but in some ways Nassau is ahead of us with respect to the use of technology and I think we can learn from them. I think there are private institutions in the County who have expressed interest in partnering with the Suffolk County Police Department to pilot different programs to utilize technology in crime fighting. I'm particularly focused on building a real state of the art intelligence center with more of a capacity to do real crime data.

I should be able to press a button and say I want all the robberies in the past, you know, 2.6 days. And, you know, we need a system that will be able to manipulate data like that (snapped fingers), and extremely efficiently and effectively, and make it user friendly, and then make it accessible in our vehicles. So we -- you know, we have -- we have a database, we have an Intel database and there are certain functions on it that's impressive, but I'm not overly impressed, so we need to invest in that.

We also need to find ways to make sure that our officers who are on patrol can focus on self-initiated activities such as traffic enforcement, and hot spot policing, and real police work, as opposed to filling out paperwork and responding to, you know, nonemergent 911 calls. I know Legislator Cilmi requested a study to be done regarding the efficacy and cost effectiveness of online police report generation. That's something that in principle is -- I think is a great idea, and we're studying how it would play out in Suffolk County. I look forward to meeting with the Legislature on that.

There's also some other, you know, mundane but important things we can do. We used to have something called the 1060 Program. 1060 is a police code where a police officer can get permission to not fill out a police report when they have an unfounded call. You can use them in connection with false alarms and other types of cases. Now that we have our CAD system and our 911 system, it's not as if there isn't a record of the call and the response. So instead of having the cop fill out paperwork for 15 to 45 minutes, you know, you 1060 it and you save that time.

And the criticism in the past is that Police Officers abused the 1060, they utilized it when they shouldn't, but that's like throwing the baby out with the bath water. So what we need to do is implement, develop and implement proper supervisory protocols to make sure it isn't abused, and Chief Cameron is working on that as we speak, so we'll be rolling that out.

There -- we need to, you know, track response times on a daily basis and figure out where the problems are. We do track response times on a daily basis, but we have to react to it. You know, we have to figure out why are response times the way they are. And, you know, I think we just need to take an all-comprehensive approach and not -- you know, just be willing to change anything. You know, just because we've been doing something for 30 years doesn't mean we should continue doing it. And technology -- I mean, everyone's been to Headquarters. I mean, we have wood paneling on the walls. I mean, in some respects it's symbolic of some of the systems we have in place, and, you know, I look forward to working with the leadership team to move the Department forward.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Thank you. You know, one thing that you did mention is that Nassau is ahead of us, you know.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

In certain respects.

*(*Laughter*)*

LEG. MARTINEZ:

In certain respects. So give me one thing that they use right now that you would like to see Suffolk County implement.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Well, one, they have more license plate readers. I think license plate readers are a tremendous asset to Law Enforcement and I would like to purchase more.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Anything else that they use that you would consider --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Well, their intelligence platform is better than ours. Ours is good, but theirs is better. So, you know, I want to work with Nassau, I want to work with other private institutions to help us develop the best intel center in a suburban Police Department in the country.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Okay. And then my other question, and that's because I just saw Laura Ahearn right in front of me, my district has many sex offenders placed. You know, we constantly get the letters. So I would definitely love to see, and you already do with -- the P.D. works awesome with Parents for Megan's Law, you know. But a class just sent me letters about issues that they have of concern in the district. And I don't know if the teacher picked the topics, you know, but the majority of them were about sex offenders in the district and their fear, their fear that they've been approached by many already, you know, just walking home from school and things like that. And I know we have SRO officers in both C.I. and Brentwood who are amazing. And, you know, I just definitely want to make sure that that continues in collaboration with Parents for Megan's Law and the P.D.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

The Suffolk County Police Department is committed to do everything we can to address sex offenders in Suffolk County. I think this Legislature has done tremendous work on this issue and I look forward to working with it in the future. We're entirely committed. We just made some changes to our Special Victims Unit that we believe make it more effective and efficient.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. While Kara is grabbing her seat, did you visit their ShotSpotter system, how they operate --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Their ShotSpotter system is at the Intel Center, so yes, I did.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right. Do you think that that's something that we could work a little better on?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Glad to hear that. Kara, you're next.

LEG. HAHN:

Hello there.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Hello. How are you?

LEG. HAHN:

I'm doing okay. It's so hard to go -- like what, am I tenth on the list? So many things have been -- right about there, right? So many things have already been asked.

I have to tell you, I am incredibly proud of this Legislature. I think that there have been a number of very good, very fair questions. Now, of course, Legislator Trotta hasn't gone yet, so be ready.

*(*Laughter*)*

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I'm going to take my bathroom break before Legislator Trotta goes.

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Do you want it now, should we recess?

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Just make sure you come back

*(*Laughter*)*

LEG. HAHN:

Sorry, Rob, that was just a joke. I do want to thank everyone who came out today, I don't know if anyone's left, but to speak. I know my other colleague sitting next to me, you know, mentioned that there were just a lot of character references. But I feel like, hell, yeah, we need character references, given what we've just been through. And they certainly -- I very much appreciated everything. You know, I listened to everyone who spoke. And I listened to, you know, other than when I took my bathroom break and went and got a soda, you know, I listened -- did I say it wrong -- listened to everything you had to say, and I'm incredibly impressed. I mean, I've been impressed by you, but I really think, you know, you've done a strong job here answering all these questions, communicating to us, and clearly spelling out a vision for the Department, hands-on way in which you're approaching the job, a real interest in changing the culture and the morale there. I think it's incredibly important that you're shooting for a meritocracy, not a system based on nepotism. I think that's -- I heard from a number of officers that I know personally about the importance of that. And so I think you're -- you know, you've already taken a number of strong steps.

I, too, am someone who did speak to the County Executive, and when I was informed of the retirements, you know, the first thing I said was do a national search. And certainly, you know, we wish -- we wish they did, but here we are, and I'm just -- I'm incredibly impressed.

I hope you don't mind, I am just going to ask Deputy County Executive Jon Schneider just to come up for one second. I just want on the record, because I did read something, I think it was just an online article, but that kind of gave a flip response to the back -- because the other thing I had asked the County Executive was just not to make the same mistake, and to make sure -- I mean, I have absolutely no reason to believe there's anything in your background, but I asked him just to make sure that we don't make the same mistake again and that he's doing a thorough background check. And so I just -- because of what I read in the paper and I thought it -- not in the paper, it wasn't in the paper, I think it was online, an online story, I don't think it did -- it did its own justice to the diligence that you've taken on this. So if you could just --

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE SCHNEIDER:

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you, Legislator. As you may be aware, in order to be a candidate to work in the Office of the United States Attorney for the Southern District, one needs to go through a full FBI background check, which I think Commissioner Sini has been through and has been cleared, and was subsequently offered a position.

Our office has been in contact with all three of Mr. Sini's direct supervisors in the United States Attorney's Office. All three have confirmed, confirmed to us that he received outstanding performance reviews. And, additionally, the current U.S. Attorney for the Southern District, Preet Bharara, has said publicly that Tim Sini served that office with integrity and distinction. We've also checked with both the Southern District of New York, as well as the Department of Justice Office for Professional Responsibility, and in his time in that office, there were -- there were no allegations

made against him. There were no charges filed against him in any way. So we've talked extensively with people in that office and received nothing but glowing reviews, I think some of which have also since made their way directly from his supervisors to this Legislature.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you, Jon.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE SCHNEIDER:

Thank you.

LEG. HAHN:

I just want that to be clear. There was just online -- you know, some -- an online story that made it seem like there wasn't that kind of review done, and I think that's important that that's on the record. Clearly, your record here has been exemplary, and, you know, we appreciate all your efforts.

I -- there's so much that's been covered, but I do want to highlight just a few things. Obviously, the drug addiction problem, thank you for all your work on that. I just want to add my name to those here who have -- you know, we've -- we've worked this one over already. You're clearly on top of it. You need to know it's -- you know it's -- you do know it's a problem everywhere. I just want to add that I brought that up, because it's extraordinarily important in my district, as everywhere else.

The other thing, the concern about you having worked directly with the County Executive for so long, and while I totally understand his -- you know, how this has worked out, it makes sense that he wants someone he trusts and has seen firsthand the integrity. One of the problems we as a Legislature, you know, may feel with you coming in now in this role is in the past, appointments have not wanted to be fully honest with us in front of this committee, have not wanted to say, "We need more personnel," when we need more personnel; have not wanted to tell us, you know, in an open, honest forum, in an open forum honestly about the needs of the Department, because, look, we're in a tough fiscal situation. But we need to know that you can come here and tell us, and, actually, we need to know you will come here frequently. You know, it doesn't have to be every month, but -- I don't think, maybe, but we need to have open communication with you, we need to have honest communication with you, and you need to let us know when we need things.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I'll make myself available at the request of the Legislature to discuss any issues that are occurring. I also will always be straightforward and honest with this Legislature. You know, there are -- you know, let's just talk very bluntly about hiring Police Officers, because that's clearly what -- you know, that's one of the big issues. You know, in many respects, that's a decision that's -- you know, from the Police Department's perspective, we can make recommendations to the County Executive about what we need from an operational standpoint, and we can also give insight as to the number of personnel that would have an impact on bringing overtime down.

In terms of how much the County can afford and other fiscal questions, I look forward to working with the County Executive and the Budget Office on that and this Legislature. But, you know, of course, you know, it's not up to the Police Department how many people we hire.

So I look forward to working with you. I look forward to coming to the Legislature and speaking with you about all these issues. I look forward to answering your questions that relate to the P.D., and I look forward to working with all the people involved in the process, particularly the hiring process.

LEG. HAHN:

Right. We right now are at the lowest number of sworn officers since 1993, somewhere around

that, so, you know, it's --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yeah. I don't think it's -- let me just be very clear. We need to hire more police officers, so there's -- I don't think there's any ambiguity in that statement.

LEG. HAHN:

We're also facing a time where, you know, folks are going to be retiring, they're reaching that point, many, many, many of our officers, and Legislator Browning has been, you know, talking about this for years now. We have to be prepared. We have to be in a place where we're not retiring so many that, you know, it's too much youth. Youth is good, yes, we get it, I know it, but there -- you do need within the Department --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yeah, you don't want to lose all the institutional knowledge. And, you know, the good thing, the -- as of now, retirements are under projection for 2016. That may change, but, you know, we need to not only to do an analysis of what we need operationally, what would help the overtime problem, but we also, obviously, have to take into account retirements, because it could be that we hire, you know, 50 cops and then lose 50 cops, and that did nothing, so that's got to be part of the analysis.

LEG. HAHN:

Absolutely, and that's part of the problem that's been happening, is we've been hiring fewer than have been retiring.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Right. So --

LEG. HAHN:

Fewer, so it's a problem. Would you be able to share the Command analysis with us, analyses?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Well, I mean, it's not all, you know, in paper or, you know, written down. I am going to be transparent with this Legislature, and will provide, you know, facts, and statistics, and historical analysis that will help this Legislature make policy decisions. I view my role in part as Commissioner to assist the Legislature in its public safety decisions. According to the Charter, this Legislature has oversight responsibility for the Department. And as a result of that, I feel part of my obligation is to make sure I keep this body educated.

LEG. HAHN:

911 Operators, there is a serious ongoing problem with staffing and personnel there. It is unacceptable, and I need you -- I need you to figure this out. No one has been able to figure this out. It is unacceptable that we are using overtime to fill daily staffing shortages. These people are tired. These people are, you know, being totally taken advantage of and abused, quite frankly, over there. And we haven't been able to figure it out so that mandatory overtime should be saved for hurricanes, major fires, you know, blizzards, you know, some holidays, maybe. But it just cannot be day to day staffing is filled with mandatory overtime. I mean, it's outrageous. And we need -- you know, that's -- people count on -- you hear about problems, people calling and there's a wait. You hear about -- you know, we can't get to a place like that. It takes too long to fill these positions. They have to be trained. They're professionals that do a life and death job day in, day out, handle individuals in situations that are just devastating, and it takes a toll on them. And then to be forced to stay for overtime like that on that kind of regular basis is unacceptable.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yeah. The issue of mandated overtime is an issue. You know, the idea of requiring someone to

stay after a long shift of doing that type of work on short notice is not good for morale, to say the least. The work that is done in that Call Center, and I know you understand this, you know, as well as anyone, is incredible. It is the, you know, nerve center of the Police Department. Without it, nothing works. And the work that these individuals do is incredible. When I'm working a late night, I often will roam in there and just listen to them. I mean, it's just so impressive the professionalism that they -- that they show on these calls, regardless of, you know, how stressful the situation is, regardless of how unreasonable the person may be on the call. It's just incredible. And we need to do -- as a Department, we need to do whatever we can to support that staff. And I'm taking a hard look at the staffing numbers and I'll be making recommendations to the County Executive.

LEG. HAHN:

Excellent. Dare I say, the sooner, the better. It takes a long time to get them trained and screened, and etcetera, so --

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I understand.

LEG. HAHN:

You know, we don't want to go through hurricane season again. We don't want to go through another blizzard, and etcetera. It could happen, of course. Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you.

LEG. HAHN:

Plate readers, I wanted to bring that up. He brought it up first. It's a darn shame how few we have. Asset forfeiture funds could be used for that. Just, you know, I agree with you, what you said. Intelligence Center, same thing. You know, there -- cameras have been used in high crime villages and neighborhoods in really creative ways that can be replicated throughout the County, and these are ways that we could be investing those kinds of funds, you know, to fight crime.

I do also want to just also mention, as one of the few women Legislators here, it is a concern about the number of women in the Department. How many did you say were promoted the other day?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Well, there was one eligible for a promotion above the level of Captain, and so I promoted her to Inspector. And she was promoted from Deputy Inspector to Inspector, and she's outstanding. And I'll get you some numbers, if you just give me a moment.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

And there are other females that were promoted at yesterday's ceremony. Under my personnel decisions, there were four females promoted. Department-wide, there are 248 females out of 2,399.

LEG. HAHN:

Yeah. I mean, I think it's -- I think it's fair to say that, similar to this body, you know, it can be seen as an ol' boys club in some respects, and I think there's a culture to that. There's -- there are a lot of things that go on that make it difficult for women. And people get promoted with backgrounds that are disgraceful to women and I think that needs to be turned around. And I think -- I look forward to working with you on the initiative you discussed earlier. Gave me a little too much credit there, but, you know, I look forward to working with you on things going on

externally within the County, but also within the Department, to make sure women feel safe, respected, welcome, so we can recruit more women. It's important in, you know, interactions with women that the police have to make on a day-in-and-day-out basis, and women victims, domestic violence, sex crimes, all kinds of interactions, just even ordinary -- you know, ordinary interactions. So I really think this is also a priority and it's important to me as a woman Legislator here.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

And it's important from a law enforcement perspective, particularly from a community policing perspective, as we were discussing with Legislator Fleming.

Just to give you a story that was sort of put -- you know, to illustrate the point, we were having a community meeting with many Latino community groups and members of the community, and it was a very good meeting, I thought. But one of the comments was, "Okay, you know, what you're saying sounds great, but look around the room." And we looked around the room and there was mostly white males. So in order for us to really move the Department forward and embrace the trust, earn the trust of all our diverse communities, we really need to make a real effort to diversify the police force.

LEG. HAHN:

There's no question. So I have to say I'm really impressed today. You know, I came in undecided. I really am impressed with your responses here. I'm impressed with your vision and what you've outlined. I thank you for all that you -- I know how hard you've been working. I hope you can keep it up. Poor family. I -- you know, I really look forward to and expect to be working closely with you and seeing you more than we saw others before, because I just think we are at a critical juncture. I think there's -- I thank you for your work, you know, on the Internal Affairs reforms that we've talked about recently and were announced recently. I think there's a lot of work still to be done. I think we have an extraordinary department, you know, work day in and day out with the officers who very much appreciate being recognized for the good work that they do, and getting recognized and promoted, and whatever else, based on the good work that gets done, and not who you know or, you know, etcetera, and I think that's incredibly important. And we have so many great officers that are out there putting their lives on the line every day, and they need strong leadership. They appreciate the team that's been -- from what I can tell, that's been assembled. And there's so much more to do to move us forward technologically. And, you know, we have a lot of issues we're still facing, and in addition to more, which I think we can say, unequivocally, we need more personnel. It's a matter of how many, you're right, but we need to make sure we're making that investment and making that investment in a way that we all feel confident they're going to be properly placed, and someone's in there with the vision to do that. So thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you. And without --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Go ahead.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

In all seriousness, I do need a restroom break.

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I was actually going to ask you. I'm looking at your water bottles and saying, okay, you have really good bladder control.

*(*Laughter*)*

So I was actually going to give you that.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

If you would like to take a few minutes, certainly.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Go ahead, and that goes for everybody.

*(*The meeting was recessed at 1:21 p.m. and resumed at 1:27 p.m. *)*

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. We are going to start again, if we could have some -- I think everybody's back. Are we ready? Okay. Feel better?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So we do have Legislator Trotta, but it's -- I want to jump in. I'm jumping in every so often.

There was a few things that were brought to my attention. The former administration did some civilianization of certain jobs, and actually some of those civilian employees have actually approached me and said that some of those positions have gone back to sworn officers that they felt that they were very confident in doing. As you know, we're critically low. We have a serious problem with how many Police Officers we have, and I want them out on the street. Are you looking at what has occurred over the past few years with the civilianization, what was civilianized, what's gone back to sworn officers? I'm not necessarily saying that all of them should be civilianized again, but have you looked at that yet, or are you planning to?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

We are in the process of looking at any role that can be done more efficiently, and that includes duties that can be done by civilians in the bounds of the contract. We're certainly taking a look at that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, good. And, again, I continually talk about when we have police officers on the street, and I know we have had a couple of incidents, one specifically with a police officer and targeting -- I don't want to say targeting, but taking from motorists some money. Again, I think it's very important that we have good number of officers in a supervisory position. And, you know, I know we had always had a real shortage in Sergeants. How are we doing in our numbers for Sergeants?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

We're doing better now. But you're right, I mean, we did have a shortage, which is why you saw some of the wave of promotions recently. The recommended -- recommended supervisor ratio, the sort of rough -- the rough recommendation, because it always depends on the circumstances, but generally speaking, six to one is what's recommended. We are close to those levels. And, you know, I continue to learn every single day how important it is to have good supervisors. Particularly if one of our goals is going to find efficiencies, you need supervisors to help us do that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And I know DuWayne will agree, because coming from military backgrounds and wife of military, I've always heard it from my husband, is you can never have enough Sergeants. Sergeants are -- they're the backbone of the military, and I think they're the backbone of our Police Department. So, with that, not the last, but Legislator Trotta is next.

LEG. TROTTA:

How are you doing?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I'm doing well. How are you?

LEG. TROTTA:

Hanging in there. How did you get here? How did you, you know, in -- two years ago, you were sitting in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Southern District of New York. And from that time on, I want to understand how you got to the position you're sitting in right now.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I don't know.

LEG. TROTTA:

I mean, there was a decision at some point. Did you speak to someone about running for office, or were you offered a job?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Oh, yeah. I didn't know what you were talking about.

LEG. TROTTA:

Your timeline.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Sure, sure, yeah, absolutely. So I live in Babylon. I live across the street -- well, I did live across the street, that person has since moved, a guy named Scott Horsley. I didn't know anything about Suffolk County politics, even though I grew up here and lived here. I didn't know any of your names. I probably didn't even know who the County Executive was. And I became social with Scott Horsley, because he was my next door neighbor. He introduced me to Wayne Horsley, who you all know. And I was looking for a change. I was in the U.S. Attorney's Office. I was commuting from Babylon to Manhattan. It was very hard on the family. I was, you know, literally coming home on the train, taking a shower, and going back to work. And more importantly, I wanted to work in my own background. You know, I know I wanted to be in public service my whole career, and it's just a matter of finding exactly how I want to serve the public.

One of the jokes I often make with my wife is the highest paying job I ever had was the first job I had out of law school. I continue to make decisions that require pay cuts. So I -- you know, just talking to Wayne about how I wanted to do something in my own backyard, and I was looking -- actually, put together an application for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, who I interviewed with all the way up to the U.S. Attorney. It's just that the Southern District had given me the offer first, the first time around. But things would have played out very differently, because I did make a preference for the Central Islip office, so perhaps I'd be prosecuting James Burke right now.

So the -- you know, I put together an application to transfer to the Eastern District, the contact there, Chris Caffarone, and was about to go through the process, and Wayne said, you know, "Did you ever think about, you know, local government?" I said, "Well, I don't know what role I could

play." And he introduced me to Rich Schaffer, the County Chairman. And he said, "Well, you know, there's" -- "With your background, you know, you could add a lot of value to public service out here. You should think about coming, working for me in the Legal Department." And we had a couple of conversations and he asked me to consider running for office. And I remember him telling me that the incumbent Legislator was popular and wasn't a bad guy, so it would be a tough run, and I took him up on the offer. And I was going to -- it was uncertain as to where I was going to, you know -- well, before that happened, at the same time that all this was happening, Errol Toulon moved jobs. He went to the Department of Corrections in New York City, where he serves as a Deputy Commissioner. So at the same time that those discussions were happening, that position opened up, and the County Executive met me and offered me that job. I took that job and the rest is history.

LEG. TROTТА:

That's -- you know, what you've done up to this point, I agree with 99%. I think you've made some great decisions. I think you basically reproduced what was here before. I mean, we used to have a Chief in charge of Internal Affairs, we used to have three Captains, we used to be in the FBI, we used -- in the DEA and the ATF. My concern is that, you know, you were the Deputy County Executive in charge of public safety. I mean, you're a smart guy, you've worked in Task Forces. It would seem to me you'd say, "Hey, how come there's no Task Forces? What's going on," and you'd start to investigate and to look into these things. And, you know, I know you traveled a lot, I know you worked very hard, but on the cover of Newsday, there's like 56 stories on these scandals going on in this County. I know you're in a position where -- you know, I think of myself as a guy who's going to do something about something, and I see you do that. My question is why didn't you?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Why didn't I what?

LEG. TROTТА:

You know, when, clearly, you know the Chief is on the cover of the paper, I realize that was before you got there, the heroin thing, which was after you got here, the robberies, one after another, why weren't the questions asked, "Hey, how come we don't have anybody in the DEA, how come there's no one in the ATF, how come there's no one in the FBI?"

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

You're assuming those questions weren't asked. I mean, we explored, you know, a lot of crime strategies with respect to some of the violent crime that we were seeing. And I, you know, met with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, you know, I met with someone from the ATF, and I wasn't able to get much movement on it.

LEG. TROTТА:

I understand. This is nothing to do with you. I mean, I think that -- clearly, I think there should be a search. I think that you're right in the right direction and you might be the guy. It's not about you, it's about the County Executive. And I'd like to ask the people, the County Executive, or whatever they are, the representatives to have the County Executive here on Tuesday, because there's a lot of unanswered questions that the people of Suffolk County and the taxpayers deserve to have answered and what happened.

There's currently a Federal investigation going on, okay, and I don't think, with the exception of bringing someone in from the total outside, we should be doing anything right now, because we don't know how many people -- there were Chiefs up there standing next to Chief Burke, talking to him every day, that are still there. I don't think you know or I know totally. I don't know if they committed a Federal crime or not, but, certainly, if they did something that was a violation of the rules and procedures, or something that you and I don't know about, we should sort of park this and say, "Mr. Sini, run the Department, let's see where this ends up." I mean, I think it would be irresponsible for the taxpayers to say, "Okay, you're it."

You know, I understand you live very close to the County Executive. You know, someone told me, I'm not going to -- I'm not going to claim credit for it, "He didn't do a national search, he did a neighborhood search," and that's not good enough. The residents of Suffolk County deserve the best. You may be the guy, and from what I'm seeing, there's a very good chance you are the guy, but we can't -- we owe it to the taxpayers to do the right thing.

You can sit there -- I agree, you should be the Acting Commissioner, because what you've been doing, you've been proving yourself, and after two months, we deserve to see that. But we also need to question the County Executive as to what the hell he was doing. What was he thinking when the Chief of Police is on the cover of Newsday for having sex with prostitutes and he does nothing, or there's a Federal investigation about him going on and he does nothing. He actually stands up and says, "I stand behind him." There is something wrong with that, very wrong with it.

The Federal Government is investigating it, but I want him to come here and I want him to answer these questions. For him to say, "I didn't know when it happened," I think that's a total lie. But, clearly, he knew when this happened, he knew when this happened. What message is he sending to young cops on the street when he allows this guy to continue to lead? It's repulsive, it's horrible. And he should be here answering these questions, not his spokesman saying, "It's not political," blah, blah, blah. It is political. Your jobs are political appointment and it is political, but he needs to come here and tell us why you're the best person, and what he did wrong, that now this has changed, that you are the right person. I believe you probably are, but I believe that we absolutely should do a search and look at -- we have New York Police Department, Nassau County Police Department, Federal Prosecutors with 35 years of experience who might do just as good a job as you, but you prove to us, listen, you've done it already, you're an honest guy, you're our guy. But we'll never know that if we sit here and vote for you unequivocally, you're the guy. And is that what we -- is that how we represent our representatives, represent our constituents by saying, oh, yeah, this is the first guy they throw up to us with no background, no one else looking, nothing? It's absurd.

I mean, these things happen like in a third world country, oh, here's the guy, the next guy up. It's sad. It's sad that we're even here. I actually feel a little sorry for you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Don't feel sorry for me.

LEG. TROTТА:

But I'm behind you 100%, I am, but I want to make sure, and we owe it to the people to do the right thing. Listen, I can go on for two hours, I got 400 questions here, but the bottom line is I think you're a good guy. I think you're a hard-working guy. You've done some great things, and you've righted a lot of wrongs that were done, a lot of wrongs that were done, and you're on the right track. But we owe it to the people of this County to at least look further than Steve Bellone and Rich Schaffer's neighborhood. I'm sorry, that's the way I feel, and I think that's the way everyone should feel if they're representing their constituents properly.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Wow, that was a compliment.

*(*Laughter*)*

Very candid, but again -- okay. Last, but not least, our Presiding Officer Gregory.

P.O. GREGORY:

Okay. Thank you. And I want to thank everyone for their -- for their diligent questions and thoughtful questions, and those who came out earlier for their input and insight. I mean, this

is -- this is a public process, this is an open process, and it's important that we have as much input as possible. I know this process is not necessarily, you know, what some people are calling for or like, but it certainly is an open process.

And so, Tim, a lot has been said about your age. You know, you're what, 36, I think I read.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thirty-five.

P.O. GREGORY:

Oh, 35, even better, okay.

*(*Laughter*)*

And you're -- I assume you're a natural born citizen of this country?

*(*Laughter*)*

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I am.

P.O. GREGORY:

Okay. I say that -- I say that tongue in cheek because we're in the midst --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Excuse me.

*(*Laughter*)*

P.O. GREGORY:

Well, well, well, we'll discuss that later. I say that tongue in cheek because we're in the midst of -- you know, we had the Iowa Caucus last week, we're going to have the New Hampshire Primary next week. We have a Presidential Election, in case those who haven't noticed. And I just want your commitment that if you don't get the appointment, that you won't run for President.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I may run as a Republican.

P.O. GREGORY:

Oh, okay. And, again, I say that tongue in cheek, because there was reference to, I guess, four years ago, the news, New York Times advertisement which called for -- you have to have eight years of administrative experience, it has to be a Law Enforcement Department of 500 employees or more. I think it's kind of ridiculous that the President, the current President of the United States would not qualify to be the Commissioner of the Suffolk County Police Department.

So I think it's important to understand that. And it's important to understand that, yes, what may have been good four years ago is not necessarily apropos to today. We are facing a crisis within the Police Department, primarily stemmed from our relationship, lack of relationship with the Federal agencies, but also the acts of one individual. And I think, and, you know, he hasn't expressed this to me, but, you know, I think I could understand the County Executive being kind of gun-shy, if I can use that word, in having -- bringing an outsider. With your top uniformed law enforcement official in the situation that they're in, you want to have someone that -- that you've worked with, that you trust, that you know comes from a background of moral integrity. And I would imagine that was kind of the thought process for him to put your name forward.

And, you know, this is -- you know, this is a big challenge, obviously. You haven't done this specific task in the past, but I just want to hear a little bit more about how do you think you can overcome the challenges that the Department face and where your vision is to bring the Department forward.

**(*The following testimony was taken & transcribed by
Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer*)**

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yeah, I think one of the keys is to move the department forward by instilling confidence in the rank and file of the Police Department. As everyone on this Legislature has recognized publicly -- and if they haven't, I know they believe it -- the vast, vast, vast majority of almost the entire department is just filled with hard working, incredible men and women of the -- you know, of law enforcement who put their lives on the line who work very hard. So for them to see failed leadership is crushing. You know, it's not fair to them, it's not fair to the County. So it's important to get a team in place as quickly as possible, which we did. It's important to make personnel decisions to put the right people in the right spots for the right reasons, which we did and we're going to continue to do. And it's important to focus on initiatives that actually matter to the rank and file.

So how can we make their jobs easier? How can we make them be able to focus more on police work as opposed to administrative tasks? And we're going to learn those things by doing real outreach, by talking to not just the Precinct Commanders and the Supervisors, but also the police officers. And we're starting this process -- we actually just instituted a new protocol, a new procedure, a new process, I should say, where officers now can go on-line to our -- on the Internet and submit suggestions, and we're receiving incredible feedback. I mean, we all understand that the people who know how to improve the department the best are those on the ground, because they understand the things that present obstacles for them. So, you know, to how we can better make the MDCs in the sector cars more efficient and user-friendly. How can we reduce paperwork without sacrificing public safety and accountability? You know, what -- you know, what new teams can we create to catch more bad guys? So things that are good for public safety and things that law enforcement officers care about.

So just to recap, I would say just a commitment to integrity and making the right personnel decisions, and then working on issues that actually make the department better

P.O. GREGORY:

Good, good. And a person with your background, I think you have put an excellent team together. You know, I've known some of them as long as 15 years, so I have great confidence in them. And you and I, you know, we sat down early on in this process and one of the things I asked you was two things. One, you yourself, as the head of the department, you advocate for what you feel is in the best interest of the department. Whether it's more personnel, whether it's more equipment, whatever that need is, don't let politics get involved in that decision making process. You, with your leadership team, determine what that is going to be and then you come here and advocate for that to happen. And I'm sure that's still and I'm confident that that still stands true.

You know, I as a -- I was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Carrier Division in Fort Hood, Texas, we could deploy to war within 72-hours. I had an NCO that had 17 years experience, he's been to Panama, Iraq, he had a bunch of experience, and it would have been foolish of me, as a new Lieutenant, to say, *Well, I'm going to do -- I know everything. We're going to go to war and you follow my lead*, that doesn't happen. As Legislator Browning said, you've got to learn, you've got to understand the importance of listening to your Sergeants and those under you because they have that vast level of experience. And I don't expect you to know everything, but I expect you to follow -- seek out the information that you need to make an informed decision, but have those people that you trust that can make those decisions or guide you and have your best interests at heart, and I know you've done that because you're a very smart guy and you can discern what's real and what's not real. And I've seen your approach and I'm very impressed with it. You're not in the bubble, you know.

You've done a lot of outreach to not only within the department but in the community, and that's important. That people feel that as the head of the department, you're the public face, that you're engaged in that process, and Legislator Spencer and Legislator Martinez have both spoken today about how you've done that. So congratulations on that.

And I also said to you the importance of diversity, which has been mentioned several times. You know. I asked for your commitment, I still would like your commitment. Deputy Commissioner Risco Mention-Lewis, she's an African-American, she's a woman, you know, I feel strongly that she should remain where she is, but it goes beyond that as well. And I've heard a lot of people say, you know, in the African-American community, she's there, they feel proud that she's there, that they can have a connection with someone that understands their issues. But when I talk to minority officers, I think it was mentioned about the ranks and how people -- there's a lot of people retiring. The experience for a minority officer is very different for other officers. You know, as I understand it, minority officers, they'll do their 20 years and they retire because of the experience. You know, they feel like they're not given enough opportunity. And I'm not talking about -- and I've said this directly, I'm not asking for a quota, I don't want 14 people or whatever the case might be, just those who are qualified to get a chance to be considered.

Because quite frankly, I felt lied to from our prior County Executive because I helped him when I was out in the community talk about promoting minorities to take the Police test, because he specifically said, *We need more minorities. Take the Police Department because they can patrol their communities*, and then when that happened, they weren't patrolling their communities. And why it's important that they patrol their communities, those patrols are important to promotion. So you don't get the promotions if you don't get the job opportunities, so I would like to see that. And it's been mentioned, I'm glad it's been mentioned several times here today. And only qualified people, but you've got to put them in the spot to give them opportunity, and I know you'll do that.

So you mentioned gun violence, drugs, and what was the third?
I forget.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Traffic fatalities.

P.O. GREGORY:

Traffic fatalities are your three top priorities. And you're obviously working with the Federal government where you can -- I know we were at an event somewhere, or actually at one of the press conferences, I know you have -- it seems like you started up with a good relationship with Commissioner Krumpert next door.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes, I did.

P.O. GREGORY:

So you're doing -- you're checking all the boxes, you're doing all the things that are important to really establish relationships. I think as reflected even in the Gilgo case which is -- you know, I'm not law a enforcement official, I don't understand necessarily the importance of having the Federal feds involved in that, but when you explained it to me I understood it and really appreciate that. And, you know, I really -- I guess the point I want to get across is this is not an easy job, as you know, and you're learning. And I appreciate your willingness to serve because it takes a lot, it's going to take a lot away from your family. And it's not easy getting questioned. You know, the motives and things of that nature, *Why are you here, you know, why are you doing what you're doing?* It takes a person of integrity to stand up for what you believe in and to be confident in that and I appreciate that and you'll certainly have my support.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you very much.

P.O. GREGORY:

All right.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I just -- I have a couple of questions. You know, obviously you've worked very closely with the Sheriff's Department. And I'm -- you know, what kind of things are you going to be doing as the Police Commissioner now? Obviously the liaison under the County Exec for Public Safety, your role is going to change as a Police Commissioner. So what kind of things do you intend to do with the Sheriff's Office?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

The Sheriff and I have already begun discussing different initiatives that we can work on together. You know, in many ways -- to speak, you know, very bluntly -- the Police Department may be in a better position to conduct certain functions and the Sheriff's Office may be in a better position to conduct other functions. So we're looking at ways to reduce costs for County residents and enhance public safety.

You know, there's a lot of different players that need to be involved in those discussions, so I don't want to get into too much detail right now. But, you know, I'm very hopeful because Sheriff DeMarco and I have a very good working relationship and I think we can make the case that by working together we can save the County money.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I'm kind of glad to hear that because, you know, a lot of the -- when I go to the events and, you know, the Deputies are at these same events, like National Night Out with the police officers, they're all socializing and talking to each other, and so a lot of that friction that's been going on over the years, it's not down there with them.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

It rarely is.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, and so I'm hoping that that can change that relationship. But I do believe you're going to get some serious kickback when you start coming up with some of your initiatives, and I'll give you a lot of credit if you can accomplish what you want.

Let me ask you. John Barry, he has been named as Deputy County Executive. I've had an opportunity to meet him. Is he currently on the payroll?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

No, right now he's taken leave from the U.S. Attorney's Office and has been assisting and liaising with the Suffolk County Police Department free of charge.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, nice. Now, in order for him to -- maybe this is not a question for you, but I would assume you would have to -- you could answer it; I would assume that he needs a waiver?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I know that he collects a New York City Police Pension.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

And he's not going -- I mean, he has to collect that pension. Here's an individual who I think without exaggeration, and I don't know if Legislator Trotta has done his due diligence on John Barry, but I think it is not an exaggeration to say he's probably one of the top, if not the top Federal investigators in the country. The fact that he's even willing to come to Suffolk County and work in our Police Department is a gift from the heavens and this County should do everything in its power to help make that happen.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. But he does need a waiver in order to work.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

I'm not an expert on waivers, but he does have a pension, he needs to maintain keeping that pension. To the extent that he needs a waiver --

MR. NOLAN:

(Inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, okay. Okay. So I don't think -- I think a lot of questions were asked prior to. Again, I remember reading in the paper Ray Kelly making a statement, and I'm sure his Mayor was not real happy with his statement because at one time their numbers were getting so critically low that he actually publicly said that public safety was in jeopardy. And that's one of the things that I want to know, because too often we have Commissioners come and sit in front of us and they'll say, *Well, you know, we know finances, you know, we have issues and we're doing the best we can with what we've got.* I want to see a Commissioner who can come and say, or at least express the seriousness of when we have critically low numbers, the impact. If it's going to jeopardize the safety of the public, that you are going to push, and I am only hoping that that can happen and only time will tell.

So I don't think there are any more questions for you. I do appreciate -- I will tell you, I still believe in the process. I am a very strong believer in the process. I know the first time we met, I probably surprised you, shocked you a little bit because I'm very frank, and I know there's a few people in the back of the room who are probably saying, *Oh, yeah.* But I'm going to be honest with you, there's no back doors; that's an Irish expression. I have no back doors, I'm going to tell you what I think, I'm going to be honest with you. And I really strongly believe in process, which is something that this County Executive has failed to do, not once but many times. And so that's where my concern is. And again, four years ago, because he didn't go through the process and do the right thing, we are now facing Federal investigations, we're under a microscope and it's not fair to the rest of the members of the department that they're having to deal with this.

So I have to tell you that I know we've met before, I've always been impressed with you and today you have certainly proved yourself in front of everybody here today. I'm surprised that Trotta did not give you more than what he did.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Well, don't invite him back.

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I will tell you, I am very impressed. Even he's impressed by you, so that says something for you. So again, I don't know where I'm going to go today. I know we have to have you come back on -- we don't have to have you come back on Tuesday, but I would like you to make yourself

available because there are a number of Legislators who are not here. But you do have another question?

P.O. GREGORY:

I apologize, Madam Chair. I didn't take notes and I forgot, there was a question. Because of the concerns of community input that was expressed during the public portion earlier -- I can't believe it's been four hours already, or whatever it's been. Not Benghazi yet, but it's getting close.

*(*Laughter*)*

I wanted to ask you if you were willing to address some of the concerns of community input. Would you be willing to have a community advisory board?

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Yes. I'll actually be rolling that out, this week I was intending to do that. And I was going to reach out to all the Legislators and ask for recommendations as to what type of posts should be on that advisory board. I know that -- I met with the NAACP the other week, they had indicated to me that there were -- they thought they were on an advisory board but then it never really -- after one meeting it didn't meet. So I certainly want to reinstitute that and make sure that all of our communities are represented on that.

P.O. GREGORY:

Great, great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So, well, thank you, Tim. And I would actually, between now and Tuesday, maybe take an opportunity -- we'll talk afterwards, I can call you, I know I've got your cell number -- but I would like to take some time and have a conversation with you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

All right, I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER SINI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So, actually it's the first bill on the agenda and that is ***1014-16 - Confirming the appointment of Timothy D. Sini, County Commissioner of Suffolk County Department of Police (County Executive)***.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I have a motion by Legislator Calarco.

LEG. MARTINEZ:

Second.

LEG. CILMI:

Motion to table.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And second, Legislator Martinez. And there was a motion to table by Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. KENNEDY:

(Raised hand).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second, Legislator Kennedy. I'm trying to figure out who all is on the committee. Okay. With that, on the motion or are we just taking a vote?

LEG. CILMI:

Let me just say, the reason for my motion is that I know there's a bill later on in the agenda, sponsored by Legislator McCaffrey, that would set some qualifications forth and a criteria forth for a search for a Commissioner. And as has been said here a number of times, our Acting Commissioner is in place doing, from what most have said, a good job, and I think we should hold off on our full appointment decision until we can properly address Legislator McCaffrey's bill. That's the reason for my tabling motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

George, is there any requirements? I know that Social Services, a Social Services Commissioner can only serve as an Acting Commissioner for one-year. Is there any requirements on a Police Commissioner; Acting Police Commissioner?

MR. NOLAN:

No, I'm not aware of any.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

LEG. HAHN:

(Inaudible).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Say again?

LEG. HAHN:

We have our County Attorney's Office here.

MR. NOLAN:

I think the law you're referring to is when we have somebody in a holdover, serving in a holdover capacity, if they were subject to Legislative confirmation, they can only serve in that holdover capacity for so long, and that's not the situation we're dealing with here.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right. You know, I have to say, I mean, I did see Legislator McCaffrey's bill, I know that that was drafted based on what the County Executive required four years ago. And I don't disagree that we should not let that process play itself out, whether it be voted up or down.

So I guess with that, I can't say that I disagree, that we should not consider minimum qualifications. I know that we have had Commissioners who do not -- have not had a police background but have had administrative background. And to be honest with you, I know that we have Chief Cameron right now who does a phenomenal job. I don't believe that our Acting Commissioner, Tim Sini, cannot continue to function as the Acting Commissioner until that plays itself out. So I think I would support the tabling motion at this time. So I guess on that, the tabling motion takes precedence.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, go ahead.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Thank you, Chairwoman. I haven't spoken yet today. I didn't have any questions for Tim. We met extensively, I think I was one of those people that had that 30-minute meeting that turned into a two-hour and thirty-minute meeting, and I had an opportunity to talk to him quite a bit about what he's looking to do in the department.

There were a lot of things that were brought up here, including the process. And, you know, I know that it was something that I had a question about originally myself; I, too, thought there should have been, you know, a national search. And I'm sure that we could have found a lot of people out there with a lot of years of experience in a Police Department who would be willing to come and take the job.

You know, those things are not without consideration and due respect.

And Tim and I actually spoke about the age thing, because I'm the 36-year old at the horseshoe, I got Tim by about a year. And I find that often people of a little bit of a younger age -- though I don't think 35, 36 is all that young in age -- are not given our due respect, and I think sometimes at the expense of the person who's not giving us our due respect. But it is going to be a challenge for Tim, should he be confirmed, to get the rank and file of the department to respect him, and I had that conversation with him.

But you know, every situation and every place has different needs and different requirements. And certainly, to say that the person that we're looking for for the Police Commissioner in this particular instance is the same as the person we were looking for four years ago, or the person we were looking for 12 years ago isn't -- doesn't hold true. And I think there are certain things that the County Executive was looking for in this particular appointment that we get out of Tim Sini.

First, all of us have had experience hiring people, even in our own small realm of being a Legislator and hiring three staff members. You don't really know what you're going to get until you got the person on the payroll and they're working for you and they're doing the job. And I think we probably all can say that we've had an experience where we thought we were going to get somebody and that person maybe didn't perform exactly as we expected. Legislator Trotta is saying not me, but I guess he had some good luck with that.

LEG. TROTТА:

I'm not saying anything.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

The County Executive knows what he's getting out of Tim Sini.

LEG. TROTТА:

I wasn't even listening to you, so --

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Okay.

LEG. TROTТА:

-- the motion had nothing to do with what you're saying.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Okay, good. You know, the County Executive knows what he's getting out of Tim Sini, and I think that what we got to see over the last two months -- and this is what I said two months ago -- you know, he was going to be in there and he was going to be doing the job and we're going to see what he delivers. And I think he's been working hard and we know what kind of work ethic we're going to get out of Tim and I think we know what we're going to see out of them. You know, we also know we have somebody with integrity. We know somebody who's coming in at a time when the department needs to have integrity installed in the department and in the fashion that the public sees that there's integrity there again; we know with Tim we're getting somebody who has that, and those are important factors.

And I think in this particular instance, having somebody who is a little bit younger is going to be a good thing for us. Tim's got a long career ahead of him and most likely not completely within the Suffolk County Police Department. That's not to say that it's not possible, but rarely do Commissioners last through many administrations of County Executives, and certainly there will be more County Executives to come before Tim Sini is done working in his life.

And so he has -- he's clearly an ambitious person and he has a personal investment to do well and to really be eager and be a go-getter and go out there and do the job and do it as well as you can, because at some point in time he's going to need to go someplace else or he's going to have to do something else. And I think that that's going to be a benefit to us right now.

I think it's going to be good to have somebody who is definitely full of energy and is eager and is going to go out there and do everything he can to make sure that this department is functioning at the highest levels possible. And if you talk to folks in the department and you talk to that leadership team that he's put into place, they will tell you that he is doing just that, and I think that's a benefit to us in this situation. And he does come from the outside and he doesn't have a police background and he doesn't have a police culture that comes with it, and I think all of those are going to help Tim do his job very well for us.

I think over the last two months he has really shown that he's going to go out there and do the work and, you know, I'm willing to support him on this and I think that in this particular situation the uniqueness of the situation actually calls for a unique candidate and I think Tim's the guy for us. So I'm going to be supporting him in this nomination.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Kevin?

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Thank you. Thank you for allowing me to speak. You know, as I said before, this isn't about Tim Sini. Tim Sini may be the right guy, he may be the best person out there, but I think it's being a disservice to the residents of this community, of Suffolk County, I think to the members of the Police Department if we don't take the time to see if there is somebody else out there that's available. I don't see the rush to fill the spot. As I said before, Nassau County has been operating -- they were operating with an Acting Commissioner for a period of time. I don't think it would hurt to look to see. Let's do a search committee. We did it four years ago, the criteria that was set up in there was put out there, we had a New York Times ad in the paper. One of the reasons may be because he wouldn't qualify under the criteria we set four years ago. I don't know what's changed now than four years ago except that our Police Department is being even more challenged than it was before, it's even more reason to see who's available. At the end of the day, when the smoke clears, we do a search and Tim Sini is the right guy, I made the commitment and if he's the guy that's best, I'll make the motion to confirm his appointment.

But in the mean time, we need -- it would be a disservice to the residents of Suffolk County not to see who else is available out there. I gave the analogy before, it's not -- there's no need to rush into this. It's not as if all of a sudden Ray Kelly, or even Tom Selleck from Blue Blood became

available. We need to be able to -- he already used that? So I think we really need to take a look at this and give it time. And I'm sure Tim's not going anywhere. It seems he's doing a good job right now in terms of holding down the fort there, and at the end of the day he may be our guy. But I think we need to take a look at that process and I would support, you know, tabling -- recommend that you support tabling of this motion now. Thank you.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

You know, I just wanted to respond because it sounded that those comments were aimed at mine. And it is about Tim Sini. I think that's -- we're missing the point. This resolution that we have before us is a nomination for a Police Commissioner that is the nomination that the County Executive has the right, authority and, by law, the responsibility to make. How he came about making that decision we can criticize, and that maybe is worth criticism, but at the end of the day it is his appointment to make. It is our responsibility to confirm that person and to ensure that that person's the right person. And it's interesting what I'm hearing here because what I'm hearing is not that he is the wrong person, and it's not that he is unqualified; in fact, Legislator Trotta said that he probably is the good person for the job. So it's not a matter of whether or not Tim Sini is capable. You are making it a political statement in that you don't like the way the County Executive has made the appointment. And I can appreciate that, but at the end of the day the resolution before us is to nominate Tim Sini for the Police Commissioner post. It is not to change the process by which we nominate a Police Commissioner.

So we can either make a decision based on the nominee presented before us or we cannot, but the reality is that's what we have before us, is that there's a resolution for the appointment of Tim Sini to be Police Commissioner. So it is about this individual at this particular point in time, and at this juncture we have to decide whether or not we think this person is the right person for this job.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

It should be about the process as well. And we have a duty to confirm, not to rubber stamp, and we've got an obligation to do that. And I think unless we go -- this is our largest department, it is one that's come under scrutiny, and this is the time now to take a step back and look to see who's out there, who's got the experience in leading us through all these things. It's not what Tim wants to do, he's got great ideas. You might have somebody that's already done it and that might be the better person. When we were looking for someone to run the Health Department we went through an extensive review. Even when we went through with the IT Commissioner, we went out there to see who was available. We didn't just interview one candidate, and we did all those things. I can't understand what's so different now about this or what everyone is afraid of going through the process.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

DuWayne?

P.O. GREGORY:

Thank you, Madam Chair. And I -- you know, I appreciate the efforts of Legislator McCaffrey and others to draw attention to certain aspects. But I think, you know -- again, as I stated before -- I think circumstances change. If you -- let's go back in time five years ago, we had a County Executive that was under investigation from the District Attorney's Office who put forward budgets that actually cut and Detective Investigators were investigating him. So needless to say, the relationship between the County Executive and the District Attorney's Office was not great at all. So Bellone comes in, he gets elected, he comes in and says, *You know what? One of the things I have to do is repair the relationship between the County Executive's Office and the District Attorney;* low and behold, Jim Burke. You know, he was a good liaison for that purpose.

Four years fast forward, we're in a situation where it's been exposed that we don't have the greatest relationship with the Federal -- with our Federal agencies. And certainly with Tim Sini's background, I think he has already established or reestablished those relationships which I think is

to our -- not only to our benefit, but to the benefit of the residents of Suffolk County, and I think that's important. So circumstances matter. You can put qualifications on a piece of paper and play gotcha politics, you're not -- you don't meet the qualifications that you would have met five years ago, that's all well and good. But circumstances matter and it's important that we appreciate those circumstances when it comes to relationships that have to be established with the Federal government that is, quite frankly, causing some concern to those communities that are effected because there are still open crimes that haven't been resolved simply because we're not using the assets and resources that are available to our law enforcement agencies.

You know, my extent of law enforcement is, for instance, watching Law & Order. I don't know how this stuff works, and even on TV, I know the relationships aren't that great. But to see it in reality and to understand the effects and the detriment that it's had to residents of Suffolk County is appalling to me. So I'm grateful that there's efforts that have been made to reestablish those relationships to move things forward. Hopefully we'll resolve some of these unsolved crimes and God bless everyone who can take credit for it, I really don't care who takes credit for it, I just want them to be resolved.

And, you know, I don't want to politicize this. You know, I totally appreciate the process argument, but the County Executive decided to go the way he decided to go. As a new administration, sure, you put in, you know, a transition team, you go through the whole bells and whistles. I was even kind of -- you know, I don't -- I kind of chuckle, I should say, not necessarily in the County Executive's process, but any time. When you look at town government, State government, they put all these {transitioncies}, we're going to do a national search and it always ends up to be someone that they knew that was, you know, back here, local. So I don't -- you know, process is important, but it has to be a real process, too.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

So let's take the politics out of it and let's -- let me amend my bill, and my bill will take out all the criteria that the Acting Commissioner right now doesn't meet, okay. I'll take it all out. We'll take away the eight years of law enforcement, take out having managed these 500 plus membered department, or even lower the standards so that he -- whatever criteria that -- and let the search committee decide what's important. All right? So he'd be in the game. I'll amend my bill right now if this committee can say we'll at least do a process, and I'll make that process fair so that we'll include them, and at the end of the day it may very well be him and just as you said. Let's go through the process.

P.O. GREGORY:

And I appreciate it. But again, circumstances matter. Right? We're in the process now, we had a 40-year person within the department retire who was the Commissioner, we had the Chief of Police retire, you know, and is under investigation; we had several other top retirements. The department is in turmoil. We need someone at the helm to kind of right the ship because there is -- you know, there is some morale issues that have to be addressed and I think the Acting Commissioner has worked well to address those issues and concerns. And having an Acting Commissioner for a period of time I don't think is the greatest thing either. You know, I would advise those who think that's the proper way to go, maybe talk to Chief Krumpster, or Commissioner Krumpster in Nassau County, because my understanding is his opinion would be that it wasn't the greatest process to have him in limbo for --

LEG. McCAFFREY:

And that was a year and a half, I'm not looking for a year and a half. You're making my argument, to say that we have a department that some say is in turmoil right now, so maybe we need the steady hand at the wheel, someone that's been through this, and that's making my case more and more.

P.O. GREGORY:

I don't think so.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

So I'll agree to amend my bill and let's speed up the process, let's not make it a nationwide search. Let's just look to see who's just out there in this general area. I'll make this as easy as possible to say that we at least went through the process.

LEG. FLEMING:

Madam Chair, if I may?

P.O. GREGORY:

I want to make one comment and then ill just -- I'll yield, because I don't want to go back and forth all day.

I disagree, I don't think I'm making an argument. I think because of the circumstances that exist, it's important that we put leadership in place. And the people that I've spoken to that have been there for years, they have great confidence in some of the things that have already been happening, they have great confidence in Tim Sini that he's going to do a great job. We have a person for the job. Of course, could we find someone who has, you know, 20 years experience as a Commissioner in some small department in, you know, Utah or whatever? Yeah, there's probably a likelihood of that. But the County Executive says this is my guy, I feel comfortable he can do the job, he's qualified to do the job addressing the circumstances that exist today, under the circumstances that exist today. And you can agree with that or disagree with that, but I think, you know, he's shown to be right at this point, and I think we should support him. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Bridget, and then you're next.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you, Madam Chair. I'm glad that Legislator McCaffrey is willing to amend his resolution regarding qualifications, because I have to say I question the fairness of an initiative to set qualifications when someone in particular is being considered. But look, even the folks who oppose the process here universally are saying -- are hard-pressed to find fault with this candidate who, through a difficult process this morning, into this afternoon, has really proved himself very well, as a number of people have noted. So whereas I originally, I did feel that the process should -- you know, we should have done a nationwide search. We've heard somebody who folks are hard-pressed to find fault with.

We're talking about a paramilitary organization which is very, very important to our community and is currently in a unique and extremely difficult situation. The confidence of the community and the confidence of the rank and file are dependent on the strength of the command structure. And a confirmed Commissioner is different from an Acting Commissioner, just as a -- you know, someone who was in elected office for a number of years is different from a lame duck Legislator or a person in public office. Folks respond differently to a confirmed Commissioner from the way they would respond to an Acting Commissioner. And now that we've had an opportunity to vet Mr. Sini, I think that the talk of process over actual substance maybe needs to be put aside and we have to recognize the needs of the community and the rank and file for confidence in their Commanding Officer. And at this point, after this session today, I feel that we should go ahead and confirm him, or at least offer to approve him to go to the Legislature to confirm him.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTTA:

I find it funny that the Presiding Officer stands there and says that the County Executive, this is his choice. Well, who was his last choice? His last choice is sitting in Federal prison. I came to you before I took office but after I got elected and I told you what was wrong with Burke. I told you the problems in your crime-ridden district. Mine is very light in crime, so I came to help you.

P.O. GREGORY:

Sir, I take exception to that; my district is not crime-ridden.

LEG. TROTTA:

Well, it leads the County in crime, let's put it that way.

P.O. GREGORY:

No, no. My district does not lead the County. There are communities within my district --

LEG. TROTTA:

It's a very high crime area.

P.O. GREGORY:

-- that have challenges that certainly have crime, but --

LEG. TROTTA:

Regardless. I came to your district and I told you before I took office of the problems with this guy and you sat there and gave me lip service, and look what happened a year and a half later. So this process --

P.O. GREGORY:

Hold on, no, no, no, no. I thought this process was about Tim Sini. Now you want to attack me --

LEG. TROTTA:

No, I'm not attacking you.

P.O. GREGORY:

-- because you came to my office --

LEG. TROTTA:

You're saying to us --

P.O. GREGORY:

The first thing that I did not -- I didn't even know who you were, you came to my office, you talked about Jim Burke who I barely even knew and I'm supposed to --

LEG. TROTTA:

You barely knew?

P.O. GREGORY:

I didn't know him.

LEG. TROTTA:

Oh, please.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, no, no. Rob?

LEG. TROTТА:

The bottom line is --

P.O. GREGORY:

You accuse me --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, no, no. Stop.

LEG. TROTТА:

The bottom line is people failed to act here.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Rob.

LEG. TROTТА:

And there's an ongoing Federal investigation, it would be irresponsible for us to put anybody in there because we don't know who's being investigated. It could be three or four chiefs, it could be anybody, we don't know.

P.O. GREGORY:

Well, we know who's being investigated.

LEG. TROTТА:

We don't know if the District Attorney's involved.

P.O. GREGORY:

We certainly know that Tim Sini is not being investigated, so I don't know --

LEG. TROTТА:

How do we know that? Because he was there, he was there during that time.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Hold on a minute. I think that this conversation needs to be inside, not right here. This is about the confirmation for Timothy Sini, not about Jimmy Burke, not about your district and what you know. And I would be happy to go in there because I know you spoke to me about that individual and I said, *Show me what you got*; you didn't have a damn thing to show me. Okay? So we'll continue the conversation inside.

I'm going -- I'm going to say what I need to say. I met Tim when he first came in. I've been very impressed by him, I've had a great working relationship with him. I do believe in process. And my personal opinion on Tim is, yes, maybe he is the right person. However, I have a serious lack of confidence in this County Executive and I have for the past four years, for more reason than one; not just the Police Department, but in other areas. Okay? That's why I feel that I do not want to give him the free reign to screw up again and that's what I think he's done on more than one occasion. And I think that we need to kind of reign back.

Our Acting Commissioner can continue to do what he's doing. Let's not forget about the good people who work around him. He has Chief Cameron who has a phenomenal background working with the Federal government also. So to say that everything's going to crumble because we don't appoint him today or next Tuesday, that's not going to happen. The Police Department will run extremely well because we also have a very good Chief and also good Chiefs that are working with him. So let's be honest. And again, we all know about Cameron, he's been highly talked about, highly respected, a man of integrity and, again, has worked for many years with the Federal government also.

So I'm going to tell -- again, I'm counting three votes on the tabling motion. I don't know if Legislator Cilmi wants to continue with that vote. That's what I see is going to happen.

LEG. CILMI:

(Nodded head yes).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So why don't we just let's call the vote, thank you, and let it go where it may go. I'm not prepared to take my vote today. I've asked Tim that we could sit down and talk between now and Tuesday. I might change my mind come Tuesday. I think he did a phenomenal job sitting here. But again, because of my lack of confidence and a County Executive who has screwed up many, many times over the past four years and has not proven to me that he's a good County Executive is why I don't want to say I'm going to rubber stamp it. Okay? That's my opinion.

I know what he's done over the past four years, I know where he's screwed up. Let's talk about a \$5 million Microsoft agreement that was a total sham that he was pushing. So that's where my lack of confidence in him is. It's not my lack of confidence in Tim Sini. And I'm sorry, Tim, that you've been caught up in his mess.

But anyway, let's call the vote. So there was a motion to table and a second. All in favor of the tabling motion? In favor of tabling? You're not on the committee. Okay. Opposed?

(*Opposed said in unison by various Legislators*)

Okay, ***tabling motion fails. (VOTE: 3-4-0-0 - In Favor: Legislators Browning, Cilmi & Kennedy).***

Okay, there is a motion to approve by Legislator Calaraco. Second by Legislator Martinez. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I'm an abstention.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Abstained.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And two abstentions. Okay, ***so the motion is approved. (VOTE: 4-1-2-0 Opposed: Legislator Cilmi - Abstentions: Chairperson Browning & Legislator Kennedy).*** Thank you.

So I think I did say it; we do have a couple of Legislators who are not here. So I did ask him if he would make himself available. Tim, I don't want you to come and spend all your time here. I would just say make yourself available, we'll give you the time to get here. Okay?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER SINI:

Absolutely. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Now where are we?

(Introductory Resolutions Cont'd):

1026-16 - Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Local Law to amend Resolution No. 1123-2015 and improve Alarm System Registration Requirements (Browning).

LEG. HAHN:

Motion to table for a public hearing.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you, by Kara. I'll make that second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's tabled for public hearing (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

1042-16 - Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Charter Law to establish minimum qualifications and screening process for appointment of Police Commissioner (McCaffrey).

I'll make a motion to table for a public hearing.

LEG. HAHN:

Second.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

All in favor -- oh, second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's tabled for public hearing (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).***

Procedural Motion No. 2-2016 - Establishing a special committee to review law enforcement operations in Suffolk County (Trotta).

LEG. CILMI:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Motion to approve by --

LEG. HAHN:

Motion to table subject to call.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Whoa, hold on a minute. There was a motion to approve. Did we get a second?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

We got a second by Legislator Kennedy, okay. And we have a motion to table, Legislator Hahn?

LEG. HAHN:

Subject to call.

D.P.O. CALARCO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Table subject to call, and there was a second by Legislator Calarco. Okay, so the tabling motion takes precedent.

LEG. TROTТА:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I know you're not on the committee but it's your bill, so go ahead.

LEG. TROTТА:

This is something that clearly we need. You know, we just rubber-stamped, without looking at anybody else, a Police Commissioner. We have no -- and he's coming from a guy with clearly failed judgment in picking Police leadership. Now, I introduced a bill that is going to form a bipartisan committee -- three Republicans, three Democrats -- who are going to find out what went wrong and what could we do to do better. And I don't see any reason why -- it's bipartisan. It's not the Republicans, it's not the Democrats, it's both of us together, working together to look into what happened, why this Police Department ended up like this. Not specifically investigate -- you know, what happened in the rules, procedures, the policies; how this happened. And I don't see any downside to it at all. It's not going to interfere with any Federal investigation, it has nothing to do with that. There's currently a Federal investigation going on right now and we just picked a Police Commissioner which maybe some of his support staff is involved in; maybe the District Attorney, the County Executive is involved in. That didn't seem to matter in that case.

So the argument that we're going to interfere with a Federal investigation because we have a bipartisan committee to find out what happened, what went wrong and what can we do better is a bad thing?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I'd like to jump in, because I have to tell you that I don't know that this is something that we necessarily need to do right now. I did ask our Presiding Officer to send a letter to make sure that we're not going to be interfering with the Federal investigation.

If we're doing something in the public forum and we're asking questions, my concern is we're going to ask questions that are maybe interfering with what the Federal investigation is; that's my major concern. And I don't know if our Presiding Officer has received a response yet?

P.O. GREGORY:

No, we have not received a response yet. But we're -- you know, our request was to see if any investigation would impede the ongoing investigations; investigation by this body would impede the Federal investigations. Certainly there are some that have characterized it or made an opinion that it would. We had the -- you were there, I believe, the State Attorney General a week or so ago give his opinion that he thought it would be prudent to do so.

LEG. TROTТА:

We're not going to be investigating the Federal crimes. What we're going to be doing -- and by the way, by the time this happens, you know, this committee is going to take time to get together and put it together, it could probably be two months from now. And if it looks like there's something going on, we'll just put it on hold, I have no problem with that. But I think that it's beginning -- we should sit down, get it together. I'm not saying do anything except get it together and let us talk about what went wrong maybe internally. Maybe bringing in the Chief of Police and the Acting Commissioner and say, *Hey, listen, what's going on?* And until we all decide, Republicans and Democrats, and we check with the Federal government that it's okay, and my intention is no way to interfere with any criminal investigation. What does it hurt?

P.O. GREGORY:

Well, I think you just contradicted yourself. I mean, you know, I find it offensive that you're implying or putting out in the atmosphere that the County Executive may be under Federal investigation, all along with 58 other people.

LEG. TROTТА:

Does it seem --

P.O. GREGORY:

So how can you say that the County Executive -- well, I'm not even going to say that because I'm not going to play into it. That people in law enforcement, in our Police Department are under Federal investigation, but yet we should establish a committee to look at what went wrong, but somehow that's not going to interfere with this Federal investigation.

LEG. TROTТА:

I'm talking about the policies and procedures of the Police Department. I'm not talking about a Federal crime. I want to know why wasn't there an internal affairs investigation done? How come the Commissioner wasn't advised of there was no internal affairs investigation?

P.O. GREGORY:

Okay. So an individual that --

LEG. TROTТА:

How come the County Executive didn't look at Chief Burke's internal affairs file? Policies and procedures that would have prevented this. It's our responsibility to the taxpayers to oversee every department, and our lack of doing this irresponsible.

P.O. GREGORY:

I agree that it's our responsibility to have oversight. But I think when there's a Federal investigation going on, we don't know where it leads --

LEG. TROTТА:

Exactly.

P.O. GREGORY:

-- or where it would go.

LEG. TROTТА:

This is what's called a cop-out. You don't want to do this because you're using the excuse of a Federal crime. I am in no way indicating in any way, shape or form that we will be involved in any criminal investigation at all. It's a policy and procedure. What went wrong? We'll bring them in here, whether it be open or quietly, and say *How come this wasn't done? How come that wasn't done? What have you done to change it?* That's what we should do. It has no effect on a Federal investigation. I mean, in 1987 the SIC investigation, this very body convened an investigation that ran in tandem with it, there was no problems. I checked with the former legal Counsel, Paul Sabatino, and he concurred that clearly this can go on simultaneously. There's no interaction, and we'll make sure there's no interaction.

P.O. GREGORY:

And you're going to -- so these people that you're going to subpoena --

LEG. TROTТА:

Did I ever say I was going to subpoena anybody?

P.O. GREGORY:

That was my understanding.

LEG. TROTТА:

No. Not necessarily, no.

P.O. GREGORY:

Oh, I'm sorry, the committee has the power to subpoena,

LEG. TROTТА:

Yes.

P.O. GREGORY:

So clearly that's an opportunity or an option.

LEG. TROTТА:

It's our job to find out what went wrong.

P.O. GREGORY:

Oh, absolutely.

LEG. TROTТА:

Our County Executive failed us and it's our job to do it.

P.O. GREGORY:

It is our job to --

LEG. TROTТА:

It's in the County Charter. We would not be doing our job if we didn't find out what went wrong.

P.O. GREGORY:

Absolutely. I agree with that. But again, it's a matter of timing. If there were no investigation I would say absolutely, we should get in there, find out what's going on.

LEG. TROTТА:

We're not --

P.O. GREGORY:

Similar to what my predecessor did with the Ethics Board. He said something's gone wrong, we established a committee, we turned it on its head, we created a new body.

*(*The following was taken and transcribed by
Lucia Braaten - Court Stenographer*)*

LEG. TROTТА:

What if during this investigation, let's say we put this bipartisan board together and we found out that Tim Sini knew that there was no Internal Affairs investigation and he did nothing? I'm not saying that happened, but what if we did. Wouldn't that say, "Holy, gee, maybe we made a mistake about Tim Sini, he knew about this"? And it was not a criminal act, it was just something that he didn't do. I'm not saying this happened, but that kind of thing could expose it. Now what do we have? We have a situation where we have a Commissioner who might have known something happened. It's our responsibility as this Legislature to look into it and find out what happened. And now I'm asking for three Republicans and three Democrats to do this. I don't think that's an unreasonable request.

P.O. GREGORY:

I think it is given the circumstances of the current investigation, because you're going to call someone in, because you put it out there that there could be -- there's a whole bunch of people that

are potentially under investigation. Any lawyer worth his salt would not allow their client to come into any forum and participate with any type of investigation that could lead them into some type of trouble.

LEG. TROTTA:

I am talking about interviewing people in Internal Affairs and the hierarchy of the Chiefs in this Department and asking them what procedures weren't followed, that's what I'm asking about. It has nothing to do with what he did or what he didn't.

P.O. GREGORY:

You're going to subpoena them to do that.

LEGISLATOR FLEMING:

If I may.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Can I let -- I'm sorry, but I know it's 25 to 3. We've been here since 9:30. Bridget, no, go ahead.

LEGISLATOR FLEMING:

Just very quickly. I just want to support what the Presiding Officer is saying, from the perspective of someone who ran a unit in the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, where we investigated fraud in public programs. And it was critically important to ensure that we ask the civil -- any civil bodies, whether it was the Office of Medical -- Office of Professional Medical Conduct or Inspectors General to step down and wait until the crimes were investigated. Because as much as Mr. Trotta says that we don't have to investigate any Federal crimes, he's also saying what if we found out that somebody knew something and didn't reveal it, which would constitute obstructing governmental administration, which is, in fact, a crime.

So if we're looking at the same facts that would underlie crimes that may be being investigated right now, there's no question in my mind that a committee, Legislative committee that has the power to administer oaths and affirmations, and to compel the attendance of witnesses, and to issue subpoenas could very easily step on the toes of a criminal investigation.

And, look, you know, we're hearing things that people did very bad things. If that's the case, the bad guys need to be prosecuted criminally. The very last thing we want to do is to step on the toes of the Federal prosecutors, who are obviously already being very aggressive, and interfere with what they need to do. Afterwards, I can understand implementing, you know, some sort of an investigation into policy and procedure, but there's absolutely no way that the two won't get entwined if you're looking at the same fact patterns.

And as someone who prosecuted public fraud and asked civil, you know, agencies to wait for us, I really think it's very, very important not to rush into this and wait to let the Feds do their work.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So, and with that, I agree, Bridget. I would say that when all is said and done, and the Feds are gone and said, "We're done," which I don't know if they'll ever tell us that, however, I think it's early.

LEG. TROTTA:

They will never tell you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I don't disagree with what you're trying to accomplish, but things are new. We are in a new year, let's -- let's hold off, because I do not want to interfere with the Federal investigation, okay?

Public Safety 2/4/16

So with that, there was a motion -- where are we? Motion to table subject to call by Legislator Hahn, and Calarco second. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed to table subject to call.

LEG. KENNEDY:

(Raised hand).

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Abstentions? Okay. Tabling carries. **(Vote: *Approved 7-2-0-0/Opposed: Legislators Cilmi and Kennedy*)**.

With that, we have nothing more on the agenda. Have a lovely day. I hope our Public Safety meeting never goes this long again.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m. *)