

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on Thursday, July 21st, 2016 at 9:30 am.

Members Present:

Legislator Kate Browning - Chairperson

Legislator Robert Calarco - Vice-Chair

Legislator Kara Hahn

Legislator Bridget Fleming

Legislator Tom Cilmi

Legislator Leslie Kennedy

Legislator William Spencer

Members Not Present:

Legislator Monica Martinez - Excused

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature

Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature

Amy Ellis - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature

John Ortiz - Senior Budget Analyst/Legislative Budget Review Office

Josh Slaughter - Aide to Legislator Browning

Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Gregory

Bob Fonti - Aide to Presiding Officer Gregory

Eva Greguski - Aide to Deputy Presiding Officer Calarco

Alysa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn

Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy

Maria Massimo - Intern/Legislator Kennedy's Office

Liz Sutton - Aide to Legislator Fleming

Katie Horst - Director-Intergovernmental Relations/CE's Office

Kerri Suoto - County Executive Assistant

Jason Hann - County Executive Assistant

James Cerone - Sergeant/Chief of Department's Office - SCPD

Joseph Caracappa - Undersheriff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office

Mike Sharkey - Chief Deputy Sheriff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office

Joe Williams - Commissioner/Suffolk County FRES

Joel Vetter - Coordinator of Emergency Medical Services/FRES

John Becker - President/Deputy Sheriffs Police Benevolent Association

Artie Sanchez - 1st Vice-President/Deputy Sheriffs Police Benevolent Association

Lou Tutone - 1st Vice-President/Suffolk County Police Benevolent Association

Jim Roddin - Trustee/Superior Officer's Association

Matt Porter - President/Probation Officer's Association

Peter Dykeman - Suffolk County Probation Officer

James Mahoney - Suffolk County Probation Officer

Karen Branda - Suffolk County Probation Officer

Gregory Rotundo - Suffolk County Probation Officer

Bill Johnston - Suffolk County Probation Officer

Anna Geraldo - Suffolk County Probation Officer
Jeff Nichols - Suffolk County Probation Officer
Joe Callan - 2nd Vice-President/AME
Michele O'Connell - 3rd Vice-President/AME
Dawn Ruggiero - President-Police Emergency Unit/AME
Jodi Pagel - 911 Suffolk County Police Dispatcher
Jennifer Nunns - 911 Suffolk County Police Dispatcher
Suzanne McBride - 911 Suffolk County Police Dispatcher
Leslie Quinn - Nominee/Suffolk County Child Fatality Review Team
Deborah Maffettone - Resident of West Babylon
Kathy Cole - Resident of Great River/Gym Door Repairs
Stephen Ruth Jr. - Resident of Centereach/Red Light Camera Program
Linda Frego - Resident of Ronkonkoma/Red Light Camera Program
John Caracci - Resident of Deer Park
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 9:43 A.M. *)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Good morning. We'll start the Public Safety Committee meeting.
If everyone could please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Fleming.

Salutation

And we'll have a moment of silence for the police officers in Dallas, Baton Rouge, and also there was one just a couple of days ago in Kansas City. I believe since our last meeting, that's 11 police officers, which I think is an extremely high number. So it's a sad day for -- sad times for our country. And also for the men and women who defend our country at home and abroad.

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you. Okay, we do have a few cards. I did receive a correspondence this morning in my e-mail; I'll have to see if I can find it. It was a pretty long letter with regards to the alarm bill. Christine Tucker, a resident of Ronkonkoma, and her partner live together with her 84-year old mother and saying about them being on a tight budget. She's worked for the Department of Treasury for 32 years; however, based on what she's saying, you know, they struggle to pay their bills month-by-month. And she asked that the policy requiring a permit be rescinded, and her other comments were about the residential fee and having to pay that every month. So I will send a copy of this to be entered into the record. Like I said, it's a little long to read. But I will reach out to her and let her know that there have been some changes to the bill.

So with that, we do have a few cards. And our first speaker is Peter Dykeman.

MR. DYKEMAN:

January 1st, 2011, day one of the Suffolk County Probation Officers working without a contract.
January 1st, 2012, day 366; Steven Bellone's first day as newly elected County Executive.
January 1 of this year, 2016, day 1,826 with no contract as County Executive Bellone begins his second term of office. Today, July 21st, 2016, day 2,028 of the Suffolk County Probation Officers working without a contract. Over 1600 of those days spent wondering if the County Executive ever plans to sign a fair and equitable contract.

All within this timeframe, we have seen the continuing scourge of the heroin epidemic, tearing at the very fiber of our County. We continue to see the proliferation and impact of violent street gangs who benefit from the business of poisoning our streets with these narcotics, all while engaging in violent turf wars that will leave honest citizens of this County in fear. In the face of these backs, over the past four and a half years, the very agency charged with the supervision of those offenders has seen an approximate 20% decrease in its budget and its sworn staff being near or at the lowest point in over a decade working without the consideration of a fair and equitable contract for over 2,000 days.

While we are aware of the challenges faced by this County, know this; it is not the potential fair and equitable contract for probation officers that is breaking the back of Suffolk County. It is the failure of this County Executive to negotiate a fair and equitable contract that is breaking the backs of Suffolk County Probation Officers. We are aware and appreciative of the continued support of this committee and the Legislature at large. So I apologize for my tone, my volume, and for being another probation officer to appear in front of you to take three minutes of your valuable time to voice our frustrations. Unfortunately, it's only on this side of Veterans Memorial Highway where we find a listening ear. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you, Peter.

LEG. CILMI:

Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And don't be apologetic. This is your time to be here and to voice how you feel. Legislator Cilmi has a question.

LEG. CILMI:

I was just going to say what you just said; never apologize for sharing with us.

MR. DYKEMAN:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

We appreciate the fact that you're courageous enough to do that. Thank you.

MR. DYKEMAN:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

And thanks for the great work that you do.

MR. DYKEMAN:

Thank you, Legislator.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, and don't go anywhere. Legislator Spencer.

LEG. SPENCER:

Thank you very much. That is extremely concerning to me, to say the least. Can you tell me, I guess, as much as you can publicly where -- when was the last serious negotiation, what the last discussion on this issue was?

MR. DYKEMAN:

I would not be able to answer that, I'm not part of the negotiations committee or the Executive Board.

LEG. SPENCER:

Fair enough.

MR. DYKEMAN:

That would -- obviously, you'd have to ask the appropriate personnel for that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, we do have somebody in the room that we can ask; and actually, I was going to ask the same question of the Deputy Sheriffs. Lou, if you want to hang on and we'll let the speakers finish, and then -- I'm going to ask the same question of you and of Mr. Becker, to see how things are going. But Peter, what -- you said there's a 20% decrease in the budget?

MR. DYKEMAN:

That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And your staffing numbers in the past -- like you said, in the past ten years, even just the past four years.

MR. DYKEMAN:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

What's the decrease in your membership?

MR. DYKEMAN:

That's correct. So I was able to use a decade because I'm on this job for ten years, and I know when I came in, I know back to 2009 when we looked at potential layoffs that we faced, we were somewhere in the realm of 290, 290 sworn staff, and today we're at 244, perhaps, somewhere. Again, perhaps Lou or Matt can give you more info on that. So our staffing, as long as I'm here in ten years, is at the lowest it's been.

Our budget -- as I mentioned, what I did was ironically, from the County Executive's own web page on the official Suffolk County website, I went into the 2012 budget, the 2016 budgets, looked at the adopted lines and compared them. We are down 19.6 over that time. Ironically, his own budget, the budget for the Office of the County Executive, has increased 13% across that time.

And, you know, unfortunately -- if I may, Madam Chair -- the only word that comes to my mind is neglect. Because whether you talk about the smallest subset being probation officers without a contract for four-and-a-half years, five-and-a-half years, you talk about a slightly bigger subset of a departmental budget being slashed by 20% across -- under this administration, or the community that every one of us is charged with serving, they're being neglected as well by this failure to act.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right. And I have to say that I know -- and I'm not going to point fingers, but we've had legislation with regards to, you know, the ignition interlock, the domestic violence. I mean, there are so many other things that now you're being charged with over the past number of years that you didn't have before.

MR. DYKEMAN:

That's correct.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So you're basically being asked to do a whole lot more with a whole lot less. And, you know, I do agree that, you know, you are -- and we hear it all the time, you are our alternatives to incarceration. So how do we ask you to do a good job and keep your morale up when you're sitting for six years and no contract?

I certainly respect everything you do and I would hope that the County Executive would finally get that agreement signed. I do believe there was one sitting on his desk before Christmas; it would have been a nice Christmas present. But maybe it will be a new Christmas present for 2016, I don't know; I would hope not.

MR. DYKEMAN:

I'm hoping for a Labor Day present.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Maybe Christmas in July (*laughter*). But I thank you for coming, Peter. You've definitely -- you've gotten your point across and we get it.

MR. DYKEMAN:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I just wish somebody else would.

MR. DYKEMAN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, Committee.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Kathy Cole.

MS. COLE:

Hi, everybody. Thank you for having me. And this is my fourth time coming and speaking about the same issue. It is a health and safety issue for the children and the staff of New York State and New York City school system. I first want to start by saying that today is my 32nd wedding anniversary. My husband and I took the day off to spend the day together and go out to Montauk maybe, and I just felt that it was so important that I had to come and actually give you an update on what's going on.

So briefly, I've been a vendor for the New York State, New York City Education Department 30 years. New York State is the only state in the nation that has a law that protects children from being killed in the school gyms, because unfortunately we lost two children crushed and killed, one here on Long Island. Unfortunately, there was no oversight over the funding, \$37 million initially in 2001 and approximately three to five million annually since then. So now we're up to about \$150 million of money given by the New York State Legislature to the education department which has not been properly accounted -- overseen.

So I have been reporting -- I blew the whistle on the noncompliance to the Senators -- Marcellino and Seward and the Attorney General then Cuomo -- and I became a victim of retaliation and blacklisted. And unfortunately, a few high level education officials conspired with one particular vendor to eliminate me from even competitively bidding on school work, public work on Long Island

and New York City school system. So I've been relentless in my pursuit of safety number one for the children and the staff and justice for what has been done to my -- the American dream, my business.

So I've been reporting, reporting and ultimately it fell in the hands of -- there is no Inspector General in the New York State Education Department, the only branch of the government without one. So when you're trying to report high level fraud, whatever it may be, abuse of power, there's no one to turn to. Because the Attorney General is in conflict, in my opinion, because he investigates and prosecutes the New York State Education Department. It's like the bank robber and the bank having the same attorney; it just doesn't work. So I had to go through all different avenues and finally I wound up at the doorstep of the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office in March of 2011. And I kind of got bounced around for a few years and then I just documented overwhelming evidence through video and tape recording of -- and I was advised to do that by a Racquet Sergeant in the Suffolk DA. So he said that I had to document everything because unfortunately it would be my word against theirs, meaning some of the education officials that are in charge of the procurement and some of the vendors and they lie, so if I had it on video or audio, it would be indisputable. So that was the best advice I had ever gotten.

So finally I get to the Suffolk DA again, roundabout, through the Attorney General, through the Nassau County District Attorney's Office, the Comptroller's Office, and there's going to be indictments. *This company was raided, be patient, be quiet, you know, it's happening. We have 257 felonies, we are going to fly to the companies that fabricated these documents and circumvented competitive bidding into the tens of millions of dollars of State -- of school tax dollars;* that's not my word, that's the word of the Regional Director for the New York State Department of Labor.

And I just want to let you know through certain members here reaching out to the Attorney General's Office to the Federal investigators, that the New York State Education Department Facilities Director will be stepping down from his position September 1st, we just found that out. I have subpoena power and we are subpoenaing nine individuals on August 1st in Federal Court at 11:30. And the Attorney General --

(Timer Sounded)

-- the New York State Comptroller and the Regional Director for the New York State Department of Labor have all been in touch with me the past few days, and the pending investigation that they thought was going on and the indictments that were coming by the Suffolk DA, all three of those agencies will be working together and the investigation is in full force. And hopefully sooner rather than later, the taxpayers will have justice, the children will be safe and I'll be vindicated for what's been done to me for blowing the whistle. And I want to thank you all.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, thank you, Kathy. And congratulations to you --

MS. COLE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

-- for sticking to your guns and keeping it up.

MS. COLE:

And again, I think it's so important. I wish I would have flipped it and been here in front of you several years ago when I knew or really felt that something was being covered up and the right

thing wasn't being done. And I think you should think about maybe having a separate unit of the Legislature that can actually take legitimate claims of government corruption and maybe have them looked into, because when you guys reach out it seems that something gets done. You know, when I -- even though I had all the proof, I had all the evidence, I had other people saying, *Yeah, something's not right and something should be done*, but until somebody has the chutzpa to stand up and say *We want this taken care of, we want this investigated*, nothing gets done.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you, Kathy.

MS. COLE:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And happy anniversary.

MS. COLE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Deborah Maffettone.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm here to speak as an animal advocate, but also as an advocate for the citizens, as obviously this is about public safety. And we really have no animal law enforcement here in the County. We do need stiffer laws. I know that we have about 15 people that are up for their cases, one of them is a felony, every other one is a misdemeanor. Buster's Law and the New York State Agriculture & Market Law clearly states that animal cruelty is a felony, yet people are not arrested for felonies. The District Attorney is not convicting, they're down-charging, they're plea bargaining. Therefore, we now have animal abusers who have not only been -- they are beating dogs, burning dogs, they're doing all kinds of things to cats, cats have been found cut in half on people's lawns, and these people are out in society. These people are out there with our children, with our grandchildren. They are keeping, obviously, the Police Department busy. And I can sadly, from hearing the Probation folks, know that Executive Bellone does absolutely nothing, because I have personally called his office 18 months in a row requesting a meeting, requesting a phone call and have gotten nothing in return from him. We have tried to work with the SPCA who, again, does very little. Obviously their only task is worrying about turtles and little ducklings, and meanwhile we have animals out there causing problems.

And I'm not here to say that every animal is not a problem, the animals are the problem as well. We had one last week, a dog got out of his yard for the second time, attacked his neighbor's small dog. That dog -- that family had a court order that the dog had to be muzzled if he was out in public, the dog was supposed to be spade, the bill was supposed to be paid and nothing was done. And this young girl, single mom, is out there not knowing what to do with a \$5,000 vet bill, with another \$5,000 vet bill and no one in law and enforcement, SPCA doing anything to help her.

Myself and another advocate that's here with me, we take time out of -- I work from home, thank God that I can come here and speak, because we have to take time off of our jobs, and we do. We're out at 11:30 at night picking up dogs off the street because the SPCA doesn't. We're out there, you know, taking care of things. The animal control officers in our municipal shelters, thank God for them because they're doing the job of the SPCA every single day. And we want an SPCA that's going to protect our animals, that's going to cause the safety of the public and give safety to the public, to the children, to yourself. If you walked out of your home and your neighbor had a

dangerous dog that the SPCA got called 18 times, how would you feel if you were attacked by that animal? And we're not just saying that -- look, there are animals that have to be put down, we understand that, but this is about, again, safety of the public with dangerous animals, with not dangerous animals, with dangerous people who are out there who will become tomorrow's Jeffrey Dahmers, and that's our concern.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, thank you. And I just wanted to find out, have you reached out to some of our State Legislators? Because I just asked our Counsel, the most that we can do is misdemeanors. So any laws that need to be done to require that felony charge would be something that would need to be done on the State level.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Actually, Leslie Kennedy has been gracious and met with us several times --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

-- you know, helping us.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

We also met with Assemblyman Murray and he has put some things, but the State just knocked down three laws that, if they were passed, they would have helped us. But can we put a County law into place that overrides State laws?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, the State overrides the County.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Okay. So we have to just wait for --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So it would have to be State legislation. But I always say, the squeaky wheel gets the grease.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Right. Well, we've been squeaky for a while.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

You have to be persistent. You have to be persistent.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

If I may ask one more questions? So Buster's Law that is part of Agriculture Markets 26, it states that animal cruelty, intentional cruelty is a felony.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

That's a State law.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Right, but it's --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

That's a State law.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

State laws don't come down to the County?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, they enforce the State law, but the law was created by the State, not by the County.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Right. But the County is not enforcing that law? This County does not enforce that law.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Now you have to understand that the SPCA are a volunteer organization. There are no paid employees, your town animal control are paid employees.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Uh-huh.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So a lot of people seem to think that the SPCA is a government department, is a County department, they're not.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

No, we fully understand that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

But the fact of the matter is that they have \$1.3 million in their bank account. They spend 13,000 -- 13% of that on animal -- prevention of animal cruelty and programs, and they do not adhere to their mission statement. They do not have a TNR program, they do not have a spay/neuter program. I have sat with them for nine grueling hours creating programs and was told that we could not have any money to help do those programs, and we volunteered to help our time as well so animal rescue organizations are out doing what they're supposed to be doing.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

We would like to know, if I could ask you a question, how do we put together a new organization.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

This is not a Q and A time for us.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I mean, clearly I can ask you some questions, but how you create an organization, that's on your own.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay?

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And I know since you have been talking to Legislator Kennedy, you know, helping to advocate to get our State Legislators. But like I said, the squeaky wheel gets the grease, so I recommend you keep going to them.

MS. MAFFETTONE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Next speaker is Linda Frego.

*(*Ms. Frego is chewing loudly while speaking into the microphone*)*

MS. FREGO:

"We deeply respect the value of your hard-earned tax dollars. As stewards of your money, your money, we commit to exercising the utmost fiscal responsibility in its management." Those are the words on the County website sworn to by Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.

Let's talk about respect. In Mr. Gregory's own words, he confesses to the Legislature's respect for tax dollars, not we the people. The members of this committee feel it is appropriate to eat, hold conversations with their colleagues, type on their computers, text on their phones, turn their backs to the speaker, get up and walk out of the room when we, the people, address them from this podium. In the Army, they'd be beating their faces into the ground for this behavior. It's not proper decorum in that setting and it isn't proper decorum here either. So either respect us when we come to speak or don't even bother to come in and collect your paycheck.

Now, let's talk about our money. Suffolk's Red Light Camera Program has been a fiasco from its inception. The yellow light timing has been dangerously shortened by Xerox and this Legislature for revenue at our expense, and it is in violation of our substantive due process. I am sure that equity and good conscience militate against permitting them to keep our money. We the people publicly and on the record challenge this Legislature's, as well as Xerox's, overall authority to establish traffic light times or to use traffic cameras to identify violations and issue fines. It has been discovered that the payment the extortion letters demand is merely voluntary, people. No one is bound to pay it, unless we volunteer to part with our money.

The word is spreading about this scam. The U.S. Court of Appeals noted in its ruling in {Weeder} v. American Traffic Solutions, Inc., et al, that the Queen's woman voluntarily paid her red light camera ticket. You must abandon the program now or go down with the chip.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Next speaker, Stephen Ruth.

MR. RUTH JR:

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. I know a lot of you would like to see me go to jail, aside from a few of you. Either way, you know, I was prepared to go to jail, I was willing to go to jail for a cause I believed in from the beginning. You know, I learned that a lot of people were getting hurt, I saw the evidence in the shortened yellow lights over by County Road 83 and Old Town Road, and I saw that two people had been killed there. I talked to the homeowner of the property and he wasn't willing to fix his fence because people getting smashed through it because the light was so short. I was willing to go to jail, I'm still willing to go to jail. I know that not all of you want to see me go to jail, but, you know, I was willing to go to jail, so if it happens, so be it.

I really don't -- I don't really mind the idea of going to jail, because when I went to jail the first two times I got plenty of respect there, even from law enforcement. They didn't cuff me, they told me that they only cuff criminals and that I was doing the right thing. I know you guys probably don't believe that, but it is what it is.

But I wanted to talk about the homeless people. Yesterday I was with my son and we went into Wal-Mart in Centereach and I saw a gentleman holding his baby and it was a naked baby, and it's just not right. There's so much money being generated by these cameras that each camera generates between 10 and \$20,000 a day. There's no reason that we should have that. That's not -- it's not right. And I know with my taxes, I pay about 75 to 80,000 a year in property taxes; that's just property taxes. My property taxes alone would fund a giant tent with food and cots for all these homeless people in Coram, Centereach, Port Jeff Station. There's no reason for that. We can do better. There's no reason. If we all do the right thing by the people, we can do the right thing by the homeless, and many of them are veterans that laid their lives on the line.

And I said it earlier, part of the reason why I laid my freedom on the line was because veterans were being taken advantage of when they come back from laying their lives on the line for our country. So guys, come on, we have to take care of the homeless people. It's not only, like, despicable to see it, especially naked babies and people that are begging for food, but also veterans that are homeless. So I hope that we can set aside some of these funds, especially with the amount of taxes we pay. Where is the money going? There's no answers. It's not going into our roads. If we had beautiful roads like they have in other places, I'd say, *All right. Well, at least it's going back into the roads.* But we have more homeless people than we've ever had before.

So for those of you that believe in God and go to church, I think that everyone can do better. I know that some people really do believe in God and I know that, you know, every one of us are going to have to answer for this. I myself, I really don't have much money after I pay my taxes every six months, but I know that we can set aside some money for the homeless. So, thank you very much. And God bless all of you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Dawn Ruggiero.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Good morning. My name is Dawn Ruggiero. I am the President of AME in Police Emergency, having taken the reigns from Suzanne McBride a couple of months ago. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before you today.

Once again, we stand before you begging for your help. At this time we are short 10 to 12 dispatchers. I know firsthand that we are losing at least three to four within the next month and a half. We have up to 35 people that will be eligible for retirement within the next three years. Our dispatchers are being mandated four to five days a week, working 12 to 16 hours per day. Some squads are so short that unless they have a pre-picked vacation or call in sick, they are not getting

off at all. Due to the increase in mandates, we have dispatchers that are trying to maneuver time off either by attempting to get family leave or going home sick when mandated. Every squad has half their people working before their scheduled tour, the other half staying after their scheduled tour. At this point in time, one squad has a total of nine dispatchers, minimum requirement of 12. With two on vacation every week, this brings to a total of seven; of those seven, two are constantly trying to avoid a mandate either by requesting family leave or going home sick. The five dispatchers that are left are working themselves sick. This is taking a toll on the other squads because at least five dispatchers are needed to help the squad meet the minimum requirement at work; this is including just covering the radios. I am sure you can imagine, the situation makes it impossible for any employee to plan any kind of family or social event. They are dealing with a very high level of stress on a continual basis with no break in sight.

Due to the recent events in this country in regards to the public views of the Police Department, security for the officers has been increased. We are not complaining about this; officer safety is our top priority. But this is more added stress on us. Due to the fact that we are employees of the Police Department, we are also targets. With this being summer, we have an increase in call volume with an approximate number of 4% being life-threatening events. We have more waterway incidents as well as outer beach and Fire Island. We assist outside agencies with aviation and marine.

Training a new dispatcher takes approximately six months or more. There is no guarantee they will make it through in the training, or want to continue. Our experience has been that these new hires realize halfway into the training that it is not the job for them and we desperately need your help. I don't know if you're aware, we had, I believe, six start within the last week, which is great. But again, we're still down to less than when Suzanne came to you a couple of months ago.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. I do have a couple of questions for you. Legislator --

MS. RUGGIERO:

I think I want to bring Suzanne up.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Say again?

MS. RUGGIERO:

I think i want to bring Suzanne up.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Well, let's see; if you have a hard time we can always have Suzanne. But I want to give you an opportunity, you still have -- well, you did have time on the clock. But Legislator Cilmi and Legislator Kennedy have questions. But if you're uncomfortable, don't answer.

MS. RUGGIERO:

I'll try.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you. Congratulations? (*Laughter*)

MS. RUGGIERO:

No. I think somebody doesn't like me.

LEG. CILMI:

So, less of a question and more of a suggestion. This is one of many things that we have been frustrated about here on the Legislature for some years. And to hear you and the others who work in your line of work come to us meeting after meeting, and privately as well, and tell us about the incredible stress that your coworkers endure day after day, and to hear about the turnover in your department which is no doubt a result of that stress, and to hear about the fact that you're constantly being forced -- not asked, but forced to work double shifts or whatever it may be, to not take days off that were due to you, to not take lunch periods and sit and eat lunch while you're working, is -- you know, it's heart breaking for us.

And I just wonder if there's a -- if there's a willingness on -- I'm sure there is on your part, and I can say pretty assuredly that it would be on the Chair's part as well. But if there's a willingness to sit down around a table with members of this committee who are interested, yourself and others from your department and with the County Executive's Office, and with the administration of your department, to really have a candid conversation about -- about these issues that you and Suzanne have brought to our attention time and time again. I'm sure you'd be willing to do that, I'm sure Madam Chair would be willing to do that, and I hope that the County Executive's Office would be willing to do that. And I would ask the Chair if we can try and put that together, and I'd like to be a part of it.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Sure we could.

MS. RUGGIERO:

I just would like to clarify. Our recent administration, my Captain, my Lieutenant, Inspector, they've been awesome. They have done everything in their power. Like I said, we just started with six more and he actually reached out to me, that's why I was running late this morning, because he actually was able, I believe, to get a seventh, but it was a transfer. And that's one of the issues, is that we have -- where are you, Suzanne? Seven dispatchers, right, and three of them are transfers? Okay, we have four transfers. The question is now those SCINS, they left ECO side. Are they being held, are they not being held? Again, ECOs are probably better off than we have been in years, and I thank you for that. But my biggest concern is right now, especially looking at -- I believe approximately 35 employees that we have, their starting year was '91, within the next five years they're gone. And if we don't do something now, I mean, we've been screwed a long time, but it's going to get worse.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah. It seems to me, and this is not to blame anybody. I don't pretend to understand the challenges that the administration of your department faces in trying to solve these issues, but I'd like to understand them. Because I'm sure there is -- you know, there are issues that are difficult to solve; but nevertheless, it warrants a conversation. And maybe working together we can actually make a difference in the lives, the work lives which are such a huge part of your total lives of those who work in your department, and that would be my objective.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

To at least make your quality of life, for the time that you're working here in the County and beyond, because I'm sure beyond you're stressed about getting called in or whatever.

MS. RUGGIERO:

I just turn my phone off nowadays.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah. It's a conversation that needs to be had openly and, you know, with open minds, open ears, and maybe cooperatively we can actually -- we can actually do something. Because it's just not fair that, you know, you continue to be in this stressful situation day-in and day-out.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right. And I will agree, Josh will -- we will work on trying to put something together. Not to fault our Police Commissioner, because I know that since he's been in he's trying.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Yeah, absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

The problem is, as you know, stress, sickness and just retirements, and obviously, at this time of year, vacations. I know exactly what that's like because my husband just had to work his days off because there was no coverage, so he had to go to work and lose his days, so I kind of get that. But at the same time, I know that the Commissioner has committed to trying to get a better staffing level for you, but it seems like every time he gets six new ones, you're back again to where you have nine out, you know. So it's just --

MS. RUGGIERO:

Even with that --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Something needs to be done and we certainly want to have that conversation to say how do we fix this. But you know yourself, over how many years, 10, 12 years your staffing levels have dropped dramatically and we're not -- we're not back to where you probably should have been how many years ago. So that's -- I think that's the conversation we need to have, is how do we remedy this so we don't get to this point.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Right.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

You know, you pick up six, you lose nine; you're back to where you were.

MS. RUGGIERO:

We lose a supervisor soon and we lose another one from the floor; that's exactly --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Right.

MS. RUGGIERO:

You know, it's a vicious cycle.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Kennedy, you have a question?

LEG. CILMI:

I think Kara had one.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, Kara, you do?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Congratulations on your new position and welcome to the fray. We're all very well aware of what your department has been going through for years and years and years. You brought up what I was going to speak about, the SCINS. Is there a representative from the County Executive's Office here that could answer if there are still SCINS waiting on the County Executive's desk?

MS. HORST:

I don't have an answer for you, but I could find out.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay, I would appreciate that. Also, I'd like to say as a nurse who worked in multiple facilities, I understand mandation very well. We have to look to preplan, preplan for retirements. And the more these people are mandated, the more stress incurs. We're losing them after five years, that's horrendous management. And I'm not criticizing anyone in particular, but in a position where this -- these people have to deal with life and death situations on a continual basis with no respite. They have to be looked upon differently than other employees. So I'd like the answer as to how many SCINS are on his desk as soon as you can get it to me.

MS. HORST:

Sure, absolutely.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you. I appreciate it. And thank you and good luck.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. And as soon as I can get that meeting set up, I'll let you know. And I know Kerri's here; let's work on getting something together. Okay?

LEG. KENNEDY:

Kate, Kara had a question.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, Kara, you had a question? I'm sorry. Debbie, Legislator Hahn had a question for you. I'm sorry.

LEG. HAHN:

I guess I'm going to have a hard time raising this as a question, because this has just been an ongoing frustration. Where's Suzanne? I just -- you know, we need to get to a place and we keep saying this and we haven't gotten there. And I know there's been, you know, recent movement and we very much appreciate that, but we need to get to a place where we're not operating on overtime, and we have to get to a staffing level that allows that. Overtime -- and I've said this many times before, you know, mandated overtime for emergency, for a blizzard, for, you know, maybe a single holiday day or something, you know, is fine. But it -- you know, we've been operating this department on overtime and that -- it can't happen when life and death is on the line every day with what you do, and it's just not fair. So you still feel like, you know, mandated overtime is the way the department is being run just to fill a shift.

MS. RUGGIERO:

Yes. And again, it's not actually mandated at this point because we all pick and choose our poisons. I personally will come in at 8 PM, I'm on the midnight tour now and I'll come in at 8 and work 8 to 8.

Occasionally I'll stay 8 to 12 because somebody really can't stay in the morning. But if you actually look at our mandates; no, it's not being mandated because we're all picking and choosing how we want to work it and we're trying to work with them.

I believe I spoke to somebody the other day and we were over a million in overtime already, over of the overtime with dispatchers. And I believe somebody from admin was called in and asked why and he laughed; he's like, *We don't have people*. But apparently -- and I may be saying it wrong, but Bellone's Office did not realize that still, and that's really mind-boggling to me that they don't understand -- how they can't see that there's an issue.

LEG. HAHN:

I feel the same way. So I very much want to participate in that meeting again, because it is again, we've had these meetings.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, I'll reach out --

LEG. HAHN:

We have to --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

-- to the Public Safety Committee members, I'll make sure that everybody gets contacted.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you, Debbie. And I believe there are not any more questions.

With that, we do not have any more cards. Is there anyone else who would like to speak? No. Okay, I did forget to mention Legislator Martinez has an excused absence. And there are couple of issues. Sergeant Cerone, we have some CNs. Good morning.

SERGEANT CERONE:

Good morning. We have two CNs, one of which for a technical correction to the GIVE Grant, and a second CN for the procurement of two bait cars.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, okay. What's a bait car? Okay, bait cars.

LEG. FLEMING:

Bait cars, like bunker.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Undercover-type; correct?

LEG. CILMI:

Sort of like bunkers.

(*Laughter*)

LEG. FLEMING:

I'm from the East End.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Kind of like bunker only law enforcement bunker. So bait cars are undercover vehicles, right?

SERGEANT CERONE:

Correct.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. And we're going to be accepting donations.

SERGEANT CERONE:

Correct.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Does anyone else have any questions of the Sergeant? No. Okay. Well, thank you, Sergeant.

SERGEANT CERONE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And on the issue, Lou, I held off. Lou Tutone is here, he represents the Probation Officers. And I know that John Becker is here from the Deputy Sheriffs. Update; last time you met, anything happen? What's going on?

MR. TUTONE:

We are exactly where we were in November, where we can call it a negotiated contract, an agreement on points, but what was presented to President Noel DiGerolamo he accepted.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

In November.

MR. TUTONE:

November of 2015.

LEG. CILMI:

I'm sorry. Can we just clarify; what was presented to Noel DiGerolamo from the County Executive's Office was accepted by Noel DiGerolamo.

MR. TUTONE:

President Noel DiGerolamo accepted that. Again, we can call it whatever we want, a negotiated contract, an agreement on points; that was accepted.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Somebody needs to go back to negotiations 101, okay? They made an offer, you accepted it and --

MR. TUTONE:

As recently as yesterday --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Did they rescind it? I mean --

MR. TUTONE:

Noel had a conversation with Chief Deputy County Executive Cohen and he did not have an answer.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Maybe we need somebody new to negotiate contracts.

MR. TUTONE:

I think President DiGerolamo's doing a good job.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, no, I don't mean on your side, I mean on the other side.

MR. TUTONE:

I know, I'm joking.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Because clearly it's not just your contract, but it's also Deputy Sheriffs and we have AME's contract coming up. You know, we're getting ready to do an operating budget, and it would be a good idea to kind of settle these contracts when you're working on your budget, so at least you know what you got. You've got a question? Go ahead.

LEG. CILMI:

Lou, do you know if the proposal that was accepted by the President, was that in writing?

MR. TUTONE:

I don't believe so. I don't believe so.

LEG. CILMI:

So it could become then a he said/she said.

MR. TUTONE:

Of course, and I think that's where we --

LEG. CILMI:

Would the County Executive's Office then say that there really was no proposal made?

MR. TUTONE:

I think as of now the County Executive's Office is saying that there was no agreement that had been agreed upon.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So your perception of the situation is that the County Executive's Office presented a proposal to your president which was accepted by your president, which I suppose that would have to be accepted by the membership, etcetera,

MR. TUTONE:

Right, yeah.

LEG. CILMI:

But the County Executive's Office, based on your understanding, is basically saying that there was no, I guess, concrete proposal --

MR. TUTONE:

Correct.

LEG. CILMI:

-- proposed.

MR. TUTONE:

They're saying that it was not an agreement.

LEG. CILMI:

An agreement.

MR. TUTONE:

Correct.

LEG. CILMI:

Maybe just ideas that they shared.

MR. TUTONE:

Yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. I mean, I don't -- I'm sure we can't start asking questions of the County Executive's Office as to the nature. Maybe we can, all right (*laughter*). So through the Chair, if I could ask Katie?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I don't think Katie's going to be able to answer those.

LEG. CILMI:

I don't think so either.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Because I know she's not privy to --

LEG. CILMI:

But there's nobody else to ask here, so I'm going to ask Katie.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

She can take a message.

MS. HORST:

I can take the message back.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MS. HORST:

I'm not privy to those conversations, so I couldn't even begin to give you an answer.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. I mean, I've had a conversation with the Chief Deputy County Executive about this specifically. I guess the last conversation I had with him was longer than a month ago.

MS. HORST:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

If you could just see if there's been any movement as far as, you know, the Administration's perception since then --

MS. HORST:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

-- that would be fantastic. All right, thank you.

MS. HORST:

I will get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And Lou, how many meetings have you had since November?

MR. TUTONE:

Well --

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Can you count them on one hand or two?

MR. TUTONE:

Again, I have said this to our membership, Probation membership. A lot of times, you know, Chief Deputy County Executive Cohen sits on our Benefit Fund also, so a lot of times there'll be meetings after those. So I don't know how many negotiation meetings there have been, but there's always conversation. There's always conversation going on between Noel and Mr. Cohen.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Well, they need to stay on task. And clearly, there was some kind of an agreement, but I guess no MOU is drafted, so that's a problem.

MR. TUTONE:

Correct.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Well, I guess we'll ask the question again. I know John is here from the Deputy Sheriffs; just curious where they are on their negotiations. Thank you.

MR. TUTONE:

If I could, Madam Chair?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, go ahead.

MR. TUTONE:

Let me reiterate what Peter said. We do appreciate the support of this body always with Probation and law enforcement in this County.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you.

MR. TUTONE:

Difficult times and you guys are always there for us, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you.

So tell me you're close (*laughter*).

MR. BECKER:

I would love to tell you that; unfortunately, it would not be true. Since the last time I spoke there has been no change. There's been no meetings, there's been no communication. We submitted a comprehensive proposal back in March. This proposal addressed the contract and a settlement for highway; we have yet to receive any counter offer, verbal or written.

Additionally, there were -- we had requested costings as part of the negotiations, and I know Presiding Officer Gregory had sent a letter to the County Executive also requesting the same costings. I also want to acknowledge Legislator Hahn wrote a letter as well, you know, requesting an update on our status. My understanding is there has been no reply from the County Executive's Office.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Kara, no answer?

LEG. HAHN:

No.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, just double-checking. But I know that that letter went out, we met -- that's well over a month ago that we met and he had that letter sent out, but nothing has occurred since then. And I understand what you're asking for, and I think at the last Public Safety meeting I said that should be in a file somewhere, and that's something that they should be able to just pick up and be able to provide you with.

MR. BECKER:

Right. I've been told, again, that they were working on it, which I find puzzling that why would you be working on costings of contracts that have already been negotiated; that should have been done prior to the contract being signed off on.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Incompetence, that's the only thing I can say.

Anyway, I do -- I want to say I'm sorry that you didn't get a response to the letter from the PO and I'll certainly ask him if he will redraft that letter, and maybe our committee members would be willing to sign that, maybe all 18. We'll be here next Tuesday, we can have that letter signed by everyone. But it's really a shame that they can't sit down and come up with a contract for you guys, too.

And I don't want to hear the comments. I know what you make; you're not the highest paid employees either in the County. So it's -- there has been some misinformation with regards to what your earnings are and, yeah, you can make a lot when you work a lot of overtime. So if they want to resolve that issue where you don't make that much money, then they need to hire more people, but they also need to resolve a contract.

MR. BECKER:

And the overtime is a direct result of shortage in staffing, and if they wanted to hire, then that could be addressed as well. But the numbers that were put out in Newsday as far as what an average Deputy Sheriff makes was grossly exaggerated; they didn't even get our base pay correct.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So, like I say, overtime is not a guarantee. But thank you, John.

MR. BECKER:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

So we have an appointment. Okay, 1662. I'll make a motion to take out of order **1662(-16)**.

LEG. FLEMING:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second by Legislator Fleming, and that's ***Appointing Leslie M. Quinn to the Suffolk County Child Fatality Review Team (County Executive)***. Leslie, you're -- oh, sorry. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, it's taken out of order. Leslie, if you'd like to come forward and introduce yourself.

MS. QUINN:

Good morning. My name is Leslie M. Quinn, I'm a physician, pediatrician at Stony Brook University Hospital and I am Board Certified in Pediatrics and Child Abuse Pediatrics.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Any questions? No?

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you very much for your willingness to serve on this team. You know, I just -- that's really all I wanted to say. I don't think I have any questions.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, good luck, and we look forward to hearing the final report.

So with that, I believe there are no more questions. So Legislator Hahn makes a motion to approve. Second by Legislator Kennedy. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez)***. Congratulations.

LEG. FLEMING:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And it'll go in front of the full Legislature on Tuesday, but you do not have to be there. Thank you.

MS. QUINN:

Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, we'll go back to the agenda.

Tabled Resolutions

1180-16 - Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Local Law to prohibit the sale of Kratom in Suffolk County (Stern). I believe the sponsor said it's ready to go, so I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. CILMI:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second by Legislator Cilmi. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

1493-16 - Adopting Local Law No. -2016, A Local Law to improve alarm system registration requirements (Browning). It has to be tabled for a public hearing still, so I'll make that motion. Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's tabled for a public hearing (VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

Introductory Resolutions

1624-16 - Appropriating funds in connection with Suffolk County Fire Rescue Main Building Renovations and Improvements (CP 3418) (County Executive). I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. CALARCO:
Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second, Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

1631-16 - Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) provided through the appropriation of FY2015 Byrne/Jag funding in the 2016-2017 State Budget for the Livescan Equipment Program (County Executive). The Sheriff's Office will utilize the grant funding to replace and update -- I'm assuming that word should be obsolete Sheriff's Office Livescan Equipment with 50% support. Motion to approve by Legislator Fleming. Second, Legislator Kennedy. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's approved (VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

1634-16 - Accepting and appropriating a grant in the amount of \$300,000 from the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services for the State Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (SLETPP) FFY2016 with 100% support (County Executive). Legislator Spencer makes a motion to approve to place on the Consent Calendar. Second, Legislator Cilmi. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It's Approved (and placed on the Consent Calendar -- VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

1635-16 - Accepting and appropriating federal pass-through from the State of New York Department of Taxation and Finance for the Suffolk County Police Department's participation in the Cigarette Strike Force (County Executive).

LEG. SPENCER:
Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Motion by Legislator Spencer. Second, Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?
It's approved (VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).

1638-16 - Accepting and appropriating a grant from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to the Suffolk County Department of Probation for the Parole Reentry Task Force Grant Program with 100% support (County Executive). I'll make that motion and place on the Consent Calendar. Second, Legislator Kennedy. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It is approved (and placed on the Consent Calendar -- VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

1659-16 - Appoint member to the Child Fatality Review Team (Jennifer Ripton-Snyder, M.D., M.P.H.) (Hahn). Kara, what did you want -- did you want to --

LEG. HAHN:

Yes, we'd like to make a discharge without recommendation because she can be at the General Meeting. Hopefully the Presiding Officer will take her out of order so she doesn't have to sit there all day.

LEG. FLEMING:

I'll second that.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay, so Legislator Hahn made a motion to discharge without recommendation. Second by Legislator Fleming. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? ***It is discharged (without recommendation -- VOTE: 7-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Martinez).***

And 1662 we did. With that, we have no more on the agenda, so we are adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 10:42 AM*)

{ } – Denotes Spelled Phonetically