

***CAPITAL BUDGET MEETING***

***of the***

***PUBLIC WORKS and TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE***

The Public Works and Transportation Capital Budget Meeting was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Smithtown, New York, on Wednesday, May 16, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Legislator Jay Schneiderman - Chairman  
Legislator Steve Stern - Vice-Chairman  
Legislator Wayne Horsley  
Legislator Tom Barraga  
Legislator Muratore

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature  
Gail Vizzini - Director of Budget Review Office  
Robert Doering - BRO  
Rosalind Gazes - BRO  
Gilbert Anderson - Commissioner - DPW  
Jim Peterson - Chief Deputy Commissioner - DPW  
Phil Berdolt - Deputy Commissioner - DPW  
Bill Hillman - Chief Engineer - DPW  
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk - Legislature  
Catherine Stark - Aide to Chairman Schneiderman  
Ben Zwirn - County Executive's Office  
Vito Minei - Cornell Cooperative Extension

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Donna Catalano - Court Stenographer

(\*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 9:40 A.M. \*)

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Good morning. I'd like to call the hearing on Public Works and Transportation to order. If you will all rise join for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Horsley.

**SALUTATION**

Please remain standing. I'd like to pause this morning for a moment of silence. Our friend and colleague, our Presiding Officer Bill Lindsay is in surgery this morning. And we want to send him all of our love and prayers for a speedy recovery. So if we can pause together with Bill Lindsay in mind, I would appreciate it.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Thank you. Okay. So today's meeting is for public comment on the County Executive's proposed Capital Program for '13 through '15 and subsequent years. I do have a number of cards. If you wish to be heard -- you know, today's meeting is focused on Public Works and Transportation. I have a number of yellow cards. If you wish to be heard by the committee and haven't yet filled out a yellow card, they are available at the front table through the Clerk's Office.

We're going to allow three minutes for each comment. These are in numerical order, the order that people arrived and filled out the cards. I have a number of yellow cards. I should mention that Gail Vizzini and additional staff of the Budget Review Office is here to assist in answering questions. They have prepared a detailed analysis of the County Executive's Capital Budget and their own recommendations, which sometimes agree and sometimes differ. Without further adieu, I will go to the public portion. Our first speaker is Vito Minei, Cornell Cooperative Extension.

**MR. MINEI:**

Good morning, Legislator Schneiderman, members of the committee.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I'm guessing at the beginning that, Vito, three minutes won't do it, right?

**MR. MINEI:**

We requested fifteen, and I believe we were granted by your staff at least that. I'll try to keep it even under the 15.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I was going to say there's no way we can do this in the three minutes. So 15 minutes is fine.

**MR. MINEI:**

I appreciate the accommodation. Again, thank you to the committee and good morning. I'm Vito Minei, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. And this morning I'm joined by one of my colleagues Chris Colahan, who is our Director of the Peconic Dunes Camp in Southold, one of the three projects we want to present to the committee this morning.

Chris just handed out a folder of material, and if I can just quickly get you through it. In the left-hand sleeve is our general brochure that goes through all of our programs at Cornell Cooperative Extension. And you know that our three-part mission is to strengthen families and communities to preserve and enhance the environment and foster economic development. Also on the left-hand

sleeve is a summary of the three projects. And behind our summary is a summary of the recommendations from BRO.

So if I could get started, in the right-hand sleeve is a package dealing with Capital Program 1796, the improvements to the County Farm. And I believe most of the committee, if not all, have taken us up on our tours of the County Farm, so you've personally seen the status of the buildings. In particular, there are two parts to the Capital request. One is to continue ongoing renovations, and several of the buildings need care almost immediately, including the hog house, the roads need complete renovation and roofs to several of the buildings.

And even more importantly, on the tour, we always ended up with you folks at the office for staff and reception area for thousands of visitors to the farm. And if I can quote you Legislator Horsley, you characterized those offices as, "a dump," which I think pretty much sums up. They're 1960 vintage mobile homes. And as you leaf through the package and get to the photos in the back, we've made up not only an aerial focusing on the 225 acre farm, but also, there's a montage of the buildings. And the walls are in disrepair, the ceilings are caving in, it rains inside, the floors are coming up. The joke typically is that the conduit for the fire alarm is all that is holding those buildings up.

It's been unsafe for years. It's really not fair to keep the staff in there also. And really, it's a disrespectful visitor center for all the people who take the time to come visit; a lot of grandparents are there with their grandchildren and a lot of young families come as well. So basically, there's a few hundred thousand dollars in the BRO summary that they support the ongoing renovations. There's money for planning, and we've been working a lot with DPW, Public Works has been great over the years, they come in and help us with the repairs, they help us with the design for the buildings.

And towards the back of that package, you'll see a barn-like structure. One of the architects at DPW gave us a rendering. We're hoping to take the buildings where they're centrally located and move this visitor center and offices close to Yaphank Avenue, making it more visible to the public. This would be a totally green building. We anticipate significant savings over the life of the new building with regard to energy. And also, there will be environmental preservation. And it will be also an instructional building for people as they come to it.

We have requested \$1.6 million, which hasn't been included in the Capital Program. But we fully recognize the austerity and the devastating economy that the County is facing. So we're asking not only for guidance and approval to go forward with the ongoing renovations, but at least to start the planning phase for the new visitors center and the offices.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Let's pause there so that we can do these one capital project at a time. BRO recommended, I think, a significantly lower amount, right? Some planning funds and then a cost -- a fraction of what was -- not the 1.2 originally adopted, but about 340,000. So I think it's more of an interior renovation than a full new building. I've been there too, so I saw the ceiling falling down. I couldn't spend too much time there, because of the cats running around which I'm quite allergic to.

**MR. MINEI:**

They've been removed.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

The cats have been removed. That's good. Do any committee members have any questions about this project? Legislator Horsley.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Vito, so the planning steps for this is what are you asking for? I don't know off the top of my head, I'm sorry.

**MR. MINEI:**

The guidelines DPW usually gives us is try to put at least 10% into a full planning and design phase for a project. Obviously, we're not near that if the building is going to be 1.6 million. And we have about 35,000 I think is already appropriated, we asked for another \$85,000 in planning.

What has happened is in their review, BRO has indicated that in their estimation that this capital project is so multi-faceted and that we have such bold plans for the visitors center, that perhaps we should lift that out and come to you with a separate request for the new visitors center and reception area. I'm fine with that, except we have planning money already in the existing 1796 Capital Program. I'd like the authorization to go forward with the planning. That's the only use we have. We don't need planning money for the hog house floor or replacing the fences. We're working with DPW to get the roads finished. And they come and do roofing as time and materials allow.

So I'd like to be able to use capital planning money in 1796, enhance that with maybe another \$85,000 and go through with a full alternative review and planning, because some people say, "Well, just replace the mobile homes in place." That would be logistically a nightmare, because we have staff in there. And also, I think long term the County should be really thinking forward with regard to a green building and more visibility. We do you -- and you saw on your visits, that we do get thousands of people there. And we should really make it a showpiece for the County. It is the County farm.

So again, I'm asking you not only to let us go forward with the planning, 35,000 would just get us barely started this year. But if we had the full planning and design money, I think we could come back to you in a year with all of the alternatives evaluated.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Maybe this question is for Gail. The hotel/motel tax, I know, you know, some of that goes to Walt Whitman, some of it goes to Vanderbilt, but there is a portion for buildings. I guess it's mostly historic. But the fund itself is designed for promoting tourism and museums and cultural centers. This seems like it might fall within the "museum" in a way or "cultural center," people are learning about agriculture. Is that something that could be funded through that fund. Is there money in the building portion of it?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

It's hard to say. Most of that funding is already allocated either to cultural or historic. The law stipulates that a certain portion does go to General Fund for relief. We might have that occupation to review what goes to the General Fund.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Well, I don't want to take money away from the General Fund, but the portion that go towards fixing buildings in the Parks Department --

**MS. VIZZINI:**

It goes to the Parks Department for historic --

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

This wouldn't be under Parks.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

No, Cornell is not under Parks.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So the farm is not under Parks. It could be though?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Well, right now, organizationally, it's not.

**MR. MINEI:**

Organizationally, our contracts are processed and administered by the Health Department. The work at the farm is typically done by DPW. But in the past, Park has also contributed signs and things like that. It's sort of a vague collaboration.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

If it was put under Parks, Gail, would that make it eligible for some of those park funds?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

It might be worth consideration. However, as I said, that \$7 million in revenue that we get is accounted for. So you would be taking from Peter to give to Paul.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Right. But the money that's for buildings, you know, maybe down the road could be used. If it's accounted for now, there's new money coming in every year for that hotel tax. It's just a thought.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Something to consider.

**MR. MINEI:**

There is a historic building, the main barn that you've seen is in disrepair. They've did some work several years ago actually with a State DOT grant because of proximity to the LIE on that historic hay barn. So there is historic value to the farm.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

A beautiful visitors center is a great idea. It might not be one that we can afford right now. The idea of taking what you've got -- and I agree, it's squalid. You know, we ought to have a decent place for our County employees, Cornell's employees to work in. What is the least expensive approach to getting to that point? Not the premiere visitors, but just maybe a new modular building or maybe gutting it, having DPW or a private contractor go in there, resheetrock it, new ceilings, new walls.

**MR. MINEI:**

I would hate to make that kind of an investment in buildings that are just so substandard and should be removed. That's why I'm asking for the planning funds, so we can go through all the alternatives and come back to you --

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Well, it might be years before you have the new visitors center. Meanwhile, we have people working in terrible conditions. I'm just thinking, on a more immediate basis, since the timing is terrible in terms of our County's fiscal position, we certainly need to do something with that building, there's no question about it. But we do have the Department of Public Works, Parks Department, we have people who can go in there and clean it up or fix the ceilings. It may not be perfect, but it might be a lot better than it is today as an interim basis.

**MR. MINEI:**

It's a thought, and I certainly can talk to our friends at DPW, but I know they are not robust with extra staff and materials to do that. I would prefer, quite honestly, just to move ahead with the planning and come back to you with those kinds of alternatives; with cost estimates for minor modifications, cost estimates to replace in kind modular buildings, and then really to evaluate what the cost effectiveness is for a bolder plan for that facility. But again, I'd be a little concerned with -- we have so many requests at the DPW that I'm a little concerned about piling on another one. I'd rather just move right into the planning phase with them and start evaluating alternatives, and maybe they can give us a good cost estimate.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Well, you're presenting the situation that this building is basically unsafe. Gil, I'm sorry, can I bring you up for a second. What I want to know is have you or anybody at DPW been inside this building? Is it okay in terms of keeping these workers in there? And is there anything that DPW can do to remediate the situation?

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

Certainly we have been in the building. Off the top of my head to tell you the safety of the building, I'd like to go and take a look at it and come back to you. I think what Vito is outlining here is a good program and should be considered given the age and the condition of it. Is it safe? I would think a Public Safety Officer would take a look at it as well, but if you give me until the next meeting, you know, I can certainly come back with a recommendation.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I would appreciate your expertise in this structurally. Just make sure it's sound. It would help us make our decision whether we want to throw money at what could be a losing battle or whether we want to move forward with a whole new building.

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

Again, I think the planning steps are what would be needed at this point to look at that, not just us going in and saying, "Oh, yeah, we can do that." Certainly, you know, you look at the photos here and you see some significant situations that should be addressed. Again, I think it would be wise to, in agreement with Vito, to say that we should spend the money on the planning at this point. This way we can see what options we're up against. We can, you know, make an intelligent decision based on, you know, sound engineering and architectural detail.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

But you could take a quick look and let us know if there are mold issues or water leaking or whatever it might be, structurally that it's safe.

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

I'll have that at the next meeting.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I would appreciate it. Legislator Barraga.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

I've had the opportunity over the last couple years to visit the farm and to tour the buildings in question. There's no way in hell I would ever want to go in those buildings and spend eight hours a day in there. Those buildings should have been demolished a long time ago. The fact that humans are in those buildings, it's a disgrace. I mean, you have to take a look at the place. These buildings are falling apart. Just the pictures here don't do justice to what's really out there. These

places are dumps.

I mean, I don't know why an investigation hasn't been launched to take a look at these buildings, because, you know, human beings shouldn't inhabit these places. It's that bad. And some day, you know, you're going to read about a portion of this building falling down on somebody or being damaged or some sort of sickness being developed because these people are in these buildings day after day eight hours a day. These things should have been taken care of and knocked down a long, long time ago.

**MR. MINEI:**

I'm with you, Legislator Barraga.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Why am I not surprised?

**MR. MINEI:**

When I started at Cooperative Extension two years ago, that was what I was hoping for, was the economy to turn around quicker. But I do believe, and Gil and I communicate a lot of issues, and they've been great on the farm, that if we could move quickly into the planning phase, we could arm DPW with more information that they could come back quickly and start outlining the options and even some or the remedial work that Legislator Schneiderman is talking about.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Legislator Horsley.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

I want to just go back to the hotel/motel. I don't think that's an unreasonable concept. My feeling is that this year we are going to have a robust year for tourism. I think things are starting to happen. If we were -- seeing that, you know, we don't know much monies are going to be in the hotel/motel, because we don't know how well we're going to do tourist-wise in the hotels and stuff like that. If we were to place that into our request for the hotel/motel, is that something reasonable? Should we be doing something like putting the farm on the historical register? You know, what parameters -- and I'm not sure, Gail, this is your question here. Help me with this.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Just before I respond to the hotel/motel alternative, I just want to point out that the planning money is in the 2012 Capital Program. So really what we're talking about is a resolution appropriating the \$85,000. The construction money to move beyond that was discontinued in the new program. Normally, we would bond rather than do this on a pay-go basis, but we're talking about 85 -- well, it's hard to project where we're going to be with hotel/motel.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

I recognize that. But it seems -- my gut tells me, how's that?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Well, my gut tells me that we would be taking -- you know, if you're going to establish this as a priority, it would displace some other priority that is currently funded as long as it was consistent with what's outlined in the law.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Vito, should we be putting the farm on the register? Is that something we should be moving forward with?

**MR. MINEI:**

I believe the hay barn may already be on the historical register.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

That's just the one building.

**MR. MINEI:**

I would like it to be in better shape. And I appreciate everybody's gut feeling, but I think we can answer all of these questions in the planning phase.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

We've called it a dump. I think Legislator Schneiderman has one-upped me when he called it squalid.

**MR. MINEI:**

I would just like -- you know, we have 35,000 already I believe appropriated and encumbered. The request was for the 85,000 additionally, which gets us closer to the usual 10% that DPW asked us to put into planning and design.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Is this your number one priority?

**MR. MINEI:**

I'm sorry?

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Is this your number one priority?

**MR. MINEI:**

For the farm it is.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

No, no, no. For Cornell.

**MR. MINEI:**

You've known me long enough that I'm just --

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

It's not that you don't love all your children. If we were to work with you --

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Let's see if we can move on from the farm. So we will go on to the next Capital Program. I think we've got all the information, and Gil is going to provide us with additional information in terms of the immediacy of the problems there so. Vito, next.

**MR. MINEI:**

Again, as we transition over, the request now is for another 85,000 for planning for us to answer all those questions.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

But you want us to put the money in to the subsequent years or somewhere for the visitors center, right?

**MR. MINEI:**

Well, the planning will answer all these questions. We'll get back to Gail on hotel/motel, we'll be working closely with Gil's people at DPW on alternatives or immediate repairs just to keep it safer.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

But it wouldn't make sense for us to spend 85,000 on planning, approve that money if we don't have money in the Capital Program to do something later on. We'd just be doing planning with no ability to fix anything.

**MR. MINEI:**

In my nearly 40 years of working for the County, I found projects go in and out of the Capital Program, and if they have merit, people bring it back into the fold. And my plan is to be so compelling in a year, that you'll see the merit to long-range planning for the County farm.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

BRO I think, they recommended the planning money, right, Gail, that was your recommendation?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Correct.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

But a lesser amount down the road for the actual job. Okay. Let's move on to the next one.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

These are the -- 342,000 was the planning money for the other structures that need repair as detailed on Page 97 of the report; the hog house, the main barn, the hay barn.

**MR. MINEI:**

Thank you. I'm now inviting your attention to Capital Program 7050, which is improvements at Peconic Dunes County Park. Again, now we're dealing with Parks and Public Works again. Cornell Cooperative Extension has been operating the camp since 2003. Chris Colahan, my colleague, has been there for the last six years, I believe the last four years as Director. And this is an even bolder plan for us.

In reading the BRO recommendations, I believe I pretty much agree with everything. One of the issues Gail's staff raises is that we're operating under a waiver at this park. We've been asking for a request for proposals that we could respond to. I believe it was in for a while, but we would ask that that RFP be issued some time this year so we could respond as well, because it's kind of a Catch-22; we're willing to put up some of the money that we obtained through the fees, but we want a formal long-term relationship with the County. So we would ask that our friends at Parks please release an RFP that we can respond to this year so we can move forward.

Now. Moving to the project, we made presentations before two committees last year, last fall; one to Environment and one to Parks where we brought to the County Legislature this relationship that Chris has struck with a professor whose home, summer home, is right off the campus grounds. And he has this exciting graduate architectural program at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, and he's also a visiting professor of Harvard. And if you just go through the package I presented on 7050 and move towards the back towards the graphics, you will see that, again, the lynchpin to all the improvements at the camp and the focus is really on the dining hall. Again, this building, I think is a 1930s vintage building. I'm about three or four slides back from the end of the package.

You will see a montage of photos inside and out of the camp dining hall, which is the focus of the entire campus. And it's in terrible disrepair. In 2001, a Parks Department report said it should be

demolished and replaced. As a professional engineer, I asked for an independent engineer to evaluate it. He agreed the building should be replaced, but he did indicate it is at least safe for the time being so that we have children in there. So we're moving again on a building that should have been replaced ten years ago.

The exciting part is if you move backwards into the graphics of what the vision for this camp is, Chris, through his association with Professor Nastasi at Harvard and Stevens Institute has proposed, the first of its kind nationwide, an overnight camp that will be totally energy independent and also be environmentally conservative. You hear the terms LEEDs thrown around a lot, Leadership in Environment and Energy Design. He is planning to go well beyond LEED certification. He is internationally renowned. He has done work at the Beijing Olympics, he has done work in Middle East, he has done work all over the country. His grad students do very well in the energy decathlon down in Washington D.C. and what we're proposing is, again, to use planning money that we have on hand and planning money that we would put up, sort of a pay-go situation.

And also, if indeed the RFP is settled and our proposal is accepted, which we're very confident would happen, we would propose construction of this future vision of the dining hall with us defraying most of the cost of the bond for \$1.6 million. I believe it was \$120,000 a year for 20 years, and we would commit to \$80,000 of that bonding. The County Executive, seeing the value of this camp moving ahead, has moved the money back a year. But we would like to enter the planning money with our own funds and move forward on what the County will be truly proud of; a first of its kind overnight camp.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Do we have questions on this capital project?

**MR. MINEI:**

This is a priority too.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

How big is the property? The County owns the camp, right? What is the size of it?

**MR. COLAHAN:**

It's 30 acres of land and a 30 acre fresh water pond, and it fronts the Long Island Sound.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

How many kids do you serve there?

**MR. COLAHAN:**

About 1500 annually -- actually, 1500 during the summer and another 500 in the fall and spring.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And you guys are moving toward a more sustainable model by carrying the debt service for the County, that's the idea?

**MR. COLAHAN:**

Yes, sir.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

A portion of the debt service, right?

**MR. COLAHAN:**

A portion. And we're also moving toward a year-round facility. It's such a unique facility, and it's a

shame that it's really only used for a portion of the year. We think that there's a lot of the opportunity for the children of Suffolk County to use it throughout the year.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I know that a lot of the schools go to Frost Valley and other places for educational environmental discovery types of trips. It might actually be a savings for those school districts to have a facility like that here in Suffolk County. Maybe that would help the finances of it, make it more profitable. I don't know what the operating costs in the winter would be and whether it would be covered by that increased use.

**MR. COLAHAN:**

Well, that's actually one of the unique concepts of this design is that the annual energy cost would be less than they are now, only operating in the summer.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

BRO actually kept -- pushed the money back to subsequent years, but I think the same amount of money was in their recommendation, right, Gail?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Right.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So the only difference is timing here?

**MR. MINEI:**

Yes. And we're just making this presentation for educational purposes, just so you know what we're doing and planning to do on County property.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Are you objecting at all to BRO's recommendation that the money go into subsequent years?

**MR. MINEI:**

You know, we would have preferred our original schedule, but we fully recognize the situation of the budget. We're good with it. We just want -- first of all, we have to establish a more formal relationship. That was the outcome of the two presentations to the committees. So we have a resolution pending with either Stevens -- Professor Nastasi's relationship with Stevens Institute or at Harvard. So we have to get you that resolution for your consideration. We'll establish an MOU with Parks, DPW, Cornell Cooperative Extension and possibly Harvard or Stevens Institute to do the planning, and then obviously, we would go out to bid. There were some questions in the early stages, but now we're planning to do it more conventionally once the plans are delivered and accepted by DPW and Parks.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Any other questions from the committee? All right. Let's move on to the next capital project, CP 1766.

**MR. MINEI:**

Last one is CP 1766, and it's still titled "Building for a Wildlife Rescue and Education Marine Center." This is out at our facility at Hogs Neck at Cedar Beach in the Town of Southold.

If you leaf back to the graphics, you'll see the outside of the building was constructed in 2006 under Capital Programs, but it's remained a large open building without heat and infrastructure installed. And we truly believe this is kind of a waste to have this much money spent for what is ostensibly a

storage building. And you see the montage that we have included in that package.

We're asking for completion of the interior of the building, either its classrooms and offices, also the plumbing and heating to be installed. BRO raised a legitimate question with regard to our existing facilities, but this really would be an enhancement of what we provide to literally thousands of school children that come to the Marine and Environmental Learning Center. This would give us much more flexibility. This would give us room for other display purposes as well as research. We conduct a lot of marine research out at the Environmental Learning Center out there, and we're asking to move forward -- you have a resolution pending, I believe it's 1001-2012, to appropriate the 25,000 for planning. I'm asking that you please consider that and approve that resolution. I'd like to do the planning. I believe we can bring the cost down on the modifications. Right now, that \$175,000 estimate is the best we can do with consultation from DPW in the abstract without formal planning. So I'm asking to at least ask you to approve that resolution for \$25,000 so we can come back to you and reconsider the actual money for the improvements to the inside of the building.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Based on the photos you've included, it looks like you need it for storage. It's pretty packed.

**MR. MINEI:**

It's like my home; if you have a large open area like a basement of a building, it has a vacuum, it draws materials into it.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

And if we renovate this building, where is all this stuff going?

**MR. MINEI:**

Well, obviously, part of the discussion is a sure side logistics for all the work. We will find room for the materials. But again, it's quite a shame that it's an unheated, unplumbed building, that we should have restrooms, classrooms in there. We think we could probably bring the cost down a little bit. Some of our early decisions were that we might need a separate septic system for this. We believe now that maybe the existing septic system would be enough. So again, I think if we were allowed to move forward with planning we could come back with a more cost effective proposal for you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

How does the County benefit from this?

**MR. MINEI:**

Well, essentially what you're getting is a facility that really educates thousands of children and now adults. We have a lot of adults involved in the restoration of scallops and oysters as well. And I think it goes right to the heart of an issue that I hear time and time again here, that children of Suffolk County don't appreciate what they have here in Suffolk, and therefore, they're willing to leave at first notice to go outside once they're educated. What we're doing is enhancing the educational and research capabilities of Cornell Cooperative Extension in Southhold.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Part of the reason why the children are leaving is that they can't afford to live here sometimes because we spend money on things maybe that aren't part of our core mission. And I'm not sure this is part of our core mission. It's certainly part of Cornell Cooperative Extension's core mission. But it's something that we will debate as a committee. Legislator Stern.

**LEG. STERN:**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Vito, I'm not very familiar with this facility. I'm looking at the

overhead --

**MR. MINEI:**

Legislator Hahn is coming out next week. We'd love to bring you West End Legislators out there. There is a Suffolk County east of William Floyd Parkway, I assure you.

**LEG. STERN:**

The building that you are referring to, I'm looking at the overhead here, it's the building on the right, I'm assuming, right, with the white top?

**MR. MINEI:**

It's the constructed building.

**LEG. STERN:**

What is the building to the left?

**MR. MINEI:**

That's part of our existing facilities. What you're seeing is probably -- I can't see exactly what you're looking at -- but there is a greenhouse structure that we use for propagating eel grass, which is the main habitat out in the bay system. But also, you're seeing the main building.

I was first familiar with it about 20, 25 years ago. It was part of the Community College facilities, and it couldn't attract enough students to eastern Southold, so they turned it back to the County, and the County in turn allowed Cornell Cooperative Extension to use it for our Marine Environmental Learning Center. So you're looking at the main building that has classrooms, it has touch tanks, it has different exhibits, but it also has a lot of research going on mainly with scallops and oysters in the building. We actually grow our own algae to feed the oysters and the scallops. And in that creek you see right there on the graphic, Goose Creek, we've raised them to a certain size, and then we put them out in the wild. So you're seeing a research and education facility.

**LEG. STERN:**

And the boats that are docked there belong to who?

**MR. MINEI:**

To Cornell Cooperative Extension. We purchased those.

**LEG. STERN:**

So those are boats that are yours?

**MR. MINEI:**

Yes. I think you are even seeing the barge that we use for probably the largest {spawna} sanctuary in the world for shellfish. We have it out in Gardiner's Bay.

**LEG. STERN:**

Thanks.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

All right. Anyone else? Legislator Horsley.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Just quickly. Chris, I've never been to Peconic. I feel like I have with all of your conversations. Do you think I could take a look a nice spring day.

**MR. COLAHAN:**

You all are invited, anytime. During the summer would be ideal. Do you want me to schedule -- okay. You got it.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

All right. Thank you. We're going to wrap this, I think, Vito and move on to our next speaker. Thank you for coming out.

**MR. MINEI:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I think you got even more than 15 minutes.

**MR. MINEI:**

There were a lot of questions.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

All right. Our next speaker is Richard Elberfeld.

**MR. ELBERFELD:**

I want to thank you today for letting me speak. I work for the DPW. And as you know, in the capital projects, a lot of our capital projects are funded 80% by the Federal Government. It makes sense. Why would we do a project and say, "Okay. The Federal Government is willing to put up 80% of the money, let's do it with the Federal money"? So we pay the other 20%. So we get five times the bang on our dollar. But we also go outside of DPW to hire contractors. Now, they are reimbursed 80% from the Federal Government to do the jobs, and then we pay 20% from the Capital Budget to pay the rest of it.

Now there's eight people in DPW who can be switched to these capital projects, not pay a contractor, somebody outside, and actually fund eight people who are losing their jobs. Now, because of the rules of the capital money, we can pay a contractor the 20%, but we can't pay a Suffolk County worker the 20%.

Now, as most of you people have said in the past, these are tough times, so they take tough decisions. The decision I'm asking you gentlemen to make is that why not keep eight positions that can work on these Federally funded projects. Make a bill, one signature that would allow these people to work on these projects, whether they're 80% funded or go one step further and take the tough decision, change the laws that allow the Capital Budget to pay for the 20% so the Operating Budget would still have the same savings, but instead of the money going to somebody else, you are saving your fellow workers.

It's a tough decision. It's never been done, paying a County worker with capital funds. But I work with a gentleman who's a contractor, and I'm one of two traffic techs in all of Suffolk County. I'm going to be gone, I'm one of the eight. So we can have him there, paying him from capital funds, working with us doing traffic studies, yet, I can be let go, because I can't be paid out of capital funds. We use the 80% because it makes sense.

Why not use the capital funds for only those jobs that can be saved; a special bill signed by the County Executive that can save those eight jobs? It's only eight people. But if it was one of your jobs, what would you do? Would you do that? Would you say, "You know what? That makes sense."? Only in this exception will we do it, allow these funds to be used the same way the contractors are paid for Suffolk County employees to take their jobs and be paid the same way. It

takes guts to change the way the capital budget is used, but this is hard times and it takes strong leaders willing to say, "You know what? We will make this exception only in the case to save County workers," because they may live next door to you, they may be your sister, your brother, your cousin, it could be anybody. But it's tough times, and you guys have to make those decisions. Simple bill signed by the County Executive for an exception to save those eight people. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Thank you, Richard. This is an issue I've become aware of and I think some of my colleagues also. There's been conversations with the administration in terms of this issue as well. Gail, in terms of legislatively, is there a reason why we couldn't? Maybe it's because of the first instancing of the money, but is there a reason why we couldn't do something like what's been recommended, rather than using private contractors, use County employees to do some of these Federally funded projects. Gil?

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

It's actually always been policy, it's not law. The intent under the prior administration was to get as much work out as we could and get as much work done as we could by using consultants where we could as well as our own forces and not reimburse our costs for our employees. But as you said, we have forwarded a plan up to the administration for them to review, as Richard mentioned, to save those positions.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

There might be a way to keep people on on an interim basis if we can do this policy.

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

Correct.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. And it doesn't require any legislation by this body, it can be all done administratively?

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

I believe so.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Robert, you are nodding. Is that your understanding of it too?

**MR. LIPP:**

I think Gil said it best, it's a policy issue. So, you know, we aren't really sure what the objections are that the administration has. So it would be best maybe to have the conversation with them before a decision is made.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I can't speak for the Legislature, only myself personally, I certainly rather see County employees doing this work than private contractors. That makes good sense. So if there is a way we can do that, I certainly would support that. There's no difference in cost. In fact, maybe it's cheaper to have the County employees do it. Anybody else want to comment on this issue? Okay. Thank you. Our next speaker is Greg Mead.

**MR. MEAD:**

Good morning, Honorable Members of the Suffolk County Legislature. My name is Gregory Mead, and I am one of the many in DPW who are being currently laid off as a result of this most recent Operating Budget amendment. I have been employed with DPW's Design and Construction Division for the past four years and four months in the capacity of building project coordinator. During my

tenure, I have been -- I have managed various projects with the Parks Department, Unified New York State Courts, PD, Department of Labor, Probation, Highways and also managed the only two compressed natural gas fueling facilities constructed by Suffolk County. I would like to mention that these two facilities were 50% through an ARRA grant.

Most recently, I have been informed that the department has requested authorization to allow my salary to be 80% funded by Federal aid for the design of yet another compressed natural gas fueling facility located in Yaphank. However, the request was not approved. I am the perfect candidate for this project as I assisted in the design and managed the successful completion of two such facilities in the last nine months.

During the administration of those projects, I have gained intimate knowledge of these complex systems operation, regulations and requirements. This experience would make my contribution to designing the next facilities invaluable. I am, therefore, appealing to have this funding proposal reevaluated as I firmly believe it would serve to the best interest of all parties if implemented. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today and sincerely thank you for your consideration in this matter.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Thank you. Next speaker is Charles Bartha.

**MR. BARTHA:**

Hello. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I have to ask you if you're related to the former Commissioner.

**MR. BARTHA:**

Yes, I am Junior.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay.

**MR. BARTHA:**

I currently work on a Federally funded project on Pulaski Road in Huntington Station as a field inspector. I'm also scheduled to go on another Federal aid project in June, which is a 24-month project. I'm not exactly sure of the details, but like my coworkers have said, my time and benefits can be reimbursed to the County up to 80%. And I just believe that me and my coworkers that are eligible for the reimbursements should be considered and possibly removed from the list.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

All right. Thank you.

**MR. BARTHA:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Let's go back to Gail for a second. Although it's been said this is a policy decision, there's nothing legally stopping us with the Federally aided positions from not using the contractors and using the County employees, and these individuals, some of them who are speaking are on that layoff list, if legislation were to be introduced, could it be introduced in a way that would say that the County ought to use -- you know, as a preference, use County employees rather than contractors? Is there room for legislation here, or it's just something that's purely --

**MS. VIZZINI:**

You're talking about a policy statement in the form of legislation really asking the County Executive to take a look at this. I think it would behoove us -- I just reached out to the administration. I know that the Commissioner has made a presentation to the administration along these lines. Some of the concerns were cash, accountability in terms of what happens when the Federal funds dry up; are the individuals going to be spending 100% of their time on the Federally funded projects, or will they actually be doing other things? So we need kind of answers to these questions. How long can this arrangement be sustained. You know, when the project is completed, what do we do? So we need some facts, and then we could get back to you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

If it was legislation, would it be considered a budget amendment, which would prohibit us from introducing it until June?

**MS. VIZZINI:**

If you're actually going to do the mechanical restoring of positions for the people, you could do it through a budget amendment, or it could be done administratively by the creation of interim positions.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. But in terms of this body, then we probably wouldn't be able to do anything at least until June in terms of introducing it, because we can only introduce them four times a year in terms of restoring the position. So it really is a battle that has to go up to the administration I would think, because that 60 day clock is ticking, winding down a little bit.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

Our next cycle for amending the budget is the upcoming June meeting, the June 5th meeting. I'll reach out to them. I'd like to talk to Gil in terms of this issue, and then I will get back to you in the committee.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. Thank you. The next speaker is Jill Bruno.

**MS. BRUNO:**

Hello. My name is Jill Bruno, and I work for the Chief Engineer of Highway Structures and Waterways within the Department of Public Works. The duties I perform in the Chief Engineer's office are eligible Federal and State aid reimbursement. For this reason, I am requesting that my name be removed from the layoff list. I appreciate any consideration that could be given to this matter. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I'm sorry, Jill. You said they're eligible. So what you do now is not Federally funded, but could be is or is Federally funded? Is it similar to the other two speakers that talk about --

**MS. BRUNO:**

Yes. I perform the administrative tasks for the Federally aided projects.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So it probably is Federally aided already.

**MS. BRUNO:**

Correct.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

James Andreassi.

**MR. ANDREASSI:**

Good morning. I'm here for the same reasons; I'm part of the 315 that is going to be laid off. I have been told that I can be put on a Federally aided job that is reimbursed 80%. I would just like to say that, you know, on a more personal level, as this auditorium is named after Ms. Caracappa that we are not just numbers, we are faces and human beings also. You're affecting -- I just got married in September, and I rely on my benefits and everything. I would really appreciate and strongly suggest that you give us some answers if it can't be done and why it couldn't be and stuff like that. That's all. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Appreciate that. We are doing our very best. We're in a very difficult situation. I've spent most of my day every day since these layoffs talking to people on that layoff list. It's a tragic situation. There's a lot of families involved, kids, disabilities illnesses, and it's heart wrenching. We are doing best. You know, we don't have enough money to get through the year. We're trying to get there. It's, obviously, nothing personal. We will do what we can okay. Charles Chappell.

**MR. CHAPPELL:**

Good morning. I work for DPW for two years. And with everyone else here, I'm on the layoff list. I can be put on a Federally funded job and get my salary reimbursed and benefits reimbursed 80%. I'm just hoping you take that into consideration.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Thank you. Peter Nolan.

**MR. NOLAN:**

Good morning, Legislators. I appreciate the opportunity to take the time to listen to me. My name is Peter Nolan. I currently reside in Shirley, but my registered voting address is actually in Oakdale, making my representative Bill Lindsay, so I obviously I wish him luck. I am currently employed as a junior civil engineer in the Bridges, Structures and Waterways Department. The term "civil engineer" is a pretty broad term. It's pretty all-encompassing. It involves waste water, structural engineering, which is what I particularly do, environmental engineering, surveying amongst others. It actually comes from Roman times to differentiate from military engineering. So I would like to take the opportunity to at least explain just so you can get to know me. I mean, this is the first time meeting.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Are you on the layoff list as well?

**MR. NOLAN:**

Oh, yes. Let's make that clear. My journey with the County began in February '09 when I graduated from the University of Buffalo with a Masters in Math, Civil Engineering -- and a a Masters in Civil engineering. And like others in my generation, I had a hard time finding a job. And so a year and a half out while living on a friend's couch in Tennessee, a job came in. It was for the County, it was what I wanted to do. It was the Bridges and Structures Department, but it was under the title of laborer, which means minimum wage, no benefits. You know, it's a laborer position.

I worked in this position for about five to six months. At this time, I decided I had to take care of myself. So I moved and I took a position in Nassau County as a junior civil engineer right around

the time the financials of their County became prevalent. So a position -- I guess my departure from Suffolk County had been felt, and a position -- a resolution had been passed to have that position open, so I came back to the County. And I've been there for about a year and a half now, and now I'm on the layoff list.

An interesting side effect of working for both counties -- and this hasn't been clarified, I seek not resolution but clarity on this subject -- is as a County employee -- I know Nassau County has this rule -- I can't legally work on County projects for two years, which would mean that for the next six months, I legally can't work on Nassau or Suffolk County projects. But it has come to my attention that if my position can be funded by moving me on to a Federally aided project, 80% of my salary can be reimbursed. By doing this, it would allow me enough time to achieve enough experience in my field to obtain my PE License. And that's all I really ask for, enough time in the County to get my license. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you. I wish you luck.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

I appreciate that, Peter, and I'm sorry for the situation you're in. Gail, I have a question, because I think Peter brought up an interesting point. Setting aside the issue with the Federal funding, I know there is a prohibition when you leave the County to working for a contractor that does business with the County. But I don't think it was ever meant to punish somebody who was being laid off from County service from being able to find a job. That's a serious consequence here. It seems like we ought to fix that somehow. I don't really see what the conflict is. Once you've lost your job -- it's not like you left the County, you've been forced out of the County and now you need to find work. It seems quite unfair.

**MS. VIZZINI:**

I'll talk with Legislative Counsel and we'll take a look at that.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

We should probably be doing everything we can to help the people we're laying off secure work. In this case, we have an individual with an engineering degree, seems quite employable, but probably almost every engineering firm does work with the County, a lot of them do work related to the County. That would put him at a real competitive disadvantage. So, yeah, if we could continue a conversation about that and maybe fix that Legislatively. I'm not sure I'd have the support for something like that, but we can at least have the conversation. Thank you. Stand Humin.

**MR. HUMIN:**

Good morning, Legislators. I appreciate the opportunity to talk. I am not on the layoff list, but I'm representing on behalf of AME. I am DPW White's President, and my members are all sitting in the back, and they are affected. I have been with the County for 12 years. Before that, I worked 10 years for the private sector. I just wanted to give the committee some numbers to answer Gail's question. She was asking whether the positions would be Federally funded full time for the year.

Since 2005, we do an average of about \$28.6 million in Federal aid a year since 005. The nine positions that we're talking about losing average about \$35,000 per year with benefits somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20,000 a year. Now, we're talking about the positions going to the private sector that would do our positions, the one thing that was not mentioned is their salaries may equal ours, but their reimbursed at a two and a half multiplier to their companies to cover their overhead and profit. So it's not a realistic line item to look at them as one to one, because they make two and a half times what we make. I know it comes out of a different appropriation, but to me, it's just playing a shell game with the money, and it's not realistically looking at it.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

It's actually going to cost us more to use outsiders.

**MR. HUMIN:**

Absolutely, Mr. Schneiderman. Also, New York State, who basically oversees the Federal the -- Federal projects, they administrate them for us, they have minimum requirements for staffing as well. So they pretty much mandate on who -- how many people should be staffing these projects. And if we do not provide that staffing, they will not reimburse us. So they pretty much oversee and say how we are reimbursed.

Personally, I am a second-generation County employee. My father worked for the County for 30 years, I've been with the County for 12 years. And since 2000, I've watched our staff be reduced in half. We're down from 12 down to six. I would like to believe that we are on the front lines for you guys. We're out there doing these municipal projects. And we are not making a million dollars doing it, we do it, because we like to do it. I would just hope that you guys can give us some consideration and just realize, you know, what we're trying to do for you guys. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Appreciate it. Thank you, Stan. All right. That's all the yellow cards I have. Is there anyone else who wishes to be heard? I see one hand up. If you will come forward, identify yourself at the podium. We'll give you three minutes to make your comments known.

**MR. MUXO:**

Good morning. I did fill out a yellow card. It must have gotten lost.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

What is your name, Sir?

**MR. MUXO:**

Ray Muxo. In any event, I don't want to use up my three on that. But good morning. As everyone else has said, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

My error.

**MR. MUXO:**

Thank you. Again, my name is Ray Muxo. I work for DPW Buildings Design and Construction. My position is slated for abolishment. I have spoken before you in the past, last night being the most recent, although I don't know if everybody was here last night.

I have spoken in more broad terms, but my focus today, consistent with today's agenda in the effort to save a few jobs, is in regard to energy saving and Federally funded capital projects. You heard from others this morning in this regard. I really just wanted to add another face and name to that list of people who are affected and could be positively affected by a decision regarding the Federally funded projects.

While I am support staff, I have been advised that the energy saving capital project projected through 2014 will save on the order of \$5 million per year. Based on all the numbers that have been thrown around over the last several weeks, \$40,000 a year per the average employees. Do the math. That's a boatload of positions to be saved. In order to realize those savings however, the appropriate personnel need to implement what is necessary to rapidly and correctly achieve that goal. Several of us from BDC whose positions have been abolished are those appropriate people.

Now an argument could be made that the remaining personnel could handle these projects. And taking nothing away from my coworkers, they're going to have enough on their hands to deal with

because of work that we are not going to be doing now. The most efficient way of implementing this project is with those who already have the experience doing that. Again, those who will not be here beginning July 1st are those individuals.

Regarding Federally funded projects, as I mentioned last night, Department of Health Services is not the only department to enjoy, I put quotes around enjoy, funding from sources other than the County. As has been mentioned by statements made earlier, there are a myriad of significant Federally funded projects available to DPW that require personnel to implement or the funding would be lost.

For BDC for facilities engineering, for example, the compressed natural gas projects are just one series that come to mind. At 80%, I believe now there is a \$500,000 amount that's in a resolution of which 400,000 was going to be reimbursed by the County -- I'm sorry, by the Federal Government. With the release of the current staff in DPW, those projects will be seriously hampered if not cancelled. The end result is that the public of Suffolk County would suffer because these projects are either not implemented or take too long to be implemented.

To a couple of comments made before, and I'm finishing up, as far as with this Federal funding and a suggestion made before, the idea of taking care of our own is important. Honestly while it's honorable to keep the economy going with consultants and contractors, going outside for -- you know, when times are good. When times are tough, we really should pay attention and help our own.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Anyone else I skipped over? No other hands? Everybody that wanted to be heard was heard? Commissioner Anderson, just very briefly, have you had an opportunity to review the proposed Capital Budget as well as BRO's recommendations?

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

Briefly, I have. I would state, as I have for the past six years, BRO's report is spot-on as always. And I would commend them for their efforts. They have adequately, I think, reflected what's taken place.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

So on a whole, you say you could support BRO's recommendations?

**COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:**

Yes.

**CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:**

No further questions? Anyone else have any questions for the Commissioner? Thank you. If there's no one else, then we are adjourned. Thank you.

(\*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:50 A.M.\*)

{ } DENOTES BEING SPELLED PHONETICALLY