PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

of the

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Operating Budget Minutes

A special meeting of the Public Works Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on October 23, 2013 to discuss the operating budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Legislator Jay Schneiderman - Chairman
Legislator Steve Stern - Vice-Chairman
Legislator Wayne Horsley - Deputy Presiding Officer
Legislator Al Krupski
Legislator Tom Mouratore

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:
Legislator Kara Hahn
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Paul Perillie - Aide to Legislator Gregory
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick
Catherine Stark - Aide to Legislator Krupski
Robert Lipp - Director, Budget Review Office
Jill Moss - Budget Review Office
Tom Vaughn - County Executive's Office
Gil Anderson - Commissioner/Public Works
Vito Minei - Cornell Cooperative Extension
Rick Brand - Newsday
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:
Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 9:44 a.m.*)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Good morning. Welcome to the public hearing of the Public Works and Transportation -- what else are we covering today? Just Public Works and Transportation. I had to remember where I was for a second. All rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by my colleague, Legislator Al Krupski.

(*Salutation*)

Thank you for coming out this morning. Okay. I guess we'll start. Certainly, if anyone wants to be heard, just fill out a yellow card. I don't think we have any. We don't. I see the clerk's representative saying no. Commissioner Anderson, thanks for joining us at the table. Robert, do you want to provide any kind of brief overview of your report in terms of -- I know you made a number of recommendations.

MR. LIPP:
Well, in terms of revenue, the budget seemed reasonable assuming that we get the FEMA and the SEMA aid, you know, from the storm-related stuff. That's always a bit of a wild card, but it probably will occur; just, there's always uncertainly when you're talking about state and federal governments, but we should be okay there. Hopefully, there are not negative surprises, but the budget is a planning document, so it remains to be seen.

In terms of expenditures, DPW has, I guess, suffered more than most over the last few years in terms of staffing cuts, be it through early retirement incentives, attrition, layoffs, so it's been very challenging for them, so kudos to Gil for being able to juggle the balls of that.

That being said, there are some shortfalls in their budget. I would say overall, the recommended budget for salaries globally, you know, across departments, especially in particular were referring to the General Fund, it is okay. But as is typically the case, there are little pockets where there are shortfalls, so it makes it more difficult to be able to juggle the expenditure lines and move things around. DPW is one of them. There are certain limited numbers that we talked about in terms of permanent salaries, little less than a half a million for permanent salaries. It seems to be problematic in terms of being able to pay for all the current existing filled positions. Of course, you never know during the year, in terms of attrition, whether or not that would right itself, but it doesn't look that way, supposedly turnover savings. Take that into consideration, number one.

Number two, overtime, because of their short staffing, is going to be challenging to sort of cover the base with the amount of overtime expenditure that they gave them and, you know, we're talking about $600,000 or so; of course, a few appropriations there. Once again, county executive has to manage budget, the department has to manage the budget, but this will be a real challenge for them. And then there's, because of the limitations that we have in the budget, we've been sort of moving things towards capital, and there are a couple problems there. DPW is sort of the point department or front department for vehicles, so you don't -- typically, you don't have to see vehicles in department budgets but rather in DPW's budget to purchase vehicle, and most of that stuff is going through the capital program now, and there's not sufficient funding to be able to replace vehicles that are old, like 130-, 150,000-mile vehicles and ones that just need to be decommissioned. So probably in a perfect world we would add a million and a half just to replace vehicles that really need to. And a case in point, for instance, was in Public Safety yesterday; probation was, you know, saying they had problems with that.

There are three capital projects. There's one for public safety vehicles, and there are two for hybrids and CNG vehicles, but in terms of replacing a lot of the aged vehicles, typically we would do

that in operating, but we don't have the funding in the budget for that, so you're talking we could use, easy, a million and a half for that, and, you know, I guess as a fallback position, maybe create another capital project to be able to fund those so that you do still have some relief on the operating budget at least for 2014.

And you can tell a similar story for building repairs and maintenance. We're going through some of it in capital, so it appears to be somewhat underfunded in operating. They're moving it to capital, which I thought is the way I phrased it, but I guess not. So, you know, that's endemic of our challenges in the budget to be moving things away from pay-as-you-go for stuff and towards capital, sort of a negative pay-as-you-go, if you will.

We did make one recommendation in particular in terms of adding a couple of new positions in the budget for energy-related impacts. In other words, in terms of measurement and verification, you could have the best newest system so it's energy efficient in a building, but if you're not monitoring it, then the energy use will go away through the roof, so that's part of the puzzle that seems to be missing. So we were recommending adding a couple of positions and actually offsetting it dollar for dollar with reduction in utility costs. One assistant engineer and one engineer -- I'm sorry, energy systems computer specialist, and we actually feel the those positions will get us a payback period of less than a year, which would translate into actually saving money in the budget. And our recommendation was to offset the increase expense, if you're going to put the positions in, by lowering the power line by an equal amount, and we think it will actually wind up doing better than that. I know that that's not something that has in the past been embraced by the executive side of the street because of our challenges in the operating budget to be able to -- you know, we don't want to add new positions and spend more money, but we think in this case here, we actually can save money, and we've pushed that in the past, but it's hard to see because you're talking about the light, water and power line is a sink line in DPW's budget across departments. You don't see, for instance, in the legislature a utility line; it's in DPW's budget. It's a large amount of money.

We think that -- so, for instance, we think the expense could be reduced by 173,000 which is the recommended amount that we would have to, I believe, have to increase the budget for those two positions, but I believe if memory serves me correct, our estimate was more like not the 170 but we should be able to save like 230,000 in the first year and more in years after that; actually, in excess of a million annually.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
You're bringing that recommendation to the work group, I take it.

MR. LIPP:
Yes. So we're in the middle -- just so you know, we have identified in the review some big-ticket items for discussion purposes, but we're still in the process of preparing, and we'll have that finished today, our entire list of Budget Review Office recommendations to bring to the working group tomorrow, and this would be one of them.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I know Legislator Krupski has a question. I have several too, so I'll start with Legislator Krupski.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Legislator, would it be possible to make a statement before, or did you want to wait until after?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Sure.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Absolutely, Commissioner. You might answer all my questions.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I doubt it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Is your mike on, Gil?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Good morning and thanks. I want to first start off by thanking Budget Management, Fred Pollard, Connie Corso and their team, for constructing a budget that maintains no layoffs. We know, you know, as Dr. Lipp has said, we have taken a big hit in the past few years between attrition and layoffs and certainly whatever we can do to maintain the staffing we have given the current fiscal situation that we're in, I want to commend them on their efforts to, you know, construct this budget. Similarly, Dr. Lipp and his staff at BRO, their review document I refer to continuously throughout the year for both operating and capital, and they're always great to work with.

As I said, you know, I'm very happy that we have no layoffs, and I want to ensure you that DPW will continue to maintain the level of service that we have over the past year and over the past years. Just to briefly just toot our own horns, I want to thank my staff for the effort that they put in. We've -- and again, this is capital programming, but in highways, we're over $80 million in capital work between reconstruction, resurfacing bridges, dredging, work like that. Sanitation, we're probably close to $200 million in construction work that we've been putting out and overseeing between Sewer District 3, Bergen point, the industrial park Hauppauge, Sewer District 18, and the upgrade of the Stony Brook Sewer District, Sewer District 21.

Similarly, our building's designed and construction has overseen and developed over $13 million worth of work including the construction of the Traffic Violation and Parking Authority, repairs to the ballpark, and, of course, the Bavarian Inn, which is the most recent development we've been through. Our O and M staff has continually impressed me with their effort and their tireless work in trying to maintain our facilities given the staffing. Both sanitation and buildings, as you know, we are minimally staffed, and custodial, those guys are always trying to cover with use of overtime, without any question, but to cover the work that needs to be done; similarly in transportation, I want to just, you know -- and in other departments, we are looking where we can to use innovation and technology, as Dr. Lipp mentioned about the energy specialist. But in the case of the AVL, the Automated Vehicle Locater system, will be a boom for the system and be able to provide us with a lot of information that we can improve our system with.

We have over the past year gotten additional staffing, you know, worked with the county executive. We've just signed -- we've just had three new SCINS signed for auto mechanics, a division that desperately needs staffing. We've, over the course of the year, gotten new maintenance mechanics for the jail. We have a new electrical engineer starting to replace one that we expect to retire, which will be a big hit for our department.

So having said all this, I thank you for the time to let me say this. DPW will continue to maintain, rehabilitate, improve, and ensure public safety because that's what we do, and you have my assurance that we will do that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I'd like to offer a quick comment, too, first. Gil, thank you. You are working with, I guess, 20 percent less staff than just maybe seven years ago, which is really remarkable that we're maintaining the infrastructure, so that's really, I think, it's a credit to your stewardship there, and,

you know, thank you for working with both offices over at Dennison and here.

You know, I wonder, are we, though, at the same time using more outside contractors to do roadwork, and are we ending up ahead of the game rather than using in-house staff? I know we're going outside for contractors more than we have in the past. You know, some of that, I guess, is bonded, but overall is that true that we're relying more on outside agencies now to make the difference up?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I don't really know. To be honest with you, we do a lot of work in-house. A lot of our engineers are out on the field doing inspection work, which in the past we typically would've hired out, you know, consultants for. We still use the consultants at a high rate, probably as high as we ever have, but we also have a lot of -- you know, we've done over $20 million in resurfacing work that was funded through the federal aid, and that's all work that's been done in-house; sanitation, you know, they're continually doing work in-house. I mean, it's a balance. In an optimal world, you know, you really need to do that. There's certain expertise that we can't -- we could, I mean, we could staff up but at some point, you know, the level of --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
But in your mind, it's really, the staff shortage has made up by efficiencies, not by expanding outside agencies.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Correct.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Okay. All right. That's important. I actually have a number of things, but I think I'm going to defer first to Legislator Krupski and then I'll ask my questions.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
So I'm looking through your budget, and I have to give you credit for keeping it cobbled together.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Just before you -- I just want to -- it's my staff. Don't get me wrong. But they continuously amaze me, so, really, the kudos goes to them, but thank you.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Well, to you and everyone there in that department, then, for keeping it all together. There are a couple things here that concern me going through this review of the budget. One of them is the transfer of people on the 477 fund. I know there's a reliance fund on the 477 fund for salaries, and it comes -- we're sacrificing water quality for salaries here. Is there any way that any of those salaries can be transferred out of the 477 fund so that we can use that money for what it was supposed to be designed for, which is water quality improvement projects?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
The staffing that was transferred to DPW or is being proposed to be transferred, they've been working integrally with DPW, embedded in DPW, if you will. Doing water quality work has been their primary goal, whether it's been developing contracts for the work or actually physically going out in the field and cleaning catch basins, trying to do that environmental type of laboring work.

I mean, optimally in a few years, yeah, it would be really great to be able to transfer them into the -- you know, out of the 477 fund, but given what we're faced with, I don't think in the immediate future we can, but they are working with us. Their main task is towards water quality.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Well, their main task is, but it's depleted the fund to the point of having no money left to actually do any water quality work aside from the work that they do. So there's no other projects that can be completed because there's no money left there. That's my concern. If there's any room to move any of those salaries to anywhere else -- from my point of view, it's just poaching that money for legitimate purposes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I think Dr. Lipp --
MR. LIPP:
I think I can add something to that. The short-term answer is, "No, forget about it;" however, there's a definite "but" here, and the "but
is, okay, there are controversial items spoken about in the budget in particular. We mentioned a few things, not everything but a few things, about state enabling legislation would be required if you wanted to do certain things, so we wouldn't recommend trying to change the recommended budget right now because we don't have that, and it's not clear from a policy point of view if you, the policymakers, are interested. But in particular, there's one item that we mentioned both in the DPW write-up as well as the budget shortfall section in the front-end, and that's a motor vehicle registration surcharge. We could increase it to the level that's in Nassau County, and our estimate is we would get $10.35 million for it. And I think the point here is if moving forward during the year there was an interest in doing that, probably the best way to do it is with a plan to cobble together what would the funds be used for. So this is, you know, totally a policy issue here but just bringing it up to your attention in terms of trying to meet some challenges.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
We'll stay with Legislator Krupski. He's got more.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Thank you. And also, staying with the water quality theme, the overtime recommendations are that -- you know, you talk about cleaning out -- something as basic as cleaning out the recharge basins. You know, it's really important for water quality overall. It's something that's, I would guess, overlooked because you're never going to get a press conference when you clean the sump but -- I'm sorry, we're never going to get a press conference when you clean the sump. But it's really important work, and you recommended, or someone recommended that there be some overtime added to that so that DPW could complete it, and I understand, obviously, it's a lot less expensive to the taxpayer if DPW does the work rather than paying an outside contractor. So is there any room for doing -- trying to get some of that water quality work back into this budget?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
The -- I think, again, the short answer is given the budget right now, it would be difficult, you know, non-overtime. It is a -- given our staffing levels, we do that on overtime because we can pull many forces to one location and, you know, clean out the recharge basins. You know, I think in the future, I think that's something we could look at. A lot of the water quality funding was restricted, obviously, when the economy slowed down, all the sales tax dropped, and I think that's had a huge impact on our ability to, you know, parcel out projects under the Water Quality Review Committee. So hopefully, you know, as things improve and things start to move upward, we'll be able to do more.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Thank you. And then to follow up on the maintenance, and I've seen, you know, some of the county infrastructure vehicles and buildings, the maintenance has been, to put it nicely, neglected. Now, there's two new positions in the budget for engineers. Wouldn't it better -- wouldn't the county be better served at this point, because when you let maintenance go, whether it's vehicles or

buildings, the longer you let it go, the more expensive it becomes. So if you're on a maintenance schedule, it's a lot cheaper in the long-run then if you have to really completely rehabilitate a building or keep fixing these and have downtime for vehicles then you have employees standing around and now working. Wouldn't it be more prudent, instead of hiring two engineers, to hire more than two either maintenance mechanics, either for buildings or for vehicles? And, then, at least they would, I would think, they would pay for themselves over time, just in the work being done in a timely fashion, it'd pay for itself over future repairs.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I would refer any discussions on the two industrial engineers to the Deputy County Executive Melito; however, I do know that, actually since we spoke yesterday, I did confirm that it is what I would have called "efficiency experts," folks -- engineers that could look at the process, the technical process that we do, especially in DPW and I welcome that and I've been waiting since the current administration has taken over, somebody to look at us and say what we do and say, you know, I think it's basically going to flesh out that we do need staffing, we do need improvements. So personally, I welcome the staffing. Could we use two more guys? Yeah, without question. I mean, we do -- and since I've been here, we're continually trying to upgrade our equipment maintenance program. You know, we still are looking at something as simple as a wash station, you know, to wash out the trucks after the snow season, things like that, going with stainless steel bodies to minimize rust, things like that. So, again, I would defer any questions on the industrial engineer to Melito.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Sure.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Thank you. That's good for now. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I have a number of things. Let me just start out by revenue. Dr. Lipp recommended some revenues, but that requires, obviously, state approval. Anything, Gil, that you can think of in terms of revenues that your department can generate other than what you're currently doing?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I think I've stated in the past we don't really bring revenue in; we spend money, for lack of a better -- you know, it's what we do.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I mean, even reimbursements from other entities: federal, state --

LEG. HAHN:
Put a toll on that road that goes out to Montauk.
CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Not happening.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
There is -- we have done -- under Sandy, we have done all the submittals to get all the project worksheets. We have been working. We fully expect to get all our funding back from that. As far as Nemo, I'm not sure where we are in the process with that, but I'm pretty sure we either have submitted all our project worksheets or we're in the process.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
What about the double pole issue? I mean, you guys have a potential revenue source there. I

don't know if you ever went out to bid on bringing in an entity to try to collect those revenues or do it in-house. We actually budgeted a very small amount for this year; I think $6,000 in pole revenue. But have you ever moved forward on going after those double utility poles? A thousand a month per pole.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Actually, we're reaching out to municipalities to get them to join into the program to maximize the ability of the program. I don't know where we are with that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I rarely criticize you, Gil, but, you know, it's almost -- it's almost November. You know, it's been a whole year that this bill has been in place, and we haven't attempted to collect any of those revenues. Maybe moving forward...you have the authority to do that.
COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Understood.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Maybe they'll remove the poles, and that would be fine, and we won't get any revenues, but maybe they won't remove them quick enough. I don't know how many poles. I think we estimated about a thousand on county roads, of double roles. You know, it could be significant as a revenue source, so I just urge you to put in place either in-house or allow a private vendor to collect those revenues for us and give us our percentage. You know, it's a missed opportunity in my mind.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I will find out where we are with this and get back to you on it. I personally don't think the revenue is going to be as great as -- but, you know, hopefully I'm wrong.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
We don't find out until we try.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Fair enough.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
So that's one thing. You know, overtime is another issue. I know you have a very limited overtime budget. I'm not happy that we're asking municipalities on the east end to pay overtime for the dredging crews on our dredge. I understand if you don't have the overtime, shutting the dredge down in the afternoon makes no sense. You want to keep it working as many hours as possible to meet the DEC windows. But it bothers me that we're asking those -- you know, the trustees in one case are paying our overtime. You know, maybe this is a conversation I need to have with the executive branch. It's not a lot of money; I think in one case, maybe, it's $14,000, something like that. East Hampton trustees had agreed to pay overtime, but we ended up not needing it, which was good. We found other ways of doing that, but that's something I'd like to not be asking those towns for that overtime contribution.

Moving on, and maybe this is a question for Joe, but we have done -- this is an enormous amount of conservation measures: changing lights, making buildings more efficient, bio-fuels, all kinds of things, trying to bring down our energy costs. Are we seeing those savings now in our utility bills? Are we able to lower the cost in the budget, and is that reflected in the budget, those energy savings? Are we seeing our utility bills coming down now?

MR. SCHROEDER:
We have, actually. We've documented through reduced energy use over our baseline years with the

projects we've completed approximately $4.6 million in avoided cost recurring annual. So we have seen a tremendous return on investment for those capital improvements that we have made, and there's a significant amount --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Is that, though, in the budget? Can we point to it and say, *Here it is*, or are we still estimating the utilities where we were and then ending up with surpluses in those lines? Maybe that's a question more for Robert.

MR. SCHROEDER:
Well, it's not actually estimating. We've been doing measurement and verification of the actual energy used. There's a lot of influences on expenditure --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I understand that, but in the budget itself, when we put in, on those budget lines for utilities, are we reflecting the lower numbers, or are we still reflecting the higher numbers and then ending up with surpluses in those areas?

MR. LIPP:
The numbers are implicit. There are a few large sync numbers, light, power and water, that they're not by specific building or facility; it's just total for the fund, for the General Fund and for other funds. But what Joe is talking about is that they do have measurement and verification to see that specific buildings where they've implemented some of these measures that the utility bills have actually gone down. You can't see individual, like, building 1, building 2, though, in the budget.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I'm not really hearing the answer. I understand we're seeing real savings of up to $4 million.

MR. SCHROEDER:
In terms of the budget now --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
So if I looked at the utility line in the county budget, is it lower by $4 million, or is it where it was?

MR. SCHROEDER:
Yes. Yes.

MR. LIPP:
Although it's not that simple because, you know, there are a lot of variables that goes into the utility bill like, you know, the changing prices. What Joe is talking about, there are two things, I guess, to oversimplify that goes into the utility bills, and that's the price and the utilization, or the quantity, and what he's talking about is we've lowered the utilization or quantity. Now that being said, in a given year, the price could go through the roof and we might see an increase in expenditures, but it would have been all that more greater if not for the measures that is Joe is talking about.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Okay. Now, Gil, I'm going to go to you on this next one. We had implemented a program last year with your support and county executive's support to -- in order to keep some of our work force that has been on layoff list, we put them on projects, federally-funded projects that we were using outside contractors to do some of that work. Instead of using outside contractors, we put these folks on; then we got the reimbursements. How has that worked out? And is that something that we can expand in an effort to bring on some more people than maybe had been laid off and get your department closer to the staffing levels it needs?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
If I remember, I know it was two fellas out of buildings who were working on CNG projects, and they have moved those projects forward. I believe they are now paid out of the regular operating budget, no longer funded out of the federal aid. It worked out okay. I mean, it's a lot of paperwork. At the end of the day, without having that program in the queue of the federal projects, it's --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I mean, are there other areas where we're using outside contractors to do, you know, reimbursable projects, federally-reimbursable, state-reimbursable projects that we could do in-house and put people to work and then get paid back for their salaries?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Let me get back to you on that. I'll look at it and get back to you. I'm not sure.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Okay. How do we do -- 2013 was kind of refreshing. We didn't have a major storm like we did in '12 and '11, the year before that. How did we do in snow removal? I know the year is not over, but do we have surpluses in some of those lines?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
'13, we got hit with Nemo. That was that big one.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Nemo, right. Yeah, there was on early storm, right?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Right. It was in March or whenever it was.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Oh, that was a big one.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
That was a big one.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Thank you for refreshing my memory. I'm trying to remember. I thought that was towards the end of last year, but it was this year, huh.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
It was this year.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
How are we doing with our snow removal line, though?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I would have to defer to BRO.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Oh, that's right. He's reminding me of the Brookhaven situation. Yes, that was earlier this year. Okay. But in terms of snow for the year, are we ahead of the game, behind the game?

MR. LIPP:
We'll have to look it up, get back to you in 12 seconds.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I'm pretty sure we got hammered under Nemo. I mean, it was --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
No change in that -- Robert, is there no change in that line? The snow removal budget is the same as it was for the --

MR. LIPP:
We'll look it up now.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
To follow up on that, could you look at, is it going to snow in November or December? Could you check on that, please?

*(*Laughter*)*

MR. LIPP:
All the snow is going to be in January this year.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
All right. While you look that up, let me move to another topic: system roads. I know that's an area that we were concerned about exposure. How are you making out in terms of transferring some of those roads over or, youknow, resolving some of those issues with towns and villages?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
With the exception of exception of Huntington, we have in each town in case, still at stasis. You know, the towns are still maintaining the roads that they maintained. I believe only Southold and East Hampton have basically accepted the roads back, if you will. The others were working with the county executive's office to, especially with regard to Huntington, to resolve that issue, but it really hasn't made an awful lot of progress.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Anything with Dune Road in Southampton? What is the status of that? I believe the highway superintendent has made a request for grant money.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
It's looking very positive that under FIMP, they'll be able to do the Dune Road project. The discussions that we had in Southampton, the Corps was very positive that if they tweaked it a little bit, it sounds like they could justify raising --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Are we assisting with that request at all?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Only in our involvement in FIMP as the local share sponsor.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Okay. Are there any other -- I mean, we've transferred some assets in in past, and we did Long Wharf, and I guess that is saving us us some in our capital budget. Are there any other assets that

we're not benefitting from that we maintain that may be in better hands? Let's say the towns or villages. I'm thinking maybe the Shinnecock docks with the commercial docks there which we share with the Town of Southampton. Have you looked at any other county assets that may be --

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
If we could give the Shinnecock Canal back to the state, that would be a great thing for us, but, you know, that's the only lock system in New York State that isn't controlled by DOT. We annually send that up to the state legislature to try and get it, you know, passed, but it never happens. Certainly, you know, again the Greenport dock is an issue that we deal with on a pretty constant basis, but I think that's more of a policy issue than, you know, from a DPW standpoint.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Legislator Krupski has a related comment.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
I have been in discussion with the mayor of Greenport about the Greenport dock. He would like to open up discussions. He's away now; he'll be back in November, so, then, obviously you'll be invited to attend that, and we'd try to -- you know, I don't think anything's been revisited there as far as the management of that for about 20 years, so he just wanted to revisit the management, the ownership, the whole scenario. That'll be taking place next month.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I think the Town of Southampton would be willing to have a conversation about the Shinnecock docks too, the commercial docks down there. I'm not sure that we gain anything. Do we get revenues from that? I know we're paying the maintenance fees on it.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I don't know. I don't really don't know.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I think that the dock fees are flowing right into the town now, anyway.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I would assume that's something would have been worked through parks. It's not something that, at least in my tenure with DPW, I've ever dealt with.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
The county owns the dock?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
We own a commercial fishing dock.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Whose land is it on?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Ours.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
The county owns underwater land?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Probably, yeah.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
The west side of Shinnecock where the fishing fleet is.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Doesn't Southampton Town own the underwater land there? Because I mean, in the Greenport dock, the MTA actually owns the land under the dock, so that's the -- you're bringing in the MTA because it is called -- I mean, it's called "the railroad dock" for that reason. But I was wondering in Shinnecock, then you'd bring in Southampton Town trustees because they would probably own the underwater land. You've got another player there.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
There's a building there and there's the docks, and the town maintains, I think, and office for their bay constable.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
They have the jetty in there. That whole area, there's a combination of lands owned by us by the town.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I mean, I don't know what our yearly cost to maintain that facility is.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Just so you know, any improvements we do, not necessarily to the docks, but to the west of Shinnecock now is going to fall under the FIMP, which now any future extreme strong events would been handled by the Corps.,you know, with us as the sponsor and the state.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Robert, you have an answer on snow removal?

MR. LIPP:
Snow removal, yes. I couldn't get the answer on when it would snow know, though, but it all depends on that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
No crystal balls.

MR. LIPP:
According to the budget, in 2012, we spent a little over 1.1 million. For this year, we budgeted almost 3.5. We've spent as of, I guess, sometime in the beginning of -- end of September, I'll say, we spent about 3.65 million, and the estimated is for 4.3 million and change.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
So we're actually underfunded in that line.

MR. LIPP:
Yes, but I guess one way to look at it is we didn't know what was going to happen. So if you were here this time last year, you would figure, *Oh, we have too much money in there.* And, then, recommended for this year -- I'm sorry, for next year is 3.35 million. So we did really good in 2011; "good" meaning that we didn't have to spend a lot for. For obvious reasons, 2012 is a lot higher.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
That was Nemo? Is that the major blizzard? Was that what it was called? Did we get some

money back on that?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
We will. There's a -- I think it's a 48-hour period that we will be reimbursed for. It's a short time considering the extended period that we were out there working and plowing.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I mean, but most of that three, three and a half million was spent on that one particular storm, right?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Correct, but it'll only be a portion of the amount of time. I mean, if I had to throw something against the wall I'd say maybe half, but it's something.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Well, half is a million something, right, a million eight, something in that range. Is that million eight something in your analysis, Robert, that that money will be coming back? I guess, in 2014 we'll get it or sometime this year?

MR. LIPP:
Well, it's implicit -- it pulls together lots and lots different expenditure line items into the FEMA and SEMA aid lines, and there's too much noise there to connect the dots to any specific items such as a snow removal.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
It's just a tight budget. I just want to make sure that if we're not accounting for almost $2 million that we account for it because as we try to wrestle with developing a response to the county executive's budget, if that's additional money we can count on in 2014 --

MR. LIPP:
My response to that would be since there's a lot of noise in exactly what's going to come down, we don't want to touch those lines, and we will just hope that we wind up getting more rather than less and then we'll -- the budget will be a little sounder.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I just want an accurate reflection of what we anticipate.

MR. LIPP:
We try.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
So you have thought about this Nemo money.

MR. LIPP:
Yes. It's just very difficult to even say. We're unsure what's going to come through.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
But there's a request out there for that reimbursement. I mean, we think we're going to get 50 percent reimbursement on it so. All right. Let me go -- turn to my left. Anybody have questions? Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:
Thank you. You're bringing up the snow. You reminded me of a couple things I wanted to ask Gil.

I have asked before about -- and I don't want you to forgot this year -- about bus stops because -- and I know this is not a county road, but it illustrates the issue. I was told several times about a young mother with a stroller with babies standing in the street on 347 waiting for the bus for three weeks because the snow was never removed from where the bus stop is located, and the shoulders weren't cleared. And this is a state road; I recognize that. But it just made me think that around our system on the county roads where we're at least responsible for the snow removal, you know, just making sure that they clean out areas for people to stand when they're waiting at a bus stop. So I know we've talked about this over and over again, and I wanted to remind you about it and see if there's anything you could say now, maybe not; but before the snow falls, just remind you that I really think there could be many, many dangerous situations when that happens.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
I certainly agree with your assessment. Not Nemo but the storms last year in 2012, in January, the snow lasted for almost a full month. It was a situation that scared us. We witnessed the people standing on the snow, kids in baby carriages sitting on the side of the road. What we've implemented, although it's somewhat ad hoc, is that after we've pushed the snow off the main part of the road and while we're working, certainly on county roads, where we can, we are opening up the bus stops. If there are locations, rather than trying to fight with the state and local municipalities, if there are locations you are aware of or anybody is aware of, they can identify them, I can send crews out there, and we will open those up.

LEG. HAHN:
Did everybody hear that?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Say it again.

LEG. HAHN:
There were instances on 347, which is a state road, granted, where mothers with baby carriages were waiting in the snow -- after a snowstorm waiting in the middle of 347 for the bus because the snow wasn't cleared, and it was deep at the bus stop. So he's saying that they've institute -- you know, of course on the county roads, they're going to take care of it, but if we ever hear of a location where that's happening that maybe they could get to even on a state road .

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Rather than playing whose jurisdiction it is, we'll just -- I'll send highways, I'll send vector, whatever we need to, I'll get it out there. Our immediate, obviously, is to open up the roadways, but once we have that taken care of, we can address those concerns.

LEG. HAHN:
Of course. And I'm not sure if this is the right time, but has there been any movement on the new bus, the way to pay on bus, the law that I passed, the automated payment cards, et cetera?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
One of the things we're in the process of doing right now in addition to the automated vehicle locating system is the new farebox. We're going to put out a proposal, an RFP, to basically provide new fare boxes which will look to include the technology that you legislated that we look at. It's out there, systems such as CooCoo, and there's other developments that we're hoping that we can, as we bring these new fare boxes in, we can add to that so people can use technology rather than change. Most of our riders are probably going to remain with, actually, hard currency, but as we can bring in technology and as riders, certainly kids going to colleges and whatnot, they'll be able to move right into this. To answer your question, yes.

LEG. HAHN:
And it will also be helpful at major transfer stations, et cetera. You know, if there's a place where they can use a credit card to buy whatever it is, that would be helpful too.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Yeah, that --

LEG. HAHN:
I know that on the bus, the credit card, it takes three minutes or whatever to approve or whatever it takes, and it's too long to wait for people as they're getting on. We don't want to slow down the whole system, but if at a major transfer stations, we can have a way to buy the card or whatever we're going to go with on these new fare boxes.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
That one, we're still working on. The issue becomes the ability to install and maintain systems like that. Certainly, with anyone that has the expertise to, you know, use an iPhone, if you will, to pay for something, most likely that will be able to be purchased offline and increased as you need it.

LEG. HAHN:
But we also right now -- I'm sure it's a lot of staff time. Some people can buy the books, and you have to package them up. It would be good if we could buy those online and it was a little easier just for people to purchase instead of having to drive to Yaphank or take a bus to Yaphank to get them.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Again, as I said, we are, as we are looking into this new farebox, looking at those technologies, and hopefully we can.

LEG. HAHN:
Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I think it's really important.

LEG. HAHN:
Yeah.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
We definitely need to be able to make the system more user-friendly. You should be able to get right on a bus really quickly with some scannable card.

LEG. HAHN:
And even on Sunday.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
We ought to be able to look at your phone and be able to know when the bus is going to arrive, you know, through an app, which we're working on.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Again, I think you're going to see a whole complete change in the system.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
I think within a one-year window of time, we're going to see some major changes here, and, you

know, I think we'll see ridership improved too, and with Sunday busses, as you say. All that's important.

Are you guys looking at some of the lower performing routes? I know I've had some discussions internally about this, that some routes are carrying very few people, and there might be more efficient ways to get those people around, whether it's a smaller bus or more like an on-demand kind of service in those areas. Is that something you guys are looking at?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
It's something we've considered in the past, certainly under the Twarney (ph) Report. They did identify certain underperforming routes recommended --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
And recommended some other routes that they thought we need to add.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Right. I do know that the county executive has an initiative in the Bus-Rapid Transit Program that he's looking to implement, and that's being studied right now, and that, along with the recommendations under Twarney -- you know, again I go back to the AVL. Once we have the AVL in place, we'll get realtime information where our busses are, how many riders are going where and being picked up from where, and once we have that, I think you're going to see an ability to really transform the whole system.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Thank you. Kara, was there more?

LEG. HAHN:
Yeah. I mean, I'm sure must have been keeping up with the latest and greatest from around the country and around the world, but I remember hearing that, like, switching to smaller busses, their vehicle life is much shorter and the maintenance or the warranties are not as good or there's something. That's got to improve, though, as other jurisdictions start to use and demand smaller size busses. I don't know if you can speak to that.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
We have looked at using smaller busses, and care has to be taken when you're looking at a route because while you may have a period where you have minimal, no riders on it, that same system will have a full complement on the bus during certain peak hours, so we do look at those. You know, the efficiency from previous considerations wasn't there to order and build a fleet of smaller vehicles, if you will. Something we kind of still always look at. Again, I go back to the AVL. Once we have real information provided from that system, we'll be able to make, I think, prudent decisions to move forward with the program whether it is to implement a fleet. But it becomes difficult because, you know, when -- you know, again what routes are not performing as well as others, how do you maintain one bus or three busses that are smaller compared to rest of the fleet. You know, you have to weigh those inefficiencies or efficiencies against each other.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
One other thing not related to this: We still have a tremendous amount of vehicles, not our surplus vehicles, but impounded vehicles at the BOMARC facility, and every once in a while this comes up about, you know, selling it to a scrap metal dealer. At one point, somebody estimated close to a million dollars in scrap metal there. Have you looked into that? Are there stuff that we could be selling and turning into revenue for the county, particularly those -- that impound? Stuff has been sitting there for a very long time.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
The stuff that -- again, the control of those vehicles is either from police or through the district attorneys', and based on cases, you know, if there is a case, ongoing case that the vehicles involved with or there's a potential for a future case, they will not release those vehicles. As soon as those vehicles are released, we get rid of them or work with P.D. to basically sell them, whether a scrap, or auction them off, so that is something I've looked at. We did look at trying to scrap the old silos, what it would be worth --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
At Bergen Point?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
At BOMARC, the old missile SILOS, but the concrete is so heavy there that the amount of steel you get is so negligible compared to the amount of work it actually takes to get through the concrete that it wasn't worth doing.

LEG. HAHN:
Has Michelle Stark brought film crews out there? Because it's probably -- it's amazingly large, kind of creepy but cool.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
It's interesting.

LEG. HAHN:
I don't even want to think about the environment.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Well, yeah, I mean, I think that's one more reason why we should clean it up. It is, though, it's a 60-acre site.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Yes, correct, which performs a lot of basic services, not only impounding but also --
CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Thankfully not being used anymore to house homeless sex offenders, which is a good thing, but, yeah, it seems like it could have a positive use or it could have some revenue generation. I think that was studied, that property, as surplus by Newmark Knight.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Again, I don't recall what Newmark said, but that facility performs specific --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
We still need it, you're saying.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Yeah, which we wouldn't be able to do this anywhere else, especially when you come down to the --- they demolish, whatever the right term is, the munitions, fireworks at that site. We would never -- we looked at trying to relocate it, and you would never be able to relocate it anywhere else.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
What about here?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:
Sorry.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Can't do it here?

(*Laughter*)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Any other DPW questions, transportation questions? Gil, again, thank you and your staff for the great job you guys have done; and, Robert, thank you for your thoughtful analysis.

MR. LIPP:
You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
And with nothing else, I'd say we're adjourned. Thank you.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.*)