

SUFFOLK COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

MINUTES

A meeting of the Suffolk County Charter Revision Commission was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on April 3, 2008.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sondra Bachety - Chairperson/PO Lindsay's Appointment
Dennis McCarthy - Vice-Chair/Joint Appointment
Arthur Cliff - PO Lindsay's Appointment
Ronald Devine - PO Lindsay's Appointment
Victor Fusco - PO Lindsay's Appointment
Steven Kenny - PO Lindsay's Appointment
Robert Braun - County Executive Levy's Appointment
Saul Fenchel - County Executive Levy's Appointment
Kathy Giamo - County Executive Levy's Appointment
Jacqueline Gordon - County Executive Levy's Appointment
Marlene Israel - Joint Appointment
Maureen Liccione - Joint Appointment

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Thomas Germano - Joint Appointment
Roger Clayman - Joint Appointment
Edwin Perez - County Executive Levy's Appointment

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Executive Steve Levy
Terrence G. Pearsall - Chief of Staff to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Gail Vizzini - Director, Legislative Budget Review Office
Kara Hahn - Director of Communications for Presiding Officer Lindsay
Bill Shilling - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Christine Malafi - Suffolk County Attorney
Joe Dujmic - Deputy Chief of Staff for County Executive Levy
Connie Corso, Director, Budget Office.
Fred Pollert, Deputy County Executive, Finance and Management
George Gatta, Executive Vice President, Suffolk Community College.
Charles Stein, Vice President, Suffolk Community College

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Lucia Braaten - Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary

(The meeting was called to order at 2:39 P.M.)

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Could I ask you all to please stand and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Salutation

Thank you. Okay. Good afternoon. Thank you all for coming this afternoon. We're starting a few minutes late, but we do have a quorum and I don't want to keep the County Executive waiting since he got here before most everybody else. So, at this time, I'd like to ask our County Executive, Steve Levy, to join us and I'm sure you're going to have some wonderful things to tell us.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

I brought Christine Malafi, who is our County Attorney, who can embellish upon a couple of remarks first. It's great to be back with you in the Legislative building, seeing you in that chair once again.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

A long time.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Yeah. And quite an august body that we placed here as well. We're in good hands moving into the future. I'm not giving a speech, I'm just going to in a very dry, bland manner give you some of my thoughts on things that we can be doing collectively moving into the future and commenting on some of the other suggestions that might be out there. I've also picked up through the rumor mill and through some newspaper reports as to some of the things that either have come before you already or might be coming before you at a later time, so I'll use this opportunity to put, you know, my two cents in on some of those things that I've heard.

I'm not going to go in any particular order, just as they're listed on my sheet here. I'm going to be joined -- she's not here yet. I was waiting for Rick to leave. Now I'm done. I was waiting for Connie Corso from my Budget Office to come -- is she here, Rick? Did you see her?

MR. BRAND:

Yeah, she's right outside.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Oh, okay. Great. So I wanted to start with the items that pertain to her so I can let her get back to the Capital Budget, and that is really a great segue, because our folks in Budget are going crazy right now, as they do during any budget cycle, and we have three major budget cycles during the year. The first one being our Capital Budget, and the different departments are told to report to us by April -- no, no. Connie, what is the date for the reporting on the Capital Budget?

MS. CORSO:

The capital budget is due to us on the fifteenth. I have to send it over to Gail.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Come on up.

MS. CORSO:

This year it's due to Budget Review -- to the Legislature on April 15th.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Okay. And when are the departments due to bring it in?

MS. CORSO:

To us it comes in February 15th.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Okay. Stay here if you would. This is the first thing we wanted to talk about. There's been a recommendation, I don't know if it's been broached to you yet, to swap the times, the time period for the Capital Budget and the -- the Capital Budget and the college budget. The Operating Budget comes to us in June and then we deliberate upon it. It's incredibly labor intensive for our people in labor -- in the Budget Office, and then we present it on the third Friday of September. Then the Legislative Budget Review Office plays with it for a month or so and the Legislature does final disposition in late October and votes in November. That's going to stay the same. But the question is can we flip-flop the college budget, which usually is voted on in August and we finalize it, and when do we send it over, June? The college budget.

MS. CORSO:

The college budget, June.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

And so we have Capital Budget, college budget, followed by Operating budget. There's a recommendation to flip the college with the Capital. We think it would be a major mistake. First reason, they're working their tails off around the clock right now with Capital Budget. If Capital Budget were pushed right on top of the Operating Budget as soon as -- under this theory Capital would be done and they'd go right into the Operating Budget. They would burnout. These folks are working around the clock for weeks at a time and they need a break in between, to be quite honest, just to go back to a regular, you know, nine to six schedule. But they're working nine to nine every day for a while. Now if the Capital and the Operating are together they'll never be able to get through it. It is just too much to ask for our budget people to do that. That's an emotional appeal as to why not to do it.

But a factual reason why not to do it, if we push up the college too early in the year, we're not going to have enough information from the State as to what kind of revenues will be shared and available to us regarding the full-time equivalency monies coming from the State. So we want to fashion a budget that is as accurate as possible and, you know, we're just now starting to get the numbers from Albany as to what the tuition assistance will be for the upcoming budget. We're able to factor that in when we put our college budget to bed. But, if we have to push this up too far, we'll be doing a guessing game basically.

So what we would be amenable to is if there is -- the concept of moving perhaps up a month the college budget. I don't think we have a problem -- with the Capital or the college?

MS. CORSO:

I don't think we'd have a problem moving it up a few weeks either way, but moving it to the beginning of year, I'm not going to have the data available to actually give a good, solid estimate as to where I think the year is going to end. I wouldn't have enough of the college expenditures either because the college year doesn't end. So if I had to submit the college budget in February the semester isn't over, so I wouldn't know how the actuals panned out. It's hard enough to do it at this point, but to have to add that extra, you know, lag of information just -- I wouldn't be able to give you an accurate document.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

So those are the reasons. It's too much of a burden on our staff to have back to back Capital and Operating, and if we push up the college too far we're just going to lose our opportunity to get clearer revenues. So, that's basically it on that issue.

MS. CORSO:

Can I just add something?

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Yes, please.

MS. CORSO:

I think that if we met with the college and Budget Review and maybe kind of met internally and came up with a time frame that maybe would work for the three of us, you know, I would also be amenable to that, to working with Budget Review and the college, because I do recognize that there are some issues with the tuition. But you're talking about a matter of a week or two weeks, not, you know, three or four months.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Thanks. Do you want to hang out for just a second?

MS. CORSO:

Sure.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Vic?

MR. FUSCO:

What has prevented that from being done already? Why isn't that being done if it's something that you are amenable to doing? Why isn't it done?

MS. CORSO:

It actually was just brought to my attention today, so this is something new for me to look at at this point, and of course it's not in the Charter.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

If you can hang out just a minute. I don't want to keep you for the whole time. I'll segue into another college issue and I'll be leaving after my series of bullet points here. I know George and Chuck will be able to rebut and get last licks, but that's fine because we respect them tremendously. But you'll probably be asked to deal with the whole issue of Plan C, and we are opposed to it on the executive level, and I know a large number of Legislators are as well, including the County Executive.

The way it stands now, Plan C, and Christine Malafi can chime in in a moment and to help answer your questions. But Plan C was entered into in the 1990's, an agreement between the college and the County whereby the college would put together its budget, hand it over to the Legislature, and the Legislature and the Executive would be able to make amendments to that budget. We are, after all, the stewards of the public money and we believe we have the ability to help shape that budget, not that we micromanage. I don't think you've ever seen a situation where the Legislature or the Executive, at least during my tenure, either as a Legislator or an Executive, started tweaking with classes, what kind of classes should be taught. That's all given to -- we respectfully defer that to the college. But there is a feeling that because it is such a large financial institution, and it has big buck ramifications to our taxpayers, that people who are accountable, elected officials, should have a say as to where this money is going in the overall scheme of things.

Now, the proposal that's been laid on the table is to take the Executive and the Legislative branch totally out of the picture with one exception. The college would do everything soup to nuts, and hand over to the Executive and the Legislature the total package. You either vote it all up yes, or you vote it all down no. We have a problem with that, because what you're going to see is that we'll agree with the college, probably on 95 to 98 percent of what they present in the first case anyway.

But now, let's say, for instance, that there was extra surplus money that trickled into our budget after the college submitted its plan, but before we in the Executive Branch solidified our presentation to the Legislature, or perhaps we proposed a plan to the Legislature and in between the Legislature

getting that plan and their final disposition on the budget, more State aid becomes available or we find additional surplus monies. Well, at that point maybe we'd like the flexibility to say hey, we've got this extra money, embellish something, put it in the Reserve Fund, do this or that with it. We couldn't do that. We would be stuck with voting yes or no, it all goes back and then we'd have to hope that the college changes it around to our liking for maybe one or two line items in a huge budget.

So it's just going to create a lot of chaos, a lot of strain that doesn't have to be there. If you look at the history of the process over the last decade or so it's a very smooth one. They come over with the budget, there is some tinkering around with it just to find out how we balance out the revenue projections that we have vis-a-vis what the college says is there, and then we straighten it out. Because every year you're going to have a difference of opinion from what the college says is available for revenues, from what the Executive says is there, from what the Legislature says is there. We might want to say, you know what, we would prefer that some of that extra money go toward lowering tuition, or maybe we want some of that extra money to go toward more full-time faculty, or maybe we want some of that extra money to go into the Reserve Fund. We don't think as stewards of the public money that we should be shut out from that process.

Again, we don't micromanage, we don't tell them what courses to do, but this is not something that we believe is in the best interest of the County or the taxpayers. We have a very good relationship and 90%, 95% is under the purview of the college. They do all the everyday stuff, but this is money we're talking about and we have a right to say of your thousands of line items there might be one, two or three that we want to switch around for our tuition payers or the taxpayers. This change would really put a very deleterious strain on -- if not relations, our ability as public office holders to have a say as to how the public's money is spent.

I did want Christine to just comment on the legality. There was a lawsuit that was brought by the community college in Westchester in 2003. There was a law that was passed in Albany that gave colleges the ability to go beyond a 10% transfer from one line item to the next without having to go back to the elected officials. That was challenged by Westchester Community College and by the Association of Counties, and the community college prevailed at the Court of Appeals level. However, while the college is interpreting that decision as being a catchall, which now requires that the college get full say from soup to nuts, we disagree.

We are different than what Nassau or the position Westchester was in. We had a Plan C agreement already in effect dating back to the 1990's, where the college and the County voluntarily entered into an agreement that there would be a certain give and take between the two parties, and that was not vitiated by this Court of Appeals decision. The Court of Appeals gives county community colleges the ability to transfer monies where there is no other agreement in effect. But we have an agreement in effect, this Plan C agreement, that dates back for many years. It is not superseded by this new Court of Appeals decision we don't want to go backwards. We want to keep it exactly where it is or we're going to lose our autonomy.

Did you want add anything or did I just say it all?

MS. MALAFI:

That's the problem with having an attorney as a client. You said everything.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

I'm sure -- she'll have to answer the specifics for you, but that was pretty much it in a nutshell. I'm just going to ask Christine to stick around if there is any questions on this later. I think, Connie, you're doing Capital Budget, so I don't need you to hang around.

I'll segue, since I still have Christine here as well, Risk Management. Risk Management is a division

within Civil Service that we believe more aptly should be under the County Attorneys umbrella. It once was under the umbrella of the County Attorney going back, I think, in the 1970's. It was then changed to -- guys. It was in the County Attorney, did it go to the Comptroller's Office for a short time? And then, believe it or not, probably Dennis remembers this, but I think it was basically personality conflicts between the then Comptroller and the County Executive led to it being moved to Civil Service. And our point is why is it in Civil Service, why was it with the Comptroller, it should be with the County Attorney and here's a perfect example why.

We had a situation a couple of years ago where we had one of these hundred year rain storms, which seem to happen every ten years now, and we had no liability to cover people who had flooding in their basements. We'd want to deliberate upon whether or not we would sign off, but before our attorneys ever got to weigh in, folks in Insurance and Risk Management were telling people in Public Works oh, just let people sign up and we'll cover them for the damage in their basement. It cost us 4 million dollars out of our Assessment Stabilization Fund because we had people in Insurance Risk Management, good people but not lawyers, making this determination as to how we're going to settle claims. I'm saying this is nuts. We should have these folks, who are basically dealing in the area of legality, reporting to our top lawyer within the County, the County Attorney. It just makes eminent sense.

So we tried to do this last year. The unions balked because they thought it was some kind of power move to shift people around and change the personnel. Those people are Civil Service. We're not looking to change who they are. We just think it makes more sense to have these individuals responding to an attorney because there's major bucks involved with these type of decisions. Anything else to add?

MS. MALAFI:

Just to add a few more. The workers -- the counsel that we have handling the Workers Compensation claims for the County reports to me, but yet the claims are not handled in my office, so sometimes there's a disconnect.

Also, just by way of background, in the private sector the house counsel for an insurance company and the claims department are located -- work together very closely and the claims department goes right to the Department of Law to ask questions and get help on claims. Also, with the background we have, myself and a lot of the people in my office, we all come from the insurance industry as outside counsel to a lot of insurance companies. We're intimately aware of procedures and how things can run a little more smoothly. And not having, in terms of Risk Management in the Department of Law, so that we can directly oversee them sometimes makes a big time lag when something happens when we find out that help is needed and when help is actually given.

And in the case that the County Executive spoke about with respect to this hundred year storm, they were just following procedures that had been put in place and had always been followed. And because it wasn't in my department, it wasn't -- the procedures -- they didn't think okay, this happens when we have two to four sewer claims a year. And when they got in I believe like 4,000 sewer claims they just handled them the way they would handle two or three a year. So I think that it would be financially beneficial to the County on numerous levels to have the division overseen directly by lawyers rather than pretty much autonomous in the Civil Service Department.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Thanks. Anything you want to add on the community college?

MS. MALAFI:

No.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Okay. Going to the next item, something that Sondra will probably remember me talking about since I was 14 years old and a Legislator here, it was consolidating the Treasurer and the

Comptroller. There are a number of other large cities and municipalities that do not have two separate entities. We feel that there is a sense of redundancy there. The extra computer systems that they have to have, the extra deputies that you have to have, we think are unnecessary. Is it going to save you tens of millions of dollars? No. But will it save you millions of dollars? Yes, we think it will. You have to have one of those positions elected, we understand that. It would be an elected finance director.

They do this, again, in a number -- we're actually more the anomaly than we are the norm. Nassau County does not have both a separately elected -- these separately elected positions. Of course just about everyone has a separately elected Comptroller, which you want to have. You want to have someone who is independent of the County Executive doing all the auditing, but there is really no need to have an independently elected Treasurer. They should be combined under one umbrella.

By the way, as long as we are looking at it that way, do we really need a separately elected Clerk, and do we need a separately elected sheriff? Nassau County doesn't have a separately elected sheriff. It's a person who is -- and I'll tell you right now I'm in a good position because I find Vinnie DeMarco to be very much following my philosophy of being a taxpayer watchdog and he's great. I can really trust the decisions he's making. But, you know, my first couple of years I was pulling my hair out because I had, you know, a Sheriff's Department that was spending anything they wanted with overtime, doing just about anything they wanted within their particular agency, and I had to pay the bill. So I'm the elected person who has to write the check, you know, send the bill out to the taxpayers, but I don't control what's going on in this behemoth of a jail or all of the sheriff's division itself. So that should end. You know, either have a sheriff send out his own bill to the taxpayers, or let that person be accountable to the person who's accountable to the public, and right now you don't have that. And I do say that I'm very lucky because Vinnie has been doing a fabulous job so I'm less pressing on this issue than I used to be in the past, but from a philosophical perspective I still think it's the right thing to do somewhere down the line.

Going to the next -- oh, by the way, as far as Treasurer and Comptroller. Both are now monitoring cash flow. It seems to be a redundancy. It should be one or the other and a lot of times there is cross information going back and forth. There is no need for both the Treasurer and the Comptroller to be doing that.

Now let's get to the fun stuff. Monies that are going from public safety in the quarter penny sales tax for public safety purposes to towns and villages, vis-a-vis the western police district. I don't know if anyone has come before you yet and spoken on this issue. They will. Let me give you a little history on this because sometimes you just get like little sound bites from News 12 or little snippets from Newsday, but it's far more involved than that. I was around as a Legislator when it first germinated all the way through here where we're debating again what the distribution should be.

This started back in the early 90's as a result, an offshoot, of the resolutions in the late '80's by then County Executive LoGrande and then County Executive Halpin, to put in monies for the Open Space Program. It actually started with Cohalan. So millions and millions of dollars going for open spaces, quarter penny of the sales tax going dedicated strictly for the purchase of open space. Where's 90% of it? The east end of Long Island, appropriately enough. We should be spending that money on the east end of Long Island because that's where the property is.

A decision was made in the early 90's when we were in really difficult financial shape, probably the same way we are right now, maybe to even a greater degree, and the County Executive was raising the sales tax. And it was thought okay, since money had gone to the east end with all of the open space programs, it was time to try to balance out the scales a bit and get more money for the fastest growing part of our budget, which was the police district. So, an eighth of 1 percent was set aside strictly for helping out the police district with it's enormous growth, and that's the way it was for a while.

Then in the mid to late 90's some of the east end Legislators said you know, we'd like to get in on some of that action because, in fairness to them, you know, sales tax money is generated throughout the whole County and rightly so some of that money should go to the villages and the east end towns. The question was how much. So they came up with a formula that was set on the base year of 1997 and it was decided that of the one-eighth of one percent that would go to public safety purposes, a certain portion of that one-eighth would go to the east end towns and the villages, and the law on that year said future years would give a proportional amount as set in that base year.

Well, if you take that same provision and you apply it to today's sales tax receipts, if you take the percentage that the east end got of the one-eighth back today as they did back then, the east end today would be entitled to about 3 million dollars a year in sales tax. What are they getting? They're getting about \$5 million a year. Why? Because in 2005 I sat down with Legislator Caracciolo and some of the east end supervisors that we fashioned the compromise -- or the compromise already exists. They wanted a doubling of the amount of money that would go to the east end towns and villages. I said look, I can't do that in one year, but I can phase it in over five, and that's exactly what we've been doing.

So over the last three years the east end towns and the villages County-wide have gotten an 81% increase in these revenue sharing monies, big bucks. So they're getting \$5 million now compared to the three million that they would otherwise get if we just gave them that same proportion of the one-eighth of 1 cent that dates back to the early 90's.

Now, some will come and say well, while we used to get one-eighth of a cent, okay, that's been changed over the last couple of years. In fact, I lobbied Albany to give us the ability to go beyond one-eighth and to make it three-eighths because the General Fund really wasn't going up much, it was the police district that was really putting the pressure on us. So we got that ability to do so. But never in those discussions, never in any legal language, never in any bill, did we say that there would be a proportionate share for east end versus west end. We do not want to set a precedent of allocating money based upon population formulas. We think it's dangerous. We don't distribute health care monies based upon where the population is. We base it where the need is. We don't distribute our open space monies based upon where the population is or 90% of our open space monies would be in the west end and it doesn't make any sense. The same thing should be the case with our public safety monies. Where is the need? Sometimes there's going to be a need in the east end, sometimes it's going to be in the west end. Of course it's going to be more on the west end just because of the numbers, but we don't want to lock into any formula.

So we got the ability to get more, we did, but still, to go back to that 97 law, it's based upon one-eighth of a percent and that would have been 3 million dollars. They're getting five million dollars, two million dollars more. So those who bring this lawsuit have to be careful what they wish for, they might get it. But from a purely equitable perspective, since I cut that agreement, that compromise in 2005, the amount of increase to the western police district has been 36% over the 2005 base when I cut that compromise. In the east end towns and in the villages, it's been 81%. So they are starting to creep up. Now, I don't say it's a 200%, that's in years prior to that agreement. Once I made the agreement, 36% to the west end towns and 81% to the east end, so we think we've been more than fair and equitable in that regard.

And I guess just one other thing, just quickly talk about something I have been pushing since dating back to 1986, which campaign finance reform concept is the best. They're tough, but, you know, I think if you're going to do it, it's got to be across the board. It should include contractors, it should include municipal unions, it should include everyone who's got direct contact through some kind of a, you know, municipal agreement or a contract with the elected officials. And the way I think it's best done, you know, you really can't ask a person to unilaterally disarm. So, if you want to have the limits it should also be coupled with a pot of money so that a person can get his or her message out. And I believe that creating a blind trust that a candidate can tap to get the message out if they

agree to cap their spending is the best way to go.

So, we have all of these contractors that do business with the County. I believe that we should make a condition of that contract, a ban on that contractor giving money to any particular County-wide official, but a requirement that they give a certain amount of money into the blind trust pool. And then if you're a candidate who wants to run for office without having to take the money from any of those unions or any of those groups that contract with the County, you say I don't want to take their money and I will cap my spending and I will be now eligible for money from that blind trust pool and you don't know from whom you're getting the money. That takes away that appearance that the money came from a contractor for an official. So, it's an interesting concept that would be very unique.

We have public financing systems out there, but a public financing system where you are asking the public to pay without also restricting the donations, I don't know if it makes much sense, and I don't know if it makes much sense to just say you can't have a donation from a person, but you don't have any other source to get money to get your message out. So this is the best of both worlds. It gives you a pot of money whereas an incumbent or challenger you can get money to get your message out, and it also, if you are going to take that money, bans you from accepting money from those very same groups. So something to chew on.

I think it's the most interesting concept out there and I think it's the most realistic because I don't think you're going to see Legislators unilaterally disarming like I said before. But this is an opportunity for challengers and incumbents alike, for them to be able to get some money. They know they can get their message out and they don't have to go to any of those groups out there to seek donations. So I think I hit my major points and that's it.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Steve, could I ask a question?

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Yeah, sure.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

On the public financing, at our last meeting when it was recommended that that section be deleted from the Charter, I had asked the County Attorney, because I was concerned about something that had been approved in a public referendum the way this was because it did get a lot of publicity at the time. Are you suggesting that we repeal the section that's there and propose this new idea that you've just talked about?

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Well, the old one's obsolete now because we have a commission on paper with nothing really to do. It still had a function when it was taking in the donations and putting them online, but that function has been transferred to the Board of Elections, so now there really isn't anything for this commission to do. So, unless there's a new piece of legislation for them to justify their existence it doesn't make sense to have them there anymore. But, you know, yeah, you can just take them out and leave it as it is or we can take them out and try to replace it with a different kind of a program.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Have you suggested to the Legislature or proposed this new idea? Has that come in front of them?

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Yeah. It actually came up for a vote last year or the year before. It didn't make it out, but, you know, I've been pushing these type of bills since, you know, 1986. At one time there was one vote and then there were three votes and then there were five votes and then, you know, it would constantly be evolving trying to get the votes. We'll see where it goes. We'll keep trying and see what happens.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Okay, thank you.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Thanks. Anybody else? Okay. Thanks for your indulgence. And we'll be available if there are any questions after the fact that you'd like us to address, you know, through Christine or our Budget Office or myself. We'll be happy to get you a written response or just give you a call.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Thank you. Thank you so much for being here.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE LEVY:

Thanks a lot everybody. Appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

If you look at the agenda Fred Pollert would be up next, but I don't see him here yet. So I thought --

MR. PEARSALL:

I think Connie Corso discussed --

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Oh, she was instead of him?

MR. PEARSALL:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Okay. And everything then that Steve said on Risk Management would be applicable. So we have from the Suffolk Community College, the pride of Suffolk County I must say, that wonderful school, George Gatta, who's the Executive Vice President. And I see Chuck Stein is with him, who is the budget person.

MR. GATTA:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. The topic that we were invited to speak on has to do with the budget cycle, the college budget cycle. I have to say at the outset that we agree with the County Executive on many of the points that he made regarding the submission of our budget.

To begin with, submitting it much earlier would really be problematic and Chuck Stein might get into that. But we really, since a third of our budget is funded through the State budget, and since the State budget is usually adopted around April 1st, submitting it much earlier would not give us an accurate projection on those State revenues.

There is a strong desire, however, to have our budget ultimately adopted before August. In the past, we've submitted our budget to the County Executive around the middle of April, and then the Executive Office does their analysis, sends it to Budget Review in the middle of June, and then it's picked up by the Legislature and discussed, debated, acted on, generally at the first meeting in August. And then if there are any vetoes of that they then would be in a position to override later in August.

Our fiscal year begins September first, so at times it's been difficult making adjustments, last minute adjustments right before the beginning of our fiscal year. It's also -- it also poses a problem in terms of -- as those adjustments sometimes entail adjustments to tuition, to the tuition levels. And when we need to -- we send our bills the middle of July. If we then need to adjust tuition the end of

August, we then have to refund tuition to sometimes up to 23,000 students, which is costly, time consuming, it's an inconvenience for the students. And it would just be -- it would make it much easier for us to operate to know what our budget would be by the end of June so that we could then spend the rest of the summer planning for the opening of the academic year.

We would very much like to meet with the Budget Director and with Budget Review to see if we can shorten up the process, if we could submit our budget slightly earlier, right around the first of April. That would give them an extra couple of weeks or sometimes up to three weeks more than they have now in terms of review. And then have the Executive Budget Office send their recommendation to Budget Review, send it to the Legislature, sometime around the beginning of May to give them a month to review it. Our hope is that it could be acted on some time in June.

So, in a perfect world, that would really be what we would like to see. But, again, we will be glad to sit down with both the Budget Office and the Budget Review Office and come back with a more specific proposal.

Regarding the second issue, we really weren't invited here today to speak on that, and that's the Plan C issue. I will limit my remarks to just a couple of facts. There were changes to the State Education Law back in the late 1980's that came about as a result of the State University of New York experiencing difficulties in the relationships between some local sponsors and their community colleges. And at the time the chancellor formed a task force. It reviewed what was transpiring. The report found that too often community colleges were treated as departments of the county and that hampered the college's ability to function as a college. That report went to the State Legislature, there were amendments to State Education Law. SUNY then, a number of years later, adopted implementing -- excuse me, implementing regulations that reflected the intent and the letter of the State law.

The County Executive mentioned that the community college in Westchester entered a lawsuit. Actually it was the County of Westchester who brought suit against the State University of New York. That was in 2003. In 2003, the trustees at the community college requested of the Legislature, which is the sponsor of the community college, to terminate the agreement. That did not happen. We had a number of suits. That Westchester suit went through the courts, went to the highest court, and in 2007 the Court of Appeals upheld the validity of the regulations as based on the State law.

Again, at the beginning of this year, in January, the trustees, all ten trustees, signed a letter that went to the Legislature requesting that the agreement be terminated. No action to date has been taken on that by the Legislature. In March, the trustees did authorize retaining a law firm to move this forward through litigation if needed. And just yesterday, the trustee -- the Chairman of the Board of Trustees sent a letter and a memorandum, a legal analysis, to the entire Legislature which outlined the reasons behind that. We're still -- we remain hopeful that the Legislature will agree to terminate the agreement and allow the community college to operate pursuant to State law and SUNY -- excuse me, and SUNY regulations. So that's where we stand on that issue, and I'll have to limit my comments to that.

If there are any questions on the budget cycle or if there's anything that Vice President Stein would like to elaborate on, or if you have questions, we'd be glad to respond.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Does anyone have any questions you'd like to ask? Okay.

MR. GATTA:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Thank you, George. Thank you for coming. Is Budget Review --

MR. PEARSALL:

Yes, Gail is here, Gail Vizzini.

MS. VIZZINI:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. Basically, I'm glad to hear that the college and the Budget Office are willing to approach this informally and perhaps even on a pilot basis. I would be willing to do that as well, but I would just want to say up front that to meet the college's time frame of having their budget adopted in June, that is exactly when Budget Review is briefing and reporting to the Legislature and we are currently adopting the Capital Program. So if we could just approach this on a pilot basis, even moving it up two weeks or so. Budget Review would be running on concurrent tracks of briefing the Legislature as far as the Capital, making changes to it, and briefing the Legislature as far as the college's budget and making changes to it. But I would be willing to do it on a trial basis. I just don't know whether, you know, until we do that, I really don't know whether it will be effective or better for the Legislature and Budget Review.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Do you have any other suggestions to make it better for the college as well as for the people who have to do the analysis?

MS. VIZZINI:

You know, from the college's point of view I can absolutely see it, that, you know, that the problem of the bills and the readjustments of the bills would be minimized and probably almost eliminated. So from that point of view it might be worth it. Maybe Budget Review can change the number of people who are assigned to it. Perhaps there are things that we can do internally to make it beneficial to everybody. Perhaps we don't need to issue a 30 page report or something like that. These are things I'd want to talk to about the college, because I know not only do the Legislators benefit from the report, but the college benefits from the report as well. So we'll give it some additional thought.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Well, having read all the reports from Budget Review over many years, I would not want to see that shortchanged. It was always very important to Legislators to have that. On the other hand, I think the college does have a very legitimate problem. Chuck wants to join in.

MR. STEIN:

Yeah, just from a budget point of view. I don't think there's much disagreement among my office, the County Exec's Budget Office and Gail's Budget Review Office. I think everybody recognizes the situation in terms of the difficulties. And I think the suggestion about the three of us getting together to try and pull together a plan that might be beneficial, recognizing that it's very difficult to go much earlier. Without that State information, it's really a shot in the dark. So it's extremely difficult to go earlier. And the real question is can we shorten up the review process.

We've done this survey of the other community colleges. Practically all of them provide their local sponsor with the budgets either in May or June and have them approved by their local sponsor in either June or July. So, you know, the question is we also have to recognize that there may not be Legislative meetings in July in Suffolk, so that causes another dilemma. But I think the three of us can get together and talk about it. We might be able to try something, as Gail suggests, on a pilot basis.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Thank you, Chuck. Saul.

MR. FENCHEL:

It seems to me that the question here is how much funding you're going to be getting from the State, and that's what creates some of the confusion or conflict between the setting of the County

budget and the setting of the education budget. That's really the problem?

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah. The college has three major sources of revenue, the State funding is big. So, if we wait until after the State budget is adopted then we know what chunk of change is coming from the State. That helps the County determine what percentage increase, if any, the County needs to give to the college. The other is the tuition. And when the college knows what the State is giving it and what the County is giving it, then the Board of Trustees and the County can better get an idea of what the tuition need be.

MR. FENCHEL:

Considering that the -- I'm just wondering how this was dealt with in the past, since considering it's kind of usual for the State budget to ever come in on time. I mean, it's -- in fact, it's practically unheard of. So how do you deal with that when you have these State budgets coming in --

MR. STEIN:

In the past what we've done is, recognizing and in accordance with the instructions of the County Executive, we submit our budget should there not be a State budget in place, with the amount that was proposed by the governor. The governor delivers the proposed State budget in January, and then there's a 30 day amendment. So at some point in February there's a governor's budget. You're absolutely right, there are very few times when the State has approved the budget on April 1st. But you also get an indication along the way as to where the State process stands. In many cases, when the bill is sent out for printing, depending upon the date, you almost can count that as something that is going to go through.

This is more of an art than a science. And I think that what we attempt to do, and there's constant discussions between us and the County Executive's Budget Office and the Legislature's Budget Review Office, hey, what have you heard, no, what have you heard, you know, those types of situations as we prepare the budget for submission. The situation that we face is, and have faced, if we were unsure of where we stood with the State aid, we established a tuition level not anticipating a growth of State money. And the Board of Trustees approved a resolution that stated, had resolved clauses in it that when the State resolved its budget, should there be more funding, it would be proportionately used to adjust the tuition. And that's the way it's been handled.

MR. FENCHEL:

Has there ever been a situation where the State, utilizing that system, has come in with less than you had proposed and then how do you deal with the tuition?

MR. STEIN:

I'm in the process right now of putting together the eleventh budget at the college and we have never faced the possibility of the State Legislature coming in with less than what the governor proposed except this year. We're hopeful that won't happen, but this is the first time that that's occurred.

MR. McCARTHY:

Chuck? Chuck?

MR. STEIN:

Sorry, is it something I said?

MR. McCARTHY:

Chuck, what is the -- maybe you can give us the breakdown of what the contribution is between the County, the State and the tuition?

MR. STEIN:

Yes.

MR. McCARTHY:

But by percentage.

MR. STEIN:

The original concept of community colleges, and Suffolk was formed in 1959, Suffolk Community College, and that concept was one-third support to come from the State, one-third from the students, and one-third from the local sponsor. That was subsequently changed when the community colleges became full opportunity colleges. The formula was changed where the State would provide 40%, the students one-third, and the local sponsor the balance. It's only happened once.

Every year the State Legislature takes a vote and exempts itself from its required level of support, which has ultimately resulted, and unfortunately resulted, in the student body picking up the bulk of the expenditures. Right now, in this current fiscal year, the students pick up 42% of the cost. The State is at 30.8%, and the County is at 25 plus percent of direct contribution, and then about 2 1/2% of other items. But the difficulty here is that the tuition ultimately serves as the balancing factor for the budget. So it's a challenge each year. My hair was dark when I started.

MR. FENCHEL:

I'm just curious about one other thing. Is there a federal component or any federal support of Suffolk County Community?

MR. STEIN:

Only in the form of grants and student aid, financial aid.

MR. FENCHEL:

There's no direct budgetary --

MR. STEIN:

No. Community colleges, if you look across the country, are funded in many different ways. In Pennsylvania, for example, the community colleges are funded by the students, the State and the local school districts. And the interesting thing is in the Harrisburg area community college, which I've looked at, they have 20 different school districts that provide funding. Boy, do they have a budget problem for approvals.

MR. FENCHEL:

I've got a feeling that's not going to work in Suffolk County either.

MR. KENNY:

Sondra, I just have one comment. It seems to me if we're talking about deadlines and we're reviewing the Charter at this point in time maybe this is a ridiculous idea, but we keep backing up the community college budget line against the Capital budget line, and I understand the problem there. Is there some logic to looking at the budget lines for other, so that there becomes a domino effect or reexamine the budget process in a way that might be more logical for the overall budget process, not just with respect only the community college.

MR. STEIN:

I'll talk to the community college. There really is no mandate in the Charter with specific dates for the community college. So it's really an issue of the other ones that you're discussing, and I will step back on that one.

MS. VIZZINI:

It certainly is something that the three offices can discuss while we're discussing this solution. Even if you push the capital to the beginning of the year where things are a little bit quieter, then you're preparing a Capital Program almost an entire year ahead of when it's going to go into effect. So the college budget is the more manageable of the three major budgets. The capital is, you know, five year program; the Operating Budget is huge. The college budget is like one department, so it's probably -- although they're not a department, in terms of the magnitude of what you're looking --

MR. STEIN:

Entity.

MS. VIZZINI:

Entity, I like that. Just to give you a perspective of the magnitude. So the only thing that can be wiggled a little bit is, you know, is Capital, but it's not necessarily beneficial to move that up to the beginning of the year, so you have a down side to that as well.

MR. KENNY:

I just came away from South Hampton Town where we moved the Capital Budget to April 1st, and that has been working. We separated it from the Operating Budget to April 1st. And to me, Capital Budgets are long-term budgets. They're capital -- they're asset creation plans and, you know, I would think that maybe looking at the position of that timing might be fruitful in terms of creating some more room for the other aspects of the budget.

MS. VIZZINI:

Absolutely. That's exactly where we are. To my recollection we never had, thank God, the Capital and the Operating together, although I know many towns have done that. And the County Executives must deliver the proposed April 15th and we must turnaround our analysis within forty-five days is the way the Charter is currently constructed, do our report, and while that's going on, as Mrs. Bachety well knows, the Legislature is being briefed in every aspect of the process to determine if their priorities are different than those that are presented by the County Executive. So in a sense that works well, but we have concerns in regards to the college, so we'll continue to discuss it.

MR. KENNY:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Kathy.

MS. GIAMO:

I have a question of Chuck.

MR. STEIN:

Yes.

MS. GIAMO:

Can you tell us what 38%, 42%, 25% represent in terms of actual dollars?

MR. STEIN:

The County support is somewhere around 39 million. The State is somewhere around 49 million. And the students are somewhere around 62 million, somewhere in that vicinity.

MS. GIAMO:

Thank you.

MR. STEIN:

That's just off the top of my head.

MR. McCARTHY:

Chuck, how about the -- I don't want to get into Plan C either, but how about if you could just talk to us a little bit about what type of oversight you have now from the County in your area?

MR. STEIN:

Well, in my area, we --

MR. McCARTHY:

On that 39 million or whatever, you know.

MR. STEIN:

Well, it's in a sense the whole budget. We don't separate things out. We provide monthly reports, financial reports to the Board of Trustees. We provide that same report to the County Executive's Budget Office, we provide it to the Legislature's Budget Review Office. There's a constant flow of information as to our ongoing operations. We try and be as transparent as possible. We recognize the fact that we're stewards of funds that come from the County, from the State, and from the students. And we have nothing to hide. The -- I don't think any of that would change under any scenario. We would continue to be providing information. We would continue to provide a line item budget the same way we do right now. I don't think any of that would change. I'm not an attorney, so I don't want to get into the discussion about those legal aspects.

MR. McCARTHY:

I didn't want to get into that either, but I was just thinking about oversight as far as in the -- you know, as a -- the fact that you're not a department of the County, but there's a -- my understanding is there's a representative of the Comptroller's Office that is involved in the -- in accounting.

MR. STEIN:

Yes. As a statement of fact right now, every week a representative of the County Comptroller comes in and pre-audits every payment.

MR. McCARTHY:

Is that done in other departments? If you had been a department, in your experience as a Deputy County Executive, do you have that in other departments? Did you have that in Social Service? Did you have that in --

MR. STEIN:

As I recall, the County Comptroller actually has a unit, I believe, operating full-time at the Department of Social Services. And you know, certainly, the County Comptroller, under I think it's Article Five of the Charter, has the responsibilities of that office listed. The question that's come up in this situation and involves the college is what State law provides. And State law differs from the current interpretation at the County level.

MS. GIAMO:

I'd like to understand the State law. And I don't want to get into the Plan C either, but I'm understanding that the County of Westchester in their lawsuit, which is now being appealed --

MR. STEIN:

It's gone to the highest court in the land and in the State, and the highest court in the State has said that Westchester County has no basis and the other parties to that lawsuit had no basis, that State Education Law and the SUNY regulations rule. And that's a very uneloquent way of saying it. I'm not a lawyer.

MS. GIAMO:

But I'm just trying to understand when it says they rule. In other words, this is regardless of what the amount of money on a local level is given to SUNY.

MR. STEIN:

Well, I think the interpretation of the courts was that the approval process at the local sponsor level is for the budget total, rather than the total budget. In essence, it's what is the contribution level of that local sponsor to the college and I think that, you know -- but those things are going to be discussed by whoever. I deal with numbers.

MS. GIAMO:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Okay.

MR. KENNY:

Sandra, if I could just make one more comment, maybe half point of disclosure and also to give you some personal experiences to the -- to some of the issues. I am currently a faculty member at Suffolk Community College so I should disclose that. I have clear bias as a result of that probably. I also served as an Executive Dean for seven years at the Eastern Campus.

It's more than just cutting checks back to students at the end of the year. It's a very -- we are a very different department than the other departments. One of the key problems I had as an Executive Dean was going through the hiring process, being in the position of hoping to offer someone a faculty position and then not being able to tell them yes or no until August and then having lost that very good faculty member at that point in time.

So there is a much more arbitrary kind of start of the year and hiring process and annual, you know, experience when you're managing the community college, and so I think wrestling with this problem is a good one. It will make us a more effective institution.

MR. STEIN:

And if I just might, the County Operating Budget is 2.8 -- 2.7 billion dollars. That's reviewed and voted on within a period of about seven weeks. The community college is just a mere fraction of that amount and it's submitted in mid-April and we don't know until the end of August.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

It's a good point.

MR. McCARTHY:

Very good point.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

It's a very good point. Yes.

MR. DEVINE:

Mr. Stein, just a quick question if I can. Dr. Kenny was my first college professor in Suffolk, as a point of disclosure.

MR. STEIN:

Did you get good grades?

MR. DEVINE:

I think got a B. It was an eight o'clock class. It wasn't easy. He was my first teacher at Suffolk Community in 1974, so point of disclosure of that. But just a quick question, and I'm not sure of the answer, obviously, but you said that Suffolk Community -- that Suffolk County gives -- the funding

from Suffolk County to Suffolk is about thirty-nine million dollars the past year?

MR. STEIN:

It's somewhere that vicinity. Yeah, I don't have that.

MR. DEVINE:

Was it in that range the last few years? Was it always in that range or has it been historically that range?

MR. STEIN:

We received a 2% increase the prior year which is about \$750,000. The year before I believe we received a 4% increase, which was about a million and a half dollars.

MR. DEVINE:

Is there any way, and this is a hypothetical, that some monies or a base amount of money can be approved where you have -- you know you are going to get so much and then you can work out the last 5% at a later date?

MR. STEIN:

Well, there is something called a maintenance of effort situation, which basically is the amount you received in the prior year is the amount you're going to receive. It's really a question of whether or not there are going to be increases. Traditionally that's the situation.

MR. DEVINE:

But it's been historically fairly constant all the way along year after year in the same range, there's no dips and valleys.

MR. STEIN:

Historically the County Legislature, which is the sponsor -- the local sponsor is the County Legislature and it's been the County Legislature that has determined where that funding level is.

MR. DEVINE:

I don't know if it's legal to do that. Maybe they can --

MR. STEIN:

Well, no. For example, the County Executive may send the budget over to the Legislature with no increase, but the Legislature in its deliberations has provided additional funding.

MR. DEVINE:

I'm just trying to get to more money faster.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Obviously the college budget is probably a very interesting one. I would think that if we could get a report back, we have a public hearing scheduled for May 15th, but if within that time frame or after that there could be a meeting of the three departments, so that we can get some idea of whether or not it is possible to make some changes in the budgetary process. I think that would be very helpful.

MR. STEIN:

Yes. And we've all agreed that we will get together and discuss it.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

And you will let us know.

MR. STEIN:

Thank you. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Thank you very much, Chuck. Okay. Gail, did you have anything else that you wanted to add?

MS. VIZZINI:

No. I think that's a good time frame, and we'll get -- we'll meet and we'll get back to you.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Okay, that'd be great. I don't know if anyone has any questions for Budget Review. It's always been one of the best agencies I've ever worked with. No? Okay.

MS. VIZZINI:

Thank you very much.

MR. CLIFF:

Nonpartison.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Nonpartisan, absolutely. Always has been. All right, I think those were our speakers. Now, you'll notice that we did have a meeting scheduled for the beginning of May on May first, but because it's an effort by the Presiding Officer to kind of move this along we're going to have a public hearing on the 15th of May here in the room at 2:30 in the afternoon.

MR. BRAUN:

That's instead.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Excuse me?

MR. BRAUN:

Instead of the May first meeting.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Instead of the May first meeting. And we have been very lucky that we have three people from the Presiding Officer's -- well, I didn't include Terry but he's a big help, to assist us in this and they are going to notify the different towns here in the west end, any civic groups, the League of Women Voters, and anybody that might have some interest in the way the County is run. I'm losing my voice, I'm sorry. To make sure that we try to get as much input as we can early so that we can then start dividing up some of these things and see what we want to recommend as a commission. Now, if anyone has any questions or if you have any suggestions this would be a good time for it. Everybody's fine?

MS. GIAMO:

I have a question. In the public hearing, are all of the -- every town is notified?

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

West end.

MS. GIAMO:

So we're going to have a second public hearing for the east end?

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

We have to have an east end hearing. Terry Pearsall was going to check on what would be available for us on the east end.

MR. PEARSALL:

If you could give us some dates in September we'll find a location on the east end.

MR. BRAUN:

Is there a reason why the entire County shouldn't be notified about both or are we expecting an overflow crowd?

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Oh, yeah, it's going to be packed. No, I'm just kidding of course. We hope somebody will come. Certainly we could have both east and west here, but we are required to have a hearing in both the west end and the east end.

MR. BRAUN:

I'm just thinking that everyone should know about all the hearings.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

They can come on May 15th. Everybody can come. We can pack the room.

MR. PEARSALL:

We will notify the entire County.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Okay.

MR. PEARSALL:

For both public hearings.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

I think the towns might be interested certainly now with this question about the money on the police district. That might bring a few of them out. So May 15th. Anyone have anything they'd like to bring up or have you had a chance to look at the Charter?

I do have one question that came to me when the County Executive was speaking and he talked about the elimination of elected officials. That has been a hot button issue as long as I can remember. I would ask you all to kind of look at that, you know, perhaps talk to some people. We have -- I was here when we tried that in the distant past, but it might be something worth talking about now, particularly since there is this huge shortfall and the economy is not doing as well as we might have hoped it would. That maybe it is time to at least talk about combining the offices of the Comptroller and the Treasurer. I would be interested if anyone has any opinions on that.

MS. GIAMO:

I'd just like to ask if we could get a copy or could we see what the responsibilities of each position are, what they actually are doing and where they have, you know, where they do the same thing.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Well, it's also in the Charter. It does tell you. But I'm sure if there are any other facts you could get those.

MR. FUSCO:

Shouldn't we get them in and get their opinions?

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Well, if everyone -- I can tell you their opinions.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

There's not going to be a lot of enthusiasm for that. But you might want to look at it first. And I will tell you that historically people in this County have not been big on eliminating elected officials. It's usually not the most popular thing. But these are two jobs that are, you know, probably not very high profile and there might be a very good case to make for that. Kathy, I'll certainly see if there's anything, but look in the Charter and you'll see their initial duties. And certainly if you all think it's a good idea they will come in and speak to us. I'm sure of that.

MR. KENNY:

If you'd like an opinion there I'll be happy to offer one. I, in fact, tried to do that at the town level for the highway superintendency. I do know that when you look at the literature on management reform at any municipal level, and including State level, the recommendation is to eliminate, except in the instances where you need a check and balance as in case of Comptroller being elected for the purpose of being able to monitor the other side. That the fewer the elected officials the higher the accountability for the CEO of whatever municipality, state or county government you're talking about. So, you know, my, again, bias and if you ask for it, my bias is -- would be towards elimination of elected offices. And I think it's worthwhile exploring and looking into.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

And you might want to look at the County Clerk's Office, too. Personally, I don't think it will go anywhere no matter what we recommend, but I think it's something that should be discussed and it might be something that you want to take a look at. Okay? All right. Anyone else? Okay. Terry, is there anything that you --

MR. PEARSALL:

Are you going to have a June meeting?

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Yes. We didn't set a June meeting, we stopped in May. Yes, I think we should. Certainly after the public hearing we're going to want to have one.

MR. PEARSALL:

And you'll keep that on the first Thursday? Oh, that presents a problem for us. That's a committee week for us.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

You have what? Committee reports that week?

MR. PEARSALL:

Committees meet that week. We can do it on the 12th.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

June 12th. Does that look okay for everyone?

MR. PEARSALL:

Or the 26th of June.

MR. BRAUN:

How long is the budget reform meeting?

MR. PEARSALL:

That will be over by then.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

So how about the 12th of June? That would give us almost a month after the public hearing and

we'll have an opportunity to kind of review all of that. So 2:30 or thereabouts we'll meet on the 12th of June.

I would almost look at a July date now, but I don't know if everybody's really -- perhaps we can think about it in May when we get together. Okay?

MR. PEARSALL:

Let me book the auditorium for July.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

Book it, but --

MR. PEARSALL:

And we can always cancel.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

I'm assuming we're going to have a lot of difficulties -- you want to do that for July 10th?

MR. PEARSALL:

Fine.

CHAIRPERSON BACHETY:

And that will be tentative until we say, okay? Anything else? No? Okay. I thank you all very much for being here. And I'll see you on the 15th with the crowded auditorium to discuss the Charter. Thank you.

(The meeting was adjourned at 3:54 P.M.)