

VETERANS AND SENIORS COMMITTEE

of the
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Veterans and Seniors 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 3, 2002.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator William J. Lindsay - Chairman
Legislator Martin W. Haley - Vice Chairperson
Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator Andrew A. Crecca
Legislator Lynne C. Nowick

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Sabatino, II - Counsel to the Legislature
Tim Laube - Aide to Legislator Lindsay
Ed Hogan - Aide to Legislator Nowick
Art Lozeau - Director, Veterans Service Agency
Holly Rhodes-Teague - Director, Office of the Aging
Nicole DeAngelo - County Executive's Office, Budget
Ray Zaccaro - Caucus Aide
Dave Ryan - Aide to Leg. Nowick
Tom Donovan - Aide to Presiding Officer
Other Interested Parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Ana Grande- Court Stenographer

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(THE MEETING CAME TO ORDER AT 10:55 A.M.)

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. We're going to call the Veterans & Seniors Committee meeting to order. If we could rise for the pledge led by Legislator Haley.

(SALUTATION)

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Before we go to the very short agenda, Art, do you have anything to talk to us about?

MR. LOZEAU:

I'm Art Lozeau, the Director of the Veterans Service Agency. The only thing I want to mention is the upcoming ceremony on October 12th at ten o'clock at Armed Forces Plaza. It's a ceremony that commemorates the hundred and tenth anniversary of the pledge of allegiance.

It should be a very nice ceremony. I hope we have good weather. If it's inclement weather, we'll go into the media room.

LEG. HALEY:

What time is it?

MR. LOZEAU:

Ten o'clock on October 12th at Armed Forces Plaza.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Could your office send a notice to all the Legislators about it? I know I got one from the sponsors, but I'm not sure whether everybody else did.

MR. LOZEAU:

Definitely, that's not a problem at all. The American -- we're cosponsoring with the Third Division of the American Legion, and I'm assuming they were to invite everybody. I'll send another invite, that won't be a problem at all.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Yeah. If they got two, it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world.

MR. LOZEAU:

No, not at all.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. Great. Anybody have any questions for Art? No.

MR. LOZEAU:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. Holly?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

I only have one thing to tell you.

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CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Just a comment.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

You'll be happy to hear that the first checks for Epic are out this week.

LEG. HALEY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

All right.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

We did a test run last week of five hundred, so those are going out in the mail today. So, it's been a process.

LEG. HALEY:

Could you do me a favor, just tell me exactly how the process has been established for the two programs, there's the premium and there's the deductible.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

You know in my head I haven't split them out, so let me just explain what's going on. The State office, the State Epic office sends out a check to each and every senior at the end of their enrollment year, which is a rolling enrollment year, so it can happen anytime, stating to them what they have paid out in premiums, if they've paid a premium, and what they've paid out in co-payments.

The letter then tells the senior that if they're eligible, that they may be eligible for reimbursement from Suffolk County and to please return the letter with their signature and social security number to the Suffolk County Office for the Aging.

At that time, we get it, we log them in. MIS has been invaluable to us because they have been logging a lot of these in, putting them in the computer for us because they have somebody who keys it all in for us. We're also keying on our end, but they have keyed a lot of them in.

They go into the system, they verify that they were put in correctly and then it goes through this interface program with the County computer system to go to Audit and Control and then to the Treasurer's Office to cut a check.

LEG. HALEY:

Okay. Did you say it's at the end of the period, they just do it -- they don't do it -- they usually pay quarterly payments?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

At the end of their enrollment.

LEG. HALEY:

Period.

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MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Each senior has an enrollment year, so at the end of that enrollment year that's when they get a letter saying, you know, you may be eligible, please send this back to Suffolk County.

LEG. HALEY:

Okay. Good.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

All right. And then what's happening because --

LEG. HALEY:

It's more efficient to let them, you know, have them wait until the end of their enrollment year.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

And what happens now, because it's a year where some things are

prorated, because a lot of them, their enrollment years ended in March or February, I think I explained this another time, the amount that they're getting reimbursed for is prorated for the number of months that are in 2002 or the number of months that are in the July 31st on for the copayments.

LEG. HALEY:

Thank you.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

All right. So that's how this whole process is, you know, this -- you know, we're working out the little minor glitches that are coming up as we go, but, you know, it's moving, we'll see how it goes.

LEG. HALEY:

Thank you.

LEG. CRECCA:

Can I ask?

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Go ahead.

LEG. CRECCA:

Does the senior who's in the Epic Program then automatically get a letter?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Yes. They get a letter if they have paid out. If they have put anything out, at the end of their enrollment year, the State Office is responsible, the State Office of Epic is responsible for that, because they cannot give us the names of the seniors who are in the program, because it would violate confidentiality.

LEG. CRECCA:

How do you get to these seniors, where are you getting their names?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

They do it.

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LEG. CRECCA:

What?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

The State Epic office is doing it, at the Epic Program --

LEG. CRECCA:

They are sending the letters out?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

They send the letters out.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

That was the delay, right?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Correct. We had to get an agreement and a system in place. And it's in place and we've, you know, there's been glitches where the seniors have cut off the bottom and sent that in and not give us the top part which has what they've paid out. Seniors have also sent us checks thinking it's a bill. You name it, anything we thought we made foolproof, they've managed to get around.

LEG. CRECCA:

And you haven't been keeping those checks, have you, because that could help balance the budget for next year possibly.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

I'll send them over to you, Andrew. All right, so I just wanted to let you know.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

I remember my mother at one time trying to trim, you know, the check. A receipt was on the bottom, her social security, she cut off all the numbers on the bottom.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

We get fifteen number, you know, fifteen digit social security numbers. I mean we've, we've -- people are deceased, we're getting theirs, so now we have to get that corrected. You know, I mean they can get reimbursed for it, if they can tell us that they're supposed to.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

But, Holly, the longer you run the Office of the Aging, the younger you look.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Oh, I appreciate that one. I don't know if that's a good reason to stay, maybe it's a good reason.

Anything else for anybody?

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Well, do you want to -- we have an introductory resolution, if you want to comment on that?

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MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

I believe all that does is increase the income and, you know, of course, that would be a good thing, but that's -- I don't, I mean, it's, obviously it's something we would support.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

And increase the income for --

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

The income limit for someone to get the tax exemption.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

That comes from where, the State I think originally, and then I guess Suffolk County has to buy into it.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Yes, yes, okay.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Okay. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Anybody else have any questions of Holly? No?

We have one, there's a dispute on whether we have a tabled resolution or not, and we have one introductory resolution. I have on mine that, Freddy's authorizing conveyance of parcel to Suffolk County United Veterans, Town of Brookhaven, 72H that we've been tabling for quite a while, but the Clerk didn't have it on the agenda.

Does anybody recall whether that was --

MR. DONOVAN:

3/19 it was laid on the table, so six months was 9/19.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY

Okay. All right. Then the only thing on the agenda is the Introductory Resolution 2039.

2039-02. Local Law defining income for senior citizens real property tax exemption.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Anybody want to comment, want to make a motion?

LEG. HALEY:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

That's what Holly was just talking about, it raises the income limits. We're buying into a program that the State Legislature has recently adopted. That's for the Star exemption?

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MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

No, I don't believe it's Star. No.

LEG. CRECCA:

It's the Epic --

LEG. NOWICK:

The senior citizen exemption?

LEG. HALEY:

Do you have it in front of us?

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

For real property tax exemption.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Yes, but it's not the Star one.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

It's not Star.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

No. This is the other one.

LEG. HALEY:

What it is, the State enables, the State passes it and then each taxing jurisdiction has to buy, opt into it, so we're just opting into it.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Do you want to make the motion?

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Second?

LEG. CRECCA:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

All in favor? Okay. Approved. Anybody have any other comments?

LEG. CRECCA:

I was just going to say put me down as a co-sponsor on that bill.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Everybody want to co-sponsor it?

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes.

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LEG. ALDEN:

Yes.

LEG. HALEY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. Motion to adjourn is in order.

LEG. CRECCA:

I'll make the motion to adjourn.

LEG. ALDEN:

I'll second that.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. We have to go back on the record.

LEG. CRECCA:

Motion to reconsider the motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. Is there a second to that motion?

LEG. HALEY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. We're talking about resolution 2039-02. Is there a motion to table subject to a public hearing?

LEG. CRECCA:

A motion to reconsider.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

LEG. CRECCA:

That motion.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

We did that already.

LEG. CRECCA:

No, it was to reconsider the motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Oh, okay.

LEG. ALDEN:

Motion to reconvene at a later date.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Don't make stuff up.

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LEG. CRECCA:

Paul, we adjourned and we have to redo a bill.

LEG. HALEY:

Why are we waiting for Paul, just finish.

LEG. CRECCA:

What's the number of the bill, please?

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

2039-02.

LEG. CRECCA:

A motion to reconsider 2039-02.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

MR. SABATINO:

There's a public hearing coming up.

LEG. CRECCA:

Yes, we approved it already. That's why we're doing a motion to reconsider. Is there a second?

LEG. ALDEN:

Second. I second it. How many times do you want me to second it.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Cameron Alden. All in favor? Now it's back before us.

LEG. ALDEN:

Motion to table for public hearing.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

And I'll second that. All in favor? Okay. It's approved.

(VOTE: 5-0-0-0) TABLED

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Now we can adjourn.

LEG. ALDEN:

Motion to adjourn.

LEG. NOWICK:

Second.

(THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:05 A.M.)