

VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE**OF THE****Suffolk County Legislature****Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Veterans & Seniors Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on September 14, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Steve Stern • Chairman
Legislator Jack Eddington • Vice•Chair
Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator Elie Mystal

Members Not Present:

Legislator John Kennedy

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan • Counsel to the Legislature
Richard K. Baker • Deputy Clerk
Meghan O'Reilly • Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Bob Martinez • Aide to Legislator Montano
Paul Perillie • Aide to Majority Caucus
Verna Doonan • Budget Review Office
Brendan Chamberlain • County Executive's Office
Holly Rhoades•Teague • Director/Office for the Aging
Paul Arfin • President/Intergenerational Strategies
Tim Jahn • Cornell Cooperative Extension
Dan Hilton • Local 25
Alex Strauss • Local 25
Paulette Corrigan • Local 25

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer

Minutes Transcribed By:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

(*The meeting was called to order at 9:19 AM*)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

The Committee on Veterans and Seniors will come to order and ask everybody to please rise and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Alden.

Salutation

I will ask everybody to please remain standing and join us in a moment of silence as we keep all of our brave men and women fighting for us around the world in our thoughts and prayers.

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you. Good morning Holly.

DIRECTOR RHODES • TEAGUE:

Hi. I just wanted to update you a little bit on the HEAP season that's coming up. It opens up November 1st. And our office is subcontracted to DSS. We do the applications for those who are 60 and older and social security

disability clients. The applications, just for your information, applications are already out to those people who received a HEAP benefit last year. The mailing went out from the state at the end of August. The applications are already coming into our office. Last year we received about •• about 6,000 applications total for the HEAP season. We've already received 1,900 applications in our office as of yesterday. So even though the season doesn't open until November 1st, they've •• they've given the people who received a benefit prior, the ability to get these applications in prior to November 1st. After November 1st checks will be cut, you know, they'll •• they'll •• after they're approved, but the applications are already out for those people.

New HEAP applicants can call our office at the end of October and we'll send out the paperwork for them as soon as it opens on November 1st. So prior applicant •• applications already have their app's. Current ones, you know, new people will have to wait until the end of October to receive •• to give us their names and we'll send out the applications to them.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Is there any estimate as to how many new applications there •• you might receive as compared to last year or the year before?

DIRECTOR RHODES • TEAGUE:

I just know that we went up, I think •• I think, it was somewhere around 20% from last year to this past season, so, you know, two years ago to last year. So I would imagine if we keep seeing the oil bills being where they are that we'll still get new applications coming in. Its a lot •• it's a lot of applicants, 6,000's a lot of applications.

And the season was not as smooth as it should have been last year because the state went to this new mail•out system a year ago where they put all these applications out at once where it used to be on a rolling •• a rolling process. We used to do telephone re•certifications; so we were backed up a lot last year. We're hoping, we've •• we've got some cooperation with DSS. They're helping us with this initial influx of applications because we •• we were buried last year under the applications when they •• when they, put them out this way. So hopefully this season will work out a little better for us.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Is there information or are there handouts that •• that we should have in our

- our district offices?

DIRECTOR RHODES•TEAGUE:

Not •• not yet. We usually give out the eligibility information towards the end of October, beginning of November when the season actually opens. And we'll send out the information on the income levels for each size household which we sent out to all the Legislators and I think we put it out to all out contractors as well. But I just wanted to give you a heads up that's •• that's out there.

I don't know if you want the phone numbers, I mean, for our office the over age 60, excuse me, is 853•8326 and then the •• the DSS regular HEAP number is 853•8825. There's another category of people who do not do their own applications; food stamp households, and Public Assistance households don't have to file app's. They automatically receive the benefit. And there's a separate number for them and that's 853•8820. So, I just wanted to give you a little heads up because I know that's coming along.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good. Okay.

DIRECTOR RHODES•TEAGUE:

Okay. Anybody have any questions? Thanks.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good, Holly. Thank you. Paul?

MR. ARFIN:

Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Paul, good morning.

MR. ARFIN:

Good morning. Paul Arfin, President of Intergenerational Strategies, and I have with me Tim Jahn, our Program Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension. And at your invitation we're here to talk briefly about a program that we're recommending to •• that the Legislature consider. Its origins are in the Commission on Creative Retirement. And it was one of the 14 recommendations that came forth in the report that was issued about a year

and a half ago, that you •• that I've spoken to you before about. And it's perhaps the resolution which the recommendation which has the most •• most compelling case.

It has to do with the serious problem of turnover among workers who care for our •• our frail and most •• most elderly people, whether in the home, whether in the nursing home, or in the assisted living facility.

We know that our older population is growing and growing; people are living longer. We know that the turnover rates nationally are 71%. And we have no reason to believe that generally speaking here in Suffolk County they're •• they're up there. The turnover rate has a negative impact on the quality of care and the quality of life for •• for older people.

There's a need for additional personal care aids, certified nurses aids, and home health care aids. As our general population grows and we by our public policy at a national level, we're basically saying that the family has the responsibility of taking care of its own. So this is going to increase the pressures upon families and increase the odds that some families are going to need home health care aids, home companions to augment the care that families provide.

In addition, as people get older and older into their 80's and 90's, the likelihood that people are going to be entering nursing homes and assisted living facilities in greater numbers is tremendous. So we need more people in the field and we need to pay them better and •• and provide benefits to them so that they •• if they enter the field they stay in the field.

So the Commission looked at this these issues. And we came up with a program with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Suffolk County Community College. And we worked collaboratively for almost a year with the Office of Continuing Education, and unfortunately {Nina Lenhardt}, the director, couldn't be here this morning, but she had developed a program that is very successful and very comparable with this program.

Years ago, the people in the developmental disabilities field were having a similar problem in recruiting and retaining people to work with people with developmental disabilities and physical disabilities. And they developed a curriculum which was offered at the community college. And they have found that the graduates of that program stay longer and •• and they were

successful in recruiting people because part of the program was to provide a cash incentive for people to graduate the program. And secondly that their employers provided them with paid time to take the course work.

So we took that concept and applied it to this population. And Cornell and the community college •• and Tim is going to briefly give it an overview of •• of the program itself. We're •• we're confident that this kind of program will help to attract and retain these workers who often receive salaries •• in fact, Tim, do you have my copy?

MR. JAHN:

Yeah.

MR. ARFIN:

There's a couple of facts I just want to I •• I pulled out last night from the State Department of Labor. There's 22,000 employees working in home health care, homes for the elderly and services for elderly and disabled. On •• that's on Long Island. I don't have the Suffolk figures. So we could probably guesstimate that it's half of that more or less.

The median annual salaries of home health care aids, nurse's aids, and orderly's, and personal and home care•aids was \$23,623. Another fact. They were •• they're projecting that there's 3,630 vacancies, unmet need between 2002 and 2012. We're now at 2006. There's going to be 3600 job openings in health care support occupations and personal care and service workers. There's more •• this is more than double the rate of employment in the overall labor market.

And lastly I guess this is a repeat that the turnover rate nationally in personal care•aids and long term care settings is 71%. I've seen ranges from 10% to 70% so I don't pretend to suggest that 71 is Suffolk County's, but •• but from the discussions we've had with home care agencies and assisted living it's probably 30, 40% on the average. So, Tim, why don't you give an overview of ••

MR. JAHN:

I wish •• I wish Nina were here to talk about the Suffolk Community College component of it but ••

MS. MAHONEY:

Could you use a microphone please.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

And if you could just state your name and just for the record.

MR. JAHN:

Oh, I'm sorry. Yeah. My name is Tim Jahn. I'm the Program Director for Family and Consumer Science's Program at Cornell Cooperative Extension. I supervise basically, kind of four program emphases. One is Consumer Education, Diabetes Education, Nutrition Education for low income families; and our Human Development Program which we work with parents and families. As part of that human development program is the Family Development Credentialed Program, which would become a component of this project as well.

The •• the model would be that there would be a recruitment plan for identifying and recruiting participants in this program. With our Family Development Credentialed Program, one of the things we do is we interact with community organizations and agencies. And we secure a commitment on the part of those agencies for participation in that credentialed program, and also a commitment on the part of the participant, the student, to •• to spend the time both in class and out of class to do the work that's required and to successfully graduate from the program. And we would do the same sort of model for this. The Suffolk Community College would provide credit bearing certificate program that would be an introduction to health careers •• course work on geriatrics, psychology, and community residents management. And that would be approximately a semester long program.

And then the other component of this would be our Family Development •• Development and Credentialed Program, which is a state credentialed program, recognized by New York State. It's a 90 hour •• a nine credit bearing program. 90 hour program that leads to a credential. And there is a state exam and there's also a portfolio development that has to be done by students.

And that program is for people who work front line with families, with individuals at all ages. And it's designed to encourage cultural confidence. It teaches the empowerment model for families and individuals and utilizing community resources, maximizing community resources, and decision making

and problem solving. And so we feel that this is a real enhancement for these individuals to have this credential as well.

So they •• the plan would be that participants in this program would get both pieces. And we're also hoping would be a springboard for them seeking additional kind of course work and also perhaps earning one of the things we had talked about, is them pursuing additional college course work to earn an associate's degree or perhaps a bachelor's degree.

MR. ARFIN:

In that •• in that regard for many of the likely students in the program this may be the first time they've ever been on a college campus. And the building of self confidence and the opportunity to see that I have more than I thought I had to offer as a step towards, you know, upward mobility we think is another feature.

And I guess the last thing I wanted to mention was that I was in the child care field for many years and •• and several years ago this Legislature established a living wage for child care workers. This we feel is maybe a small way in which to acknowledge the workers in our •• in our communities that care for the elderly. This is not such an ambitious program as the •• the millions of dollars in the child care, you know •• living wage, but it's a step towards recognizing that we have a serious problem in recruitment and retention.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Paul, and or Tim, how long •• how long do you think it would take to have this kind of a program planned and then implemented?

MR. ARFIN:

It could begin as early as the next semester in January that the •• basically the curriculum is been developed through the collaboration between the two agencies. My role was as involved in the Commission so Intergenerational Strategies has no role here; so the two of them I'm sure, Tim, this could happen by January, yeah.

MR. JAHN:

Yeah, the Family Development Credentionalling Program which is part of Cornell Cooperative Extension ••

MS. MAHONEY:

Use the microphone please.

MR. JAHN:

I'm sorry, is a •• that a •• that a •• over the years have given the •• awarded the credential to over 150 individuals so it's been in existence for about six years now and the curriculum is all set. We actually collaborated with Family Service League in doing that program. We a •• there's a staff member there who's a team teacher for that program and the a •• the •• the work at the college, Nina's not here to talk about it, but that's •• that's well established as well. So it could be up and running the next, you know, January semester, the Spring semester 2007.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

And what would be, you had mentioned a cash incentive a •• a •• for students who finish the program. What would be the amount of that cash incentive?

MR. JAHN:

Do you have that in the budget?

MR. ARFIN:

Yeah •• just looking. Well •• what we •• what we propose to do was to •• and we've already had some discussions with some of the providers, assisted living, nursing home, and home care worker •• home care agencies, and that •• that part of it would come from them. And what we're •• we're requesting and certainly this may be a, you know •• different amounts depending upon their investment in the program but we're hoping that it would be at least \$500.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

And would that be offered as a \$500 check or is that some type of credit towards something else? How do you see that?

MR. ARFIN:

No. That's a \$500 check at the end of satisfactory completion. And we're also asking the employers to, you know, pay for the time, you know, that's •• that's involved in the program. So the proposed costs here are all, you know,

towards the Community College and the Cornell's staff time to administer the program.

One other thing that we •• that we should have mentioned was that one of our specific outreaches in this is •• is towards, let's say the active older adult. Probably that woman between 50 and 75 who drives her own car, who's sharp as a tack and is looking for some part•time work. And we've got plenty of those.

And because much of this work doesn't require, you know, physical strength, you know, we know that our mothers •• or I take it back, I should say. Our •• our wives are caring for our parents who are in their 80's and 90's and assisting them to get in and out of cars and getting into bath •• bath, you know, into showers and into bathrooms. So if we can identify some of this older population to serve in this capacity, we not only address part of the recruitment challenge but we also provide these folks with meaningful work that many of them are looking for. Not only because they may need some money, but partly because they need some more purpose and meaning in life.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Which I think could be an important element.

MR. ARFIN:

Exactly.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

But also keeping in mind that so much of this work isn't just basic assistance and supervision. Some of it can be quite strenuous and even back breaking work ••

MR. ARFIN:

Right.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

•• when we're talking about a little more than getting in and out of the tub, but maybe assistance in getting in and out of bed.

MR. ARFIN:

Exactly.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

It can be quite strenuous. The •• given the •• the numbers and •• and given the vision of the program how many students do you envision the •• the program being able to accommodate?

MR. ARFIN:

We •• we •• we feel that, I think the number was at least 15 that we would try to recruit 25 ••

(* Legislator Mystal entered at 9:39 AM*)

•• to recruit 25 for the first class and a •• and a •• go with, you know, at least •• at least 15. And we would think that a •• that a •• based upon, you know, the discussions with the students to understand what's involved in all, there would inevitably be some turnover as life's circumstances change. But we think that, you know, 80% of them would continue, you know, and complete the program.

MR. JAHN:

Yeah, our experience with Family Development Credential Program, we recruit •• it's an application program. We recruit about 25 each time we do the course. And the course lasts about a year. And we hope to graduate 20 of them because just what Paul mentioned there is life changes and other circumstances that they cannot •• the requirement is that they do attend and complete, you know, the program expectations. If not, they do not get the credentials so we have to maintain that standard with credentials.

So generally if they miss, I believe, it's •• and I'm not the person in charge of the program but I believe if they miss 12 hours of instruction, they're excluded from the program. So that's what we try to do, try to •• try to graduate 20 out of the 25.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Vice Chairman Eddington.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Good morning. Currently is there certification for personal care aides and

home health care aides and certified nurses? There are, right?

MR. ARFIN:

Yes, there are; absolutely.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And so you're trying to recruit more people ••

MR. ARFIN:

That's right.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

•• to get those credentials?

MR. ARFIN:

Exactly. This is the difference.

LEG. EDDINGTON

And I heard •• and I commend you on your outreach program for people that are like 55 or older. That's a fantastic net of people. What about like high schools? Have you thought about going to •• because I •• as Chairman Stern •• really we're going to need people that are •• have some strength also.

MR. ARFIN:

Absolutely.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Are you doing anything in that area?

MR. ARFIN:

Absolutely. That's what the plan is. Really we would do a marketing campaign to people of all ages ••

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Gotcha.

MR. ARFIN:

•• but concentrating, you know, among the younger people who maybe don't have any career, you know, aspirations at this moment.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Correct.

MR. ARFIN:

And, you know, whether they're 18 to 25, let's say, but, yes we would •• we would do targeting to younger and older.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And I guess the incentives would be similar?

MR. ARFIN:

Yes.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Now, you mentioned about the home •• the provider agencies now that you are looking towards them. What population in there would you be targeting? I mean, I thought everybody was kind of certified to be working in home care facility.

MR. ARFIN:

They are. They are. So this •• the incentive we think, based upon the experience with the developmental disabilities folks was this college based course work. Say wow. And so the agency that sponsors a •• has a program like this •• has a •• has a market advantage over the company that doesn't have this college based program to offer its potential employees.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Gotcha. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very well. Obviously critical issue as the •• as the population of Long Island ages, becomes that much more of a critical issue shortages that we're already experiencing significantly now. Only are going to become a bigger problem in the future and these are exactly the kinds things and exactly the kinds of •• I think my colleagues would agree, important partnerships that we need to be pursuing in the future. So thanks so much for being here today.

MR. JAHN:

Thank you very much.

MR. ARFIN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

I do have one card. Mr. Malaga. Welcome.

MR. MALAGA:

Good morning. My name is Cesar Malaga. I'm the President of the Hispanic American Association. And thank you for letting me •• letting me speak here. I am a senior and also a veteran. As you stated, you know, that here on Long Island Suffolk County, you know, we have the great number of senior citizens. It is a fact that many of the senior citizens here in Suffolk County, they need help.

Health care. Also you know, utilities, you know, utilities costs. I was talking yesterday to some •• some senior citizens who were complaining the fact that they're paying higher month •• higher month, you know, dollars for the LIPA now. Of course, you know, that LIPA has increased, you know, the cost of electricity. They call it, you know, the •• the fuel costs.

But actually, you know, what we •• many of us see in LIPA is the fact that probably all of you are aware that LIPA has increased the number of people working by three times as much. And who are they? They're, you know, people, relatives of elected officials like Senators, Assemblymen, and Legislators whose wives, children are working there. It's not required there. The number of people have increased so much that the expenses of LIPA has increased in order, when you •• when you increase expenses, you have to increase the rates that the people are paying to cover those expenses.

So I think, you know, one of the things that you have to look is about •• about Seniors citizens who are on fixed incomes. Some of them they do not have •• are •• shall we say a pension for the companies that they work. Many of them are living only on social security. And social security every year is decreasing because all the Medicare that keeps increasing. Medication is increasing. Everything's increasing. But, the amount of money that our senior citizens are getting in social security does not increase as much it should.

So one thing we have to look for is how can we make the life for our senior

citizens better in the county? They're the ones who built the county. They're the ones who built this country. And now we are ignoring many of our senior citizens, the needs for it. We have to go to them and say, look what do you need? I know, like in the Town of Babylon, they have senior citizens where the senior citizens go out for food, this or that. Well that's not everything. Our senior citizens here in the county, they need the best care that we can offer.

And we do not •• you know, you don't have to •• out there to look for money or increase taxes this or that. Our federal government has to put in some money for this •• for the projects and also the state. They are the ones collecting great amount of money from taxes.

And where is the money going? Well, we're wasting it. Right •• right now, you know, we're wasting money in the •• you know, in Iraq. A war that I consider is a personal war of President Bush. We didn't have no reason to go to Iraq. So we're wasting what tax dollars are out there. And we people do not •• do not force our governments to cut expenses. We have to look to improve the quality of life for our senior citizens; also our veterans who need help. I think my time is up, right? I appreciate for your help.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Yes. Before •• before you leave, Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Good morning Mr. Malaga.

MR. MALAGA:

Good morning.

LEG. MYSTAL:

As you know at the Suffolk County Legislature we sit here and we listen to anybody who wants to say anything but you made two accusations which I think, you know, should be rectified. You said that there are people in the Suffolk County Legislature who had their families working for LIPA. Do you have any proof of that?

MR. MALAGA:

Well, it was published in newspapers. There are some relatives •• the names of it •• now if we can go to it, you know, LIPA's, you know, records. We can

see, you know, who the people are working there.

LEG. MYSTAL:

And the other accusation that you made, I don't know of any LIPA money going for Iraq.

MR. MALAGA:

Well, there was ••

LEG. MYSTAL:

You know, so •• so I don't know it's just •• the statement you make a good statement. You start good. And at the end what you do is sabotage your own speech by making accusations that cannot be supported by anything. So that's •• I'm just saying that, just try to stay on the topic that you know that you can talk about without going on •• on far left field to make accusation that •• that, you know, sounds superfluous at •• at this point.

You know •• I don't know, you know, I have 18 Legislators who are here. And none of us condone anything LIPA does. And I don't know of any of us, you know, who really, you know, really think LIPA is the greatest thing in the world. And number two, I don't think any •• LIPA has anything to do with Iraq. And if you want to talk about Iraq, go to Congress.

MR. MALAGA:

Which I do.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Thank you.

MR. MALAGA:

No, I appreciate what you are saying, but the fact is that I am stating that, okay, maybe the Legislature don't have any relatives. But there are relatives •• there are relative officials that are working at LIPA which increase the costs.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Yeah, but you are talking with the Suffolk County Legislature. I don't want you to mistake us for the state Assembly or the state Senate or Congress. We are not. We are County Legislators.

MR. MALAGA:

Yes, I know. I understand that.

LEG. MYSTAL:

And •• and when you make accusation that we are as a •• as a body, you know, fattening the taxpayers' bill by putting all relatives on the payroll of LIPA •• LIPA is an authority that was done by the state. So you go to the state Legislature, go to the Assembly, as a matter of fact, you can't speak to the Assembly the way you speak to us. I know that. But, when you speak to us, at least have your argument in a fashion that people can listen without sabotaging your own self.

MR. MALAGA:

Yeah, one thing Mr. Mystal •• Legislator, is the fact that, you know, you are County Legislators. If you see that something is happening that shouldn't be happening, it is time you act.

It's like many times during the LIPA take •• take over I was here stating that we are paying three times the cost of •• you know, assets. And we didn't act fast enough, to stop, you know, LIPA paying three times the cost of LILCO. So what you know, we are •• you know, you are our friends of Suffolk County. So when you see something that's happening, it's time we do something about it.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I'm not going to •• any more, let it be.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

In the past we couldn't even act but we could do •• do things called Sense Resolutions. And all that is is that we agree that we would send a message to another level of government that had the legal authority to act. We don't have any legal authority to act on LIPA in •• in just about any way shape or form. So, that •• that should end, you know, that discussion.

What you mentioned before about seniors having great needs; yes. And we have some representatives here today that actually run departments that give help to seniors and other people when they can't pay their •• their fuel

bills, when they need food, when they need to get to the doctors.

We have a whole situation where Suffolk County except the Bay Shore Health Center, which is •• remains closed. It hasn't been open again. But we do have a health center in just about every part of Suffolk County so that senior citizens and others in great need can get to those.

And for the record, my mother and father are dead so they're not working for LIPA or LILCO or any other government agency. My brother is mentally and physically challenged and living in a nursing home up until about a week ago and I put him back into a •• an adult home. And I support him. And my sister is mentally and physically challenged. She lives in Florida and I support her. So I don't have any relatives there on the payroll anywhere.

So I •• I really take it as a great insult for you to come in here and make a blanket statement and then when asked by a fellow Legislator, well let's hear the names so that we can at least •• we can clear that up. No, you sullied all of our reputations. And that's not fair.

MR. MALAGA:

All right, so let me state that ••

LEG. ALDEN:

No, no, but it's not fair.

MR. MALAGA:

You do not have anyone working •• the Legislators don't have any relatives working. Okay, I'm sorry I misstated that.

LEG. ALDEN:

I don't know if they do.

MR. MALAGA:

I misstated that, okay. I'm sorry.

LEG. ALDEN:

But if you come in and make that statement then at least have the name so that you can back it up. Because otherwise what you're doing is your saying,

Alden, your name is black, your name is mud. And I'm not going to take that because that's going to be reported in the •• in the press. And it's not fair to any one of us ••

MR. MALAGA:

Well, as I said ••

LEG. ALDEN:

•• that don't have a relative. If you have a name, fine. Put it on the record.

MR. MALAGA:

Mr. Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Otherwise don't come in and make that kind of accusation because I •• I resent it.

MR. MALAGA:

Okay, okay I take back that. But the fact that I would like to emphasize is there are relatives of politicians in LIPA {inaudible} •• in the LIPA jobs.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Mr. Malaga, thank you very much. Thank you very much.

MR. MALAGA:

Thank you very much for listening.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

For the record, let me also say my, my are children are seven and four years old. So they're not on the payroll of anybody at this point. But I don't want to •• I don't want Mr. Malaga to •• to leave here without at least getting back to the underlying point which I think is a very important one. And •• and I know that my Assistant Debbie is going to give me a look for telling the story that I tell all the time.

But I'm a Little League coach. And •• and there isn't a game that goes by where grandparents of children don't come up to me and ask me, you know, is it okay if you put my son on the pitcher's mound or if you •• you, my •• my grandson on the pitcher's mound and my granddaughter up in the batting order because this is the only little league game that I'm going to get to see

all season.

And then we'll get into discussion as to why. And because I live in Florida. I live in Arizona. I've just moved to North Carolina. And we'll get into the conversation as to the reasons why they left Long Island. And for some they wanted to pursue the retirement life•style and playing golf everyday under the palm trees, which is wonderful. But for so many other seniors they did have to leave Long Island because of the very high cost of living. And whether it's utilities, whether it's taxes, whether it's just the cost of every day life, I think at every level of government we do have an obligation to our seniors to do everything that we can to ensure that if they want to remain on Long Island we do everything we can to •• to help that.

So with that, any old business, new business. Anything else? Very good. Then we are adjourned. Thank you.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 AM)

{ } Denotes spelled phonetically

**Legislator Steve Stern, Chairman
Veterans and Seniors committee**

meeting