

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 November 16, 2006.

Members Present:

Legislator Steven H. Stern, Chairman
Legislator Jack Eddington, Vice-Chair (not present)
Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator John M. Kennedy, Jr.
Legislator Elie Mystal

Also In Attendance:

Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay
Legislator Edward P. Romaine, First District
George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Ian Barry, Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Richard K. Baker, Deputy Clerk
Verna Donnan, Budget Review Office
Deborah Harris, Aide to Legislator Stern
Tom Ronayne, Director of Veterans Service Agency
Ken Bombace, President of Suffolk Police Veterans Association
Paul Arfin, President and CEO Intergenerational Strategies
Janet Allen, Suffolk Community Council
Brian Beedenbender, County Executive's Office
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Diana Kraus - Court Stenographer

(THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 9:45 AM)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Vets and Seniors will come to order. Please rise and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Alden.

(SALUTATION)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

I ask everybody to remain standing as we take a moment of silence and keep our brave young men and women fighting for us overseas in our thoughts and prayers.

(MOMENT OF SILENCE)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you.

Good morning everybody. We'll do the agenda today. We're going to start off with presentations to the Committee so I'm going to ask Tom to step up and Ken.

MR. RONAYNE:

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, Committee.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good morning.

MR. RONAYNE:

Good morning again. I've actually got very little to report on myself. If anything I think I would just make the Committee aware of a recent success that we had. We're all aware of the Homeless Veteran Outreach Program that we've been working very hard with through my office. And we recently had a -- certainly an unusual occurrence. And I would hope and pray that we see it happen again.

We had become aware fairly recently of a veteran who had been displaced. He had been evicted and then went and lived in his vehicle and then become further displaced and was completely homeless. Legislator Kennedy had contacted me and made me aware of this veteran. We took steps. We went out and outreached with him. We ultimately were able to get him into the Salvation Army Northport Veterans residence on the campus of the VA Medical Center in Northport.

As it turns out somebody for lack of anything better to do with their time got a hold of this gentleman's name and decided to run it -- did a Goggle search or something on him and came up with a hit through the New York State Comptroller's Office that he had unclaimed funds.

As it turns out the gentleman has -- apparently there's a trust fund in his name. And he's got some -- he's got a dividend account where he's got stocks that he was unaware of; that there are dividends being paid into an account in his name. All the while he's been living literally in squalor. We were able to identify those funds. The State Comptroller's Office contacted us. We were able to put all of the parties altogether. And as of yesterday afternoon it is my understanding that they have a-- they

now have a check that they're ready to present to this veteran who two short weeks ago, three short weeks ago had been evicted and was living in a van. I'll remind you a van where the engine didn't run and there were four flat tires. So it's a wonderful success story that -- it proves the value of continuing the work of the outreach.

We've had several other happy endings with regard to the ultimate disposition of veterans that we have found, but certainly this one rises above. I know the media has gotten a hold of this. And I think it's a good thing. It certainly demonstrates that these people exist in our population. We need to be serving them and hopefully we'll continue to have successes such as this in the future.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

That was a great uplifting story. And, yeah, certainly a happy ending. But let me point out it's not right to have any homeless living among our community; but certainly to have homeless veterans living in Suffolk County is absolutely unacceptable.

Tom, can you maybe bring us up to date on what your estimate would be of a number of homeless veterans that we need to be concerned with here in Suffolk County particularly as we go into the winter months?

MR. RONAYNE:

And, again, I agree with you. As we approach the winter months it certainly becomes a slightly greater concern because of the environmental concerns with the people being out in the elements. The numbers range. And they range anywhere from, you know, the six to 700 number to as many as 4,000. It's a very difficult thing to nail to the wall. Obviously homeless people in general, it's a population that is difficult for us to track. We do have some sense. And the VA is really the bellwether that we use when we look at this. But even their numbers are in my opinion somewhat speculative. They base their numbers on population overall. They factor population within the general population of veterans and what percentage of the general population that is. And somehow from that they extrapolate what they believe to be a round number for the homeless. But again the range in Suffolk County from low end to high end varies by several thousand.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

But is it safe to say that certainly we're looking at several hundred?

MR. RONAYNE:

I think several hundred is extremely conservative. It's certainly more than several hundred.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Tom, recently my office contacted your office about -- I have a constituent and I think he's the last surviving member of the family. And it's either his uncle or, you know, some relative that is in Queens, a veteran and is going to be evicted. So while I don't think he qualifies right now for any of our programs because he's not a Suffolk County resident, very shortly he's going to become a Suffolk County resident because as soon as he gets evicted, you know, his only living relative, I think, is out here in Suffolk County. So I don't know if we conveyed that information to your office. But if you add it to whatever we did send over, his name and things like that, that's what's going to happen within the next like couple of weeks, I think.

MR. RONAYNE:

I did speak with the family member. I spoke with the -- I believe he was a cousin.

LEG. ALDEN:

That's it, yeah.

MR. RONAYNE:

We had a conversation. And the gentleman -- he lives in Flushing at this time.

LEG. ALDEN:

Right.

MR. RONAYNE:

You're correct. He is -- he is imminently -- he'll be homeless very shortly.

LEG. ALDEN:

And he's going to be our homeless because he doesn't have any other relatives in Nassau. I think he's going to come back out towards us.

MR. RONAYNE:

Well, what we tried to do, and we did, as I liaised between the family members and the Long Island State Veterans Nursing Home in Stony Brook -- and prior to him actually becoming homeless, what we're hoping is that we'll be able to get him through a screening process and ideally get him into Stony Brook.

LEG. ALDEN:

Oh, great.

MR. RONAYNE:

Stony Brook is one of those wonderful facilities where it's not income driven as many of these places are. It's -- essentially it's a veterans nursing home but it's almost like -- they run it almost like an emergency room. It's not on your finances and your ability to pay but on the urgency of your need. So somebody facing homelessness would probably rise to the top of their list.

LEG. ALDEN:

Great.

MR. RONAYNE:

Okay? And I'll keep you posted on that. As I'm updated, I'll update you.

LEG. ALDEN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Thank you. Good morning, Tom.

MR. RONAYNE:

Good morning.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I'm still a little bit flabbergasted about the range of homeless veterans. When you say certainly in the hundreds and certainly could be thousands, is there any way we can have at least a data base of these people? I know it's a transient population. It moves in and out. It's not stable. It's not -- you can't pin them down. But is there something the County can do at least, you know, have a data base of homeless veterans and what kind of program that can be -- that are available to them and find some way to help them? It's a disgrace.

MR. RONAYNE:

I agree with you. One of the problems, and I think you can appreciate this is, in order for us to really establish a meaningful data base, we need different levels of government to come together. And unfortunately the VA, some of these people are receiving pensions and compensation that go direct deposit into bank accounts or the checks are mailed to post office boxes. The VA is not permitted to share that information with us because of patient confidentiality rules. I've met several times with the Department of Social Services. And we are working toward figuring out ways to navigate through the different levels between the two agencies of sharing client information, again because of the confidentiality and privacy laws.

One thing the DSS has been helpful with is they do screen for veteran's status when you come in and apply for benefits. So if you present as homeless to Suffolk County DSS, they will now screen for your veteran's status. Unfortunately what we're trying to do now is figure out a way to take that data base where they establish that they have veterans and find a legal means in which they can call us and say, okay, we got veteran X, can you come over and see what sort of services you can provide?

So what we're doing right now is we're trying to figure out how to navigate the legality of sharing client information.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Okay. Well, I'm pretty sure Ms. DeMarzo will be here this afternoon for the Health and Human Services Committee. I'm definitely going to bring that up to her in terms of, you know, how -- what are the, I guess, obstacles of -- you know, I know the legal obstacle and what -- you know, I probably will ask, you know, the County Attorney.

MR. RONAYNE:

One of the things that we have asked is that perhaps we can rather than them simply flagging a veteran and saying okay, Veterans Services come in and advocate to behalf of this person, to have a disclosure box to have the person who presents and screens as a veteran to sign a -- check a box and sign after it saying that I agree to be interviewed; not necessarily to receive services or be counseled, but at least to be interviewed. He can tell us, you know, go home. I don't want anything from you and that'll be fine. But at least we'll have been able to make contact with that veteran. Hopefully -- hopefully that will be sooner than later.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Elie, and that's the second part of the problem. The first part is identifying the people that are out there in the woods and behind shopping centers and things like that. And that's why in a way it's so important to bring the COPE units up to speed -- not to speed but full strength because they're the ones that are going to go out into the community and they know where these, you know, homeless communities are actually getting set up. And they bring along, when they go into that -- into that situation especially now that the weather's going to get colder, they do bring along Social Services people so that's a way to identify them out on the street. But, you know, you're very, very right on the money. But after they've been identified and end up like almost into a shelter or we know where they are -- but the other part of it is just, you know, being able to have the people out on the street to find where these people are. And they're living in, you know, very dangerous conditions. So there's my suggestion that, you know --

LEG. MYSTAL:

Maybe the Public Safety -- maybe that's the question also we should present to the Public Safety Committee and maybe to Commissioner Dormer as to, you know, what is, you know, going on --

LEG. ALDEN:

Well, they've improved their procedures, I think, immensely because now they do bring in Social Services instead of, you know, like either an arrest or, you know, just dispersing or disbanding these things. So I think that, you know, we're going in the right direction but we still -- we need the COPE units up at full strength. And they're really not.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

No question we're moving in the right direction because Director Ronayne will come before this committee, and this is a tremendous success story, this most recent, but he has great examples of -- for all of us to consider every time he comes before this Committee and letting us know how we are moving in that right direction, how they are making best efforts to identify homeless vets and getting them into the system. And that seems to be working well, but certainly we need to do more.

MR. RONAYNE:

I appreciate that. But to touch on your point we have -- one of the things that we do when I send my teams out into the field to do the homeless outreach, they don't -- they're not dressed in business dress. They're going out into the woods. They're going to be dressed as if they're going out into the woods. And they have the windbreakers that identify who they are. But one of the things that we do, and I do this for several reasons primarily for the safety of my staff is before you go out into the woods, before you start walking the railroad tracks, before you start visiting vacant buildings or buildings where you may have multiple occupants where we have information that veterans may be residing, we do speak to the Police Department. We stop at the precinct or at minimum we'll flag down a sector car, identify ourselves and let them know who we are and why we're there.

But I can tell you that in the recent past, probably the last six or so weeks, we actually have begun to get phone calls in the office from police officers saying, listen, I got this fellow, we're over here and behind such and such shopping center, what can I do with him? And in at least one instance I can you tell you that the guy was able -- the officer was able to get the veteran to get in his car and he drove him over to the -- to the Vets place on Mill Road in Yaphank. This is a guy who didn't have to find his way into Social Services, didn't have to find his way into the judicial system, he didn't get arrested. He got help. So it is -- it's going to be a process. It's going to take some time but it certainly is moving in a forward direction which I'm -- I can always add that I'm pleased of that.

LEG. ALDEN:

And that was part of my point; that the police are one of our greatest resources in identifying the ones that, you know, we had no idea about. And I find it time after time in my district, you know the cops are coming in telling me, you know, like, behind this shopping center or in this woods area, you know, we've got five or six people. And then, you know, sometimes we call you; sometimes it's just Social Services but, you know, the police are a great resource.

MR. RONAYNE:

Well, what we're trying to do, and it seems to be bearing fruit is the police are the single greatest resource that we have in terms of intelligence when we go into a community as to where the homeless populations exist. Certainly what we begun to see, and I don't know how many it is, it's a small number, but these phone calls from the police officers coming to us directly is a testament to the fact they they're only now becoming aware that the agency exists in the first place. Had they known previously I'm sure they would have been doing just as well of a job. But if you don't have -- if you don't know something, you don't know that you don't know it. And that's been a part of the problem. And I think we're addressing that. And it's a slow but steady -- it's a slow but steady process.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Tom, thank you.

MR. RONAYNE:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good to see you.

Ken, welcome.

MR. BOMBACE:

Welcome. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

It's good to have you with us this morning. If you could just state your name and organization for the record.

MR. BOMBACE:

Yeah. My name's Ken Bombace. I'm the President of Suffolk Police Veterans Association.

All right. Good morning, everybody. I'd like to thank the Legislature for having us here today to speak to you. I want to give special thanks to a few people here, but Cameron Alden was actually our first honorary member. He came to our first meeting back in August. He's been a great supporter of our organization.

Legislator Steven Stern, the Chairman of the Committee, I only met him maybe a month ago or so but since then he's been of great assistance to our organization. He's helped us a lot. We appreciate it.

And also Tom Ronayne, the Director of the Suffolk Veterans Service Agency. He's opened a lot of doors for us. I'm on the phone with Tom almost everyday. And he helps us with a lot of things. He's got us to a lot of events that we probably wouldn't have been invited to like the American Legion had their Legislative breakfast. He got us in there and it's been a lot of help for our organization.

We're here today to provide a general overview of the organization. It's a fledgling organization; and provide you with what we do, what our mission statement is. And it's multi-purpose our mission. It's sort of unique that way. And also we're going to touch also on our budgetary requirements. So we came up with a tentative proposed budget for 2007. And we were going to request any assistance possible from the Legislature maybe in our initial start up costs of our organization. We have a broad mission. And we plan on providing a lot of services to the veterans throughout Suffolk, not just in the police department.

I'm going to start now with the power point presentation. I know you probably see a lot of those in the military. We call it death by power point, but I promise this will be short and sweet. I just want to give you an overview of the organization.

I'm going to start with the Mission Statement, our organizational structure, the member benefits that we provide to the actual members of the organization, services provided to the police agencies throughout Suffolk. I know it says SUPD up there but I just wanted to make it clear that our organization is an organization made up of veterans serving the police service throughout Suffolk County, not just the Suffolk County Police Department. We have Deputy Sheriffs, we have east end towns who are all members. Even state police who are members of our organization. Anyone who works within Suffolk County.

We also have SPBA community projects that I'm going to familiarize you with, membership requirements and our annual events on the website. You can go to the next one. This is our mission statement. I'm not going to read it verbatim. Everybody can see it, but I'll just let you know that our mission is first and foremost is a fraternal organization for police officers that are veterans. When I returned from Iraq about a year ago now, and when I first deployed with the police department it's -- in the post 9/11 era, there was a big transition that went throughout the country; and also in our County and in the police departments specifically. Whereas prior to this everyone knew that the National Guard and Reserves pretty much did two weeks in the summer, one weekend a month and that was it. But after 9/11 that all changed. And we make up about 50% of the deployed troops around the world. And like everything else when there's a great change, there's a transition period. And things need to be fixed.

I know when I deployed there was a lot of issues that came up referenced the procedure for doing so and also as far as some benefits that would have helped these officers when they deployed like military leave. And there's a big issue with military pay back. And if they can take police pay or if they can take military pay. There's numerous issues I'll mention when we go through the briefing. But it just -- it alerted me to the fact that there should be an organization that addressed this specifically. There's many fraternal organizations throughout the police. And we have 600 veterans who are active police officers just in the Suffolk County Police Department not including the Deputy Sheriffs and the other police agencies which are numerous in Suffolk County. So we saw a void for an organization. And we've created that. When I returned, we started this organization. And it's been pretty successful, I think, so far in assisting the veterans since we started in August.

And our mission is, like I said, there's a multi purpose to this. First and foremost a fraternal organization. Also we're going to address veterans' benefits for all police officers in the County. And third and very important is we want to provide services to the veterans throughout Suffolk County, not just within the Police Department. That's important to our mission.

This is just quick organizational structure we have right here. Everyone can see it. We have a President, first and second Vice Presidents, Sergeant at Arms, a Treasurer, Recording Secretaries. And we have precinct delegates which will be -- and command delegates. And those people will be responsible for the people assigned to their command. And they'll sort of be a point of contact for these officers when they deploy. I know when I deployed to Iraq they told me at the time there was over 30 police officers deployed just from Suffolk County Police around the world. So it was an issue that needed to be addressed. And I can tell you a lot of people pledge support before you deploy. I was gone 18 months. And about a week after you leave, you don't hear from many people anymore. And that's it. That was an issue that we wanted to try to address and provide support for these -- the families as well as the officers who are gone.

Also we're going to have an honor guard -- a standing honor guard that we hope to be able to provide services to the County at memorial services. There's been a void in that issue, too, where -- I know we had a soldier who was killed, not a police officer, but a soldier who was deployed and was killed from the Mastic area. And it wasn't until the day of that we were seeking -- they were still trying to get an Honor Guard to show up at the funeral. And West Point last minute sent down a team to do it. But it seems that there's also a void, is a liaison between the military community and the police department and the County overall in addressing that issue. So we hope to be able to assist with that.

Further in the organizational structure we have non-profit organization. We're registered. We're incorporated as a veterans organization with the State of New York. We have three year terms for our elected officers. We have legal counsel on staff. We have two attorneys, a Chief Counsel and a Co-Counsel who are both -- donate their time to us. Our Chief Counsel is Kerry {McCaulie}. He's here today with us. He's a full-time military officer, a Major. He's assigned to the 48 Second Aviation Brigade right here in Suffolk County. Chief Information Officer also. We have someone -- we have a website. He's the one who handles that. And he's not here today but I will -- you'll be all provided

with the website. So if you wanted to log on and see what we're about, you can. I'll just warn you that it is under construction right now. Next one.

All right. Here's some of the benefits we hope to provide just to our members who are the police within this organization; is fraternity among members. First and foremost is a fraternal organization, monthly meetings, guest speakers which we've had at every meeting starting with Legislator Alden at our first meeting. We have an awards ceremony we're going to hold every year. We just took part in the awards ceremony the County Executive held in, I think, Suffolk County Community College in Brentwood this last Friday. And it really -- it went off well. And Tom Ronayne hosted it. And he invited us there to give some awards in it. It worked really well.

We have a holiday party, which is going to be December 7th. Everyone here is invited, not just for our members that -- that party. And it's also our meeting. It's held at the same place. We have a hall at the American Legion in Ronkonkoma that we use every -- first Thursday of every month for our meetings. And we'd like it if everyone here could attend as well and support us.

We have a West Point football game we plan on hosting each year that will start our calendar year 2007. And SPVA website with related links. It is helpful. And it'll provide a -- an overview of what we're about.

All right. These are some of the benefits. We're going to be a common voice. We're not a bargaining unit. We're not a union. We put our issues through to our union or to any -- any agency that could -- assist us with that. Whether it be the Legislature at the County level or even at the state levels. We have the Senate and the Assembly. And we've also met with Congressmen Bishop and Israel reference issues that not only affect police officers in Suffolk, but affect all veterans in Suffolk County.

A few issues that we thought were important were military leave. Just as an example military leave you get 30 days a year. When -- it doesn't count if it -- that's per calendar year. In other words if you're are not deployed very conveniently in one calendar year, you only gets those 30 days. If my deployment went from May to May of the next year, you'll still only get 30 days unless there's separate orders and we think that was something that should be addressed. Veterans buy back program at the state level. It's the same thing with the civil service veterans points. We think that the criteria, the dates that decide who gets those is a little flawed. And so far everyone that I've met with that I've explained this to including the two congressmen agreed with me that there seemed to be a void in there; whereas after the Gulf War 1990, August 1st, everybody get veterans points no matter where they serve anywhere in the world. They could be in New Jersey the entire time. And prior to that -- prior to that you needed a campaign ribbon to get these awards.

So we have people from the post Vietnam era to August 1st of 1990 who a lot of them -- we have people on nuclear subs for six years with live warheads who don't get veterans points. And people after 1990 could do the same exact thing, they get veterans points. So we just thought that there was a void in there. Maybe there should be a Cold War Clause added to it or I've seen other states, I've looked at their Civil Service System where it's just every honorably discharged veteran is eligible for civil service points. And the same criteria is used at the buy back program in the civil service.

You can go to the next one. We have a support network for deployed troops. It's a big issue that we hope to fill the void in. When people deploy, sending them things that they need, we're going to have collection boxes which I'll touch on in another slide or two where we plan on putting in County facilities throughout the County and we're going to have determined items that we're seeking to send over to the troops that deployed so that we can support them as best possible.

We're going to serve as a liaison for military protocol and for the military community. Like I said, we are looking for honor guards and everybody's asking people, you know, unofficially in the precinct if they knew anybody. We need to have a system in place when these things happen. They don't --

they happen quick. And we need to be prepared for that. And we could provide that. We have members in our organization. Every one of them who are active members of every branch of service right now. And they could be our liaisons for those not only the police department, the Legislature, the County or anyone who needs that information.

Representation of all military seminars where we plan on doing that with our Honor Guard and our officers attending. We're going to have points of contact for deployed -- for the families of deployed officers who go overseas. So if they have any questions or problems, they could contact us and we'll help them as best possible.

We have -- we're going to maintain contact with those officers. I know one of the few people that I actually heard from for a year-and-a-half I was gone was the Commissioner; sent me e-mails while I was over there on a regular basis. And it was nice knowing that. And I had a little support back at home. But like I said sometimes there's isn't enough. And we're going to try and help with that.

Collection points for the care packages I already mentioned. We were going to have them at all police facilities. We'd also like to put them in County facilities throughout the County and let people know people know that those will be collection points for items to support the troops, not just police but veterans or military members in Suffolk County who are deployed. This is all redundant. Pretty much the same thing we talked about. We're going to have an Honor Guard and be a military liaison.

All right. Here's some of the community projects we hope to do for the veterans in Suffolk County and families of deployed troops and who reside in Suffolk County. The drop box program, I just familiarized you with. We're going to have a summer picnic for families of deployed troops. We're still looking at a location. We've thought possibly about Hoyt Farm that's in Smithtown or Commack. And we're going to have a picnic for the families or everyone in Suffolk County, any vet, any service member who's deployed; if their family resides here, they would be invited. And we're going to provide -- it'll be a full day's event as well as we're going to have a -- we're going to have a scholarship award that'll be awarded at that picnic, we figure, prior to the fall when people would start school. And I'll go into that in a minute.

We're going to have a holiday brunch for families of deployed troops basically a holiday party there would be gifts, Santa Clause will be there. There will be gifts for the children of members of the military who are deployed from Suffolk County. We're going to have video conference systems. We have a plan to have ten of those. And this is all itemized in our budget. But we had ten of those who would be able to sign out to families of service members who are deployed where they'd have a camera for the service member overseas and they'd have a camera for the family back here and they'd be able to actually see that service member and speak with them directly. I've seen it happen. I was in Iraq and everybody uses those systems. So we'd like to provide ten of those. Five for deployed officers within the Police Departments in Suffolk County and another five at any family in Suffolk County could sign up from us free of charge to be able to communicate with those.

Essay contests for family awards. We're going to have an essay contest for the families of service members who are deployed. And the winner of that we would hope to provide a trip to Disney for. That's annual. We would do that once a year. And we're going to hope to raise funds to support that as well. Scholarship award I mentioned. And we're going to have honor guard services. These are things we provide -- we want to provide to the community at large not just for police officers.

These are membership requirements. You all have them in front of you in the packets that we provided. I'm not going to bore you with those right now. Pretty much to be a full member you need to be a police officer and you need to be a veteran -- honorably discharged veteran from any military service.

We also have associate memberships for those people who want to support us but might not meet the requirements to be a full member. And then we're also going to have a select honorary

memberships which we've already handed out a few of those to the people who've come to support us, our organization since its get go.

You have the next one. These are a few of the annual events that we plan on hosting. Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Armed Forces. We're going to have an annual party which will be December 7th. At West Point an awards ceremony.

All right. This is our website and just a few of the things that it contains in there. All this is provided, the whole slide show is provided in your packets. You can read that when you have time. And that's our website at the bottom. It's suffolkpolicevets.org. You go in there. It gives you an overview of what we're doing. Again, I just warn it is under construction. Shortly it'll be fully operational.

There is just a quick overview. You have a copy of our entire budget for the calendar year 2007. This is a quick overview. Overhead costs -- and a lot of these I mentioned on there are not annually recurring, which means that it's just initial start up costs, some equipment that we needed, any computers. Things that we won't be purchasing each year but it raises our first year's annual budget.

The project costs for the projects that I mentioned before also have a price tag on them. And that's it right there. We have 17,180 for initial overhead. And we have 10,200 for our community projects that we plan on hosting. Right now the best that I could estimate are dues, our membership dues that are bringing in funds for us is going to be \$7200 annually which breaks down to -- to get specific two dollars bi-weekly payroll deduction from every member. We have about 110 members now. We're growing quickly. Every meeting we get new members. We have 150 member goal by January 1st. At 150 members with two dollars bi-weekly it brings us to 7200 a year. That leaves us with approximately a 21,180 hollowed deficit.

We do have plans to try and raise these funds. We're not just -- we didn't come here just to request all the funds from the County. We do have fundraising projects. We plan to be very aggressive and active with our fundraising so that we can provide these services to the vets in the community. But we are also asking if there would be any assistance the County could give us with our initial first year's budget to get our organization started. I already mentioned before we have a broad mission that we've planned and we hope to do a lot of good things for the community and we'd like to see if the County could support us on that. And if anyone has any questions now I'll be happy to answer them.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thanks so much for coming today. I know for myself I had been out at Republic Airport a couple of weeks ago with Congressmen Israel a ceremony honoring those who served during the Cold War. And, you know, the vital service that they provided during that time and certainly hope to see that in the future that those who served during that time are afforded the same benefits that those who came before them and after them in other crisis around the world. Do you have questions? Question, Cameron? Very good.

MR. BOMBACE:

Reference that I just -- I will just add in there that I know that prior to this -- prior to my Iraq deployment I started my military career in Germany from '88 to '90. In was an infantry team leader over there. And I was there when the wall came down. And until just recently last year I didn't -- I received no veterans points for even promotional exams or entrance exams. Now I do. I went to Iraq for seven months. But that's just -- again that's a void we think the people need to be recognized especially in the case of like this one person I know was a Deputy Sergeant, sat in a nuclear sub for six years. And his mission is the same whether we're in a conflict in Iraq or not. And they're always on guard. And he doesn't get veterans points. This is just something we'd like to address.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

All right. Thanks so much for being with us today and we wish you and the organization every success.

MR. BOMBACE:

Thank you very much for having us here.

LEG. ALDEN:

It actually gets bigger than that because the American Legion, the membership in the American Legion is only available to those that -- on dates that are set by Congress. And as we know in each one of our districts the American Legions are shrinking daily because most of them were World War II and Korean veterans. And they're dying at a huge number nationally on a daily basis. So that's something that definitely Congress has to look at.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Okay. Paul.

MR. ARFIN:

Mr. Chairman, County Legislature, Mr. Presiding Officer. My name is Paul Arfin. I'm the President of a not-for-profit organization by the name of Intergenerational Strategies. Janet Allen is here representing the Suffolk Community Council.

I've been before this committee a number of times. I don't have a power point this time. As you recall the County Executive established a Commission on Creative Retirement two years ago. That organization doesn't exist anymore. I was the Chairman of it. And the members of the Commission spent two years doing a study and writing a report which included 14 recommendations in it.

I discussed all of those recommendations with you at an earlier time. I must admit that I am very disappointed to see that none of the recommendations that were proposed and that were included in neither the County Executive's recommended budget nor in the County Executive and Legislature's adopted budget. Those recommendations were to help expand a home sharing program which now has 32 matches of frail elderly people who have been matched with younger people, A volunteer registry to connect more and more of retired people who want to volunteer with opportunities to volunteer. And we're going to -- Janet Allen is going to briefly refer to that. A program to help people who -- direct care workers who live in nursing -- who work in nursing homes and in home care agencies who usually have a very poor salary without any benefits to create a program at Suffolk Community College that would enable them to get -- more training and college credit and put them on a college campus for the first time in their lives.

And to -- a forth proposal was to establish a Be-Save-At-Home Program to provide non-medical assistance to the increasing number of people who need assistance in order for them to age and place.

And lastly and perhaps the most ambitious one was an acknowledgement of the fact that more and more older people want to work. And our economy needs them to continue to work. And the proposal was to help the Department of Labor to establish an outreach program to older people to help them find gainful employment and to help employers to make their workplaces more friendly to older people.

So none of those proposals are -- were adopted in the budget that was adopted. That's water under the bridge as they say. So I'm here to put forth for your consideration as circumstances change one of the proposals. And Janet is going to tell you a bit about the Suffolk Community Council's Volunteer Registry. It's part of a larger effort including the Long Island Volunteer Center which has now established a website, one livolunteer.org to simplify the process for people who either need -- are looking for a volunteer opportunity as well as an opportunity -- a place where not-for-profit agencies can place their volunteer needs. So it's a matching program.

What's needed is an 800 number for those people who are not using the web -- the internet. And Janet is going to tell you a little bit about that program.

MS. ALLEN:

Good morning. I'm Janet Allen. I am Project Director at Suffolk Community Council. I work closely with Judy Panullo who regrets she could not be here today. There has been a process under way of discussion for at least two years, as Paul described, on how is the best way we can utilize people who have some time or the impulse to volunteer and the agencies whether governmental, not-for-profit, private that know that they could enhance the quality and the reach of their services by using volunteers.

Many of us think of it as a feel good thing, oh, well, you know, yeah, that's nice, they could do that. But I have some experience in the not-for-profit world going back a few years. And in Nassau at Family Service Association, which was the predecessor to Family and Childrens Association, for example, there was a financial counseling program which was run by one paid director, who was a staff member of the agency and entirely by retired volunteers who were bankers, lawyers, attorneys, CPA's who had time and energy but had finished their professional work life and wanted to use their skills in a positive way. They had the camaraderie of working together each day and of helping people who could not afford to go to professional services or even didn't know that such services existed. And they were able to stave off drastic consequences in their lives and put themselves on better paths. That's just one small example.

But a person without a way to connect doesn't know opportunities that are out there. Many people are uncomfortable using the computer. We know that still, but also sometimes the computer doesn't answer all of our questions. I don't know about you, but I still call a number if I find one to take my questions to the next step after I've done my research on the websites or the internet. We feel that a human touch will make this so much more alive. Agencies can call to register vacancies that they have or needs for volunteers. And people looking to volunteer would call the number in conjunction with using -- possibly using the website so that could be successfully matched; a place that would use their time, their energy in the most productive way. This will save us money in the long run when we're offering cost to continue level of budgeting for many agencies and services and we have all this energy, trained energy and caring and love out there to use. But if we don't maximum the ways -- connecting points, it's not going to happen.

So we are hoping that you will take a second look at the idea of having an 800 number toll free that will supplement what the current websites can do. I'll be happy to answer any questions if you have some. This would be based at the Council. That's the one thing I didn't say. And we would provide staffing from our current staff. We're not proposing to hire anyone in addition to supervisor the volunteers who will be trained by the National Council on Aging that would come to answer the phones. But then if there was a problem we would be there to trouble shoot and to make sure that the phones were answered when people called.

MR. ARFIN:

If I could just as a closing comment before any questions or whatever, I expressed disappointment about the budget. And I just want to say another word about that. You know, the Office for Aging does a lot of great things. And I'm not going to, you know, criticize apple pie and motherhood, but in regard to the growth of our aging population and the percentage of people with Alzheimer's disease and the percentage of people who are frail and home bound and the percentage of women who are living alone, we are not doing enough. We are not doing enough. And this is one place where volunteers could be connected to help people in need.

The other recommendations also had to do -- you know, we're just scratching the surface. We're putting our heads in the sand looking at the needs of this growing population. And I have to say that

for the record. We are heavily reliant on federal and state aid, but the amount of dollars that the Legislature and the County Executive puts into aging services to me is sorely lacking.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Mr. Presiding Officer.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Paul, talking about aging, and I'm aging so I need some help in a recollection here. Didn't we fund one of your programs last year?

MR. ARFIN:

Sir, I appreciate the question and I really welcome it. Yes, sir. You and the Legislature put funding into the budget for two programs. But in his wisdom the County Executive never released the funding.

P.O. LINDSAY:

That's what we thought.

MR. ARFIN:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And just in defense of this body, this year's budget was a tremendously tight budget. And right or wrong we didn't want to put money in a budget again that wasn't going to be used. And I don't know how to get over the objections of the Executive Branch to some of these programs. And the other question is the program you're talking about, what kind of funding do you need? Do you need funding for that?

MR. ARFIN:

If I could just say originally the resolution put forth was for \$30,000. In Judy Panullo's political wisdom, she cut that back to the Chair of the committee to \$4,500. That wasn't included either.

P.O. LINDSAY:

For what program?

MR. ARFIN:

For the Registry for Volunteer Services. For the telephone.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So you need \$4,500?

MR. ARFIN:

Right. That was to have a part-time person, you know, during the week to answer the phone calls.

MS. ALLEN:

With the volunteers.

MR. ARFIN:

Right.

MS. ALLEN:

Yeah. But to do the initial installation so that you have the technical equipment to do it and to get the number publicized.

P.O. LINDSAY:

The 4,000, you know, I mean, yeah, we passed our version of the budget. And I'm sure that there's going to be some vetoes. So, you know, but -- I mean we're beyond the point of adding anything to the budget.

MR. ARFIN:

Right.

P.O. LINDSAY:

But we do have a couple of bucks available as the year goes on and maybe, you know, some of us would -- might want to --

MR. ARFIN:

Well, that's why we're here, sir. And, you know, there's a number of things that need some attention. And the Office for Aging may do a tremendous job administering federal and state funds, but somebody needs to be an advocate and speak out. Thank you.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Just, Paul, let me be -- and I'm going to echo a lot of things that the Presiding Officer just said. I'm going to be loud and clear about this. This legislative body has continually spoken out for the under represented, the people that can't take care of themselves, the veterans, the senior population. Time and time again we have put money into programs and individually we have put money into programs that the County Executive -- and you said in his infinite wisdom, and you were very tongue in cheek with that, has decided not to help those that cannot help themselves.

We allocate the money, but unfortunately the Executive is the one that's charged with cutting those checks and sending them out there. So valid policy decisions are made in this chamber right here where he decides to hurt people. And there's no other way to put it. He's decided to hurt people. But the other problem is that when we put money into a fund to help senior citizens and some of the programs that you brought forward to us and it doesn't get spent, that hurts people too, because it might have been spent in another program. Like, for instance, Child Protective Services, things of those natures.

So when we put money into other areas, it's only because we've come to a realization that the County Executive's going to burn us on it. And during the course of the year this debate will go and next year it will go on. But there's -- there's a lot of hope here. And as the Presiding Officer did point out that as the year unfolds, there is a possibility to move money from one account to another and maybe fund your programs. But also the Presiding Officer when we were going through the budget cycle and debates has decided -- and I think he's going to follow through on it -- to put in place a sub-committee that will look at all of our contract vendees and decide -- reprioritize, maybe somebody's doing something that somebody else is doing and we've, you know, double funded in trying to help people. Maybe we can economize in those areas.

So I think it's going to be a long process, but I think that that's one of the things that your Presiding Officer was referencing; that if we find where we're double funding a, you know, some kind of service, then that might loosen up some money to go into what we're doing here. But we still run into the big problem that the County Executive, even though we do that, re-prioritize, the County Executive will not release those funds. So there's where -- and I can only make this suggestion, but organizations like yourself have to get maybe a little more active in whatever it is, public policy or making the people of the County that get hurt by this, make them aware and allow them to voice

their opinions to the County Executive. Because otherwise the County Executive wins out with his overall blanket statement, I'm trying to reduce taxes or reduce spending. Yeah, but at what cost? So people have to have both sides of that statement to make the decision whether they want to support somebody or support this body a little bit more in getting our policy basically executed so --

MR. ARFIN:

I really appreciate that. And I'd just like to make one brief comment. Looking around the horseshoe, I've been before this Legislature since 1975, both republican and democratic County Executives. And what you just described, you know, and this is not taking any current County Executive off the hook, but when there's a democratic County Executive, the Legislature is the advocate for human services. When there's a -- when there's a republican County Executive, the democrats are the advocates for community services. So I think this County Executive is playing the role that an Executive plays. And that's not, you know, to defend him or anything like that. But I think history would document that.

LEG. ALDEN:

Then the system's working because you have to have the other side of the story. And that's really what puts it out there for the public to decide so --

MR. ARFIN:

But you said, you know, we need to review the priorities and also is the system working or whatever.

LEG. ALDEN:

We can review the priorities --

MR. ARFIN:

Yeah.

LEG. ALDEN:

-- 'til the end of time.

MR. ARFIN:

Right.

LEG. ALDEN:

And if the County Executive's made up his mind not to release the funds, then, we've just wasted a whole bunch of the taxpayers' money and time.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Just one question. The 4500 that you are looking for, where would it go exactly; to what agency will it go to?

MR. ARFIN:

Suffolk Community Council.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Suffolk Community Council.

MR. ARFIN:

I would not receive a nickle of it as been suggested by various parties.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Okay. I just wanted to know that.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Before I go back to the list, I want to give an opportunity and recognize the County Executive's representative.

MR. BEEDENBENDER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a brief statement. I think to suggest that the County Executive is intentionally trying to hurt anybody goes a step too far. Obviously everybody here knows -- and the entire Legislature knows that he's the chief fiscal officer and he's doing his best to hold the line on taxes like we've mentioned. However, in many of the situations I think we -- I think too much involvement is given that we are intentionally picking out specific programs to hurt, hold the money back and not fund.

I'll be happy to go -- when I go back to the office this afternoon to find out exactly the situation that happened with the Intergenerational Strategies contract and find out if there was a problem along the list. And I'll be more than happy to transmit that to you and the entire committee so you know exactly what happened with that situation.

I don't have that information right now but I think -- the County Executive is not intentionally picking out these one agencies and not funding them. There's many situations as I'm sure all of you and your staff know, there are -- there's lots of paper work involved in getting all of these contracts done. So in some situations there can be holdups that are not our intention but we simply need to get things in order to before they do that. So I'll be happy to find out exactly what happened in the situation and make that available to the whole Legislature.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

In light of the fact that there was \$130 million not spent this last year or this year that we're right into, I hope that's an uninformed little statement that you just made. Because we didn't spend in Suffolk County over \$100 million that was in our budget from last year. For this year. For this current year. So I'm hoping that you just made that statement not being informed of what happened or how the budget worked or what groups weren't funded and what groups were just jerked around. And there was an endless requirement for more documentation, more paper work, more this, more that in an attempt to make that fund balance even a bigger amount than what it ended up. So I'm really hoping that you're sincere and you will go back and find out what happened.

MR. BEEDENBENDER:

I am sincere, Legislator Alden. I will go back and we'll get you the answer for what happened on this specific contract.

LEG. ALDEN:

Well, then we're going to end up in a really bigger -- and you realize that -- we're going to end up in a real big debate on what happened not only with this contract but with other senior citizen fundings and other types of programs that were either underfunded or never funded that were in our budget; in an adopted budget accepted by the County Executive. And then in his -- as was stated before -- infinite wisdom and I say that tongue in cheek, very much tongue in cheek, in his infinite wisdom he decided not to expend those funds for the reason and the purposes that were decided by this very body which sets policy in this County and is a co-equal member of this government in Suffolk County, which I think the County Executive forgets about a lot.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not a member of this Committee so I'll keep my comments brief. And they go to the heart of what Legislator Alden was speaking about. They are not a criticism directed at this County Executive specifically, but if they hit their mark, they hit their hit mark.

We have a charter in this County that spells out the powers of this County Legislature. We have a charter that spells out the duties of this Executive. We adopt a budget. The County Executive has an opportunity to veto that budget -- actually to line item veto that budget. We have an opportunity to override that veto. But once that process is done an adopted budget is in place. The Executive cannot have super veto powers by making decisions of where he will spend and not spend unless he comes back to the Legislature and says, you know what? I want to amend the budget.

As Legislators we get that opportunity four times a year. As a County Executive, he gets an opportunity 365 days a year to amend this budget. For him to sit in defiance of an adopted budget and to thumb his nose at this Legislature is a violation of the Suffolk County Charter. And it's not this Executive. It could be any Executive. And I've seen it happen before when I sat in this Legislature. But the one thing I did see when I sat here is this Legislature rise up to a member regardless of party to defend this branch and to defend the process and not allow the Charter to be watered down. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Anybody else? Anybody else? Paul, thank you. Thank you.

LEG. MYSTAL:

We're going to the agenda?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

We're going into the agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

We have tabled resolution IR 2115, a local law to extend protections to residents of planned retirement communities. (Romaine)

LEG. MYSTAL:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Motion?

LEG. MYSTAL:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Motion to table by Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Second?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

I'll offer a second on the motion to table for purposes of discussion. Anybody on the motion?

LEG. ALDEN:

I'd like to hear from the sponsor of this as to timeliness and relevance and whether we should actually get this done today.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I'm looking at the legislation. I believe it's a valid legislation. It was drafted. And I see our legal Counsel over there. It was drafted -- legal Counsel after conversations with the Attorney General's Office. At 5:17 last night Dennis Brown from the County Attorney's Office faxed over a memo which I'm going to get to in two seconds if I can get this on my computer, his e-mail -- nope. There we go. That indicated that he was concerned about the preemption issue even though the Attorney General has not expressed such because he felt it might conflict with the manufactured homes.

I have to tell you, I looked at his memo, I reread the law. I just don't see the conflict. And I'm loathe to table this -- to urge people to table this except I understand in this Legislature I'm in the minority and I don't get those choices. And I'm looking at this. And it doesn't seem -- his problem deals with the Legislative intent drafted by our Legislative Counsel. And it certainly doesn't seem that it's substantive or will in fact raise a preemptive issue. But I'll turn this back to the Chairman. I'm not a member of the Committee and I appreciate the opportunity. And I'll let Mr. Brown speak to the issue.

LEG. ALDEN:

Through the chair.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

I would ask, you know, the Chair recognize Mr. Brown and we can hear his objections to it.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Sure. Mr. Brown.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Chair, before we recognize Mr. Brown?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Yeah. Legislator Mystal.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I just wanted to tell, Legislator Romaine, I don't think -- sometime we make decision -- obviously decisions that are political that are based on different body affiliation. But on this particular one I don't think it has anything to do with politics in terms of differences between different parties. I think we are looking at it very seriously. I think everybody wants to do something for that community. But we are looking at in terms of doing something that we think can be done. And not something that we -- not a feel good piece of legislation that will not go anywhere. And I still don't -- I still don't think we have the jurisdiction basically as a county to force anything onto a landlord that owns a piece of land. And that's why we're looking at it. And I don't think it's a partisan thing. And I really mean that, Ed. I really mean that.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Through the Chair to Legislator Mystal, the objections deal with the Legislative intent, not the substantive part of the legislation, just so you understand that. And, in fact -- and I'll let Mr. Brown

speak for himself, he feels as if just a few words were changed, in essence, that the preemption issue which may or may not be there would definitely go away. This does not deal with the substantive part of the legislation; only the legislative intent.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Mr. Brown, yes, if you can speak to some your concerns and then more specifically to some of the perhaps recommended changes.

MR. BROWN:

Sure. Thank you, Mr. Stern. I'd just like to reiterate for the Committee the conversation that you and I and George Nolan and Mr. Romaine had just prior to the Committee convening. We discussed the e-mail and the preemption issue. There's a section of the law -- Real Property Law 233 which deals with manufactured homes specifically. And there are appellate division decisions as well as an opinion of the Attorney General's Office from 1996, it say this is a preempted area of the law. The bill as it's written in the legislative intent section in the first and second paragraph refers to manufactured homes and says that -- in the second paragraph -- and says that Greenwood Village in Manorville is an example of this type of community.

Then when you drop down to the substantive areas of the bill, the definition sections and the other sub paragraphs dealing with the enforcement, there is really no reference to manufactured homes. And the way you read the bill is that it appears from the legislative intent section to address manufactured homes. But by omitting it from the substantive portion of this section, it appears as if there's an attempt to circumvent what has been stated to be a preempted area of the law.

So the suggestion that we had made was that, that the bill be -- be modified to specifically carve out references to manufactured homes. There was an attempt to do that with respect to mobile homes and condominiums in the intent section of the law; and also to somehow address the fact that law is intended to protect people whose homes are built on leased land as opposed to there being a fee ownership.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Mr. Brown, you mention the term manufactured housing. My recollection is that when we had several of the people here from the community, they described a variety of different circumstances as far as the actual housing configuration there. They made reference, I think, in some cases that there was some units that might fall under the traditional definition, I guess, of a trailer or a manufactured home, but I believe that there was reference to other areas that, in fact, were actually stick built permanent fixtures affixed to the property. So clearly there the preemption issue that you had mentioned associated with the definition there wouldn't hold. Of course, I'm going to defer to the sponsor and I think his objective is ultimately to go ahead and get a resolution on the books that's going to provide some assistance here. And if it is, you know, some minor tweaking, I'm sure that the sponsor will agree to go ahead and yield. But as to that one area where you raise concern regarding that definition, I don't think it's applicable to the configuration throughout the whole community.

MR. BROWN:

You may be right. I don't recall all of the testimony that was given at the Public Hearing with regards to the law. And my recollection seems to coincide with yours that there was -- it's really like a mixed use community.

LEG. KENNEDY:

It's multiple configurations.

MR. BROWN:

Some trailers and some -- and some stick built homes. So that you could be right with respect to it applying to some aspects of the community and not other aspects of the community. So the bill as written under your scenario you could possibly have a circumstance where you have some people that might -- might be covered by the bill as written and another circumstance where they're not covered because the area was preempted and they live in homes which would fit the definition of manufactured homes in the statute. But -- so we are suggesting that the bill be tailored in a minor fashion to specifically exclude what is clearly an area of preemption under state law.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Again, and I apologize. I should have read the section myself. But does this statute actually give a specific definition of manufactured home?

MR. BROWN:

Yes, it does.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Does that include something like the pre-fab homes that we are familiar with that come --

MR. BROWN:

Yes, it does.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Oh, so pre-fab as well as what we would traditionally think of in terms of a trailer, something on wheels that can be moved around, that's included as well?

MR. BROWN:

Not exactly defined that way, but, yes. But it talks about a home which is built some place else and then trucked into the site.

LEG. KENNEDY:

All right. Again, I'm going to yield. I believe that we're going to do something and go ahead and hopefully tweak the language.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

The way -- the way I see this, the purpose of the bill is to try and provide some perhaps specific relief to the residents within the community. But I think it also goes much further than that. And I think in many ways here we are taking it upon this Legislature to define what a planned retirement community shall be here in Suffolk County. And that's really being done for the first time.

So I think, number one, we want to make sure that we get it right for the residents of the community. But I think we also want to make sure we get it right well into the future. Because although this legislation might apply in a more limited sense to this particular community, it's certainly something that we're going to be seeing well into the future as our population ages. But I'd like to go to Legislative Counsel for his comments.

MR. NOLAN:

Yeah. I just want to -- there was a conversation this morning with Dennis Brown from the County Attorney's Office and Legislator Romaine and Legislator Stern. The changes that are being recommended are -- are minor. And I think we can make those changes quickly and we should do so to clean up the bill and get out any ambiguities or anything that is unclear. And it is my understanding from the County Attorney's Office once those changes are made there is no

preemption issue any further. And I don't believe there's any -- there is also an indication the County Executive's Office that from a policy standpoint there's no objection. So I would recommend tabling the bill so we can make the changes and move it in a couple of weeks.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And therefore -- yes, I'm certainly prepared to go along with that recommendation based on sponsors, based on the Legislative Counsel's statement that the preempt -- whatever supposed preemption might exist can be done away with and clarified. Is that the case?

MR. NOLAN:

That is the case. I should restate for the record something that was said at the last General Meeting which is this bill was introduced after we had conversations with the Attorney General's Office and said this an area -- this is a community that's not covered under state law. And there was an indication that the County could act in this area and not have a preemption issue. But I understand what County Attorney's Office is saying. There might be a little a language in the legislative intent section, it's a little sloppy. And I'll take responsibility for that. And let's clean it up and make it right.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And you can do that, sir.

MR. NOLAN:

I certainly hope so.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I have absolute faith in you. Based on that, I have no objections to tabling this.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

There is a tabling motion.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Motion to table has already been made and seconded. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Resolution is tabled. **(Vote: 4-0-0-1. Legislator Eddington not present)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Next on the agenda **IR 2286, a local law expanding income eligibility limits for Real Property Tax Exemptions for Seniors.**

MR. NOLAN:

Public Hearing.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Yeah. We're going to need a Public Hearing. So I'll take a motion to table by Legislator Mystal.

LEG. ALDEN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Second by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Tabled for Public Hearing. **(Vote: 4-0-0-1. Legislator Eddington not present)**

IR 2288, a local law expanding tax exemptions extended to Veterans.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Motion to table by Legislator Mystal, second by Legislator Alden. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 4-0-0-1. Legislator Eddington not present)**

And that is it with the agenda.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Motion to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Motion to adjourn. Legislator Kennedy, we'll put him on that for that and we are adjourned. Thank you everybody.

**(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:00 AM)
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**