

**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 June 5, 2007.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Steven H. Stern, Chairman  
Legislator Jack Eddington, Vice-Chairman  
Legislator Cameron Alden  
Legislator Jon Cooper (not present)  
Legislator Jay H. Schneiderman

**Also In Attendance:**

William J. Lindsay, Presiding Officer  
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk  
Verna Donnan, Budget Review Office  
Deborah Harris, Aide to Legislator Stern  
Holly Rhodes-Teague, Director/Office for the Aging  
Tom Ronayne, Director of Veterans Service Agency/Human Services Div.  
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader  
Fran Siems, Legislative Aide  
Joe Dujmic, County Executive's Office  
Elizabeth Eggleton, Senior Advisory Board  
Debra Alloncius, Legislative Rep for AME  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken By:**

Diana Kraus - Court Stenographer

**(THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 1:12 PM)**

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

We'll get started. Good morning. Good afternoon. Good afternoon. Committee on Vets and Senior will come to order. Please rise and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Alden.

**(SALUTATION)**

Sadly we did receive news to all of us here in Suffolk County the loss of two service men James Lundin of Bellport and Matthew Baylis of Oakdale. As we observe this moment of silence, certainly keep the Lundin family and the Baylis family as well as all our very brave men and women fighting overseas in our thoughts and prayers.

**(MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED)**

Thank you. Tom?

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

Good afternoon, Chairman, members. I don't have a great deal to report on today. I'll go a little bit out of order out of respect and just make a report on the two soldiers that you mentioned at the opening.

Corporal James Lundin and PFC Matthew Baylis are the 25th and 26th Long Islanders killed in Iraq or Afghanistan during this current war. PFC Baylis we do not have any details on as of yet. His remains only arrived in Dover for processing yesterday.

Corporal Lundin who -- I received a phone call at 10:30 this morning. At 10:30 this morning he was posthumously promoted to the rank of Corporal by the Pentagon so he is no longer a PFC. He's a Corporal.

He'll be buried in Calverton National Cemetery tomorrow. The viewing will be very brief. His remains are expected to arrive at the funeral parlor somewhere around 8:30 AM. They are going to have a nine AM private viewing for the family. And from ten 'til 11:30 there will be a public session where the public will be invited to come in for the viewing. We do not know yet whether it's an open or a closed casket. The funeral director did not have that answer. But the only access that we'll have as non-family members will be from ten AM 'til 11:30 tomorrow at the Ruland Funeral Home, 500 North Ocean Avenue in Patchogue. There will be no church service before or after. Upon leaving Ruland they will do a drive past the home. And then they will proceed directly to Calverton for interment.

Again, we have no information as of yet on PFC Baylis. I'll notify the members as soon as we do get those details.

Just interestingly they were both 20 years old. And sadly when I was getting some of the family information this morning, I learned that Corporal Lundin was recently married. And, in fact he was married by proxy. They didn't even have a ceremony. They were married by proxy while he was deployed. So he's got a very young widow being left behind now.

That being said, again I'll keep everybody informed as to additional details as I become aware of them.

And moving on, I should report on the success of the Armed Forces Day ceremony. We had a very -- given the fact that the weather had turned as unfavorable as it did, we made the decision on Friday to move it from the Armed Forces Plaza outside inside the building to the Armed Forces Plaza in the lobby of Dennison. We had an excellent turn out. I thank many -- I think everybody here was at the event. We had a wonderful response by our elected officials and VIP's from the community. But the veterans and their family members really came out. We had somewhere around 200 people in the lobby for the ceremonies. Had an excellent key note speaker. We had a wonderful representation by the Veteran Service Organization with their color guards and presentations of colors.

The Marine Corps Sixth Communication Battalion provided us with the opening ceremony with their Marine Corps Color Guard who -- they've always been wonderful. They've never turned us down for anything. We request them and they come where we ask. So we thank Sixth Comm. And, again, given the fact that the weather was as poor as it was that day, it was nice to see that we had the response to the event that we had.

We also had since or last meeting we've had obviously Memorial Day which is a very, very busy time for everybody here I know. There were too many to count; parades and wreath laying ceremonies and services and so forth. We all did the parades and we all did the ceremonies. But we had the Calverton National Cemetery formal Memorial Day Services on Monday, one o'clock Monday afternoon out at the cemetery. And, again, it was extremely well attended; probably the best attended that I've seen in all of the years that I've been going to it. So, you know, it's nice to see that the community's bearing in mind the importance of this day.

Beyond that we spoke -- we had our budget committee last week, which was very brief. We're content. We're happy. We're fine with going forward as the County Executive has directed, as your growth budget we can comply with that easily. We have been invited by the VA as a result of the homeless veterans stand down, we've been invited by the VA to participate in a grant next year that will pay for and offset all of the expenses associated with the stand down. The stand down was the only unfunded program that I ran this year. And we were able to do it at no cost to the County. So going forward I think we're fine. And I look forward to continuing to advance these programs and increase the visibility of the agency.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Any questions or anything? No? Thank you very much, Tom. We appreciate it.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

Thank you.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

If we could have Holly come up, please? Director of Office of Aging.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I just wanted to start by thanking the Legislators who came to our event May 17th over at the Villa Lombardi's. We had 771 people for lunch. We had a comedienne as our senior of the year. It was a well attended event. We had a great time. It was nice.

The next event that we'll be running will be July 25th. It'll be the picnic at Southaven Park. Usually we have about 2000 seniors at that event so that'll be a busy day for us, too. We'll be grilling hot dogs and having the watermelon and the ice cream and all that kind of stuff. And hopefully this year it won't be 100 degrees so we don't have to cancel it. So those are the events. And the rain date for that is the next day, the 26th. But July 25th you'll all be getting invitations in the next couple weeks on that. They're not out yet.

I just wanted to bring up a little bit about New York State EPIC. I don't know if you've been hearing from any of your constituents but EPIC will now be requiring those in the fee program and those in the deductible program who have met their deductibles to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan. That's effective July 1st. The letters went out several weeks ago. They auto enrolled the seniors into plans based on their use of drugs and the types of drugs and things like that. It's considered a smart type of enrollment so that -- it should be considered the best plan for the senior. Whether that's true or not who knows.

Today is the last day that a senior could make a change to the plan that they were put in by EPIC. We have been getting some phone calls but not as crazy as we would have thought it would have been. I think a lot of seniors are either calling the 1-800 EPIC number or they're just going to stay with whatever plan it is. The thought process behind this from New York State is that the seniors will save additional funds by being enrolled in a part D plan and then having EPIC as a wrap-around.

So that's what's going on with that. If the senior has not made a change to that plan as of today, I believe they're kept in that plan until November 1. There's an open enrollment period. But if you do have seniors who have problems with that, they could give us a call at my office and we'll see if we can assist them in any form or fashion; you know, because I think we'll get phone calls after the fact, like what's going on here.

The seniors will have to have two cards. They'll have their Part D card and they will have the EPIC card that they will take to the drug store. So it's -- I think it's going to be more confusing but hopefully it will save them some fun so we'll see what happens, you know, how it all shakes out at the end. Any questions?

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

No. Then thank you very much.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

All right. Like I said, if you have seniors, call us if they have. You know, we're always happy to help them. Thanks.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Excellent.

## **INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

Okay. Then we're going to start with the Introductory Resolutions. **IR 1469, approving the reappointment of Elizabeth Eggleton as a member of the Senior Advisory Board. (County Executive)** And, I believe, she's present.

**MS. EGGLETON:**

Yes.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Does anybody have any questions? Okay. Go ahead, Legislator.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Yeah. Hi and thanks for serving. And why don't you tell us why you want to still serve and all that kind of stuff?

**MS. EGGLETON:**

I would love to. I'm prepared but it's short.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Great.

**MS. EGGLETON:**

Okay. First of all I want to thank Chairman Stern and the rest of the committee members for inviting me for this opportunity to speak with you regarding my appointment -- reappointment hopefully -- to the Senior Citizen Advisory Board. I have been a member since 1996. And I've attended more than 90% of all of those meetings during that time. This year I served on an advisory board sub-committee to choose the senior citizen of the year. And then I attended the senior celebration where I really enjoyed hearing Mr. {Burnett} accept his award and delight us with all of his enthusiastic jokes in his speech.

I feel fortunate to share the experience and information gained from my Surrogate for Family Service, for aging individuals who live alone in their homes and from the frailer elderly associated with my guardianship appointments. I bring information to the board from my position as Associate Director of the Center on Aging at CW Post, Long Island University where I teach long term care administration and management of senior community programs in alternating semesters.

My main area of research and publication with colleagues at CW Post has been in the area of maintaining and improving function in those seniors living in their homes in the community. Executive function involving initiation and control behaviors seems to greatly impact an individual's aging experience. So I will be doing continued research in this area that can provide aging people with programs and tools to maintain their independence and may also reduce the cost of institutionalization.

Now that my work week is down to 20 hours a week, I certainly have the time available to continue to participate on the Senior Citizen Advisory Board. I look forward to continuing the honor of serving with the Director of the Office for the Aging Holly Rhodes-Teague, the board Chairperson Carolyn {Gallagly} and all of the knowledgeable members of the Suffolk County Senior Citizen Advisory Board. And if you have any further questions I'd be delighted to answer them.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Any questions?

**LEG. ALDEN:**

She answered all my questions.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

There you go. Thank you for your continued service. I appreciate it.

**MS. EGGLETON:**

Thank you for the opportunity.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

So on IR 1496 I'll make a motion to accept.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Second.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Second by Legislator Alden. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Congratulations and thank you for your continued service. **(Vote: 4-0-0-1. Leg. Cooper not present)**

**IR 1470, approving the reappointment of Timothy Edwards as a member of the Senior Citizens Advisory Committee. (County Executive) Yes?**

**MR. DUJMIC:**

Hi, good afternoon. My name is Joe Dujmic from the Office of the County Executive. Mr. Edwards was unavailable, unable to make it today so I ask that you table it for one cycle to give this body an opportunity to have any questions answered.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Hold on one second. Yeah, go ahead.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Traditionally we don't have to see the person if it's a reappointment.

**MR. DUJMIC:**

If this body wants to go forward with it, then, that's fine by the County Executive.

**LEG. ALDEN:**

Okay. I'll make a motion to approve.

**MR. DUJMIC:**

Great. Thank you.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Okay. Motion to approve by Legislator Cameron Alden, second by Legislator Schneiderman.

**LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:**

On the motion.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

On the motion.

**LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:**

On the motion, maybe Mr. Ronayne could answer this. But I just want to make sure the member's in good standing, coming to the meetings, those kinds of things. Not Mr. Ronayne. This is for Vets or this is for Seniors? I'm sorry. This is for seniors. So it would be Holly. Holly, if you could answer that question.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Tim's a valuable member of the board. He's the editor of the Senior 55 news which is now called Life-styles -- I'm not sure what the whole thing is. But the newspaper's the newspaper that's all around Suffolk County for those over age 50. It's good for us because he brings back information to the board and he also, you know, takes information from us and helps us out with the newspaper. So for us it's great having him on the board so --

**LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Is he attending the meetings?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

He attends the meetings. He's good. I'd be happy to have him stay on the board.

**LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Okay. Thank you. No further questions.

**VICE-CHAIR EDDINGTON:**

Okay, then, we have a motion and a second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. He's appointed. **(Vote: 4-0-0-1. Leg. Cooper not present)**

Seeing no other business I will make a motion to adjourn, second by Legislator Cameron Alden. All

those in favor? Opposed. Have a good day.

**(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:28 PM)  
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**