

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 17, 2008.

Members Present:

Leg. Steven H. Stern, Chairman
Leg. Jack Eddington, Vice-Chair
Leg. Jon Cooper (not present)
Leg. John M. Kennedy, Jr.
Leg. Edward P. Romaine

Also In Attendance:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Barbara LoMoriello, Deputy Clerk
Lance Reinheimer, Assistant Director of Budget Review Office
Craig Freas, Budget Review Office
Deborah Harris, Aide to Legislator Stern
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
Debra Alloncius, AME Legislative Director
Jeff Tempera, Director of Labor Relations
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Diana Kraus - Court Stenographer

(THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO COMMENCED AT 1:18 PM)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

I call the committee to order on Veterans and Seniors and ask everybody to please rise and join in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Romaine.

SALUTATION

I'll ask everybody to please remain standing, join us in a moment of silence as we keep our brave fighting men and women in our thoughts and prayers.

MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED

Thank you. Good afternoon. We have no pending legislation before the Committee today. I don't have any cards. But we do welcome Jeff Temperra today. There were questions raised at our last committee meeting regarding military leave policy for County employees, a critical issue particularly during time of war. Questions came up. We wanted to invite Jeff here who can hopefully share many of the answers with us today. So, Jeff, thanks so much for being with us.

MR. TEMPERRA:

You're welcome. Thank you. I guess I'll just respond to any questions you have or --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, I raised some of those questions so let me start with you and maybe you can help me understand the current policy.

I met with a number of police officers. And this deals with police officers who are veterans serving overseas who felt that they were dealt with unfairly. In fact, actually one of them whom I'm very friendly with is the guy that ran against me last time, Colonel Bjelobrk. And he informed me that he wanted to use his time, but for every day that he would have to use, he'd have to give up two, which was different from, say, police officers, female police officers who were taking maternity leave, that they used a day for a day.

Now I don't have the exact details before me because Colonel Bjelobrk has been, as you know, stationed overseas and has been deployed. But I did promise him I would raise these questions. So I am raising them.

So why don't we start with an understanding of, if you're deployed overseas and you're a member of the Police Department, let's start if you want to use your time because that's what you want to do, explain how that would work.

MR. TEMPERRA:

Well, the majority of people, I think it's important to understand, we've got, I think, three separate options.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

The two options -- I think what you're referring to is the third option --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

Which is, I think --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Because he actually said after his first deployment several years ago, he came back and he owed the County like \$42,000.

MR. TEMPERA:

Correct.

LEG. ROMAINE:

So I want to understand how that works.

MR. TEMPERA:

Sure.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And how that's different say than a police officer on maternity leave. And not to take anything away from anyone, but just to understand the current policy. And perhaps you can --

MR. TEMPERA:

Absolutely.

LEG. ROMAINE:

-- tell us about the three options and then talk about the third option and how that might work to someone's disadvantage who wanted to claim time.

MR. TEMPERA:

Certainly. And I think you really have to understand as a very, very basic premise that it's a hold harmless; no one should make money, no one should lose money. You should be treated the same as if you were a full-time County employee working.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I didn't get that impression from talking to Colonel Bjelobrk. He said after his first deployment he actually owed the County \$42,000.

MR. TEMPERA:

Because he received -- okay, I'll go through the different options.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Yeah, why don't we go through the options and explain --

MR. TEMPERA:

Option one, and it's the, I believe, the most used option, allows an employee to continue to receive their full County pay.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

Continue to be covered under the County health insurance, continue to be covered under the Benefit Fund coverage. When they come back, they are required to pay back their military payments.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. And the hope is they're a high grade in the County and a low grade in the Army.

MR. TEMPERA:

Correct.

LEG. ROMAINE:

But if they're a high grade in the Army, they actually would lose money under that. For example, if you're a Colonel, if you've been promoted, if you're a General -- I remember there was a -- {Tony McKao} was someone I know and he eventually got promoted to General in the adjunct's office when he was deployed to Haiti.

MR. TEMPERA:

That brings us to option two.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

Option two is you do not take your County salary, you continue to get your -- or you opt to take your military pay --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, what does that do in terms of your pension, then?

MR. TEMPERA:

Not a thing in terms of what I've been told by the New York State Retirement system.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Okay, because he has given me other information saying that his pension would be impacted if he didn't take his salary and if he had a gap in service.

MR. TEMPERA:

Well, I'll finish.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Okay.

MR. TEMPERA:

What happens is if someone takes that second option and they get their military pay, we still hold them harmless. They keep their health insurance and they keep their Benefit Fund and they would take their military pay. Legislator Beedenbender had just raised the question within the last month to me about a constituent who came to him and said, listen, I'm being harmed as a result of going off the payroll and serving my country and fighting overseas and I'm giving up my County salary. And in the pension system, I'm getting a zero for that year --

LEG. ROMAINE:

That's correct.

MR. TEMPERA:

And I'll never recover. I picked up the phone and got a hold of the employer representative for the

New York State Employees Retirement System and posed a question to this individual and said, you know, how do you deal with this? You got -- whether it's the police that have the one year or the civilians have a three-year window. He said they will consider your salary for the year that you are deployed as if you continued to receive your salary from the year before.

LEG. ROMAINE:

That's interesting because apparently most of the people that are in that situation are totally unaware of that. And apparently the pension system hasn't operated under that premise to date. So if this is new information, it's interesting. Obviously we have a verbatim transcript and I'm going to do the courtesy to Matt Bjelobrk of finding out his address where he's stationed, and I'm going to ask the clerk, our legislative clerk, if I can get a copy of the today's minutes because I'm going to send him the transcript.

MR. TEMPERA:

Actually, I'll go one better. I'll send you a copy -- I just sent a letter to Legislator Beedenbender where I relayed the conversation I had with the -- it's basically what I just put on the record, it was in my letter.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. Because that's -- as I'm saying, that's new information from what I've gotten. Now, of course, my sources are anecdotal and I've told you some of those sources. There are other people in the Police Department have come to me with this problem as well, but they're anecdotal. Now you're telling me you've got a clarification from the pension department, the fact that their pensions will not be impacted.

MR. TEMPERA:

That's what I've been told. And again, I've been doing this and we've had these resolutions for many, many years going back --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, this is why --

MR. TEMPERA:

This is the first time I every heard of the question.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I appreciate the Chairman -- because we're asking for clarification because this does affect -- I believe there's 130 some police officers that are deployed. And then a number of other people that are deployed; people, for example, who are civilians to the police department, like a Joe Congedo, or someone like that.

MR. TEMPERA:

We have, and I don't have the exact number, but we have people all over the County whether they're in the Sheriff's Department, the Police Department or wherever in the County.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. Many of these people I know and have come and spoken to me because I've been around awhile and I've known them. And they'll call me up even though they're not in my district even to raise these questions with me.

MR. TEMPERA:

And again, this is -- as I said, I've been doing this a long time. And it's unusual that the first time I ever heard of this was when I got this letter probably a month or so ago. And I -- again, I said this -- I've been doing this over thirty years. I'm surprised when I hear something new, especially with something that we have been doing for some probably 15 years or longer, we've had these agreements in place. So all I can tell you is the representative I spoke to, I don't have his name

with me, up at the retirement system gave me this information. I put it on the letter. And I'd be absolutely happy to share it with you.

LEG. ROMAINE:

That information plus today's transcripts I'm going to forward to any of my constituents and anyone else that asks me for information. So we're going to option one. They keep their military pay but when they -- and they get no County pay, but it doesn't impact -- you're now saying that doesn't impact their pension. Option two.

MR. TEMPERA:

Option two was the second option we just spoke of, yeah, which is where they keep -- I'm sorry, option two is where they keep their military pay. And that was -- the first option was to get their County pay.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Okay. But then they have to give you their military pay.

MR. TEMPERA:

Correct. Option two is where they get the military pay and they don't get their county salary but still held harmless on the benefit fund and the health insurance.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. And option three.

MR. TEMPERA:

And option three, and again, I admit I'm not that familiar with option three because I don't know how many people even take this into -- take this option, but it's employees can receive a payment for all or a portion of the pay out accruals. And I can get you a copy of the document; if it's the police you're talking about, I do have the Memorandum of Agreement we signed with the PBA. In a lump sum or a biweekly of sick leave at the rate of one day for each two days accumulated after the exhaustion of vacation and personal leave time.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Now let me stop there if I may. So after they've used their vacation pay and they can use their sick pay on a rate of two for one; is that correct.

MR. TEMPERA:

Correct.

LEG. ROMAINE:

What is the rate of the use of sick pay for police officers who are on maternity leave? Is that two for one or is that one for one?

MR. TEMPERA:

It's not even a police officer. It's any individual. Maternity leave, if they are sick up front, someone who is not ill cannot use sick time. That's --

LEG. ROMAINE:

People on maternity leave who may not be physically ill but obviously are pregnant and going through a pregnancy can't use sick time. I just want to clarify that.

MR. TEMPERA:

Yeah, you have -- you have to be ill. You know, somebody's who pregnant isn't ill.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I understand that.

MR. TEMPERA:

But someone who cannot work as a result of an illness that could --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Although they may have toxemia or something of that nature in a pregnancy.

MR. TEMPERA:

But that could be related to their pregnancy, an individual in that situation could use sick time. And they're going to use as any other County employee because they're still on the payroll any day you can't show up for work, you can either use a vacation day, you can use a personal day or you can use a sick day.

LEG. ROMAINE:

But if they use a sick day it's a one for one situation.

MR. TEMPERA:

Of course, yeah.

LEG. ROMAINE:

However, but if you're deployed overseas and you want to use your sick day it's a two for one situation?

MR. TEMPERA:

You have a situation -- absolutely. If someone's not sick and they're being given an extra benefit that was negotiated with each of the unions, to be able to use accrued time, again, in the order first vacation, then personal time; and then after the exhaustion of vacation and personal time they can use sick time.

LEG. ROMAINE:

But only a two for one basis?

MR. TEMPERA:

Right.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I think they're major complaint is other people can use sick time on a one for one basis but they're being panelized because essentially by the very fact that they're deployed they can only use it on a two for one basis.

MR. TEMPERA:

And, again, I don't see how anyone's being harmed at their option that they choose that.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I beg to differ.

MR. TEMPERA:

They could get their full County salary and continue to be paid. If they're military pay is higher, they get to keep their full military pay. This is an individual that you're talking about that wants to be paid their full military pay and then wants to be paid their County pay on top of it and make money as a result --

LEG. ROMAINE:

And there's also something about the full military pay that they have other -- you're not looking for their military pay, you're looking for things above and beyond their basic military pay that would have to be paid back for them to get their county salary?

MR. TEMPERA:

Absolutely, because they are --

LEG. ROMAINE:

For their housing allowance which they --

MR. TEMPERA:

We do not want their housing allowance.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, they -- this is what -- okay. What are the things that you look for besides the basic pay to take?

MR. TEMPERA:

There's a form that they fill out -- "and I agree to remit promptly one full payment equal to all the military monies exclusive of the basic allowance, housing and subsistence expense allowance" -- which basically we don't want their housing allowance, we don't want their food allowance.

LEG. ROMAINE:

But do they get any allowance for being put in a combat zone?

MR. TEMPERA:

Absolutely.

LEG. ROMAINE:

And you want that?

MR. TEMPERA:

Absolutely.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Okay.

MR. TEMPERA:

They're getting their tour differentials from the County, they're getting their holiday pay from the County, they're getting their clothing and cleaning allowances from the County. And it's a --

LEG. ROMAINE:

They're not -- obviously they're not using their clothing or cleaning allowance if they're deployed in Iraq.

MR. TEMPERA:

But they're still being paid for it.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Okay.

MR. TEMPERA:

It's, again, an equality thing that we look at to be able to say you don't make any money, you don't lose any money. But yet you're being paid for your holidays, you're being paid for your two tour or night differential, you're being paid for your holiday pay, the cleaning, clothing allowances. Those are all differentials that are built into the salary specifically for police officers, they're getting these payments.

And, again, that argument I'm very much aware of because there is an opinion from the JAG Office

that says, well, this isn't salary. While the County's only obligated under, I believe, it's section 242 of the Military Law to pay for the 22 work days or 30 calendar days during a year, whichever is greater; and that Legislature along with the County Executive many years ago looked at this and we said let's -- let's not harm people. We don't want to have situations where we have families of officers serving overseas, of military people serving overseas that can't pay their mortgage or can't buy food for their household and the children. So we took the step to say we are going to make sure you have the option to keep your county salary and your health benefits and benefit fund payments.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Even though the JAG has said that other than some of the basic military pay, that that stuff really isn't -- shouldn't be considered as military pay, the County does.

MR. TEMPERA:

It's not -- it's not salary, correct. While the County looks at it to say we don't pay you your basic County payments, we pay you your full differentials with the County. And when we negotiated this with the unions -- and understand that this isn't something the County did unilaterally, we've got agreements with every union in the County.

LEG. ROMAINE:

I understand that. And I understand that if anything, if people have complaints, they should speak to their bargaining units.

MR. TEMPERA:

Absolutely.

LEG. ROMAINE:

There's no question about that. I just needed a clarification of this because it just seemed on the face of it to me to be somewhat unfair. And I just wanted to have a better understanding. And you clarified one thing, that people who came to me were under a misapprehension that they didn't get pension credit, they lost their pension credit; should they choose their military pay, they lost their pension credits for the years that they were in service.

MR. TEMPERA:

And again I've shared with you, I'll be more than happy to give you the letter that I wrote to --

LEG. ROMAINE:

I would appreciate that copy and I want to thank the Chairman for allowing Jeff to clarify these facts. And if the clerk will send me a copy of the minutes, I'll pass it along to those people that made the inquiries.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Eddington.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Yes. Thanks for coming.

MR. TEMPERA:

No problem.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Can you give me a scenario where someone would take option three.

MR. TEMPERA:

The only scenario that I can think of where someone takes option three is they have a large amount of vacation time and sick leave accruals. And the County doesn't allow employees to cash out their

accruals before retirement. And on retirement somebody is paid one day's pay for every two days of sick time. And they're paid one for one for their vacation time and specifically police officers are paid one for one for their personal time so this mirrors --

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Yeah, that sounds like an argument not to use your sick pay and vacation days when you're deployed.

MR. TEMPERA:

The only reason that you would use it is to get additional money over and beyond that which you would have made in your County salary or in your military pay. In effect -- I don't want to say -- use the term making money, but they are being given more money than they would have received had they been working.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

I see. So, in other words if you take -- you could take option one or two and ask for your vacation days.

MR. TEMPERA:

No. Well, option one you're getting your full county salary so --

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Right. So you're not taking your vacation days.

MR. TEMPERA:

You're not taking your vacation days. We're paying you as if you're working. And all we ask is when you come back, you're going to pay back whatever you received in the military.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Right. And option two you take the military pay.

MR. TEMPERA:

Option two you take the military pay because your military pay is more see than you're making in the County.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And is that when you might use your vacation days?

MR. TEMPERA:

No. At that point you're going off the payroll.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. TEMPERA:

And you're getting your military pay because your military pay is higher.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. TEMPERA:

Option three is typically that -- I think you see option three is someone who's in -- could go for option two because their military pay is higher --

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

Decides I'm going to take my military pay, but I also want to be paid for accruals I have on the books because I may not be eligible to retire for another ten years --

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Got you. I see that.

MR. TEMPERA:

-- or whatever. And I want to cash out my accruals.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Okay. So then option -- okay, I got that.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Option three is really -- has to be in combination with option two.

MR. TEMPERA:

It's not in combination with, but typically that's when they see it.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

That's the best formula, though, is what I'm -- okay.

MR. TEMPERA:

Correct.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Then the other question is that, Legislator Romaine actually flushed it out about the combat pay.

MR. TEMPERA:

Correct.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

You know, I hear things like well that should be in the bargaining unit. When I hear as a veteran that was deployed for three years during the Vietnam conflict, that that has to be justified, that we take it and then we leave it up to bargaining units, how do we justify that in our brain? These are people that are defending our country overseas. If they're working in DPW, they don't deserve combat. But if they've transferred over there, into a combat zone, we take it away because we can?

MR. TEMPERA:

Not because we can. Because that's what we negotiated with the unions. And what their bargaining representatives agreed to in return for these individuals -- and I'm not taking anything away, God bless everyone who has gone over there.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, we are taking something away.

MR. TEMPERA:

We are not taking anything away. We are allowing them to maintain the same benefits and salary they would have earned had they been working full-time. And that's -- when I started this off, I said you're under a basic premise of a hold harmless, that no one's making money and no one's losing money. Had they been working full-time, they would have been receiving a certain salary and benefits under their collective bargaining agreement.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

You know what? Cognitively I hear what you're saying. I understand it. And for two-and-a-half years in this seat, I hear those arguments all the time. But morally, emotionally, the right thing -- you know, somehow I hear arguments all the time in this Legislature that are real legal arguments, but they're not moral, they're not the right thing to do. We do what -- the letter of the law. But it's -- I don't know how we can justify. I'm embarrassed to hear that we're taking combat pay because we can or they failed to negotiate it. You know, when there's, you know, thousands of people in the union, how many are active or reserve members that are going to be using this so it's not a big deal to the general population. That's doesn't mean, well, that we can go after it. I just am appalled.

MR. TEMPERA:

And, again, I think the point that you're missing here, though, is that the County's legal obligation is 22 days or 30 calendar days.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

You hear what you said, that word legal.

MR. TEMPERA:

And that's why I said we've gone well beyond our legal obligation. You know, the County could just say after 30 days, you're off the payroll. And we have chosen, both the Legislature and the County Executive, we're not going to do that. We're not looking to harm anybody. We are not looking to put people out there and say they're living from pay check to pay check from someone sending money back from overseas.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

That was never the intent of anyone on this side of the isle or the other to say that we're going to try and harm somebody. We want to make sure that they are able to not worry about their family back home, paying their mortgage, paying their rent, feeding their children. That's why the County took the extraordinary steps at the time that we negotiated this to make sure that they're not worrying about their family back home, that they're going to get health insurance.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Well, let me tell you something. It isn't working because if you think because you don't take all their salary away that they're not worried about their home, they worried about garbage collection, they're worried about, you know, street removal stuff, snow, leaves. They're worried.

MR. TEMPERA:

But they're not worried about their family being able to pay their mortgage with the salary they were receiving before --

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

-- or to buy food. And that's why we took the steps that we did. And not every jurisdiction around the state has done this. You know, they are many jurisdictions that cut you off after a certain amount of time, whether they stick with the law or whatever it is, but the County from the very get go said we're not going to treat these individuals any differently than if they had been working. And really what you're asking -- asking in terms of an equity situation, to say, well, we think they should only have to pay back their basic allowance, then I guess on the other side they should only be earning in terms of the pay their basic allowance. And that's where you get from an equity standpoint that was looked at to say no one should be getting more or less than they should have been getting at the time they were deployed and --

LEG. EDDINGTON:

And I hear you. You know, let me stop you there. Because I don't agree with that premise. When you're in a combat zone, you should be getting more than if you were sitting here working in Suffolk County. So we don't agree with that point. Okay? And I know we're good guys in Suffolk County. I'm just saying we could be better. And I'm going to look into how we can do that. So thank you.

MR. TEMPERA:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Jeff, I'm going to ask you to speak for a moment, if you can, about the other side of the equation for actually two constituents that I have in mind, who have not yet been able to become County employees. And they are recently discharged. One was actually discharged last September, a lieutenant with service in Iraq and Afghanistan. And then one gentleman who actually he's my daughter's age, who's getting out in July, who sustained quite a bit of injury over in Afghanistan. What can I as a Legislator do to help them to try to actually become employed by the County of Suffolk? And what do they have as far as better rights or special rights as being veterans having come out?

MR. TEMPERA:

Well, again I think that's a more appropriate question for Civil Service. But Civil Service does grant certain benefits and rights, number one to veterans, it gives them veterans credit. Number two, if some is disabled as a result of fighting in the war, whatever, I would think that individual would have rights under -- don't quote me -- I think it's 55 (b), which would give them certain rights to a county position without having to -- an entry level position without having to take a test. That would be -- but I think it's more appropriate to go to Civil Service.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I'll pose the question to Alan, too, but having had all your years of experience, I new you'd have some thoughts on it.

There's going to be a third thing I'm going to throw at you. If you don't know it, you don't know it. Do they get the chance to take the civil service tests that might have been offered during the time that they were deployed?

MR. TEMPERA:

Again, it's more appropriate for Alan, but I believe there are provisions in the law because the military law states that you cannot be harmed as a result of being deployed. And I know if someone took the test and they were on the list and they were reached, and obviously couldn't be appointed because they're away, I know that there are provisions built into the law that they can be appointed later on. And they were actually some lawsuits, I think, dealing with this with Civil Service. But in terms of taking a test, I guess it would depend on how long the test is afterwards. But again that's more appropriate, I think, for Alan than I. I will tell you I do know the law does take that into account and there are some provisions that deal with the military deployment and not being available at the time of appointment or for the test.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Romaine.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Yes. Obviously Legislator Eddington raised a point that he wanted to deal with this issue in a meaningful way. One of the ways we get to deal with this is that -- I assume most of the contracts for County employees that are up this year end on December 31st; is that correct?

MR. TEMPERA:

The ones that are -- we already have about four or five that are up. There are more up at the end of the year then there are some that are up in 2010 and 11. The Faculty and Guild, I think, are 11.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right.

MR. TEMPERA:

Probation, I think, are 10.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, we get an opportunity as Legislators when we vote on the contract at that time.

MR. TEMPERA:

You get an opportunity to vote on those provisions that contain expenditure funds, yes.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Right. Okay. So we get to vote on that. And what is the role of the Legislature when considering labor contracts?

MR. TEMPERA:

To approve those provisions of the --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Or disapprove.

MR. TEMPERA:

Or disapprove, absolutely, of those provisions that require the appropriation of additional funds. And that's off the top of my head but I believe that's the Taylor Law language.

LEG. ROMAINE:

We don't have an opportunity to add or delete from the contract.

MR. TEMPERA:

No. The County Exec is the --

LEG. ROMAINE:

Sole negotiator.

MR. TEMPERA:

Sole negotiator, that's correct.

LEG. ROMAINE:

So I guess, then, for Legislator Eddington, the only way that he's going to effectuate change on this other than voting no on a contract that the County Executive's proposed is to lobby the County Executive or to get the veterans groups to lobby the County Executive. Otherwise there's really no direct way that he can influence a contract.

MR. TEMPERA:

Well, and, again, negotiations is a two-way street. It comes between each of the unions and the County to come to an agreement on its terms.

LEG. ROMAINE:

No, it's between each of the unions and the County Executive. The Legislature's not involved in any of those negotiations in any meaningful way at any time for any reason under the sun.

MR. TEMPERA:

I would never say such a thing.

LEG. ROMAINE:

Well, I would because I know how it operates. Thank you, Jeff.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Anybody else? Anybody else?

Jeff, thanks so much for being with us today. You answered a lot of questions. And I'm sure if any of us have any other questions or concerns we can always call on you and have you come back.

MR. TEMPERA:

Absolutely. Anytime. And I'll make sure I get you a copy of that letter.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thanks so much.

MR. TEMPERA:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Anybody else? Anybody else? Okay, we are adjourned.

**(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:47 PM)
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**