

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 9, 2009.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Steven H. Stern, Chairman
Leg. Jack Eddington, Vice Chair (excused absence)
Leg. Kate M. Browning
Leg. Ricardo Montano (excused absence)
Leg. Jay H. Schneiderman

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel
Steve Tricaraco, County Executive Aide
Holly Rhodes-Teague, Director of Office for the Aging
Barbara LoMoriello, Deputy Clerk
Paul Perillie, Aide to majority leader
Linda Bay, Aide to minority leader
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano
Catherine Stark, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman
Debra Alloncius, AME Legislative Director
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
Jack Caffey, Aide to Presiding Officer
Rick Brand, Newsday
Dennis Brown, County Attorney's Office
Nick LaLota, Congressman Israel's Office
And all other interested parties

VERBATIM MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

VERBATIM MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 11:40 AM

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good morning everyone. I ask everybody to please rise and join for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Browning.

SALUTATION

I ask everybody to remain standing and join us in a moment of silence as we keep all of our brave men and women fighting for our freedom overseas in our thoughts and prayers and particularly a moment of silence for Staff Sergeant Keith Bishop, a Green Beret from Medford who was killed recently in Afghanistan. We, of course, remember all of the victims and their families from the terrible tragedy at Fort Hood.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Thank you.

Madam Clerk, please note that Legislator Eddington and Legislator Montano will not be with us today. They have excused absences.

DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:

I just wanted to ask for the support for the LTCOP reso that's in front of you. The reso is for the Ombudsmen Program to receive an additional 18,000 in state funds. It's 100 percent funded. The Ombudsmen Program goes into the adult homes and nursing homes in the County to be a liaison to families and to the patients to make sure that they're receiving the services that they need. And they work for reducing conflicts between the management and the people who are there. So it's a good program. There was some additional funds on the state level for the assisted livings, which are part of program, so we're very happy they're getting some more money. And the Family Service League runs the program in Suffolk County.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good.

DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:

Just one more thing. The HEAP Program is open, opened November 2nd. We are -- we've sent out or it's going out a letter to all the, you know, elected officials and other agencies that have interest in the program telling the guidelines. We've already processed approximately 4300 applications from those who had received HEAP last year. Their applications went out at the end of August, beginning of September. So the program is moving along quite rapidly.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Good morning. I know we have sent a few constituent issues to you recently. And again I know the HEAP Program is available with certain incomes. I'm starting to see senior citizens in my district who are kind of falling through the cracks, where they're just making sometimes maybe only \$5 over, that they're not eligible for the HEAP Program. I mean, I know in our budget that we approved the MI-HEAP, which is something they'd be eligible for. Is there something else? I mean, we don't know yet that it's going to be vetoed. And I'm concerned that we, you know, I'm hoping that we will have the votes to override. But at the same time is there anything for our senior citizens if we didn't

have MI-HEAP?

DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:

The only other -- there's a couple of other programs. Project Warmth is a program that's out there for people in need. But the, you know, the LIPA program for the \$200 credit is a huge help for some people, you know, so you could encourage people to apply for that because that would put \$200 credit on their electric bill.

Other than that, the, you know, the HEAP guidelines are what they are.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Schneiderman.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

I'm just curious in terms of the regular HEAP Program, the level of funding this year, is it the same as last year? Did it pick up any money or lose money?

DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:

HEAP's a federal program. And generally the funding when it runs out, it runs out. I believe there was additional funds, but you know, that's -- I would have to ask DSS because they're the keeper of all funds HEAP.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

All right. Holly, thank you.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTION

Okay. We have **introductory resolution 1909-(2009)** on the agenda, **Accepting and Appropriating 100% Reimbursable Funds for the State LTCOP Program. (County Executive Levy)** I will make a motion to approve, second by Legislator Browning. A hundred percent reimbursement. Okay. And so that will be a motion to approve and to place on the consent calendar. All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstention? **Motion is approved and placed on the consent calendar. (Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Montano and Eddington not present)**

Okay. All right. Anybody else? All right. Very good. All right. Thank you.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:45 AM

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