

VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE

of the

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

A regular meeting of the Veterans and Seniors Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislative Building, 725 Veterans Memorial highway, Smithtown, New York on Monday June 11, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Steve Stern - Chairman
Legislator Sarah Anker - Vice Chair
Legislator Tom Barraga
Legislator DuWayne Gregory
Legislator Ricardo Montano

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk - Suffolk County Legislature
Bob Martinez - Aide to Legislator Montano
Bill Shilling - Aide to Legislator Anker
Deborah Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Laura Halloran - Budget Review Office
All other interested parties

VERBATIM MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Donna Catalano - Court Stenographer

(*THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:00 P.M.*)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Welcome, everybody, to the committee on Vets and Seniors. I'll ask everybody to rise and join in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Barraga.

SALUTATION

Please stay standing join in a moment of silence as we pray for the men and women fighting for our freedoms overseas.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Thank you. Welcome, everyone. Thank you for being with us this afternoon. Director Ronayne not able to join us today, but he did submit correspondence that I would like to make part of the record for starters. He is advising us that the Veterans Advisory Board has not yet met. They meet later this month, I believe it's scheduled for June 21st, where they will take up IR 1364. So according to the Director, that legislation is not yet ready to move forward. That is going to remain pending pursuant to the vote that the Advisory Board is going to take later in the month.

He would ALSO like to remind this committee of the June 15th Veterans Job Fair that we are hosting at the Farmingdale Armed Forces Reserve Center. That is going to be from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on that day, June 15th, the Veterans Job Fair. Also, Sunday June 10th, he reports that the Reckless With Red Veterans Skydiving Event took place at the Calverton Jump Center in Calverton, and wanted to let us know.

LEG. MONTANO:

What is that, Reckless With Red?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Reckless With Red Veterans Skydiving Event that was held. So he wanted us to know that that event has taken place. That is correspondence from Director Ronayne. Holly.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Just a couple of things very quickly. Our senior picnic will be held on July 17th at Southaven Park. We usually have about 13, 1400 people out there. The rain date is July 18th. And your office should have all received -- no, they haven't gone out yet. You will get invitations to it.

LEG. MONTANO:

What day?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

It's July 17th. It's a Tuesday. Hopefully we will have nice weather for it. Another thing I just wanted to let you know about is that our office is in the process of putting together an outreach project. You know, last year we did a survey. This year we're going to do an outreach project to the lowest income tier of the HEAP beneficiaries that we've received information from this past year.

We are going to take the information they have given us, and we are going to use basically a prescreening tool we have that we can see what other benefits they may be eligible for. Once we do that screen, depending on what benefits they're eligible for, you know, it could be food stamps, it could be Medicaid, it could be EPIC, we will send a letter out to the beneficiaries saying, "You know, based on the information we received from you this past year on HEAP, there are other services or programs you may be eligible for, and here's the links, or if you need more information from us."

You know, we're just trying to help people stretch their dollars a little more. So if there are benefits that they're missing, we might be able to let them know about them. So that's a project we're just starting to work on in the office now.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Approximately how many people are going to receive that correspondence from us?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

In this first tier, 1100, you know, because we have to basically input the information into the screening tool in order to find out what they might be eligible for. It's a project, but we try to do some kind of outreach each year. We thought this might be a good way to help people who are really struggling right now, because they really are at the lowest end of the economic tier that we're working with first. And if that's successful, we may move on to another tier of people. You know, we're going to see how it works for the first thousand or so. So that's what we're working on.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Montano.

LEG. MONTANO:

Holly, just refresh my recollection. How many people do you have on staff? How many are you in the Office of Aging today?

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Somewhere around probably 58. Don't hold me exact to that number, but approximately.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

I just want to thank you and your department for helping me with a wonderful meeting at Plymouth Estates in Ms. Sinai, Cathy. She was just wonderful. She gave a wonderful presentation about the services the County provides. And we probably had about maybe 60 to 70 residents. They picked up some of the brochures and information. They were just very appreciative that the County has these services available. Thank you.

MS. RHODES-TEAGUE:

Thank you. I'll pass that on to Cathy. I'm sure she's going to be happy to hear that.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Holly, thank you. Okay. Going to the agenda then.

We have 1364, **Authorizing the MIA-OON Flag to be flown at the Armed Services Plaza at the H. Lee Dennison Building, Hauppauge during the month of September (Romaine)**

I will refer my comments back to the correspondence that we received from Director Ronayne. The Veterans Advisory Board has yet to meet, that's later in June. I will make a motion to table, seconded by Legislator Anker. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? 1364 is **TABLED (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**.

No other business? We are adjourned. Thank you.

(*THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 1:06 P.M. *)