

**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**PUBLIC HEARING ON THE**

**OPERATING BUDGET**

**OCTOBER 10, 2007**

**HEARING HELD IN THE ROSE Y. CARACAPPA LEGISLATIVE AUDITORIUM OF THE WILLIAM  
H. ROGERS LEGISLATURE BUILDING, 725 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY,  
SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK.**

**MINUTES TAKEN BY LUCIA BRAATEN, COURT STENOGRAPHER**

***[THE HEARING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:11 A.M.]***

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Could everybody rise for a salute to the flag, please, led by Legislator Eddington.

***(\*Salutation\*)***

This is a public hearing on the proposed 2008 Suffolk County Operating Budget. Madam Clerk, has the proper notices went out as far as the hearing is concerned?

**MS. HOWARD:**

Yes, sir, the affidavits of publication for the 2008 Operating Budget are in order.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay. Thank you very much. I'd like to call the public hearing to order and call the first speaker. Each speaker has five minutes. JoAnne Sanders.

**MS. SANDERS:**

Good morning. First, I want to thank you for this opportunity. The Legislature has been very good to the domestic violence programs, allowing us the opportunity to serve our clients, and your help has been a matter of saving lives, literally. Unfortunately, I have to come back here again this year to ask you to please restore the money from the omnibus funding, because they have been taken out by the County Executive in his budget.

I have -- we have three domestic -- DSS contracts, and there is a handout that I prepared that shows that two of the contracts, one stayed the same and one is -- we had a \$366 increase. And the one that I'm very concerned about is, obviously, the -- what we call our core contract, which pays for our precinct projects, our precinct advocacy, core advocacy, educational services and counseling. So that's our primary contract with the County, and that was -- 97,606 was taken out of our funding level for 2007. 2007, it was seven-twenty-seven-six-ninety-eight. Part of that 97,000 is the Seventh Precinct Advocate. That had been an add-on by the Legislature in 2006, and, consequently, has been removed from the County Exec's budget, and again this year for 2008.

We -- I'm not requesting even a cost of living increase, because we've been working very hard at doing fund-raising and special events in any way we can to maintain our services, because, obviously, our health insurance, minimum salary increases, cost of living, they're not even cost of living, very minimal salary increases, cost of just doing business we've been able to make up through our fund-raising efforts and grant writing etcetera. And, in fact, we've been able to expand some of our services as well, which is really important, because we have children on the waiting list. We have 50 children on the waiting list waiting for counseling. So it's very difficult to tell a parent that their child has to wait until we have an opening. We refer to other agencies, but everybody's coming from the same boat. So that's why I'm here today primarily, you know, to answer any questions that you might have.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you, JoAnne. Does any Legislators have any questions of JoAnne? Yeah, Legislator Cooper.

**MS. SANDERS:**

Yes.

**LEG. COOPER:**

Only question, I know that about \$50,000 is for the Seventh Precinct Advocate. The balance of the 47,000 is used for what specifically?

**MS. SANDERS:**

That's used for counseling and for court advocacy. It's just -- it's a decrease overall of -- and it pays for a little bit of all of that, and that's our core services.

**LEG. COOPER:**

And were those monies in your budget back in 2006 and 2005, or was this a one-time add?

**MS. SANDERS:**

We were getting cuts, if you recall, up to 2006, when the County Legislature put in the omnibus money, and that helped us get over the cuts that we had suffered in years past. And so it sustained our services, and that's really basically again the same -- this amount that I'm requesting would bring us up to what was also 2006 level, 2007, and now 2008. So it really pays a portion of all that. And if we didn't get the money, we'd obviously have to cut out a service. I couldn't say exactly which one. We'd have to set priorities on which one we'd cut out. And we would work hard not to cut it out, but I don't know if there's any alternative at this point, we've been just so stretched to provide the services as they are now. So, as you know, it's extremely important, it is life saving. And the Advocacy Project couldn't be going better in the precincts, it's just overall a wonderful program.

**LEG. COOPER:**

Thank you.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Anyone else? Thank you very much, JoAnne.

**MS. SANDERS:**

Okay. Can I bring up a separate -- different issue, which is just --

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Go ahead.

**MS. SANDERS:**

-- about the tree next door?

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Go ahead.

**MS. SANDERS:**

The commemorative tree that I think most of you know about is -- we planted it in 1990, and we have Commemoration Day. The Fourth Precinct -- Fourt Precinct is scheduled to be built on those premises. And talking on behalf of the Alliance of Domestic Violence Agencies, if you can just talk to us before you knock it down to see if there's some alternative for the tree in which we can move it or something.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay.

**MS. SANDERS:**

Okay. Thank you very much.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you very much. Paul {Matellos}.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Paul Matthews.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Oh, Matthews, I'm sorry. Matthews. Oh, Matthews. Okay. I didn't pick up your handwriting, Paul.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

I'm sorry about that.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

That's all right. Go ahead.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Hello. Today, for those of you who don't know me, I've been at this innovative research for shellfish restoration by larval release for quite sometime, as a matter of fact, long enough to have gained the rapt attention of Cornell and others who are now working together on the research, which is very promising because of its innovative nature.

I made a presentation, as a matter of fact, two presentations in front of the EPA Committee starting one month ago. And working with Cornell, we submitted a budget to do the proofs of concept over a four-year period for less than \$100,000 a year.

On Page 1, you can see, I have a presentation that I actually presented back in 2004 to this body that still holds water today. On Page 2, I have one of the many, shall we say, endorsements by Cornell that shows its letterhead. On the third page is the presentation I made a month ago at the EPA Committee. And Page 4 is the project summary form for the proof of concept, which gives some background material. What's missing from this presentation is the actual budget page, which was submitted at EPA last week. I will add that, but that shows four years of study.

So, referring to Page 1 with the LIFE logo, Long Islanders For Environment, and the restoring shellfish by larval release. The release of shellfish larvae to create sets and subsequent adult populations is now available, and is innovative and cost effective. Such a larval release program is an appropriate continuation of Suffolk County shellfish restorations. LIFE has been working as an industry cooperater with Cornell to promote mobile marine hatchery systems for the upscaling of larval release. Money is needed this year for a proof of concept study, which Cornell is excited about, and able to do by mid-summer, costing less than \$100,000 per year.

There are some other bulletins, like Item 7, which shows some of the ancient history of 2004, where we were sort of skipped over, when 477 money was not exactly set aside for innovative research.

I'd be happy to answer any questions you have. And I'm looking forward to bringing a bill before this body sometime in the next couple of weeks.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Matthews?

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

I just had a question.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Yes, Legislator D'Amaro.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Matthews.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Good morning.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Could you tell me a little bit about LIFE, Long Islanders For Environment? Are you the head of that

organization?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Yes, I'm sort of its only -- its only -- its only member. We've elected to piggy-back with Cornell, who has complete bona fides as far as not-for-profit, and also gives the academic, shall we say, auspice that we need to get out of the box. So Long Islanders For Environment aspires to be a not-for-profit corporation, and maybe it will be in a year or two, but right now, it's a -- it's basically the moniker that I'm going under. They own this tanker, which I don't have a picture of in this presentation, but which is standing by, which has six 4,000 gallon tanks, and we'll be able upscale the larval release. You can get about two or three million larvae into a hundred gallons. Well, 4,000 is about 40 million, so 60 million.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Right. It says --

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

So, when you start to put out that type of number.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Okay. It says LIFE has a tanker vessel standing by, so LIFE, this organization is you?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Yes.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

And so you own a vessel?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Right.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

And what business are you in?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

I've been doing this for, I guess, seven years. I would say that I'm in the Marine Biology business, but the real finessing comes in taking these processes and upscaling them, and that involves a naval operation, or sort of a marine operation, so that's the new part of it. Much of the deployments are done at Cornell in small vessels, but this limits the amount that can be delivered into the environment at any one time. So the ultimate goal is to have a factory or a mother ship standing by, has billions and billions of larvae to be disposed into the environment, which can settle there.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Your request in Paragraph 4 is asking for \$100,000 for a concept study. What entity would receive that funding if --

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Cornell.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

It would go to Cornell?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Yes.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

So you're really here advocating on behalf of Cornell to receive funding from the Legislature?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

That's correct.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

And it's not to your organization?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

That's correct. And I'm sorry that I don't have Page 5, which is that budget that was submitted to EPA on Cornell letterhead last week. I can acquire that today and include that in the record here.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

And what role, if we were to grant the 100,000, or if the County were to grant 100,000, what role would you or your organization play in that concept study?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

I'm what you call the Principal Investigator and the Industry Cooperator. What I'm doing here is establishing a new business and a new technique, essentially, and it would be my responsibility to see that the research is done in an efficient way, and gets done, and is reportable and is done like that. I've been working for over a year-and-a-half, actually inside the walls of Cornell doing other proofs of concept, and basically getting a -- quite a, I would say, excellent education in these matters. And what we're doing is cutting edge, so I'm learning the old school and we're applying it to the new school. But I'm here as a representative of Cornell. If they weren't all so busy doing what they do, they'd probably send someone down with me.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

So you represent Cornell for the purposes of securing funding for this study and this project?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

That is correct, and we --

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Do you work for Cornell?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

No, I have -- I mean, I'm a contractor. They would pay me as a Principal Investigator as a contractor.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

So you're in the Marine Biology field.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Yes, sir.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Who else do you contract with?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Well --

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Who are some of your other contracting entities, clients?

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

We don't have any contracts at all. This is a brand new -- this is a brand new event, and the upscale aspects of it are not part of the first proof of concept. The first proof of concept is just taking larvae

to a site, surrounding it with a wall, sort of an oil boom type of a thing where you would set in competent-to-set two-week-old clam larvae, who will then settle on the sand there. You would remove the barrier after a couple of days, then and most of the work is in following up and counting and doing benthic surveys on the populations of the clams where you would plant the larvae.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

And this program hasn't been done anywhere else, to your knowledge, it's been developed --

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Absolutely not.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

It's been developed by yourself --

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Yes, this is --

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

-- working with Cornell.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Exactly, brand new.

**LEG. D'AMARO:**

Thank you.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

Thank you very much. I'll supply that budget page, so that you can see our plan to move forward. We would be deploying larvae in two sites over three years and following up with intensive, what they call rigorous research to get competent data, so that we can bring you good advice as to what the cost benefits will be. Thank you very much.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you, Mr. Matthews. Frank Lombardi.

**MR. LOMBARDI:**

Thank you for having me. I am Frank Lombardi. I serve as the Liaison for the TWA Flight 800 Family Association. I'm also the Director of the IGHL Foundation. We are here, and the families respectfully apologize for not being able to attend. We are here to request the restoration of the \$25,000 grant made by the County to the IGHL Foundation for maintenance and support of the Flight 800 Memorial at Smith Point County Park. The funding, as you are aware, we were here last year as well, has been excluded by the County Executive for the 2008 budget.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Does any --

**MR. LOMBARDI:**

Does anyone have any questions?

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

No, I don't. Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Lombardi? Thank you, Mr. Lombardi.

**MR. LOMBARDI:**

Thank you.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Juanita Crowe.

**MS. CROWE:**

Good morning, and thank you for this opportunity. I am the Fiscal Officer of the Child Care Council of Suffolk, and I am here on behalf of Janet Walterstein. She finally got a couple of days vacation for the year.

My reason for being here, we have three County -- three contracts with the County. Please be a little patient with me, this is my first time doing this, I'm very nervous.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay. Don't be nervous, Juanita, just take your time.

**MS. CROWE:**

Okay, thank you. We have three contracts with Suffolk County. We have a registration and inspection contract, which is 100% State dollars. Okay? I noticed this year the budget is coming in for five hundred -- for eight -- I'm sorry, for \$859,110. Okay. That is below what we had last year by 80,000 -- wait a minute. Oh, by \$80,083. It was put in last year, but it appears that going forward for 2008, it has been taken out again. These monies, again, they're 100% State dollars. We subcontract with Suffolk County. Suffolk County holds the contract and we subcontract with Suffolk County. A resolution was passed last year by the County for that \$80,083 and is coming out again, and we are asking for it to be restored.

The other contract we're concerned about is our resource and referral contract. What this contract does with the County, we work with TANF recipients in trying to obtain child care. Last year, we had in our budget \$109,018. This year it appears that it was taken out. Now, according to what Janet Walterstein has given me, information, she said that she had requested and was granted an additional \$30,000 by the County Executive, and that was to have an additional person placed at the Department of Labor for the TANF recipients. We've been doing this service, but what we're coming to find out is that we really don't have the staffing. So this money was granted to us, it's not in the budget now, and we're asking that that also be replaced. Our contract for the CDC Loan Program, that was increased by 2% bottom line, and we thank you for that. Any questions?

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Yeah.

**MS. CROWE:**

Okay.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Juanita, just to get it straight.

**MS. CROWE:**

Okay.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

So two of your programs was cut, one, 80,000, and the other, 108; is that right?

**MS. CROWE:**

It's not in the contract agency line here.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay.

**MS. CROWE:**

Yes.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

But they've both been eliminated. And did you say both of them are refundable from the State?

**MS. CROWE:**

The contract for \$939,193 is total State dollars.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Right.

**MS. CROWE:**

Okay. Maybe if I explain that program. Okay. These funds are from New York State Office of Children and Family Services to the County of Suffolk Department of Social Services for registration and inspection of child care providers, and the County of Suffolk has contracted with the Child Care Council of Suffolk to provide those services.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

And that's the program that's cut \$80,000?

**MS. CROWE:**

Yes.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

And again, is the \$80,000 State money?

**MS. CROWE:**

Yes, it is, sir.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay. And the other program, the 108,000?

**MS. CROWE:**

Yes. The other program, 109,018 for the 2008 is not in the column for recommended.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Right.

**MS. CROWE:**

But Janet Walterstein did speak to our County Executive and she requested an additional \$30,000 and it was granted. So, actually, what we are looking for for that contract is \$139,018.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

I see the County's Budget Officer is here. Do you have any idea of what's -- what Juanita is talking about here?

**MR. KOVESDY:**

Good morning.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Just for the record, if you just put your name on the record.

**MR. KOVESDY:**

Sure. Good morning. Allen Kovesdy, Director of Management, County Exec's Office.

There are -- Page 1108 in the recommended budget lists all the contracts for the Child Care Council. Contract Number GGN, which is in Social Services, had \$875,000 in 2005, \$864,000 in 2006. We estimate that they're going to spend \$939,000. They requested the same amount. It was lowered to 859,110. I really don't have the information.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Allen, do you know, is that money all reimbursable by the State?

**MR. KOVESDY:**

I could find out and E-mail you back.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Yeah, because I think that's the main question we have, if the money's coming from the State, why are we cutting it from the budget?

**MR. KOVESDY:**

I'll E-mail -- if you'd like, I'll E-mail it to whomever you'd like.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you. Thank you.

**MR. KOVESDY:**

And the other contract the young lady is talking about is ADB 2. They had \$92,000 in '05, \$104,000 in '06, and it wasn't funded this year, and they'd asked for \$100,000.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay.

**MR. KOVESDY:**

But I will get back to you, Mr. Lindsay.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you very much.

**MR. KOVESDY:**

You're welcome.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Do you want to say anything else, Juanita?

**MS. CROWE:**

I'm just hoping that these funds can be restored. The services that we provide to the children of Suffolk County is very vital, as far as quality child care, very important. The parents need to work, they need to know that their children are safe, and we're doing the best that we can to help them in that area of making sure that their children are safe and in a quality and safe environment. Thank you.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you.

**LEG. COOPER:**

Thank you.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

I don't have anymore cards. Is there anyone else in the audience that would like to address us?

**MS. GENTILE:**

Good morning. I'm Janene Gentile, the Executive Director of North Shore Youth Council. I just want to thank the Presiding Officer and the other Legislators for actually inviting us here and being part of the process. I think over the past year, the Ad Hoc Committee has met with many of our agencies, and it's -- it was sort of a scary thing in the beginning and made us feel sort of intimidated, but it was actually quite enlightening and held us all accountable for our projects. We appreciate that from a small agency that services a whole north end of Brookhaven in Suffolk County. So I'm listening today and I'm really glad to be part of the process. And, please, come and visit us at any time. Thanks, Guys and Ladies.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you for your kind words. Is there anyone else that would -- you spoke, Mr. Matthews, already. Okay. Anyone else? No one else?

Mr. Matthews, you want to -- I'm going to allow you to come back and say something else, if you want.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

I thank you very much. I just have that budget page.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

And as you'll see, it's on Cornell letterhead and it's quite succinct.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Okay.

**MR. MATTHEWS:**

And I think it's very important.

**P.O. LINDSAY:**

Thank you very much. Being that no one else wants to address us on these budget issues, I'll make a motion to adjourn.

**LEG. COOPER:**

So moved.

***[THE HEARING WAS CLOSED AT 10:42 A.M.]***

***{ } Indicates Spelled Phonetically***