

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

PUBLIC HEARING

ON THE

2016 OPERATING BUDGET

A Public Hearing on the 2016 Operating Budget was held in the William H. Rogers Legislature Building in the Rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on October 19, 2015.

Legislators In Attendance:

Legislator Robert Calarco
Legislator Tom Barraga
Legislator Steven Stern
Legislator Tom Muratore
Legislator Tom Cilmi
Legislator Kevin McCaffrey
Legislator Leslie Kennedy
Legislator Kate Browning

Also In Attendance:

Jason Richberg - Clerk of the Suffolk County Legislature
Robert Lipp - Director/Budget Review Office
Christina DeLisi - Aide to Legislator Schneiderman
Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy
Dr. Paula Fabrizio - Central Nassau Guidance Ancillary Withdrawal Services
Julia Goble - The Retreat
Loretta Davis - Executive Director/The Retreat
Gerry Vazquez - Long Island Network of Community Services
Aaron Watkins-Lopez - Long Island Bus Riders Union
Stan Humin, III - AME Executive Board
Daniel C. Levler - AME
Craig Brennan - Long Island Association for AIDS Care
Kathy Malloy - Welfare to Work Commission
Doris Mitchell
LeeAnn Mann
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

Minutes Transcribed By:

Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary

*(*The public hearing was called to order at 10:10 a.m.*)*

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Good morning, everyone. I'm sorry for the delay. We were waiting for the audio to get set up. We are ready to begin. Welcome to this morning's Operating Budget Public Hearing. If we could all please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Barraga.

Salutation

Thank you all for coming this morning. We have several cards and speakers. We appreciate you taking the time to come talk to us about the budget. We will get right into it. Our first speaker is Dr. Paula Fabrizio. And just so everybody understands the rules, we have three minutes to make your statement, and if any Legislator has a question for you we will permit questioning.

DR. FABRIZIO:

Good morning, Honorable Legislators. My name is Dr. Paula Fabrizio. I am a psychiatrist working at Central Nassau Guidance Addiction Recovery Treatment Services. I am here to testify on behalf of outpatient ancillary withdrawal services in Smithtown. The Opiate use epidemic on Long Island requires action from all community leaders. We were disappointed to learn that funding to the Central Nassau Guidance non-profit program to address heroin and prescription Opiate use was not included in the County Executive's 2016 budget.

As you may know, heroin overdose deaths in Suffolk County nearly tripled from 2010 to 2014 as reported in Newsday. Thousands more addicted individuals and their families are caught in the consequences of this epidemic without access to the help they seek and with unacceptable waiting lists. We are at a critical pivot point and as leaders we must take action to reverse this surge of devastation.

Now that our agency has received the methodically sought approval from the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, which is OASAS, our trained and experienced staff will begin delivering the needed ancillary withdrawal services in Smithtown on November 2nd. This critical service will help Opiate users safely detox and gain immediate access to treatment. However, without additional resources we will not be able to continue this service throughout 2016. We need your help as concerned Legislators to assure that all the efforts, preparations and approvals leading to this point don't go to waste or get overlooked. We urge you to help us secure \$200,000 in the 2016 Suffolk County budget to fuel the delivery of the evidence-based services we're poised to deliver. We so much appreciate your willingness to use your voice and the respect that you garner in the Legislature to make this happen. Your work will literally save the lives of community members. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much. Legislator Kennedy has a question for you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good morning, Dr. Fabrizio. Thank you for coming. I know the work you do, but could you just explain to the rest of the Legislature that it is not just people from Smithtown that you help and what the program does, the induction of Suboxone etcetera, etcetera, first off. And second off, you did get \$200,000 last year, correct, in the budget?

DR. FABRIZIO:

It was less than 200.

LEG. KENNEDY:

It was less than two. And you were entirely cut out this year.

DR. FABRIZIO:

Yeah.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Just if you'd answer that.

DR. FABRIZIO:

All right. So what we do is anybody that is -- has an addiction to any kind of Opiate, whether it's Opiate pills or heroin, voluntarily decide that they want to get treatment and to get off of the drugs. So what we do is we safely put them on a medication called Suboxone, which is buprenorphine and naloxone, which is a much safer way of maintaining somebody off of drugs as opposed to Methadone, where they need to go to clinics. With the Suboxone it can be administered by primary care doctors or in our case, in drug programs. The problem with access is that it's very expensive to have it done with the primary care doctors. They charge a lot of cash, whereas because we are non-profit we take insurances, Medicaid and Medicare, which literally is no charge to the patient.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The difference between your program and the physician that says 650 cash in hand, is that you require follow-up care and care during the use of the Suboxone at any facility; correct?

DR. FABRIZIO:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay.

DR. FABRIZIO:

And even now we do give it in the Hicksville office.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Right.

DR. FABRIZIO:

I give prescriptions for the Suboxone and in order to get the prescriptions they must be in a drug treatment program, which is, I think, the important part of any kind of treatment.

LEG. KENNEDY:

The Suboxone alone will not help stop the addiction without the treatment.

DR. FABRIZIO:

Right.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Are there any other questions for Dr. Fabrizio? Seeing none, thank you very much, Dr. Fabrizio. We appreciate you being here.

DR. FABRIZIO:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Next up is Julie Goble, and on deck is Loretta Davis. Come on up, Julie.

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MS. GOBLE:

Good morning, everyone. My name is Judy Goble. As legal advocate for The Retreat for nearly three years, I've worked for survivors in crisis and assisted them and their children in escaping domestic violence. The Advocacy Department alone has seen a nearly 40 percent increase in caseload over that period of time. The Natural Coalition Against Domestic Violence has found that one in three women and one in four men have been victims of physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes. With over 1.5 million people living in Suffolk County, that comes to over 436,000 of your constituents who are or will be victims of domestic violence. This public health crisis continues to be a financial burden on our country. The cost of domestic violence exceeds \$8.3 billion per year.

I have had many cases that have stuck with me over the years, and I would like to share one of those with you today. While in court one day I was referred a new client. She was visibly distraught by what she had endured. Her hands shook, her face was drawn, she was crying as she told me her story. We sat in my office. I helped her complete a petition for an Order of Protection. She recounted how the day before she had been beaten and verbally abused by her husband throughout the afternoon, and how he eventually pulled out a shotgun, pointed it in her face and pumped it. She was so frightened at the time that she urinated. She was certain her husband was going to kill her. All she could do was beg him to wait and not to do it where their children would come home from school and find her.

We completed the petition. We went to court to get an order. As we waited we discussed safety and things that she could do to protect herself and her children. After a short wait, as she was facing the door she shrieked in distress. Her husband had just walked in the door and, you know, had tracked her through her GPS signal in her phone. She was terrified. The Court Officers prevented him from harassing her in the court waiting room. I and my fellow advocate attempted to physically protect the client by blocking his view as she waited to go into the courtroom. She did receive a temporary Order of Protection that day, and through the diligence of the advocates, her attorney and the court, she and her children were able to escape the violent situation that she had endured for nearly two decades. Unfortunately, this example is not the most severe case, and without The Retreat's assistance the resolution might have looked very different.

Due to the current demands on the Advocacy Department and the lack of funding to meet these demands, we have been forced to implement a wait list for survivors for the first time in the history of the agency. If funding is further reduced, clients like mine may face an increased level of danger as they attempt to escape their situations which can lead to dire consequences, including increased instances of trauma and PTSD, more severe physical injuries and possibly death.

Please help us help these clients. They're not just your constituents. They're your neighbors, your friends, your family members and your coworkers. They need you to not only reinstate the funding, but increase it to ensure their health and safety. An ounce of prevention is said to be worth a pound of cure, but to our clients it's worth much more than that. To the men, women and children that our agency helps, these services can be worth their lives. Thank you for your time and understanding.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much, Ms. Goble. Does anybody have any questions for her? Thank you for being here. Oh, Legislator Kennedy has one.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you, Julie, for coming out. We are aware that you were cut and we are looking into it in the budget now as we are with everyone else. I know the good work you do. Keep going.

MS. GOBLE:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much. Okay. Loretta Davis is up and followed by Jerry Vazquez.

MS. DAVIS:

Good morning. My name is Loretta Davis. I'm the Executive Director of The Retreat. The Retreat is Eastern Long Island's only domestic violence agency. We provide these core services: A 24-hour bilingual hotline, emergency shelter, counseling, legal advocacy and prevention education. The Retreat has been a safe haven for thousands of residents from all areas of Suffolk County. The Suffolk County Legislative body has been pivotal in providing financial support for our work. Unfortunately, the progress that we have made together is in jeopardy, as the County Executive proposed to cut funding for The Retreat by \$49,820. Prior to the budget being released, I wrote to all of you requesting a larger funding allocation from the County's budget in order to directly address elevated needs and unprecedented victim waiting lists. Yes, as you heard Julie, we have a waiting list.

I'm here today to ask you at a minimum to reinstate the \$49,820 that have been cut. Rather than reduce services, at this time we need to provide more services to meet the increased demand. The Suffolk County funds were 16 percent of our core service revenue. The proposed cut would reduce that percent to 14 percent. This is a huge reduction to our budget, as every cent is used wisely and prudently.

We honor those who died and the survivors of domestic violence on Commemoration Day, just two short weeks ago. We celebrated new legislation and services that are available. These proposed cuts would undermine those advances.

The bottom line is the proposed cuts will result in fewer services and a reduction in our staff at The Retreat at a time when there's a heightened demand for services. Without services how can we encourage survivors to leave their abusers? How can we prevent more violence? What happens when we cannot help a survivor obtain an Order of Protection? Ultimately, what is the value of a human life? Please help us meet the increased demand for our critical services. The goal is within our collective reach.

On behalf of The Retreat and the residents of Suffolk County I request that the proposed cuts of 49,820 to The Retreat be reinstated. Thank you. See, I didn't have a timer, so I'll also let you know that I know some of the Legislators asked what our administrative costs are; 12 percent. So over 87 percent of every dollar that we receive goes to our services. Any questions?

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you, Ms. Davis. Any questions? No. Thank you very much. Thank you for being so prompt even though the timer wasn't working.

MS. DAVIS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

You're welcome. Okay. Jerry Vazquez is next, followed by LeeAnn Mann.

MR. VAZQUEZ:

Hi. I'm Gerry Vazquez. I'm Director of Programs for the Long Island Network of Community Services, a non-profit agency with offices in Hauppauge and Greenport. And with a commitment to enhance the health and safety of young people across Long Island, we're bringing together local leaders and institutions, developing innovative strategies, piloting programs and scaling up proven interventions.

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We're currently focused on two initiatives: Reducing youth substance abuse in the North Fork and reducing youth violence in the Patchogue/Medford communities. Both of these efforts involve an assessment of needs, collaboration among youth serving institutions and community members, the implementation of research-based proven practices tailored to local needs and multi-year engagements with local capacity building for sustainability.

I'm here in support of County funding for youth services, especially on Long Island's underserved North Fork. Our project there, the North Fork Alliance, has been a key convenor of representatives from across the North Fork to identify youth needs and deploy strategies to stem alcohol and drug use among minors. Our strategies include educating young people and parents about the dangers of alcohol and drugs, supporting youth leadership development in schools and in the community, positive peer influence as a powerful tool, conducting positive alternative activities and events, collaborating with police and retailers to reduce youth access to alcohol and drugs.

Our survey data shows that we're making a big difference. The Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey, which we administered in 2012 and then again this year, and completed by middle and high school students across all three local area school districts, found an 8 percent drop in alcohol use, an 11 1/2 percent drop in binge drinking, 52 percent drop in cigarette smoking, and a 22 percent drop in marijuana use. More dramatically, the survey found among eighth graders a 50 percent drop in alcohol use, 70 percent drop in marijuana use and a 67 percent drop in cigarette smoking. I think you will agree that these are pretty dramatic results. Unfortunately, we have a lot more work to do. Young people in the North Fork still use alcohol at a rate that's 31 percent above the national average. Binge drinking is 46 percent above the national average, and fully 43 percent of the young people we surveyed self-identified as being at high-risk for alcohol and drugs.

This is why we ask for your support in funding the North Fork Alliance. It's a project that's getting real results and it's a project whose strategies we believe can be useful in other communities facing similar challenges. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much. Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Vazquez? Seeing none, thank you very much for coming and speaking with us this morning.

MR. VAZQUEZ:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Next up is LeeAnn Mann, followed by Doris Mitchell.

MS. MANN:

Hello there. My name is LeeAnn Mann. I am a concerned citizen of the public who found out -- I found out just a few days ago that the budget for the public transportation was possibly going to be cut by \$10 million, which I was told could equate to losing ten routes here in Suffolk County. That concerns me. Although my daughter and I may not be here next fall and next winter, it concerns me for the benefit of the other people that depend on the buses. Whether it be that the buses run correctly or not, some of us do depend on the buses. I'm grateful for the days that I don't have to be anywhere at any particular time and I have some time to play with to ride the buses, but if they weren't there I don't know how I would get to most of the places that I would go to. I would have to get to the train and then figure out -- like Halloween may be an issue for my daughter and I because I don't know if the buses are running for Halloween. We may have to go to the train and take the train to Amityville and go to the mall so she can trick or treat. I don't know what our options are, but if our route was not there we'd be stuck. We would be a little bit more disenfranchised than we already are.

And I also have to sing praises. A lot of these services, they're all tied together. I am a survivor of

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domestic violence and so I'm one of the people that has been treated at The Retreat. So I want to applaud The Retreat for those services. So if you can find a way in the budget to tie all these things together, preventive services, if you take care of them you won't have to spend on them in the future. Then people will have the means to have their own transportation if need be, and have the knowledge and be able to pass the knowledge on to their children so they don't wind up with an endless cycle of domestic violence as well and all the other things that go into play. I mean, I grew up in a household with alcoholic parents, so these things all go together. So I hope you find a way to keep that \$10 million for the buses next year.

What you also might want to do, in the spring and the summertime, we can do some walking. We can get to the places we need to nearby, but in the fall and the winter, like it snowed yesterday, we're tied to the buses. We can't get to the library without it. The sidewalks are not there, the roads are impassable, and if we think of walking there's a danger because you might get hit by a car. So please make those services available. If you have to like thin them in the spring and the summer to make those funds more available in the winter, that might be something to do. And look at the ridership and try to work with that. Thank you so very much.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much, Ms. Mann. Any questions? Legislator Kennedy has a question for you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Hi, LeeAnn. That's an excellent suggestion and I just wanted to thank you for coming out and speaking for the people.

MS. MANN:

Thank you so much. I really felt like I had to. You know, the first meeting I went to last January, I had been complaining about things for two years and I thought you know what? There's an old saying, you have no reason to complain if you don't participate in all of these functions. So I felt like, okay, I have been complaining. Let me go and speak my mind and speak for the people so that something can be done. Thank you.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Okay. Our next speaker is Doris Mitchell followed by Aaron Waters. Go ahead, Ms. Mitchell.

MS. MITCHELL:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to request that Suffolk County not cut the \$10 million out of the budget. Over 40,000 people ride the buses per week and they try to get to the malls and to their jobs, and if we get our bus service cut we won't be able to get to work and get to the malls and get the things done that have to be done.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much for coming and speaking with us this morning. We understand that the bus service is a very important service for many people in Suffolk and the proposed cuts could be difficult. Okay. Our next speaker is Aaron Waters?

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ:

My name is Aaron Watkins-Lopez.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. There you go.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ:

I'm with the Long Island Bus Riders Union. I'm here today to talk about the proposed 10 million cuts to the Suffolk County transit funding. This would be detrimental to thousands, hundreds of thousands of people in Suffolk County. The bus system is the biggest -- one of the biggest transit systems in the country. We need this money. It services all of our major universities, it services all of our major malls. People need it to get to work, people need it to get to the doctors. I mean, you heard from the people from The Retreat. How do you think that the people that they service will get to The Retreat?

Essentially cutting the service -- cutting the funding to this service would mean terrible things for Suffolk County. We need it. There are 280,000 people in Suffolk County with disabilities. If we cut the fixed route service, which is six million from that four million from the SCAT service, we're leaving these people helpless and stuck at home. We need this funding. We need to make sure that the County actually puts more funding instead of cutting it and we need to call on the State. Suffolk County has done a great job in funding its service, almost 60% of the SCT service funding, rather, comes from the County. We need the State to step up. Nassau County gets double what we get and it's not fair.

What I'm calling for today is just that we do not cut the 10 million. Find other ways to fill that gap, the budget holes that I understand the County is facing, but not tell the people at the bus stops, poorly done bus stops might I add, that they don't deserve bus service.

So thank you very much and we're just calling that, you know, don't cut the service. We need it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Thank you. Any questions? Okay. Thank you very much. And I think you make a very good point there about how large our system is and how much of it is funded by the County versus just our neighboring County where the large portion is funded by the State, even though they privatized their system, and I think part of what the Executive is looking for, at least he says in his budget and his press releases, is that he's hoping to use this as a leverage to get the State to pony up a little bit more.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ:

Just to respond to that.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Sure.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ:

We're worried. We understand it's a gamble. We do understand, you know, the County Executive does understand that he's put his money, he's put his, you know, his fair share into the system, but you can't gamble on the back of bus riders. It's not okay. It's not right and there are hundreds of thousands of people that are utilizing the system right now. As we speak in this room people are in Brentwood, people are in Hauppauge, people are in Riverhead, waiting for their buses that don't even show up. Essentially we can't cut the service when the service is not running to its fullest potential. I understand where, you know, the County Executive is coming from. I understand where you guys all sit in this position, but at the end of the day your constituents need bus service. The malls need bus service. If we want to see a rise in income tax or, you know, sales tax, we can't stop people from getting to the malls. We can't stop people from getting to their jobs. Without buses, no one is going to work. So thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you. Okay. Our next speaker is Dan Levler, followed by Craig Brennan.

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MR. LEVLER:

Good morning. My name is Dan Levler. I am Executive Vice President of the Association of Municipal Employees. It's good to see everybody again since our interviews and our endorsements and everything. This morning I'm not here as an individual, but as a leader of an association of thousands, 7,335 to be specific, with active and retired members. Those members are not only taxpayers in this County, they vote, they engage the public to enact the rules that are set in motion in this room, and they enforce those rules in a fair and impartial manner. We're here today to voice our concerns on behalf of our membership and the tax paying public for another unsustainable budget weighing on the backs of our members. Recurring revenue notwithstanding, we face cutbacks with no cushion for unforeseen eventualities. In the next couple of days we'll be coming to the various committee meetings and presenting our findings and our recommendations.

Essentially the big thing for me this morning unprepared in all of this is we don't want to see what happens, the Association doesn't want to see what happens, I don't think anyone in this room wants to see what happens if we underfund a critical area of this government. Where we get to the point where there aren't enough people. There are small groups of people that provide, inside of the Association of Municipal Employees, provide vital services and they're only a handful of them and they work closely together. If those guys get the flu, we've got issues, you know, and there needs to be a backup plan. When I look at things like the Southwest Sewer District and the amount of operators that are necessary to keep that place up and running, a lot of businesses rely on that sewage treatment plant for waste disposal. If the people that are slated, the operators that are slated to retire within the next three years do retire, we won't have enough operators to keep that plant running. There won't be a pool of people to grab and it takes five years to train those people, and in only three years we'll see a big chunk of the trained and licensed operators set to retire. So there needs to be some thought in this whole process to backfilling positions that have gone. Again, we'll present more information in the coming days. I want to thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much, Dan. Does anybody have any questions for Mr. Levler? No? I am surprised they let you off the hook that easy. Thank you very much for coming and we look forward to hearing your recommendations as they come out. Our next speaker is Craig Brennan, followed by Stan Humin.

MR. BRENNAN:

Good morning. My name is Craig Brennan. I'm from the Long Island Association for AIDS Care and I just want to talk a little bit about our Suffolk County Initiative. Suffolk County has the second highest number of reported HIV cases and the highest number of reported AIDS cases in New York State. Since 2012 LIAAC Suffolk County Funded Initiative has enabled 227 Suffolk County college students to learn their HIV status, 113 percent of the Initiative's projected number of HIV tests. For every person that tests HIV negative and is provided prevention services by the Suffolk County Initiative, the CDC estimates that \$355,000 is saved in the course of providing lifetime HIV treatment.

According to the New York State Department of Health's most recent data, Suffolk County ranks third in the State for the most reported cases of both gonorrhea and chlamydia. In 2014, LIAAC screened 143 individuals for gonorrhea and chlamydia. Fifteen percent of these tests were completed by our Suffolk County Initiative.

Approximately 21 percent of Suffolk County adults 18 years old and over admit to binge drinking; three percent higher than the national average. The Suffolk County Initiative offers a behavioral modification workshop called Basics. The intervention teaches participants to be aware of their drinking patterns and the dangers associated with excessive alcohol intake.

Since 2012, LIAAC's Bilingual HIV Education, Information and Referral Hotline has triaged 13,000 calls and completed 477 client intakes. And Suffolk County funding also provides us to be able to

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do rapid HIV testing, screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia, prevention education and evidence-based workshops, and the operation of Suffolk County's only bilingual HIV Education, Information and Behavioral Hotline. In the year 2015 we've had seven percent HIV positivity rate for the year, so we have to -- we really need these funds to keep that positivity rate down.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. Thank you very much. Does anybody have any questions? Thank you for coming and speaking this morning.

MR. BRENNAN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. The last card I have is for Stan Humin.

MR. HUMIN:

It's actually Humin, like the being.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Humin. Okay. I'm making it more difficult than it is.

MR. HUMIN:

No worries. Good morning, Honorable Legislators. I wish you guys a lot of luck in the next 15 days. I'm here on behalf of Suffolk County Association of Municipal Employees. I'm their Fourth Vice President and I'm also a second generation County worker. I'm here for my father as well, who worked between 1968 and 2000 for the Department of Public Works. And my concern is for the budget that we're about to present before you. I just would like to read a couple of excerpts. "The 2016 recommended budget is a classic election year budget. Unlike the Police District, it continues the no property tax increase in the General Fund. It responds to ongoing Southwest Sewer District lawsuit by reducing property taxes by 12 1/2 percent. There are no layoffs nor are there any new program estimates or" -- I'm sorry, revenue -- please excuse me, "nor are any new program initiatives. It is a no harm budget for 2016. As in other election year budgets, revenue and expenditure estimates are proposed optimistically, which unless corrected after the election, will create fiscal problems in 2016 and beyond. The County has a structural financial problem which cannot be resolved with short-term solutions."

Us, along with our consultants, have been reviewing the County Executive's Recommended Operating Budget requests for Suffolk County AME since October of 2009. We've identified those imbalances that would negatively impact the implementation of each year's budget, hence negatively affecting our members and also future year budgets. In every year the Legislative Budget Review Office reports also concurred with our conclusions, but time and time again because of shortfall term -- because of short-term desire not to raise the General Fund property taxes, no major changes were implemented. Hence, the cumulative negative fiscal conditions that now face the County Executive.

Unfortunately, the 2016 budget being proposed by the County Executive continues downward -- continues that downward path where short-term considerations will continue the County's General Fund towards a fiscal cliff. We will have more to present further with the committee. I thank you for your consideration.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much for being here. Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Humin? Seeing none, thank you very much. I'm sure we will be having a lot of discussions in the future over your recommendations for what you see in the budget.

MR. HUMIN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Okay. I have no other cards at this time. Is there anybody else who would like to address the public hearing? Come on up, Kathy. Just state your name for the record.

MS. MALLOY:

I hate when you know who I am. My name is Kathy Malloy, but today I am here speaking as a longtime member of the Legislative Welfare-to-Work Commission and I have to comment on the 10 million cut to Suffolk buses. For the last three months of Transportation Committee meetings, and including some of the general membership meetings since May, there have been up to a dozen blind Suffolk County residents with their huge guide dogs taking SCAT buses for these daytime meetings and speaking out on behalf of the group known as SILO, which is a Single Independent Living Organization group. They're begging for the County to enhance the Suffolk bus system, because right now there is minimal weekend service and buses stop riding at 8:30 in the evening. These also are County residents just like any of us, but they cannot drive due to their disability. Many work full-time jobs. However, because of the limited County bus service, it's important to recognize what they cannot do.

They cannot go out to dinner with friends if their evening will be later than 8:30. They cannot go to a night movie. Yes, I was amazed. Blind people do go to the movies. They cannot go bowling; they bowl. They cannot attend government public meetings held at night where they would like their information to be heard. They cannot go to church on Sunday. They cannot visit friends, family or go anywhere on Sundays or at nights. They pay taxes just like you and I and they're willing to pay for bus service, and yet they are denied the very same rights we all enjoy as County residents.

They have attended several meetings now and I have been witness to their speeches, and yet who is listening. They are asking for enhanced service and they have provided documented written suggestions how to accomplish that without a huge cost increase. How can the only response be to cut the service even more. I ask you as our Legislators to review this budget very, very carefully to fund the most important services as you heard today. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CALARCO:

Thank you very much, Kathy. Okay. Is there anybody else who would like to address the Public Hearing? Going once, going twice. Okay. I have no more speakers. With that, we have a motion to adjourn by Legislator Cilmi and I will second. We are adjourned. Thank you.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.*)