SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

SPECIAL MEETING
ELEVENTH DAY

November 7, 2018

MEETING HELD AT THE WILLIAM H. ROGERS LEGISLATURE BUILDING
IN THE ROSE Y. CARACAPPA LEGISLATIVE AUDITORIUM
725 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY
SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK
AT 9:30 A.M.

Taken By
Lucia Braaten and Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographers

* Index Included at End of Transcript
(*The following was taken and transcribed by Lucia Braaten - Court Stenographer*)

(*The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m.*)

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Mr. Clerk, good afternoon.

MR. RICHBERG:
Good afternoon, Mr. Presiding Officer.

P.O. GREGORY:
Could I have all Legislators to the horseshoe, please? Mr. Clerk, please do the roll call.

(Roll Call by Jason Richberg, Clerk of the Legislature)

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Here.

LEG. FLEMING:
Here.

LEG. SUNDERMAN:
(Present)

LEG. MURATORE:
Here.

LEG. HAHR:
Present

LEG. ANKER:
Here.

LEG. LINDSAY:
Here.

LEG. MARTINEZ:
Here.

LEG. CILMI:
Here.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Here.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Here.

LEG. TROTTA:
Here.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Here.
LEG. BERLAND:
Here.

LEG. DONNELLY:
Here.

LEG. SPENCER:
Here.

D.P.O. CALARCO:
Here.

P.O. GREGORY:
Here.

MR. RICHBERG:
Eighteen.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Can everyone please rise for the salute to the flag, to be led by Legislator Flotteron.

(*Salutation*)

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Legislator Flotteron is going to introduce our Clergy for invocation.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Good afternoon. I have here with me my good, I consider, friend, besides my Pastor. Delivering today's opening prayer is Monsignor Thomas Coogan from Saint Patrick's Church in Bay Shore.

I first met him in 1997, when he first came to -- came to our parish, and he left for a little while and came back in 2006. For the past 12 years, his priorities for the parish have been worship first, then passing on the faith to the next generation. The Parish formal Outreach Program can be traced its roots back to at least 1940, when a group of women formed the Welfare League and raised money with an annual card party to provide food and clothes for those most in need. Today, parish outreach still provides food and clothing through its pantry and soup kitchen, which provides hot meals five days a week. The Parish is also an advocacy office, where trained volunteers help clients navigate the complex world of Social Service Agency. I am humbled and honored to introduce Monsignor Coogan.

(*Applause*)

MONSIGNOR COOGAN:
The honor is mine for -- first of all, to have the invitation from my friend and fellow congregant, Legislator Flotteron, but, also, because I realized I'm actually kind of in a holy group. And that might sound funny to you. I don't know how you think of holiness. Maybe Dr. Spencer, as a fellow minister of the cloth, I believe, would understand that my tradition says that whenever you sacrifice
of yourself to serve your other brothers and sisters in the
community, that's a very holy thing, that's the holiest thing you
can do. And as I've been more than 20 years now working in Suffolk
County, I've witnessed so many of you giving up your days off,
giving up your weekends, giving up your evenings. I see you have
Fire Departments. Some of you are in the Fire Department. I see
you marching in parades, and giving citations at Eagle Courts of
Honor. This is time you're taking away from your family, from your
recreations that our beautiful part of the world makes possible.
You sacrifice, and you let the press say things about you, too,
sometimes. And you have to go through the agony of going through
elections sometimes, as our country has seen. You're holy, because
you do all these things, you put up with all these sacrifices to
make the lives of our citizens better. So I'm honored just to be
here for that reason, too.

I have a prayer here that comes from my tradition, a peace prayer,
the prayer of Saint Francis. It's in the first person, so I'll be
saying the words. But I do think I'm giving expression to what
selfless folks like you would be your prayer. And a peace prayer
is a great prayer for right now, because we have Veterans Day
coming up, and this Veterans Day is special. It's the 100th
Anniversary of the Armistice, the first 11/11, right? That's
called an Armistice Day, not a Peace Day. It was the Great War
when they ended that war, but we call it World War I, because peace
did not come. And as we honor Veterans, so many who have
sacrificed so much, as you yourselves sacrifice so that our way of
life is possible, we've got to understand that the way to make
peace possible begins with us as individuals. And the great
spiritual master, Francis, he wrote that together in these words.
I'll speak them, but I believe I'm just echoing what exists in your
own hearts.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

Oh, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

(*Amen Said In Unison*)

P.O. GREGORY:
Thank you, Monsignor. And to think I was called "my holiness"
because I had the hole in the bottom of the sole of my shoe, you
certainly put it in a different perspective.
(*Laughter*)

P.O. GREGORY:
If we could all please remain standing for a moment of silence, and ask that we remember Marie Kuhnla, a Family Court Attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Suffolk County, who was allegedly murdered while vacationing in Turks and Caicos with friends. She will be remembered as a dedicated public servant and integral member of the County workforce.

This weekend we will honor the brave men and women who have served in our Armed Forces. With a population of more than 160,000 Veterans on Long Island, approximately 75,000 of them in Suffolk County, we set time aside on Veterans Day to thank them for their sacrifice, not simply their service. Their willingness to sacrifice the comforts of home, time with their loved ones, or a career put on hold, entitles them to a place in the collective hearts of all Americans who live in safety and freedom.

May we also keep in our hearts those following in our Veterans' footsteps who are currently serving at home and overseas. Yes, thank you.

(*Moment of Silence*)

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Thank you. Be seated. Okay. Again, good afternoon, and thank you all for coming here today. This is a special meeting of the County Legislature, being held pursuant to Section A2-6(B) of the Suffolk County Administrative Code, for the following purposes:

We have a one-hour Public Portion. Then we'll go to consider and vote on budget amendments to the Mandated and Discretionary portions of the proposed 2019 Operating Budget. And then we'll also lay any bills on the table and set public hearings for future meetings.

Okay. First, I want to say -- I want to thank -- before we go into the Public Portion, thank BRO and members of the Working Group for all the difficult work that they've put forward. It's never an easy process, and certainly the expertise and effort that BRO puts forward every year is certainly appreciated, and our hats off to you. So thank you, Dr. Lipp, and your staff for the tremendous job that you do.

And so we're going to get into the Public Portion. So I have several cards. First is Daniel Harris. For those -- some of you who may have spoken before, or some of you may be new to this process, each person gets three minutes. Okay, Mr. Harris.

MR. HARRIS:
Okay. I noticed when I came in here, I had to go through metal detectors and I passed armed guards.
In March of 2018, I received a criminal trespass warning from Patchogue-Medford School District after walking through the front door of Tremont Elementary School in Medford unimpeded. That incident led me to a lengthy investigation of why our children are getting murdered in their classrooms. My investigation can be summed up in one word, inaction. It is the school’s inaction that are getting children killed. Tremont Elementary School is known as a soft target to police.

Killers are walking through into the front doors of schools unimpeded, there is no resistance. At the last major school shooting in Santa Fe, Texas, a young man walks up to the front of the school wearing a trench coat in May of 2018. He passed a security guard and walked through the front doors unimpeded. He had the weapons under the trench code. He killed ten students, injured ten, and planted explosives. Previously to the shooting, that school received safety awards year after year, and this person walked through the front doors unimpeded.

The Superintendent of Patchogue-Medford School has said to me that he would rather his children go to Patchogue-Medford Schools than Sayville, where they are now. He said that Pat-Med Schools are safer, and I just got into Tremont Elementary School unimpeded. Santa Fe got awards year after year. It seems what school officials say and what reality is are millions and millions of miles apart.

On October 11th, 2018, I called for a meeting at Congressman Lee Zeldin's Office because of my frustration out of dealing with school officials. There were eight people at that meeting. At that meeting I presented tax maps and pictures showing how unsafe Tremont is. Anyone can get on school property with no resistance in multiple areas. The Superintendent of Patchogue-Medford Schools, Dr. Michael Hynes, stated that he -- quote, he is not concerned with the safety of the children at Tremont while they are outside for recess, because they are being protected by retired police, end quote. These retired police are unarmed.

Tremont Elementary School sits between two streets in Medford. One on the west is Tremont Avenue. There is no wall or fence along the school boundary with Tremont Avenue. On the east side of is -- of the school is Richmond Avenue. There is a fence along the school boundary of Richmond Avenue. This fence has two openings in it. On October 23rd, I took a 4 1/2-minute video of children coming within 50 feet of the openings on Richmond Avenue fence. During the entire length of the video, there was not one person of supervision anywhere in site. The school is approximately 500 feet away. I was surrounded by ten security guards. I went home and had five police cars come to my house.

I have a three-point plan to protect -- to protect children while they’re in school. One, protect the perimeter of school grounds with walls and/or fencing. Offer resistance on the perimeter. Make it hard to get on school property. Two, armed guards patrolling the perimeter. And three, metal detectors at all school entry points, security cameras, bullet resistant glass on first
floor windows. The schools won't do any of this, especially in Patchogue-Medford School District. We need --

P.O. GREGORY:

Mr. Harris.

MR. HARRIS:

We need lawmakers to mandate it.

01:16PM

P.O. GREGORY:

All right. Thank you, sir.

MR. HARRIS:

Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:

All right. Mr. Pressman, Paul Pressman, and then Vivian Barna is on deck.

01:16PM

MR. PRESSMAN:

Good afternoon, Legislators. Now that we have a whole new set of people in Albany, and for the first time probably in about 50 years, I must admit that this Legislature, both Republican and Democratic, have finally put the buses and people with disabilities and people that need public transportation to a forefront. I know it's going to take time to get done what we need to get done, but I personally want to thank Mr. Calarco and Mr. Cilmi for a meeting I had at the Patchogue train station last Thursday, so they could see, and they could see other bus riders and what the problems are. And I want to thank Mr. Chatterton from DPW for being there, and actually agreeing with a lot of the things I had to say when he and I usually disagree. So I know that there is things to happen in a positive way.

The main thing is I've already made calls, and I already have meetings set up with new State Legislative people that got elected yesterday. I didn't wait. I've already got meetings set up with them to -- set up from today to get money from the State. All I'm asking for out of a $3.1 billion budget is for the Legislators here to please find it for the people of this County, which 4 million people use the buses every year, as specifically stated by Mr. Chatterton of DPW last Thursday. Twenty million dollars out of a $3.1 billion budget is not a lot to ask for. The people of this County need that, the people that don't have cars, the people that can't afford cars, the people that are disabled, the people that need a quality of life as everybody else has. Thank you very much.

01:17PM

P.O. GREGORY:

All right. Thank you. All right. Ms. Barna, and then Brian Franco.

01:18PM

MS. BARKA:

Hi. I'm Vivian, and your time is very appreciated. And I thank you for all that you do for your community. I'm with All About Rabbits Rescue, and I'm here on behalf of other rescues who are all experiencing a population of unwanted and abandoned domestic
rabbits in Suffolk County that is totally out of control. It's not just one or two rabbits, but it's often entire batch of rabbits that are needing to be rescued.

Epidemic is the word described by a Bay Shore constituent who handed me five Suffolk County rabbits from different Suffolk County towns. "Epidemic," said a former Suffolk County SPCA volunteer who sought help for seven unwanted rabbits. Dog, cat, wildlife and rabbit rescues are getting inundated daily and weekly with calls from people in Suffolk County. This presentation depicts just a fraction of the problem. Please ask the Suffolk County SPCA to provide you with additional cases.

In an email that you should be receiving later, and also in the written presentation, we have listed various Suffolk County Facebook posts. In about a year-and-a-half it was about 100 rabbits, just that we came across, and All About Rabbits Rescue in Queens took in about 80, and we took care of them financially and we had them vetted. The sources are the breeders, pet shops who conduct the business of misinformation and omission of information on the pet rabbit. Those that buy more than one rabbit and have one, two and three litters are also part of the problem.

The impulsive, irresponsible public researches a car purchase more thoroughly than getting a rabbit with a 10-year lifespan. Rabbit sales don't work. It's a specialty pet, just like a snake or a hamster, and it's appropriate for the very few. Petco, PetSmart and Tractor Trailer Supplies acknowledge that pet -- that pet rabbit sales just don't work and they quit selling rabbits. New York City no longer has pet shop rabbit sales, and the shelter population has been reduced.

The real solution is to ban breeding across the board, in my opinion. Some less drastic, but also less effective, solutions include regulating the breeders, creating rabbit shelter programs across Suffolk County, promoting adoptions, ceasing rabbit pet shop sales, microchipping rabbits, so that the abandoned rabbits can be traced to the breeders or the pet shop, and those people can be fined. Tax breeders and pet shops for every rabbit they sell to fund rabbit shelter programs; low cost spay/neuter programs.

Obviously, the rabbits can't speak or defend themselves against abandonment, and know that abandoning a rabbit outside is equal to a death sentence. The public that cares about these animals is heartbroken, as well as the rescues. I'm hoping that somebody from here can get back to me and help us with constructive solutions, or point us in the right direction. And you'll be getting this presentation online and in paper. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Thank you, ma'am. Mr. Franco, and then Michael Watt.

MR. FRANCO:
How are we doing today?
LEG. SPENCER:
Good, thanks.

MR. FRANCO:
I'm a homeowner in Suffolk County, and our house, our houses in
Suffolk County are the most taxed and fee'd item that we can own.
And as the County Legislature has imposed new fees, you started out
in 2017 with a mortgage satisfaction fee of $225, and in 2018, you
imposed another $100 million in fees, and one of those fees
happened to be an increase to the mortgage satisfaction fee.

And I've called Mr. Bellone's office, and to no avail, you're not
grandfathered in, and they want to go to $1,000 to compete with
Nassau County. I stopped at Mr. Lindsay's office numerous amounts
of times and spoke with his Aides in there, and was willing to work
with them to find out how could we rescind this fee. Well, as of
today, I still haven't heard any answers back from them. You know,
they told me he voted no on the increase, but, you know, as
politics work, when you have enough votes to pass it and you're up
for reelection, you take a pass.

I'm looking at, well, I want to know is why do we need this
erroneous fee put on our mortgage? You know, I mean, you'll pay
30 years to pay off your house, and now you're hit with a fee to
say that we need to satisfy the Town or the County. It's
ridiculous.

You know, you guys have like the biggest noose around your neck
coming up anyway, and you're looking to come after us for more
money. You have healthcare costs, you have accrued time for all
County employees, you have pension benefits, disability insurance,
Section 8 housing, community Medicaid, Suffolk County Transit, that
we all subsidize, and, you know, it needs to stop. And, you know,
hopefully you guys can rescind this fee on the mortgage, because
it's ridiculous. You pay enough when you start off. Mortgage
transfer taxes, everything, this is like -- you know, it's like
going to the well. So, you know, I hope you guys can do something
about this, because I'm not paying this fee. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Thank you, Mr. Franco. Michael Watt, and then Ryan McGarry.

MR. WATT:
Good afternoon. My name is Michael Watt. I am the Long Island
Regional Director for Reclaim New York Initiative, a 501(c)(4)
organization whose mission is to educate and empower local
residents to get them more involved in the decision-making process
at all municipal levels for the purpose of ensuring greater
transparency and accountability on the part of our elected
officials. I'm also a proud resident of Suffolk County. And I
will be brief, because I want to catch that guy before he leaves.

I'm here to express concern regarding Suffolk County's budget for
2019, and to encourage the Legislature to address the very real
possibility that millions of dollars in anticipated revenue will be
collected illegally. This money most likely will have to be
It's been clearly established that a fee exceeding the cost of the service provided is in actuality a tax and requires Legislative approval at the State level. To circumvent the law to close the budget runs counter to the actions expected from homeowners and small business owners in the private sector. To pretend these fees are legal and to move forward with profligate spending practices in the hopes of a legal miracle from the judicial system is irresponsible at best, and an abdication of your fiduciary responsibilities at worst.

We are also concerned by the news of the impending raid on the rainy day fund to cover shortfalls stemming from over- underestimating expenses. Reserve funds are for emergencies, not to provide cover for poor planning, and underestimating police overtime by at least $20 million a year for five years straight qualifies as poor planning.

When you act in error once, it's a mistake. When you make the same mistake a second, third and fourth time, it's a choice. We ask today that our elected officials make smarter choices to make the difficult decisions necessary to right the County's fiscal ship. Either reduce spending or raise taxes with the full knowledge of the residents expecting to pay those taxes. Regarding the former, we commend Legislator Flotteron for initiating a commission to explore possible spending curbs the County can implement.

Business owners and homeowners make these tough decisions regularly and manage to do so within the parameters of the law. We implore the Legislature to follow the private sector's example. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
All right. Thank you. Mr. McGarry, and then Sherrie Godfrey.

MR. MC GARRY:
Good afternoon, Presiding Officer, members of the Legislature. Ryan McGarry, representing AME. I just want to thank everyone for your hard work on the budget, especially the Working Group. Definitely understand this is a very busy time of year and a stressful time of year for all 18 of you.

Just wanted to let you know that AME has reviewed the budget amendments as submitted by the Working Group. We are - - have a few minor concerns, but on the whole are incredibly supportive of them. They provide much needed positions at little to no cost to the County, thanks to the overtime savings and the State and Federal Aid related to those positions.

I do want to convey President Levler and the Executive Board's support. The only reason why they're not here present speaking to you today, along with many registered AME members to show their support, is, unfortunately, scheduling conflict. It is our annual convention out in Montauk this year, so they could not be present. But they are definitely paying close attention to this vote. And
we ask for your support in getting these much needed positions.
It's good for morale, it's good for the County, and, most
importantly, it's good and will improve services to the
constituents you all serve.

So I thank you for your consideration. Again, thank the bipartisan
Working Group for the great work they did to put those positions in
the budget, and we're really asking for your support here. So
thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Thank you, Ryan. All right. Sherrie Godfrey.

MS. GODFREY:
Good afternoon, everyone. I'm going to read a statement. And I do
have a copy for the Legislator Board, if -- I don't know who the
secretary is.

Okay. So my topic, this is no all members of the Suffolk County
Legislative Board. My statement is the purpose for me addressing
the Suffolk County Board of Legislator this afternoon is to follow
up on what I have addressed this Board with several times back in
March, March 20th, June 5th, July 17th. My topic was, and still
is, to bring awareness, address, and find a solutions to prevent
reoccurrence of intentional corrupt, bias, discriminative and
unjust behavior directed towards me by several libraries,
businesses and/or organizations here in Suffolk County and Nassau
County, as well.

I have sent and have also had several email conversations with a
few members of the governments, Suffolk County Board of Legislator,
including Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. I have had several
meetings and email conversations with a few members of the
Presiding Officer Gregory's staff, as well as with the Director of
Government Affairs, Mr. Mike Santeramo, who is located in Nassau
County, regarding this matter. You all could reference all the
emails, because everyone should have them.

So with that said, I would like to know what actions the Suffolk
County Board of Legislators are taking to address, resolve and
prevent reoccurrence of such bias, discriminative behaviors
regarding my cases that are pending with the Suffolk County Human
Rights Divisions, because I strongly feel that these -- there needs
to be a law to reprimand corrupt, unjust, bias behavior and
policies from libraries, businesses and/or organizations toward any
citizen residing here on Long Island and/or the State of New York,
or any else -- anywhere else in this country.

So this is my brief statement, and, you know, I'm just looking for
a timely response. So I've been addressing this issue for a while
now. I've been having plenty of conversations, but I've gotten no
results as far as addressing, resolving and preventing
reoccurrence, because what's going on and what has been going on is
ridiculous, and it needs to be addressed by all of the Board
Members to be involved with reading every email that I've sent out,
so you have the full understanding of what I endured, so it doesn't
recurr again, not just for me, but any other person who questions
the knowledge of people who should have the knowledge of doing
their job and doing it the right way.

You should not be threatened by a person who has knowledge that you
lack. You should go and learn what you do not know, so you get a
better understanding of why the person is questioning you about
certain things. That is my statement.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. That's all the cards that we have. Is there anyone else
that would like to speak that hasn't spoke already? Please come
forward. Okay. Seeing none, I make a motion to close the Public
Portion.

LEG. SPENCER:
Second.

D.P.O. CALARCO:
Second.

P.O. GREGORY:
Second by Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed?
Abstentions?

MR. RICHBERG:
Eighteen.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. All right. Let's get to the budget. Dr. Lipp, would you
like to get into a general overview?

MR. LIPP:
Okay. So the question here is what are some of the big ticket
items in the amendments to the Operating Budget? So I'm going to
talk about changes to the recommended budget by the County
Executive in the Legislature's Working Group.

So some of the big things were some funding was added, not a lot,
but some funding was added for contract agencies, because it was
felt that there was a need to improve service provision, and
priorities included food pantries, youth agencies, seniors, mental
health, and a few other minor areas. And we did about -- an
increase of about $300,000 there, which was felt -- it was felt by
the Working Group, that is, that that was a modest increase for
services that really were lacking, and those are the areas.

In addition to that, separately, there was a push about the whole
issue of heroin and opioid addiction, and there were two in
particular contract agencies that were increased by the Working
Group to deal with that, one for 100,000 from LICADD and the other,
about 224,000 from Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling. So that
was the service provision through contract agencies that the
Working Group focused on.

* Index Included at End of Transcript
In addition, there were some positions created in the Working Group's amendments, and if you look over here, there's a table, which I'll send to you after this forum. I apologize for not doing it before, because I was working on it. So in any event, the changes that were made by the Working Group, there were 16 new positions, but then two that were removed, so there was a net increase of 14 positions. Some of them were added with offsets, so that there was no cost involved, and overall, there was some cost in terms of total of $827,000. And those were to address specific areas that the Legislature had priority on.

So now we ask the question, well, you know, how is the budget put together in terms of funding, and probably the big theme for this year is sales tax. We increased sales tax legitimately by quite a bit of money. In particular, if you look at -- let's see, where am I? I already had that up. Okay. So there was a 4.9% increase in sales tax from 27 to estimate for this year, and the Legislature added another 843,000 to that in order to fund some of the contract agencies and needed staff increases. So that was an addition in 2018, which was felt to be legitimate. In particular, among other things, the anecdotal evidence is that holiday spending is going to be strong this year, number one. And number two, the third quarter ended after the recommended budget came out and it was stronger than expected. So it was felt that that's -- that was a legitimate increase. And for next year, 2019, there was no increase at all. The moral of the story is for next year the actual increase in terms of growth rate is 3.44%.

Next, there was an increase, also, for dedicated funding for the Hotel/Motel Tax, so that certain contract agencies and cultural groups in particular could receive some sort of an increase. The increase in the tax was very legitimate. We felt that after the third quarter, if we get anywhere close to that in the fourth quarter, then what would happen is if we kept the recommended revenue for the Hotel/Motel Tax the same, it would have wound up being -- we needed a negative growth rate, so -- for next year, so that seemed like an easy lift over there.

P.O. GREGORY:

Dr. Lipp, if I can interrupt you.

MR. LIPP:

Sure.

P.O. GREGORY:

So the -- you know, the budget process is the County Executive submits the budget to us, the recommended budget for 2019. Third week of September we get it. We meet -- we meet with the bipartisan Budget Working Group, we make some amendments, and presumably we're voting on those amendments. So today, if those amendments were to fail, then the County Executive's recommended budget would be the budget for 2019.

MR. LIPP:

Correct.
P.O. GREGORY:
So anything that was added by way of amendment to contract
agencies, adding positions, or anything like that, will obviously
not be in the budget, because they were voted against.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. So which means less for cultural agencies, for contract
agencies, less for -- you know, we added positions in the Deputy
Sheriff, we added -- I mean, there were roughly, I guess, 45
positions with the recommended, and our amendments --

MR. LIPP:
Added 14 net.

P.O. GREGORY:
We added 14, but there was -- I think, overall, it's like 45,
right, with the raised age and all that stuff, including the
recommended.

MR. LIPP:
Right. So that was in the recommended. We did not change that
part, so --

P.O. GREGORY:
Right, right, right. No. I'm just saying -- well, you're right,
I'm talking against myself. So their -- obviously, theirs would
stay in, because it's in the recommended, our additional 14 would
not be.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

P.O. GREGORY:
Which is Deputy Sheriffs, which is -- we did CPS workers, we did --
I think we did some custodians, we did some jail medical nurses,
because, particularly, that was concerning, because there was a lot
of overtime. That was --

MR. LIPP:
Ten-case workers, also.

P.O. GREGORY:
Ten workers, right, because there was an argument that the
case workers in Social Services have exorbitant caseloads, and that
could, you know, potentially lead to a problem. The Jail Medical
Unit had -- I forget what the exact number is, but they have --
you're contracting out for nurses. There's exorbitant contract
agency expenses in those lines, so the intent was to hire actual
Suffolk County nurses. So we reduced the output expense to the
contract agencies, added that for -- to fill some vacancies.
I think it was four, or something like that, right.
MR. LIPP:
Yes, that's about right.

P.O. GREGORY:
So we tried to fill gaps where we thought it was important. We obviously see more things that we can address in the budget, and that's happened every year since I've been a part of the budget process. But I think we certainly tried to do what we thought we could do, what our priorities are in the recommended budget that comes to us. It's a -- it's -- you know, in some respects, it doesn't make sense, particularly as it relates to contract agencies. And what I mean by that is, you know, we get the recommended budget. You know, you can have one food pantry that's gotten -- that's recommended to get the same monies that it got the previous year. Meanwhile, another food pantry doesn't have the money that they got last year. You know, so there's no rhyme or reason in that respect. So you could literally have a food pantry in one community that's getting funded from last year's level, and a food pantry in another community that won't get funded. You can have -- certainly have youth organizations in one community that's not going to get funded.

I had an initiative that I put in the budget last year with Project Connect that -- 124,000 that was zeroed out, and we were -- the Budget Working Group put in an additional 100,000 to bump it up to 224,000. So none of that would be in there, so we wouldn't be treating those who have overdosed with, you know, opioids and heroin, and it's proven to be a successful program. But that's not the only example. Obviously, there's others that -- funding that's potentially going to be cut. That would be with the -- in the recommended budget.

I've argued for years that I would almost favor zero-based budgeting. You know, if we're not going to fund similarly organizations that do the same things, you know, then maybe we do a zero-based budget. Everyone starts at zero, then you kind of start from there. I don't know, but I think that makes a little bit more sense.

So my concern is that this budget is not going to pass, the amendments, and that there's going to be a lot of hurt, there's going to be a lot of pain. We've almost been at this -- you know, at this point in the past, but I think we're going to go beyond this point this -- unfortunately, this year. But I just want to be clear to everyone what that means, because we haven't been here before. So it's contract agencies that are going to be hurt. There are positions that some of the unions have supported that they're not going to get. And simply to say you're going to make an amendment next year when there's no money for it, it's just not going to happen. So it is --

MR. LIPP:
To put that into perspective dollar-wise, if you go from the 2018 adopted budget to the 2019 adopted budget by the Legislature, if the amendments pass, you have like a $54 million increase overall in expenditures. Of that, about 1 1/2 million, a very small
percentage, is associated with the amendments, Budget Amendment 1 and 2. So that you're talking about whatever trade-off you think there is between a million-and-a-half and items that you put in the amendments.

P.O. GREGORY:
Yeah, it's relatively pocket change in a three-point, you know, six billion dollar budget. I just wanted to put that on the record. And if you agree with that or disagree, or if I said anything incorrectly, please correct me, but I just wanted to get it on the record.

MR. LIPP:
I think you stated it accurately.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. I interrupted you. Did you have anymore to say?

MR. LIPP:
Well, I could go on. I'm thinking that you --

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay.

MR. LIPP:
-- would rather ask question or talk --

P.O. GREGORY:
All right.

MR. LIPP:
-- among yourselves. If you want me to go on, I will, though.

P.O. GREGORY:
That's all right. Does anyone have any questions for Dr. Lipp? No? Okay. All right. I will recognize Legislator Hahn for the purposes of making an amendment.

LEG. HAHN:
Okay. Thank you. I want to make an amendment to the budget amendments. I make a motion to strike Omnicode MO15 from B.A. 1. This Omnicode makes a transfer associated with the creation of three new positions in the Comptroller's Office. And further, to strike the "WHEREAS" language related to the creation of these positions. I do this because of HIPAA issues, union contract issues, and my concern of harm for employees.

MR. NOLAN:
So that's to -- that's an amendment, proposed amendment to Budget Amendment No. 1, correct?

LEG. HAHN:
That is correct.

P.O. GREGORY:
Second -- motion by Legislator Hahn, second by Legislator Calarco.
And for those who understand what Legislator Hahn just said, there was -- during the Budget Working Group, there was a request, and it was in the BRO report, but a request by the County Comptroller to add several positions to do audits of the EMHP, and this is an amendment to take those out. So we have a motion and a second.

Oh, you want to say something?

**MR. LIPP:**

Point of information. There's also a "RESOLVED" clause in the amendments that need to be struck if you're going to do this.

**01:44PM LEG. HAHN:**

So can we add --

**MR. LIPP:**

Fourth "RESOLVED".

**01:44PM LEG. HAHN:**

-- to my motion to strike the "RESOLVED" clause?

**MR. LIPP:**

The Fourth "RESOLVED" clause.

**01:45PM LEG. HAHN:**

The Fourth "RESOLVED" clause. Thank you.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Legislator Krupski.

**01:45PM LEG. KRUPSKI:**

On the motion.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Yes.

**01:45PM LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Thank you. Could I ask a question of our -- you know, we do have the benefit of having a Doctor a Medical Doctor at the horseshoe. Through the Chair, if I could ask him a question.

**01:45PM**

So, Dr. Spencer, you know, we had -- we had a prolonged discussion about this, and you were -- you did illuminate the Working Group about the benefits of some oversight to the -- to our healthcare plan. As we know, the healthcare costs in this -- are a huge financial part of our budget, and for active workers and for retirees an extremely important part, all right? And we know we need to keep that as an important component to -- you know, for our employees that everyone be -- have good coverage and be covered, but the cost of those are going higher and higher. And you spoke about the need to oversee how those -- certain things are administered. Could you go into that and how this -- there could be some auditing taking place somewhere, so that, you know, people would know that it's -- the system is working properly?
LEG. SPENCER:
I'd like to first of all say to Legislator Krupski, thank you for putting me on the spot like this, I greatly appreciate it.

(*Laughter*)

LEG. SPENCER:
No, I do think that's very important, and I do appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Working Group in the work that they did on this issue.

And the EMHP, with looking at the insurance and the cost, has been something that I've been kind of extremely interested in, just because I want to make sure that we are spending over $400 million of taxpayers' money in the most efficient way possible. And any time you're dealing with healthcare, healthcare is complex and very messy. And I know that it's even more complex because of the EMHP Board, which has the bargaining units. And I think that that's the area where I'm weaker in, but I do understand healthcare, being someone somewhat understanding healthcare, being in private practice and billing.

And I believe that in healthcare there can be overcharges that really can have a massive impact to the bottom line because of perhaps a few bad apples. I don't think this necessarily comes only in the way of physicians. I'm very protective of physicians, but also with regards to ancillary services, hospital systems. And I think that the type of plan that we have, whether or not it's the copays or the price we pay for an MRI, or the charges that are being made, there's a lot of potential for waste.

And I found, you know, that as I was trying to get information about this, there were concerns with HIPAA laws, which are privacy laws, and also understanding that there's a Board in place, and information not all the time is as forthcoming as it should be. So the Comptroller expressing a concern in this regard, I found the Comptroller to kind of be frank and forthcoming with his concern, and was one of the reasons why having these audit positions in the budget seemed like a reasonable idea, but needed to be approached carefully.

I also understand that, too, with AME and our bargaining units expressing concerns with regards to if there is an audit or investigation, that would potentially lead to concerns that confidential medical information may have to be shared. I don't think that with -- that you can -- I think you can look at insurance information without necessarily getting into people's personal medical issue. But I think that to say that there's a guarantee that there would -- that would never happen, I don't know. I think that's beyond the -- you know, my knowledge of the auditing process.

So I -- since the budget, and I think that the Comptroller has just -- I think he's concerned. He wants to try to do the right thing, and I think that he may have mechanisms where he may decide to move forward, regardless. I do think that having these
dedicated auditors in the budget is in effect a policy position that we are establishing. And I've made it very clear that I think that we should be involved in the EMHP process. I know there's an outside auditor that's also involved. I would like to see more disclosure of that information. I do think progress is being made, but I understand Legislator Hahn's amendment or concern that there are a lot of questions that need to be answered if this action is, indeed, a policy change in terms of the relationship of auditing EMHP, and does it infringe upon the relationship of the contracts that the Board has with the Administration.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Thank you.

LEG. SPENCER:
I hope I said something in that long-winded response. I apologize for that.

(*Laughter*)

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Thank you. No. And I appreciate your --

P.O. GREGORY:
I thought you were a little short.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
-- your experience there. And if I could, a question to our Counsel, Mr. Nolan.

MR. NOLAN:
Yes.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
So is it -- because there's been other questions. Is it legal for the Comptroller to conduct an audit of this program, or is it a violation of some sort of anything within the workers' rights, any contract?

MR. NOLAN:
You know, this question really hasn't been posed to be previously. But I'm just looking at the Charter and the Comptroller's powers and duties, and, you know, if County dollars are going out and being spent, the Comptroller has quite a bit of authority to warrant those accounts and look at those accounts and the bills and the invoices. You know, I don't know if you can bargain -- I'll just say he has very broad powers under the Charter.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Okay. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
I got a list. Legislator Donnelly is next.
LEG. DONNELLY:
Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. So just I wanted to go on the record. Thank you for the privilege of being part of the Work Group. I believe that we produced a good product.

With reference to Legislator Hahn's motion for an amendment, I just want to put on the record that I -- certainly, I apologize to the members of the Work Group that I brought this forth during the Work Group process, that I thought then that there was serious concerns relative to individual employees being subject to providers being critical of the services that they're requesting. So I know that the County Comptroller was acting in good faith in requesting these positions and that he wants to do the right thing, but I just -- I think there are way too many variables at stake here, whether it's language with the bargaining units and the Executive Branch of government in conducting these audits, or the potential unintended consequences of specific employees being affected by that.

So I'm going to support Legislator Hahn's motion. I do think as a body that one of our greatest priorities is to look out for the welfare of the municipal workforce, and that's something that I certainly intend to do by supporting this motion. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
All right. Legislator Flotteron.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Questions, first, Dr. Lipp. I just want to verify, EMHP is the Employee Medical Health Plan, correct?

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
And that is our -- we're self-insured, we do not use an insurance company like NYSHIP, which say a lot of government agencies use.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
And what are we paying per year, roughly, in the budget for medical insurance?

MR. LIPP:
Off the top of my head, without looking at it, I'd say about 450 or so, 450 million.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
That's what I thought. And what has it been increasing on average per year? You know, it goes up and down, but it's been --

MR. LIPP:
Well --
LEG. FLOTTERON:
-- sometimes double digits.

MR. LIPP:
So the consultant, Siegel, had sort of like a trend growth rate in
their most recent report, I think, of about either 7.6 or 7.8%.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Yeah. So it's something we have to try to control, if possible.
Thank you.

I'd like to call -- just a question on this line to understand the
need. Comptroller Kennedy, I have a question for you, if you could
come up to the mic.

MR. NOLAN:
You have to ask the Chairman.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Oh.

P.O. GREGORY:
For what purpose?

LEG. FLOTTERON:
I want to understand the exact needs of -- these are questions
here, we're changing this whole budget.

P.O. GREGORY:
You were on the Working Group.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
I know, and it's changing afterwards.

P.O. GREGORY:
You went through this four times.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Well, not everyone was in the Working Group, because it was in the
basement. Okay. Well, thank you. I guess they don't want you to
speak.

P.O. GREGORY:
All right. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:
You can pass over me.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator McCaffrey.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Thank you. I may not have an M.D., but I do have some experience
in self-insured --
LEG. SPENCER:
Even more.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
- health funds. If you want, if you have an ENT problem, you want
to see Doc Spencer. But if you have a problem with your
self-insured medical fund, you may want to speak to me. I'm --

LEG. SPENCER:
Yes.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
So I also serve as the Fund Administrator for our Union's Health
and Welfare Fund, which is very similar in nature to the EMHP plan,
and so I do this on a day-to-day basis. And we actually use Empire
as -- contract with them, the same way that EMHP does. Slight
difference is we administer most of our claims ourselves. And one
thing I can tell you, what we do, we audit every claim that comes
forward with our own employees. And so a claim comes through, it's
repriced, and we make sure that it's paid in accordance with the
plan guidelines.

So I think there is some real need for the audit capabilities.
How that shakes out, I think we need to talk about it. I had a
conversation with Comptroller Kennedy, and I explained to him my
concerns about how people could be coming in and the sharing of
health related information, protected health information, could be
a violation of the HIPAA laws. But I think after our conversation,
he agreed that he wasn't looking to overstep his bounds in terms of
going after individual members and/or violating any HIPAA laws.
And I think if we put our heads together, we could come up with a
real solution that really protects, you know, what needs to be done
here.

Four hundred and fifty million dollars, and it's something that's
going up 7 to 10, and sometimes higher, double digits, every year
is the low-hanging fruit in this budget process. And this is the
area where we can really sink our teeth into and to get some real
savings. And I'm not talking on the backs of the members and our
retirees and our employees. This is something just through simple
plan design changes that we can really effect real savings in here
that makes it even a better plan for our members. I'm sorry, I'm
talking how I would talk at my union for our employees. But, at
the end of the day, when we're charging higher co-pays for people
to go to the doctor, you're discouraging them from going to the
doctor and taking care of a problem at a smaller -- when it's
small, and later on, they end up in the emergency room, because
they didn't want to pay the $25, and now they've got bronchitis,
or, worse than that, pneumonia.

So there's really some things that need to be looked at. And we
formed a working group amongst ourselves. I was proud to serve
with Presiding Officer Gregory when I was the Minority Leader. We
went to the -- to the County Executive and said, "We need to fix
this." And we brought in the unions and talked to them and said,
"We need some changes," okay?
And I have to tell you, the County Executive has failed us. There's a process there that should have taken place that would have incorporated many other things in there, all the unions and all these changes, but, really, there's been a lack of action on the part of the County Executive here to engage. We've got some qualified people. Legislator Lindsay understands the insurance side, Doc Spencer understands the medical side, I understand, you know, this whole overall process, and we just got no action from the County Executive, who didn't want to engage in this, and I'm really frustrated by that, and that's the real enemy.

But in terms of this amendment, I can tell you, I have assurances from Comptroller Kennedy, if it is today or down the road that we end up having these positions in here, that they'll be used in a thoughtful, prudent manner and with -- after consultation with the unions and people that know what's going on here and would not violate any of these HIPAA laws. There's many ways to do it, business associate agreements, where the information is redacted, or people agree not to use that information, or use it only in a particular way. So we need to be taking a look at this, because, as I said, this is the low-hanging fruit in the budget process and it has failed to be addressed, and that goes back to the County Executive. So thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:
Thank you. Yes to most of what you said, most of it. I mean, obviously, I don't know who, the County Executive failed us, but I do believe there's savings to be found. I don't think this is the way, and I think this was rushed to us. You know, sounded good in the moment for a second, and then when we got a little bit of more information, a million questions popped up.

And so, you know, we've already discussed pulling together a small Working Group, which could possibly include the experts you mentioned, both yourself, Legislator McCaffrey, Legislator Lindsay, Legislator Spencer, potentially Legislator Kennedy as a nurse, Legislator Donnelly, his experience. We can -- you know, if we figure a way out that doesn't have all these land mines, we no doubt can work together across the aisle, as we always do, to figure this out.

I just think this was rushed, and with just peeking quickly, you know, under the bed there, there was a whole bunch of things that were discovered that were problematic, and I don't think we should rush to have this in without just, you know, further understanding. So, we'll take it out of the budget and we'll get together and we'll have a joint proposal on how to -- on how exactly to go about this, and to find those savings, and do the kind of oversight that we need to do to make sure without harming our employees. So thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Berland.
LEG. BERLAND:
Thank you. First, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Working Group. It was -- as a first-timer, it was very informative, and actually enjoyable. So that being said, I did not support these positions from the start, because I'm concerned about the HIPAA issues. And I'm concerned that the mechanisms that may be able to be put in place, as Legislator McCaffrey said, that, you know, they may be able to be there, but they're not there now. So I don't think it's important -- I think it's important not to start this process, not to, you know, put these positions in and not to enter into this realm unless and until you have the mechanisms all laid out to make sure that our employees are protected, and that their medical records are protected, and that there are specific, you know, instances with their doctors are personal and private to them. And I'm very concerned about that, so I'm going to be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:
I just have a couple of questions, and if I could through the Chair. Legislator McCaffrey, I'm trying to digest some of your statements. And I don't think you meant to, but you almost could leave the impression that the reason why we're getting 8% increases every year is because we're not auditing the plan now. And I don't think that's what you were saying, but I just -- I just want to clarify that.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
I think it's a combination of things. The biggest thing is the plan design, the way he have we have our plan set up. You know, the way the -- the way the payments are made and the regulations, the rules and regulations and how the -- kind of the way that people are encouraged to use the plan needs to change, so that it's more focused on preventive and less on reactionary, and make sure that's being used in a cost effective manner.

LEG. LINDSAY:
I agree with you 100%. I think that's not just a problem here, it's a problem universally --

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Yeah, but --

LEG. LINDSAY:
-- throughout the country.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
But each one of these plans is different in itself, you know, and that each one of the -- the people on the EMHP are the ones that set the guidelines to the plan and how it's utilized, whether it be high copays on the front end, or cost sharing somewhere along the line to -- you know, to make sure that those dollars are being used cost effectively. But an integral part of all of them, as I've done on my plan, is to make sure that there -- there has to be some
sort of auditing component. I think right now we may be giving
that to Empire Blue Cross, which is the -- we pay as the
administrator of the fund. And I think where the rub is is that
we're not quite sure if that -- if that serves their purpose, our
purpose, or it serves their purpose when they're doing the auditing
function of our claims, or whether we should be doing that inhouse.

LEG. LINDSAY:
I agree with you there. But, you know, part of the other statement
you made was that you guys audit -- in your union plan, you audit
every claim as it comes in. I don't think you mean to affirm that
their -- that Blue Cross now, acting as our third party
administrator, is just paying every claim without putting it
through with checks and balances to make sure it's a valid claim
before they pay it.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Correct. So in our case they do, they pay it the way they believe
that it should be paid, and then we check it to make sure that it
is being paid the way it should be paid. So we always have two
people catching this.

LEG. LINDSAY:
Right. But don't we -- don't we do an -- don't we have an outside
auditor who actually -- who does come back and audits those after
the fact?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
I don't think they go on a claim-by-claim basis as a --

LEG. LINDSAY:
How else would they do it, then?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
I don't -- I said I'm not sure that someone does do that, or
whether or not Comptroller Kennedy is doing that after the fact.
And that's one of the -- one of his audits came up with that, with
some of the -- that's the crux of some of the issues he has with
the contract agreement we have.

LEG. LINDSAY:
So the Comptroller does audit the plan now; is that correct?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
He can, but not to the extent that I think that you really need to.
I think he looks at certain aspects of it, but not every aspect of
every claim that's coming in there.

LEG. LINDSAY:
Okay. What was represented to me with these three audit positions
was going to be to audit the outside -- out-of-network claims; am I
correct in --

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
I don't -- I don't know if there was a distinction between the --
between the two. But it doesn't matter if it's in network or out

* Index Included at End of Transcript
of network, they still need to make sure that it's being paid --

LEG. LINDSAY:
I agree with you.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
-- within the guidelines.

LEG. LINDSAY:
And my experience has been, you know, that the abuse, to call it
that, is more on the billing coding and what they code the claim
at, not out of network or in network, and it's double-billing.
Those are the types of functions that an auditor can normally pick
up. You could do it in a way that's not -- there's no danger of
someone's HIPAA, HIPAA rights being violated, and that there are
people who specialize in that.

My reason for being against this is that there's other people that
specialize in this that I think can do it better than hiring
someone inhouse. They do it at a zero cost to the County, meaning
that they normally charge an upfront fee. If they're not able to
find that money, then they return the difference. Anything they
find above their fee they keep a percentage of, and that's
negotiated with them. So it's always a net positive to whoever
the -- whoever the payer for those auditing services would be. To
have people sitting on staff auditing every single claim that comes
in, then I think we would need to restructure how we do the whole
process. Then why use Blue Cross to administer our claims at all?
Why not just use their network and we handle our own claims
inhouse, similar to what you do in the union plan?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Yeah, but we -- actually, they -- it's very hard to set that all
up. But in our arrangement, without getting into too much detail,
they reprice the claims and then we audit each one of the claims.
And it may be something similar that we want to do that, because we
pay less of an administrative fee than the County does, because
we're paying Blue Cross to do that, but we have a system set up.
It's not a hard thing to do, it's maybe something we could look at.
But to do what you were speaking about before in terms of an
outside -- I get bombarded by these people calling me all the time,
"We can save you money, can save you money." If -- there's no
incentive for them to fix any of these issues, because they want to
keep finding these issues and getting their piece of the pie. So
if you have your own --

LEG. LINDSAY:
But fix the issue in what, in terms of usage or in terms of the
abuse?

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
You said on the out-of-network claims --

LEG. LINDSAY:
Right.
LEG. MC CAFFREY:
-- where the people are paying -- where they feel that they're not being paid properly, they get a percentage of the savings, okay? There's no incentive for them to be able to make any changes or suggest any changes that would end it. They just want it to proliferate so they can get a portion of those --

LEG. LINDSAY:
I agree with you there, but I think you're -- we're talking about two different functions. We're talking about audit, as opposed to changing the plan design and --

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
There's two aspects to it. I'm just --

LEG. LINDSAY:
I agree.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
There's two ways to audit, after the fact and before the fact.

LEG. LINDSAY:
But I don't -- I don't see how using an outside auditor could -- would change how we or what we could do with our plan.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
We have a lot of choices. We have a lot of choices.

LEG. LINDSAY:
I agree. I think you and I are in agreement on a lot of this, and --

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
Yup.

LEG. LINDSAY:
-- there are some changes that can be made. I just don't know that doing it through the audit function, as opposed to making -- making those changes outside of that and continue to use -- and I believe we do use outside auditors now to audit it. To continue to use them, utilize their expertise, I just -- I'm not a firm believer in hiring those -- that staff and putting them on, and then teaching them and training them how to audit, because a very -- this is a very specific function that's not like just a normal accounting function. There's a high level of expertise that you need to really look at these claims, because they're so complex, there's so much information in there. And I just want to make clear that by hiring -- by having these auditors in place, we wouldn't recover that 8% increase that we get every year. That's more a function of just the -- a crisis of what's going on in our country right now with the cost of healthcare.

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
I don't completely agree, but I think we can mitigate. I have a much lower increase in my healthcare inflation than this plan does, and I think we could save money if we were given the opportunity to
do that.

And the last thing to auditing of the claims, if you have somebody coming in that's part of the team, they don't need to be there all the -- they wouldn't have to be there forever, because you would find out there are so many things that are happening that you could fix, fix that, move on to the next thing, and then eventually not have to use those people anymore. I think you need to find out what's going on there and fix it, as opposed to an outside guy that would just let it continue, and just say, "Okay, I saved you money here. I get a percentage of that." So I think you need to have somebody come and say, "Look, this isn't being paid properly." The readmissions to the hospitals, if they're beyond a certain period of time, that should be going back. That should not be being paid by the fund, it should go to the hospital. And there's different things in the contract that are not being enforced right now, and I think that's more what Comptroller Kennedy is looking to do in terms of our relationship more with Blue Cross than it is our relationship between us and the participants.

02:10PM

LEG. LINDSAY:
I think we agree, it's just that I think we just have different philosophies on how to get there, but I appreciate your perspective on it and your expertise. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Fleming.

02:10PM

LEG. FLEMING:
Thank you. Yes, just quickly. I support Legislator Hahn's amendment, and for much the reasons that we've heard already. I just -- I wanted to follow up on what Legislator Hahn said about rushing this proposal or these proposed additional staff members. And I -- you know, I wasn't a member of the Working Group, so -- but I do chair the Ways and Means Committee. It would have been appropriate to have a public and transparent discussion of this at committee, as we did about every other additional staff that was proposed in the -- in what end -- you know, what ends up with both the budget and the amended budget. We had a full and fair opportunity to discuss it. And so I'm a little curious as to why that didn't happen in this case, but especially considering the sort of arcane level of discussion, just what we hear between the Legislators who are so knowledgeable on it.

02:11PM

I have serious concerns, particularly about the fact that it's my understanding that this is a bargained-for provision in the contract with the participants, with Labor, that Labor would have a fair input in the audit process. So I'm certainly -- without an open discussion about it, I certainly don't feel comfortable possibly overstepping a bargained-for right in a labor contract. So I appreciate Legislator Hahn's putting it forward and I definitely will support it. Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer.

02:12PM

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Legislator Spencer.
LEG. SPENCER:
This time I'll be brief. There are audits that are going on currently right now, and, you know, I hope to have further discussions with the Comptroller, but there are actually over four different audits that are in process or completed, and they're looking at different aspects of the EMHP plan. One of the audit -- there's a claims audit that's going on with Siegel that's looking -- that's in its final stages, and the work has started, so they're already in the middle of one. There's a WellDyne audit for prescriptions that went from January '14 to December of 2016. There is also an Aon Consulting, Birchfield Group contract.

And I don't need to get into the details, but I do think that there's so many aspects of audits that are occurring and we -- I know Siegel's responsible for a lot of them, and I think the Comptroller is getting some of that information, and, you know, I think his testimony would be very important. But I do think he could probably clarify why this is necessary, but we're spending money for outside audits that's occurring, some through the Comptroller's Office, some through administration. And I think this is a very complex issue, and so I do think we need to take a closer look at this. So that's all I'll say.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Anyone else? Okay. So we have a motion and a second on Legislator Hahn's amendment to Budget Amendment 1. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. KRUPSKI:
(Raised hand)

LEG. MURATORE:
(Raised hand)

LEG. SUNDERMAN:
(Raised hand)

LEG. CILMI:
(Raised hand)

LEG. FLOTTERON:
(Raised hand)

LEG. KENNEDY:
(Raised hand)

LEG. TROTTA:
(Raised hand)

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
(Raised hand)

P.O. GREGORY:
Abstentions? Raise your hands.
MR. RICHBERG:
Ten.

P.O. GREGORY:
Ten. Keep your hands raised. You got it? All those opposed?

LEG. KRUPSKI:
(Raised hand)

LEG. MURATORE:
(Raised hand)

LEG. SUNDERMAN:
(Raised hand)

LEG. CILMI:
(Raised hand)

LEG. FLOTTERON:
(Raised hand)

LEG. KENNEDY:
(Raised hand)

LEG. TROTTA:
(Raised hand)

LEG. MC CAFFREY:
(Raised hand)

MR. RICHBERG:
Ten.

P.O. GREGORY:
Ten, okay. All right. So we need a motion. And just before we do it again, make the motion, I wanted to be clear as to -- also, as to the cultural affairs, the -- was it 92 funds, right, like all the cultural affairs stuff that we do?

MR. LIPP:
Yes, that's --

P.O. GREGORY:
Because it comes over recommended as a zero. That means --

MR. LIPP:
No, it comes over with -- as a lump sum.

P.O. GREGORY:
A lump sum, right, but it's not disbursed, it's not disbursed to any particular group, and it will remain that way.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.
P.O. GREGORY:
Until an amendment is made.

MR. LIPP:
Yes. There will --

P.O. GREGORY:
And it will be less than what the Budget Working Group did.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay.

LEG. CILMI:
DuWayne, just if I could prior --

P.O. GREGORY:
Yes, yes.

LEG. CILMI:
Could I through you ask our Counsel, what -- to what extent can we make amendments to the Budget amendment, to the Omnibus amendment? For example, let me just -- let me -- that's too much of an open-ended question. Let me ask you if we can do this. Can we, for example, remove MO02, which is the decrease, decrease the transfer of the General Fund to the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund by 32 million, etcetera, blah, blah, blah, could we remove that from the Omnibus amendment and, instead, vote on it separately?

MR. NOLAN:
I think you can make an amendment to amend this by adding something or removing. But in terms of a separate, considering it separately, I think that would be counter to the Charter, because, you know, the Charter talks about proposed amendments being circulated to members of the Legislature at least two days before the vote has to be taken. So if you want to -- and I'd have to check with Budget Review to see if it would work technically, but if you wanted to take a vote to remove a transfer, you could do that, but I don't think you could then say, "Let's vote on that separately."

LEG. CILMI:
So to follow up on that question, then, this -- in order to consummate the transfer, if you will, a separate resolution has to be adopted by this Legislature, correct?

MR. NOLAN:
You're talking about the transfer out of the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund?

LEG. CILMI:
Right.
MR. NOLAN:
Yes.

LEG. CILMI:
Okay. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Trotta.

02:17PM
LEG. TROTTA:
So you're saying there had to be a two-day process, so --

MR. NOLAN:
I said that -- what I said was the Charter states that the resolutions that are considered by the Legislature should be circulated two days prior to the actual vote. It also does state that the Presiding Officer can waive that two-day requirement, but that has not occurred here.

02:17PM
LEG. TROTTA:
So are you saying that the resolution we just voted on from Legislator Hahn is void because she didn't circulate it with --

MR. NOLAN:
No.

LEG. TROTTA:
That's what you --

MR. NOLAN:
It's well -- it's well established, Legislator Trotta, that amendments can be made on the floor to the budget amending resolutions, and that's what we just considered. She wanted to -- Legislator Hahn wanted to remove a certain omnibus code that's very -- you know, it's clearly identified, and a vote has been taken, so that has been removed and now --

LEG. TROTTA:
So is --

MR. NOLAN:
Go ahead.

LEG. TROTTA:
So is this.

MR. NOLAN:
I said that Legislator Cilmi could make a motion, if it's technically feasible from Budget Review's point of view, to remove the transfer, that he could do that, but that -- you couldn't then remove it and then take a separate vote, separate and apart from the omnibus.

02:18PM
LEG. TROTTA:
So we can do it.
MR. NOLAN:
You can do the first part that Legislator Cilmi asked me about.

LEG. CILMI:
Right, but if I may. If I may. George, in your answer to
Legislator Trotta, you added a component that you didn't add when
you answered me, in that the Presiding Officer can waive that rule.
And how does that happen?

02:19PM

MR. NOLAN:
The Presiding -- this happened in many years past where -- and it
typically happened in the context of the omnibus and Budget Review
having difficulty completing it two days prior to the actual vote.
The Presiding Officer can waive the two-day deadline for a new --
for separate resolutions, but that is not -- but he's never -- the
Presiding Officer has not issued any type of letter to that effect,
and now we're here on the day of the vote.

02:19PM

LEG. CILMI:
But that request can be made to the Presiding Officer in the
context of this --

MR. NOLAN:
You can ask him, but I won't speak for the Presiding Officer.

LEG. CILMI:
I'm asking, DuWayne.

(*Laughter*)

02:20PM

P.O. GREGORY:
You can make your request. I don't know how I would, you know,
decide on it. I don't really see the purpose of it.

LEG. CILMI:
I think it's an item that deserves to be voted on on its own merit.

LEG. DONNELLY:
Why?

02:20PM

P.O. GREGORY:
So you're -- so you're not against the -- what the Working Group
did, you just want to vote on it separately?

LEG. CILMI:
In this particular case, yes.

P.O. GREGORY:
Well, I don't understand why. Right, I mean, we -- and the -- in
the past, the only time that a rule has been waived regarding the
budget is because the Budget Working Group didn't have the time to
complete the budget in a timely fashion, and it was at the request
of BRO, not because a particular Legislator wants to amend the
process during the middle of the -- you know, of the vote, so I
would say no.
LEG. CILMI:
Okay. Notwithstanding what my response would be to your lead-up to the no, I respect the no. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
All right. What's that?

MR. NOLAN:
I should have added that the waiver only comes at the request of the Director of BRO, pursuant to the Charter.

LEG. CILMI:
Okay.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. Where were -- so I think I finished my thought. So the all the cultural affairs stuff, it's almost like a -- it's a lump sum, it's not allocated to any particular group. So all those agencies that we went through during our Budget Working Group process will not get funding for next year, as of --

MR. LIPP:
There would be a need to have a separate resolution --

P.O. GREGORY:
Right.

MR. LIPP:
-- during the year.

P.O. GREGORY:
So if you have money for a concert, or some -- you know, all those performing, you know, cultural affairs groups, you know, zero, right?

MR. LIPP:
Well, right now.

P.O. GREGORY:
Well, right, as of right now.

MR. LIPP:
There's funding, but it would be lesser than if the --

P.O. GREGORY:
Right, right.

MR. LIPP:
-- Omnibus passed.

P.O. GREGORY:
And before we vote, I just want to state that, again, I want to thank BRO, I want to thank the Working Group for all the work that they've done during this process. I personally think that this budget was -- you know, we certainly had worse budgets. It's never a fun process, it's always some level of difficulty, and this was a
difficult budget to some degree. But, you know, I think, you know, I'm a -- I am a believer in the process. I believe in having a bipartisan process. This is something that, you know, my predecessor, Bill Lindsay, felt it was important that we include -- that it not be a majority process, and then that would just cause chaos that we see in other Legislative bodies, you know, throughout the state and throughout the country, quite frankly. And we try to be inclusive. People participate, actively participate in that process. And I think, as a -- as a policy, we try to get the understanding that those who help put the product together that's presented before us that we vote on to support it. That's at least what you can do as someone who has actively participated in the process.

You know, most likely you added costs and expenses to the budget that in past years you voted against and you received a benefit of getting those priorities of yours in the budget. I'm afraid this year that's just not going to be the case. There's going to be a lot of pain if this goes down the way that I think it does. And I'm just asking -- you know, I sent an email to everyone last week and just kind of try to put everything aside and do what we think is right, not only for our constituents, but for, certainly, the residents of Suffolk County. And I don't think it's something -- I don't think this budget is something that we all agree 100%. You know, I think we disagree with certain things, I think we agree with certain things, but it's -- you know, but that's part of the process. And I just ask my colleagues to support it. I think we did a good job. Certainly, I will want the result and the product that we came up with in a bipartisan fashion, as opposed to what the County Executive put forward. And I think what he put forward was a pretty good product as well, and we tweaked it, as was mentioned before, by $1.5 million, and to address our Legislative priorities, or what we think is the priorities, or should be priorities for the residents of the County. Okay?

MR. NOLAN:
And just before we get to the vote, I just would pose this to Budget Review. If the first budget amendment fails, we don't consider the second one; am I correct?

MR. LIPP:
You -- there is no rule about that, but you really shouldn't, because it's -- you can't -- it's like half a baby, you know.

MR. NOLAN:
I just want the Legislature to have a --

MR. LIPP:
You can have either an increase or a decrease in property taxes if you pass one and not the other, because they offset each other.

MR. NOLAN:
That's it.

P.O. GREGORY:
And I have a followup. So we won't -- we shouldn't do Budget
Amendment 3 either, right, Dr. Lipp?

MR. LIPP:
No, you definitely could do 3.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay.

MR. LIPP:
That's a separate Southwest stand-alone.

P.O. GREGORY:
This is Southwest. Okay. So I'm going to make a motion to approve
Budget Amendment 1 as amended. Do I have a second?

LEG. HAHN:
Second.

P.O. GREGORY:
Second by Legislator Hahn. Roll call.

P.O. GREGORY:
I'm sorry. Does anyone want to make a statement?

LEG. FLEMING:
(Raised hand)

P.O. GREGORY:
Yes, Legislator Fleming.

LEG. FLEMING:
Just through the Chair, if I could get some clarification from
Legislator Cilmi. I'm not sure I understand the question. May I,
through the Chair?

P.O. GREGORY:
(Nodded yes)

LEG. FLEMING:
Thank you. So I'm not sure I understand the question. That you
wanted to -- yeah.

LEG. CILMI:
I missed the first part.

LEG. FLEMING:
Yes. Are you Cilmi? You're Cilmi, yeah, yes. So --

LEG. CILMI:
Last time a checked.

LEG. FLEMING:
No. I think you were just in a side conversation. I said,
"Legislator Cilmi, through the Chair."
LEG. CILMI:
I didn't hear you, I apologize.

LEG. FLEMING:
No worries. I just didn't understand. And I apologize. I've got a foggy head for a cold, I guess, but -- so in -- your question to Mr. Nolan was could we vote -- could we put forward a motion to take out M001.

P.O. GREGORY:
Two.

LEG. FLEMING:
I'm sorry.

LEG. CILMI:
M002.

LEG. FLEMING:
02, the 32 million, and then we take a vote on that, and if it is approved, it comes out of the budget. And then you wanted to separately vote on it again?

LEG. CILMI:
Yes. So I'm not -- I'll be honest, I'm not a big fan of omnibus amendments to begin with. In fact, I've authored legislation to do away with omnibus amendments, because I think we're voting on a plethora of different things, unrelated things. Yes, they're all part of a budget, but many of them are different. And I think given the fact that this is a $32 million item, it's quite substantial, I think it should be voted on on its own merit. And I believe colleagues of ours, and I don't want to -- I don't want to misrepresent somebody's past statements, but perhaps somebody from the Democrat side of the aisle has requested in the past that we vote on each of the line items, if you will, in the omnibus amendment separately.

LEG. FLEMING:
But --

LEG. CILMI:
So we could do that now, I suppose.

LEG. FLEMING:
But -- so you're contemplating a scenario under which this would be removed by a majority approval of a motion to remove it, and then individual members would still want to support it?

LEG. CILMI:
For the sole purpose of voting on it separately from the other parts of this amendment, yes.

LEG. FLEMING:
Okay. So I guess what I don't understand is, isn't a vote on whether to take it out or leave it in a vote on the merits of the item? So, in other words, if you wanted to go on the record as
opposed to this particular item, or in support of this particular item, you could do so when a motion is made to remove it from the omnibus, both -- to remove it all together from consideration?

LEG. CILMI:
I would not propose that amendment if we couldn't vote on a separate amendment to -- on a separate amendment --

LEG. FLEMING:
To put it back in?

LEG. CILMI:
Not to put it back in, but to vote on it separately.

LEG. FLEMING:
I would -- I wish I would -- I could understand that, because --

LEG. CILMI:
Sorry.

LEG. FLEMING:
-- if the goal is to remove it --

LEG. CILMI:
We'll have a conversation afterwards, I'll explain it to you.

LEG. FLEMING:
Right. But now, I mean, we want to get it right. We want to work together as responsible Legislators to get it right, so this is our opportunity. So I guess, just so that I'm clear, the opportunity to articulate your position with regard to this particular budgetary move happens if a motion is made to take it out, away from consideration. So each of us will have the opportunity to say yes, we like it, no, we don't like it. So beyond that, I'm not certain I understand the purpose, unless -- unless it's political --

LEG. CILMI:
It has nothing to do --

LEG. FLEMING:
-- to cast a separate vote.

LEG. CILMI:
Legislator Fleming, it has nothing do with politics whatsoever. I think I articulated very clearly why I made that request, so -- and it was denied, so -- and I understand why it was denied, it's fine. But that's why I made the request, because I think it's a large enough item, and I think it's different than every other line item within the omnibus amendment, that I think we should vote on it separately. And if not, that's fine. But that was -- that was my -- that was the reason for my request.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. So we have a motion and a second.
LEG. HAHN:
I want to be heard.

P.0. GREGORY:
I'm sorry.

LEG. HAHN:
I want to be heard.

02:31PM

P.0. GREGORY:
Oh, okay, Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:
So if I'm feeling this going the way you're suggesting in that we
may be giving the County Executive his budget, I'm going to express
my sincere and utter disappointment. I have worked long and hard
across the aisle, even, on some additions that got made to handle
and to make a priority in this -- excuse me.

02:31PM

MR. NOLAN:
You got to hold it down.

LEG. HAHN:
We made a priority to handle and to do additional work on the
opioid epidemic. I've worked on this for six-plus years now, a
really good prevention, proven prevention strategies, treatment,
extra funding, training for First Responders, compassion fatigue,
training for coaches at schools so that -- and in communities on
how to identify signs and symptoms, and to be prepared for what
continues to be an epidemic in our communities. This is a priority
that this Legislature wanted to make a statement in this budget,
and by voting no on this, you vote against those programs. And
I -- it's a really sad time to make that move. It is a really,
really hard time to vote no against the extra funding we are
putting in to tackle the opioid epidemic in this budget.

(The following was taken by Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer
& was transcribed by Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary)

02:32PM

LEG. HAHN:
Critical services that this -- we are responsible for making sure
that our government is functioning. Critical staffing positions
have been added that everyone who sat around that table knew were
important. We worked together to decide we needed to add these
positions. We worked across the aisle to decide together that
these things were important, and to vote no you are voting against
those. There are community organizations, the Sachem Youth,
significant dollars that will not be going to that organization and
many others if you vote no here. And so -- not to mention, you
know, the corrections with regard to the transparency for the Tax
Stabilization Reserve Fund.

02:35PM

I strongly feel that the Working Group's many hours that we put in
to making these changes reflect this Legislature's priorities,
reflect what we want to see happen and voting no says you want what
the County Executive proposed, and you may very well, but I think

* Index Included at End of Transcript
we did really good work. We worked long hours, thank you to the Budget Review Office for all of your insight, for pointing out things that were in the proposed budget that we, you know, we needed to correct and we made those choices and they were tough choices, and we are elected to make tough choices sometimes as a package. We don't vote line by line by line. There's how many thousands of lines in the budget? Many.

So this is a package that we were able to put together and work together to create and so it's just -- it's frustrating to me and I'm sure many others who sat here knowing that it might go down and some of the critical agencies in our communities won't get the funding and the good programs we were going to establish to deal with the drug epidemic you will be voting against.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:
Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. I do want to thank the members of the Working Group. I understand how much work goes into this and how difficult it is and how exhausting a process it must be, but unfortunately I can't support that work for several reasons.

One, I feel it's disingenuous that the members of the Working Group aren't going to -- not all the members of the Working Group are going to support their own work product, and I find it difficult for me to support the work of others that they can't even support their own work, so that I have an issue with.

And also, just the overall budget itself. I know it's a minor amount, but we are increasing the size of the budget over what was proposed. And given our difficult fiscal times, I understand sales tax dollars are up. I just think we need to be a little bit more fiscally conservative and try to keep the budget down as low as possible. So, therefore, I unfortunately will have to be voting against it.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Trotta.

LEG. TROTTA:
I just want to be on the record as that the chickens are finally coming home to roost. It's happening. You know, we have -- no one's even talking about the lawsuit that will potentially hit us for $70 million, which could be the $30 surcharge on the red light camera ticket, which will make it $100 million and it could tumble right down the line. It's fiscally irresponsible. We've been spending money recklessly for the past -- since I've been here, and there's a Supervisor from Smithtown who's 87 years old, sitting in his room, who taught me something a long time ago; government sometimes has to say no. And this body has never said no. Basically everything that comes in it's yes, yes, yes, yes. We can do it, we can do it, we can do it. And now it's coming home to roost.
I won't be supporting it because it's fiscally irresponsible to make pretend this lawsuit isn't out there, to make pretend other things aren't happening, that sales tax is going to go up. It's not conservative enough, not even remotely conservative enough. And this is, you know, it's going to happen. You wait. Mark my words, just as Jimmy Burke sitting in prison, this is going to happen.

(*Laughter*)

02:39PM

P.O. GREGORY:

You're a little late. We were waiting for that. Legislator Flotteron.

LEG. FLOTTERON:

I just want to clarify something with BRO. Mr. Lipp went through the whole process, again, read intently with highlights, your beautiful report your department did. We went through a lot --

MR. LIPP:

Can you define beautiful, please?

(*Laughter*)

LEG. FLOTTERON:

Again, I think as bipartisan-wise in the Working Group there was a lot of things we agreed with. Again, Legislator Hahn, I agree with you the importance of those programs we need to take care of. But my question is after we went through many pages, but even just looking at your first page of it where we have, you know, estimates -- really first 2000 estimated year-end fund balance is misleading and terms like that. Historically you showed in your report that $22 million in overtime has been underestimated each year. At the end of the day do we really correct as a group or as -- do we correct that much?

MR. LIPP:

In hindsight we have no choice, we have to correct it because the estimated number may be changed in the recommended budget or our amendments. Clearly with the actual number it will eventually happen. If, you know, we're short then we'll have --

LEG. FLOTTERON:

But we're underestimating historically with the numbers we have had in the past, which is pointed out in your report.

MR. LIPP:

Yeah. Well, the problem with that, though, is the over 6,000 lines in the budget, they're going to be pluses and minuses, so it's tricky sometimes to just look at certain individual lines.

LEG. FLOTTERON:

Some areas say just using lines of overtime is one of the bigger things which you even pointed out in the report, there are some areas where isn't it like 10 million or 4 million of over -- underestimating it and it's just been historically that each year.

* Index Included at End of Transcript
MR. LIPP:
That's a reasonable account.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
And from that did that -- do we come to a conclusion on fixing it
to the proper number or where the deficiencies are so we can reduce
that number.

MR. LIPP:
Well, we do talk about deficiencies, but we don't often make
changes because in part we don't have the dollars to do that. I
think that what we're talking about is what we were saying earlier,
is like $54 million increase in expenditures from 2018 adopted to
2019 adopted, of which only 1.5 million is the Omnibus. That
lowered amount is indicative of the ability for us to make changes.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Understand -- well -- basically what's happening that they -- there
wasn't a lot of -- there wasn't a lot of -- there wasn't many tough
decisions that were made at the end of the day. It was really more
about adding positions. How many positions was it, 50 positions
roughly?

MR. LIPP:
There was a net of 14 positions.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Fourteen. Yeah, we were moving around positions also. And again,
we added to the budget, what was the total dollar amount?

MR. LIPP:
About 1.5 million, yeah.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
And I guess being new to the process here we spent two weeks day
after day of meetings on this, but how we solved it really at the
end was we moved some from overtime to cover positions, which we
felt would be cost effective. Basically the overtime would cost
more than getting new positions in some of the areas, but a lot of
it was solved in us changing or moving a decimal point on what we
perceived that we might get in sales tax and it was like magically
fixed, which was really not fixing. That would be sort of like,
you know, it comes Christmastime and you and your spouse say you
don't really have any money for presents, but all of a sudden I
come back and say Oh, I solved it all, I opened another credit
card. That seems like how we sort of fixed the dollar amount at
the end of the day, just changing that point.

MR. LIPP:
I'm not sure what to say and everybody has different priorities.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
And I guess one of the other things, it was just even using little
things is one I guess why I was a little passionate about some of
the auditing positions. When you pointed out before that the
medical health is one of our more expensive things we had to take
care of and it's a seven percent increase that we're seeing historically, in the next year it's going to increase another $31 million and we're not doing anything to try to even address a million of it to chip off. I think with auditing there would be easy -- some savings there and that savings we could do maybe more positions for helping with the counseling, drug counseling and programs or Child Protection Services where we need more bodies. So that math is still not adding up and it historically where it's been overestimating our revenues and underestimating our expenses. It is not a balanced budget. Thank you for answering the questions.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Spencer.

LEG. SPENCER:
I'm thoroughly disappointed, and I would say in my eight years being here, it's probably one of the lowest points for me personally, it's my seventh year here in this Legislature, and here's why. I believe that we have a primary responsibility as the Legislative Branch, we say that we're a coequal branch, is to be able to present a budget. And I understand my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and I hear them loud and clear and, you know, that the County's broke and we have to make difficult decisions. And I try to look at kind of the overall long-term vision and the direction that we're going in. I realize that it could be faster for some people but, you know, we went from a situation where we saw one of the worst fiscal recessions this country has ever seen in 2008 and ever since we've been a member of this body, and I've seen difficult numbers and issues with regard to pension and health care costs, but each year we figure it out, we get it done. And I'll tell you a quote, and Tom Donnelly and I were just talking about this, he shared this with me, was, you know, Ronald Reagan said in '82 just because there's a deficit we still have a responsibility to run the government. We have a responsibility to put forth a budget.

There are contract agencies, there are lives, there are County employees, that we have a unique position in our individual districts that we represent them to look at this budget, to make these difficult choices. And, yes, we may make estimations based on kind of sales tax revenue and they're estimations, but we do them in an antiquated manner with Dr. Lipp. And I sat in that room and I saw some of my colleagues who were first time on the other side of the aisle that said I have this organization, it's important to me. And I said They should have more money, let's try to help them out. We sat there, we worked together, we tried. Would some argue that the process should be more open, absolutely, but it's good faith.

And as disappointed -- I really care about all the members of my caucus and I -- but sometimes you can cut off your nose to spite your face, and I think that us reverting we take away a lot of our power, we abdicate our responsibility. We can go with the Executive's budget, but I think we weaken this institution. And we've had difficult, difficult choices. This is one of the best
budgets that I've seen since we've been here. We're slowly but surely getting there, be it jobs, be it the economy, whether or not it's Republican action or whatever from the Federal government. We're seeing low unemployment, we're getting there. Every year it gets a little bit better. We have our challenges ahead of us, but for us to not pass this budget that we tried to bring in Republicans and Democrats to work together, and for members of our caucus to not support this budget, it's thoroughly disappointing. It breaks my heart and I think it's a really sad day for this institution.

P.O. GREGORY:
And Doc, if I may, I wanted to just kind of ditto some of your remarks in stating that I think if this budget fails that only empowers the County Executive. You know, we're separate, we're coequal branch of government. You know, this budget process is, you know, as I mentioned earlier there's no rhyme or reason as it particularly relates to contract agencies. There are some contract agencies that go to the County Executive, he puts them in the budget, and there are contract agencies that historically that the Legislature has put in, and sometimes they do the exact same work. There's no rhyme or reason why he put them in and why the Legislature puts them in.

So this will send a message to the contract agencies if you want anything you have to go to the County Executive. We will put a Closed for Business sign on the front doors of this institution. If any contract agency wants anything, any youth group, anybody, anything that wants monies from Suffolk County government will have to go to the County Executive because the Legislature won't pass an amendment to add them in and the only way to ensure that they get added into the budget is to go to the County Executive, because if it gets voted down it will remain in the budget.

That limits us, it takes away our independence, and if you want to do that, you're for that, I guess that's okay. But I think -- you know, I've been here to try to empower this body and try to implement what our priorities are and what I think is in the best interest of the residents of Suffolk County. And the work that we did as a bipartisan group I think reflects that and moves that forward, particularly as it relates to the Opioid and heroin addiction. There's no rhyme or reason why an effective Opioid, you know, prevention program, treatment program actually, was zeroed out in the budget and won't have any money. Instead of increasing those efforts we're actually going to take money away. Instead of expanding something that Legislator Hahn has worked on or actually instituting something that she worked on, it's going to be eliminated. Taking monies away from youth organizations that get kids off the street and prevent, you know, their likelihood of being involved in gangs and things of that nature.

All the great stuff that we did is going to be eliminated and you're going to send a message to folks you want to get stuff in the budget or get stuff done in Suffolk County, you have to go to the County Executive. You know, it weakens us and I'm not for that. Legislator Donnelly.
LEG. DONNELLY:
Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. So just to reiterate yourself and Legislator Spencer's comments and to you, DuWayne, thank you for your leadership in these trying times. Clearly partisan politics has injected itself into this whole process and as Doc said, it's a pretty sad day. But I'm going to go on record that we're funding key critical positions in public safety, in health care, in children protective services and we're making sure that across the board in each of the 18 Legislative Districts, both Democratic and Republican, that youth groups, cultural groups, are all being maintained and funded. So it was a responsible work product and I'm proud to be a part of it and I will be supporting it.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. I'd like to, through the Presiding Officer, ask a question of Robert. Robert, the 32 million and change, do we have to pay that back?

MR. LIPP:
So the --

LEG. KENNEDY:
To the Assessment Stabilization -- Tax Stabilization.

MR. LIPP:
So the way it worked that's in the budget right now is the revenue would come to the General Fund this year and it would be paid back next year. That being said, the County Executive I guess would have the discretion to use it next year as opposed to paying it back or a portion of it depending on how the finances are. And don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that anybody would do that, but that option would exist. Of course they could -- in next year's budget they could put --

LEG. KENNEDY:
Dump it down the road again.

MR. LIPP:
Anything's possible.

LEG. KENNEDY:
Okay, thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Calarco.

D.P.O. CALARCO:
Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer. And first let me thank BRO for their hard work, my colleagues on the work group and honestly the County Executive's Office as well because they presented us a pretty solid budget. So if our amendments go down I could at least be assured that the budget for next year isn't riddled with all
sorts of problems. It's funny because this was actually the
easiest budget year I have been involved in. This is my I think
seventh budget that I've worked on in the Working Group and this is
the first year I didn't walk out with a headache after every
meeting, which is a testament to, I think, the place we are getting
to as a County in terms of getting ourselves fiscally sound.

The reality is is this budget doesn't call for any new fees, it
doesn't pierce the property tax cap, it doesn't have any one-shot
revenues, it doesn't have any borrowing for the pension. So all in
all, provided the economy continues to do as it's doing without any
major shocks in the next year, we are in a pretty good place.

So I have budget amendments before us and I supported some of these
in the work group and some of them I didn't, but I'm certainly
going to support the budget amendments. And I have my colleagues
in the Republican Caucus, I think, and I can't speak for all of
them, maybe I'm wrong, sounding like they don't want to support the
amendments, and I have the County Executive's Office telling me he
doesn't support the amendments. So it's a unique situation in that
my Republican colleagues are actually going to look to take a vote
for the County Executive's budget and would save him the necessary
step of vetoing the budget, which he has indicated he was looking
at doing because he wasn't happy with all the things in it.

So that is a unique situation that I find myself in here today and
the reality is is this budget really, you know, worked around the
edges to take care of some minor issues that are priorities to this
body, whether it's putting 14 different new positions in that are,
you know, the rank and file membership of the County, and I know
I've been saying since the year that we had massive layoffs that it
stretched our workforce to the brink, that we are skeleton crews
all the way through, and that the minute we had the ability that it
was -- that it made sense, that we were going to look to restoring
some of those.

So what are we talking about? Custodians, CPS workers, dispatchers
and FRES. I mean, we're not talking about anything radical here.
We're giving the Sheriff some titles so that they can do the work
that they're doing and do a better job of interfacing with people
who have drug and alcohol addictions in the jail, and do a better
job of dealing with individuals who may have gang affiliations and
getting intel for us to be able to continue to do public safety. I
mean, we are talking about the critical core functions of County
government and things that by and large everybody in the Working
Group supported.

We're talking about out of the about $850,000 difference in the '18
budget, we're talking about $250,000 for youth agencies that got
cut out of the budget either intentionally or accidentally. It
doesn't matter; we're restoring them. We're talking about $350,000
to restore and enhance drug addiction and prevention services in
the County budget. We're talking about $100,000 to give Legal Aid
their first raises for their employees in I think something like
eight or nine years.
We are not talking about anything here that is somehow pushing some ideology or some policy positions that are extreme or out of bounds, and yet we're going to look at in all likelihood voting this budget amendment down and getting the County Executive's budget, which as I said, is a pretty solid budget so it's not too bad. But there are going to be things that will not be able to get replaced. Those dollars that we need to restore those youth agencies will not exist. The cultural funding as we were able to do in this budget will be reduced. There will be people who are going to see reductions in those dollar amounts next year because that's the result of the County Executive's budget. And if I was the County Executive going into an election year next year, I would be sure to put on all my pieces that he got his budget approved with the assistance of the Republican Caucus. So I'm supporting this budget amendment. I encourage my colleagues to support it and if they don't, well, at least we know we'll still be on solid ground next year.

02:56PM

P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Cilmi.

02:57PM

LEG. CILMI:
As interesting as it is to you, Rob, to hear that Republicans, at least your perception is that we're supporting the County Executive's budget, it's equally as interesting to me to hear such concern about the County Executive's budget among the Democratic Caucus.

D.P.O. CALARCO:
Okay.

02:57PM

LEG. CILMI:
But be that as it may, we all find humor in different things.

D.P.O. CALARCO:
We do.

02:58PM

LEG. CILMI:
We were talking about the positions, you said 14, 15? Fourteen positions that the Omnibus amendment would add. Could I, through the Chair, could I ask Robert Lipp, are there positions currently in the budget that are -- that remain unfilled?

MR. LIPP:
Yes.

02:58PM

LEG. CILMI:
How many? It's ten positions?

MR. LIPP:
We're looking it up now. Benny is looking it up now.

02:58PM

D.P.O. CALARCO: (Inaudible).
LEG. CILMI:
So it's ten positions we're talking about. How many positions are unfilled?

MR. LIPP:
Eighteen-hundred and fifty.

LEG. CILMI:
One-thousand, eight-hundred and fifty.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

LEG. CILMI:
So let me just let that sink in as I talk about that for a minute. So this Legislature has adopted a budget for 2018 that included 1,850 positions and funded 1,850 positions? Okay. How many -- that's my question. How many positions are currently funded in the 2018 budget that remain unfilled?

MR. LIPP:
I'm not sure. I'd have to --

LEG. CILMI:
Give me a rough number. Is it a dozen?

MR. LIPP:
Could you repeat the question? Sorry.

LEG. CILMI:
How much positions -- how many funded positions are there in the 2018 Operating Budget that remain unfilled?

P.O. GREGORY:
I know there were roughly 450, 500,000 in the Comptroller's Office, that's why that was -- the EMHP stuff was such a contentious issue, why giving him more positions when he had funding, but he had told us that he was working to fill some. Some of those should have been filled by now but I don't know if they're all going to be filled by the end of the year. That was one area that I recall.

LEG. CILMI:
Are there dozens, are there hundreds?

MR. LIPP:
Well, if you look at the recommended budget I guess -- the recommended budget itself.

LEG. CILMI:
Right.

MR. LIPP:
There's really no -- very little money at all to fill positions.

LEG. CILMI:
No, no, no.
MR. LIPP: Yes, yes, yes.

LEG. CILMI: The 2018 budget funds X number of positions. How many of them remain unfilled?

MR. LIPP: Well, the same thing as I said before, 1,850.

LEG. CILMI: So there are 1,850 positions that are funded in the 2018 budget.

MR. LIPP: No, I'm sorry.

LEG. BERLAND: No.

MR. LIPP: No, those are all just the vacancies.

P.O. GREGORY: He's asking how many funded vacancies did we have.

MR. LIPP: Hardly any. It's a small number.

LEG. CILMI: What -- roughly what's the number? A dozen, two-dozen, a hundred?

LEG. BERLAND: Don't guess.

LEG. CILMI: Half a dozen?

MR. PERNICE: The money is not tied to any position. It's in salary accounts.

When the County Executive comes out with the 2018 estimate that pretty much revises what the 2018 adopted budget is. For the most part 2018 estimate only accounts for the filled positions for what we're going to spend. It doesn't count for the classes we just hired for public safety, but for the most part it doesn't provide a penny for anybody other than everybody who's already on the payroll for this year -- next year.

LEG. CILMI: But that's in the 2019 proposed budget.

MR. PERNICE: Well, the 2018 estimate is part of that, yes.

LEG. CILMI: Maybe I'm not asking my question correctly. The 2018 budget that was adopted by this Legislature last November contained funding for
X number of positions in the County.

MR. PERNICE:
Correct.

LEG. CILMI:
Have all those positions been filled and hired?

MR. PERNICE:
No.

LEG. CILMI:
How many have not? Roughly.

MR. PERNICE:
The one--so it's a net number because some of them have been
filled, some of them have left and been refilled. The funding is
not a type to any particular position.

LEG. CILMI:
Okay.

MR. PERNICE:
A different position could be filled, then one became vacant, so
there's no dollar per position cost really.

LEG. CILMI:
Okay. We'll have a conversation offline about that. The other
thing that I just wanted to mention is that we've heard a number of
times that if we don't adopt the Omnibus amendment today, that the
funding will not be available next year to provide money for
substance abuse services, mental health, critical public safety
services, etcetera. Where is that funding going? If we're not
going to have the funding next year, then we don't have it now to
give away, right?

MR. LIPP:
We have offsets in the budget. I guess as an example, over 800,000
in the amendments. So in other words, to pay for whatever things
we're doing like contract agencies--

LEG. CILMI:
Right.

MR. LIPP:
--or new positions, we have to have an offset.

LEG. CILMI:
Right.

MR. LIPP:
Some is reducing expenditures, others is increasing sales tax for
this year.
LEG. CILMI:
Right, but my point is is the actual dollars should still be there. If they were going to be there as of November 6th, the actual dollars, the actual revenue should be there next year. And if it doesn't come in then we've been smart by not adding any money, and if it does come in we can pass budget amendments during the course of the year to, you know, to allocate that money as we deem appropriate. Right?

03:04PM

LEG. TROTTA:
No.

MR. LIPP:
You would need a budget amendment.

LEG. CILMI:
Right, of course, but we can do that. This Legislature can do it four times a year. The County Executive can do it whenever he wants, right?

03:04PM

MR. LIPP:
Right.

LEG. CILMI:
Right. So as Legislator Lindsay said, I favor a much more conservative approach. The County Executive year after year, and I'm not sure if it happened this year, but year after year the County Executive has issued states of fiscal emergency at the beginning of the year subsequent to the budget passing and I don't know if that's going to happen again next year or sales tax, thanks to some pro-growth Federal policies and some other things, sales tax will continue to increase. Hopefully it will and hopefully our budgetary situation will continue to improve. But I just think that we've not gone far enough here in terms of balancing the budget. I continue to be disturbed by a process that occurs in a basement of the Legislature without at least the official involvement, if you will, of every member and the fact that we continue to vote on the amendment as an Omnibus amendment the day after Election Day I think is a big concern to me, so I won't be supporting it. And next year if sales tax revenue continues to increase and if the growth is beyond what the County Executive has predicted, then I would look to amending the budget further to account for that growth.

03:05PM

P.O. GREGORY:
And, Legislator Cilmì, I agree with you. I think we should -- we've worked to have public Capital Budget process, to --

LEG. CILMI:
Let me say this on the record, to your credit, Mr. Presiding Officer.

03:05PM

P.O. GREGORY:
I'm in favor of having a Budget Working Group, open Budget Working Group process, but I'm afraid, you know, why even go through the process at all if people in the group are not going to support it.
You know, I don't look forward to having my contract agencies or contract agencies in the County or Legislators going with their hat in their hand asking the County Executive next year to make a budget amendment. This is only going to empower the Executive Branch. And, you know, we put our stamp on this process. I think what we did is good. We certainly have some challenges fiscally that we haven't made it through all the way yet, but we're certainly far better off than we were, you know, seven years ago. And we've made some tough decisions and we continue to make tough decisions. I hope that we would do that in a bipartisan manner, but this, you know, this is only going to empower the Executive Branch, whoever that Executive is. I have several Legislators that want to speak. Legislator Trotta.

**LEG. TROTTA:**
Yeah, I just want to know two things. One, to say that we're far better off than we were seven years later is, you know --

**LEG. KENNEDY:**
Right.

**LEG. TROTTA:**
-- is not the truth because our debt has increased -- more than doubled. We borrowed $171 million that could have been used to clean our water, which is the County Executive's number one concern, but we just sent it away, and now we're paying it back 5% a year till 2029 when there's a balloon payment when none of us will be sitting here. That's totally fiscally irresponsible, so it's not far better off. And to suggest that this is the Republicans or whoever votes against this is okaying the County Executive's budget, it's quite the contrary. They're both horrible. They're fiscally irresponsible, period. We just don't want to talk about the looming debt we have over our heads, the possibility, the strong possibility according to our own Legal Counsel, that we're going to have to repay $70 million and not collect $70 million and probably get sued for much more. It's like, you know, we're not addressing the facts.

We put our heads down at this very horseshoe when I put a bill in to get rid of Jimmy Burke. No one would look up, no one would look up. No one would say anything. The same thing is going on here. So don't suggest -- I'll get it in again. Don't suggest that this is us approving the County Executive's -- using the words of a mailer I got in the mail the other day, liberal agenda. It's not. He's bankrupting this County. My kids can't afford to live here. This morning before I came here I got a call from a gentleman who was complaining to me because he can't sell his $1.5 million house, it went down to a million dollars, because the taxes on the house are $38,000 a year. And it's -- we are in the most taxed city, state, county in the country and we're doing nothing to help ourself except reoccurring more debt. You've got to say no. We needed a swimming pool at Suffolk Community College like we needed a hole in the head. We needed a fingerprint lab for $9 million like we need a hole in the head but we just keep saying yes.
D.P.O. CALARCO:
We haven't approved that yet.

LEG. TROTTA:
Very good. Well, I think we approved it but I think there's one more thing we can vote no on, but we don't vote no. Historically we don't vote no. And it's, you know, I applaud the Democrats, whoever you may be, who don't want to support this and I hope it's for the same reason I'm thinking. You need to face the facts. You need to face what's in front of you and say look, we're in big trouble here. And I'm not putting the debt on my kids or my grandkids. We should take responsibility for it now. How irresponsible is it when the water quality is our number one concern and we took $171 million out of that fund? It's ridiculous. It's like bizarre. So safe to say -- and the County Executive, if we approve any of these people, he doesn't have to sign the SCINS and we'll never get them anyway. So it's just, you know, we're fooling ourselves here. It's not good.

03:10PM
P.O. GREGORY:
Legislator Flotteron.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Mr. Lipp, I just want to clarify some of the questions Legislator Cilmi was asking before. There's roughly 1800 positions that weren't filled this past -- aren't filled at this moment.

MR. LIPP:
Correct, yeah, vacancies.

03:10PM
LEG. FLOTTERON:
And most of them, or a lot of them, have funding connected to them.

MR. LIPP:
No, most of them don't. There's very few.

03:10PM
LEG. FLOTTERON:
Okay, but still there's funding and we're functioning without those positions being filled right now, somewhat functioning. So I just want to understand the process here. So if we were concerned about -- one of the things that came up in our meetings on the budget was additional dispatchers for 911 calls. We always can do an amendment in the future to take funding from one area, like we were doing down in the basement, to take care of those positions.

MR. LIPP:
In some cases you can, but the problem with offsets is like if you have a resolution like the Omnibus, which has multiple purposes, you might be able to cobble together some offsets pretty easily. It's going to be hard during the year to come up with offsets given our finances.

03:11PM
LEG. FLOTTERON:
But some things can be corrected because we always could use some of the positions which are not being filled at the moment.
MR. LIPP:
No, the problem is most of those positions are not funded.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
I agree, but some of them are and they're not being filled.

MR. LIPP:
Not really, no.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Not really?

MR. LIPP:
Right. The budget's very tight when it comes to positions in terms of salaries. There's turnover savings, that is significant in most departments.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
So you're saying the budget there is close to 1800 positions which just have no money with them anyway?

MR. LIPP:
Basically number one, yes. Number two, just because a position is vacant doesn't mean that it's needed to be filled at all. Select cases, yeah, sure, but as a rule it doesn't mean that we should be filling it just because it's vacant.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
I agree with you, and that's why I was saying some of the things that we find very important on these set of amendments, we have four times during the year to maybe make some adjustments if we find the funding for some positions that are not filled.

MR. LIPP:
Correct.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Okay, that was my question. Thank you.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. So I know this is your first time on the budget process. So what happens is what departments will do when they would rather keep a position, say a clerk-typist vacant in their department, instead of eliminating that position and have to come later on to add that position, they would rather leave it vacant with no funding to it so at some future point if there were funding they could just add money to it. That's why you have a lot of unfunded positions. And then there are some funded positions, but it doesn't mean that they'll fund that position or hire that person on January one. They may hire them in June, July or August at a savings. So that's why you see a lot of unfunded positions, because it's at the request of the department. They don't want to eliminate the title.
LEG. FLOTTERON:
I understand and that clarified it. Thank you. But there is some opportunities to maybe --

P.O. GREGORY:
Yeah, but it's very little. We had -- you know, when I first got here Steve Levy, one of his things, we would have tens of millions of dollars in funded vacancies. Those days are gone. You know, we have 850, you know, vacancies. I can't fathom a guess, but I know 500,000 of that is in the Comptroller's Office because that came up during our discussions. I vaguely kind of remember maybe there was like 11 positions or something like that. I don't know, something like that. It's not a huge number. But you're arguing against your point. You guys are saying that there's a deficit, you know, the walls are caving in but, oh, you know, don't forget, we can make an amendment next year to add the stuff that you want.

So you can't have it both ways. You can't say that we don't have money, everything's broke, and then, you know, next year there's going to be some surplus somewhere magically that you're going to be able to fill positions that you voted against today. I mean, you can't have it both ways. If you think the walls are caving in, the walls are going to cave in. There's going to be no funding next year to fund those things. We added funding through our process by taking away monies from funded vacancies in some instances and other things in the budget. That's not going to be available next year.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
Maybe I'm not understanding. You said there's some areas we're taking funding from vacant positions and I'm saying can't we amend that four different times a year.

P.O. GREGORY:
Yeah, we took I think it was $100,000. The Comptroller said I want six, you know, I want two teams of three to do audits in EMHP. The Working Group said No, we'll give you three. He said he was going to -- this year he would generate I think it was $200,000. We said okay, we're going to take $100,000 out of your funded -- out of your 455 or $500,000, we going to take 100,000 out of that and fund those positions that you're asking for. And then we said we'll fund the other half of it with, you know, with some of the savings he said he would generate. That's the stuff that we did. That's not going to be available next year, unless you want to go tell John Kennedy you're going, you know, start funding, you know, FRES dispatchers and custodians and things like that, CPS workers, out of his, you know, vacancies.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
The point of my question is there are positions that have money that aren't filled and they can be switched if we need to.

P.O. GREGORY:
Because they're filled doesn't mean that they're not in the process of being filled. When we spoke to --
LEG. FLOTTERON:
I didn't say all of them. But, again, when there's 1800, I know a lot of them don't have funds are on here. There's a chunk of them that just never get filled that have some money. I'm not saying it's hundreds of them, but there are some and we can maybe make a position if we needed. That was the question.

P. O. GREGORY:
All right. Oh, I'm sorry. Legislator Anker wanted to speak.

03:16PM

LEG. ANKER:
You know, so I'm sitting here listening and I just want to put out in front of this vote how much I appreciate everyone participating, and I wish more would participate. I know I had my staff at I think just about all of the meetings with the Working Group; I was not on the -- you know, involved in the Working Group because there's a limit. And even the Legislators walking -- you know, going down there, we can't sit in because that creates a quorum and we can't have a quorum during that time.

But the most important part in understanding our budget right now is that we have a $31 million deficit. And even -- and the Working Group has added $1.5 million in amendments. They've added to it, but I know they reduced it I think using $800,000; is that correct, Rob?

MR. LIPP:
Yes, sales tax is pretty close to that dollar value of increases in personnel costs for these new positions.

03:17PM

LEG. ANKER:
Right. And so I think we're getting -- we're going to a better place financially, but we're not there yet. We have a ways to go.

In 2011 when I first started we had a $500 million deficit, and that was over a three year -- that was including three years. You know, we now have 31 -- 31 million; is that correct?

MR. LIPP:
That's a difficult question; there's a lot more to that story.

03:17PM

LEG. ANKER:
There's a lot to that story. And I think that also needs to be understood, is that there's a lot of information that we really don't have. We don't know how much our sales tax will bring in next year, we don't know what's going to happen in the future, but we're looking at a brighter future and I think that's the positive side of understanding where our budget is.

But the bottom line is, you know, as I talked to a lot of my folks, you know, in my district, they're concerned about government and finances and fees and just the whole expense. And we worked hard to reduce it. We have made government efficient and affected -- effective. We have a lot more to do and I know working with the County Executive and across party lines, we can do it. We have to. We're losing people every day. The young adults are moving into
the City, they're moving off Long Island. People can't afford it. And yes, I know 70% is because of school taxes; and Monica, I hope you can address that one. Look at Monica (laughter).

P.O. GREGORY:
It's all on your shoulders.

LEG. ANKER:
It's all on your shoulders. But as a County Legislature, we need to understand that we are still in a negative financial area. We're in the red and we need to do something about it.

Now, I know we have services that we have to fulfill and we've reduced a lot of the services and moved into the private sector and having them do some of those services, but we still need to understand that we -- we're not flushed with cash, we don't have that. We do have a lot of debt, and as just personally, I don't like debt. The banks end up making the money, the taxpayers end up feeling the hit and we need to, again, put the pedal to the metal and make sure that we catch up with our deficit and then we can fund additional services and hire additional staff and do more for our County.

We're doing pretty damn good right now. And I just want to make sure that you understand that I do appreciate everyone's work on this budget, but as a Legislator in a very fiscally conservative district, I can't support the amendments to this budget.

P.O. GREGORY:
Okay. I know it's been a while, but I had a motion and a second on Budget Amendment 1. Roll call. As amended.

(*Roll Called by Mr. Richberg - Clerk of the Legislature*)

P.O. GREGORY:
Yes.

LEG. HAHN:
Yes.

LEG. KRUPSKI:
Yes.

LEG. FLEMING:
Yes.

LEG. SUNDERMAN:
No.

LEG. MURATORE:
No.

LEG. ANKER:
No.
LEG. LINDSAY:
No.

LEG. MARTINEZ:
Yes.

LEG. CILMI:
No.

LEG. FLOTTERON:
No.

LEG. KENNEDY:
No.

LEG. TROTTA:
(Played audio of someone saying "no, no, no").

MR. NOLAN:
Say it verbally.

LEG. TROTTA:
No.

LEG. McCAFFREY:
No.

LEG. BERLAND:
Yes.

MR. RICHBERG:
Nine.

P. O. GREGORY:
Okay. Robert, so we don't need to do Budget Amendment 2 because
the discretionary --

MR. LIPP:
That's the discretionary.

P. O. GREGORY:
All right, I'll make a motion to approve Budget Amendment 3.

MR. LIPP:
So Budget Amendment 3 is updated information for the Southwest
Sewer District in terms of their assessment rolls, in terms of the
number of parcels, so when the recommended budget was put out all

* Index Included at End of Transcript
that data was not available. It's available now so we're making some minor adjustments to Southwest's finances, very minor.

P.O. GREGORY: Okay. All right, do I have a second from Legislator -- would you support that, Kevin?

LEG. McCAFFREY: Yes, I will.

P.O. GREGORY: Legislator McCaffrey. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

MR. RICHBERG: Eighteen.

P.O. GREGORY: Okay. I'll make a motion to set the public hearing for the following resolutions on November 20th, 2 PM in Hauppauge: IR 2015, adopting Local Law imposing a duty to report criminal conduct at water parks and amusement parks; also IR 2017, adopting Local Law to prohibit smoking in County bus shelters; and IR 2019, adopting a Local Law to expand and amend the Grant Assistance Program for the installation of innovative and alternative onsite wastewater treatment systems. Second by Legislator Calarco. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

MR. RICHBERG: Eighteen.

P.O. GREGORY: Okay, that is all the business that we have. We stand adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.*)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>11th [1] - 6.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>12th [1] - 3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>16th [1] - 11.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>18th [2] - 10.42, 45.9</td>
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<td>201st [1] - 3.34</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1/2 - 15.56</td>
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