

RESOLUTION NO. 269-2020, DIRECTING THE SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF SECURELY VIDEOTAPING AND STORING INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES CASEWORKERS

WHEREAS, the Suffolk County Division of Child Protective Services (“CPS”) in the Department of Social Services (“DSS”) provides vital services to families and children throughout the County; and

WHEREAS, CPS interviews of family members and children during an investigation are currently documented solely in writing without any visual memorialization of these interactions; and

WHEREAS, without video footage of interviews, certain behavioral cues exhibited by interviewees may be missed by caseworkers, leaving children in living situations which may not be in their best interests; and

WHEREAS, recording and securely storing interviews would allow caseworkers and their supervisors to further review the discussions with families and may provide valuable insight into interactions with both the children and their parents or guardians; and

WHEREAS, the recorded interviews would also serve to aid CPS and DSS in evaluating and making determinations on particularly difficult cases; and

WHEREAS, DSS should study the feasibility of securely video recording interviews conducted by CPS caseworkers to be able to better serve the children and families of Suffolk County; now, therefore be it

1st RESOLVED, that the Commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Social Services is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to conduct a study to determine the feasibility and practicality of securely video recording all interviews conducted by Child Protective Services caseworkers during an investigation and storing such files for further review; and be it further

2nd RESOLVED, that the study shall evaluate the benefits, drawbacks, costs, and practical implications of employing video recording techniques for interviews conducted by CPS caseworkers during an investigation and the various storage options available for maintaining such files; and be it further

3rd RESOLVED, that the Commissioner shall complete this study and present a written report on its findings and recommendations to the County Executive and each member of the County Legislature and the Clerk of the Legislature no later than ninety (90) days subsequent to the effective date of this resolution; and be it further

4th RESOLVED, that this Legislature, being the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) lead agency, hereby finds and determines that this resolution constitutes a Type II action pursuant to Section 617.5(c)(26) of Title 6 of the NEW YORK CODE OF RULES AND

REGULATIONS (6 NYCRR) and within the meaning of Section 8-0109(2) of the NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW as routine or continuing administration and management not including new programs or major reordering of priorities that may affect the environment, and the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is hereby directed to circulate any appropriate SEQRA notices of determination of non-applicability or non-significance in accordance with this resolution.

DATED: March 17, 2020

APPROVED BY:

/s/Dennis M. Cohen
Chief Deputy County Executive of Suffolk County

Date: April 1, 2020