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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & HOUSING
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, PERSONNEL, IT & DIVERSITY
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A special meeting of the Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee and Government Operations, Personnel, Information Technology & Diversity Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York via hybrid in-person and Zoom conference to discuss the matter of the 2022 Operating Budget on October 14, 2021.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Kara Hahn, Chairperson/ Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee
Leg. Samuel Gonzalez, Chairperson/ Government Operations, Personnel, IT & Diversity Committee
Leg. Susan Berland, Vice Chair Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee/member Government Operations, Personnel, IT & Diversity Committee
Leg. Jason Richberg, Vice Chair Government Operations, Personnel, IT & Diversity Committee/member Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee
Leg. William Spencer, member Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee/member Government Operations, Personnel, IT & Diversity Committee
Leg. Robert Trotta, member Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee
Leg. James F. Mazzearella, member Economic Development, Planning & Housing Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. Al Krupski, 1st Legislative District
Amy Ellis, Clerk/Legislature
Lance Reinheimer, Director/Budget Review Office
Roz Gazes, BRO
Laura Halloran, BRO
Elizabeth Stroehlein, BRO
Timothy Rothang, Aide to Leg. McCaffrey
Tom Melito, Director/Civil Service
Christina Blake, Civil Service
Sarah Lansdale, Director/Economic Development & Planning
Natalie Wright, Commissioner/Economic Development & Planning
Scott Mastellon, Commissioner/Information Technology Department

1 **MINUTES TAKEN BY:**
2 Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

3
4 **MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:**
5 Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

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50 **THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:41 PM**

51
52 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**
53 Okay. Welcome, everyone, to the Legislature's public hearing for
54 Economic Development committee and Government Ops joint Operating
55 Budget public hearing. If we could all rise for a salute to the
56 flag led by Legislator Berland.

SALUTATION

Economic Development, Planning & Housing

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you. Legislator Gonzalez and I are co-hosting chairing this joint operating budget committee here. And do you mind if we start with Economic Development?

CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:

Please.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Hello, Commissioner Wright.

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:

Hi, how are you?

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Excellent.

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:

Good afternoon.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Good afternoon. Thank you for your patience while we waited on a few Legislators. So, welcome. Maybe if you can begin with a presentation on your department's budget and I know there was a \$35 million investment that we probably want to hear a little bit about if you can start there. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:

Sure. So, thank you for providing the opportunity to speak with you all today. We are certainly in recommendation and in line with the County Executive's recommended budget. A couple of highlights that I just want to touch upon is, of course, the \$35 million investment in the recovery money that is included in our budget. That would be dedicated towards small business and downtown recovery initiatives. We envision this to be to be able to mix a capital investment and grant opportunities so that we could assist in revitalizing and rebuilding and helping our commercial corridors and small businesses thrive after the impacts that they have felt as a result of the pandemic.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

So we've -- we've had these kind of funds in the past and I'm just kind of curious as to how they're gonna work. Do you have -- do you have activities already planned to use the \$35 million or a portion of it that you are -- investments that your department wants to make?

COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:

Yeah, so, we have some ideas right now. I will say something that's really important for myself is to ensure that, number one, we are filling gaps that are not being fit -- filled by other

1 funding sources. We all know that there's a lot of money out
2 there. There's a lot of services out there. The State has
3 committed tremendous resources to small business grants, most
4 recently the \$800 million dollar grant program that they have out
5 there. So we really want to take a -- an accounting of the
6 existing services, see what the remaining needs are and tailor
7 programs that are, number one, compliant, right, with the
8 requirements of the funding, efficient and effective. And so that
9 would really be the first step provided it is approved in the
10 budget is really doing that work to create smart programming that
11 will make impactful lasting and non-duplicative benefits in the
12 communities.

13
14 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

15 So where do you see those areas? Where -- the funding, that
16 source, that 35 million is coming from where?

17
18 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

19 It's coming from the rescue funds.

20
21 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

22 And it's restricted how?

23
24 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

25 So, there are federal regulations that come with that money and so
26 there are particular uses and it's pretty flexible, it's more
27 flexible than other federal funding sources but there are specific
28 regulations that we need to make sure that we adhere to in terms of
29 delivering that money out to the communities so that we do it
30 within the guidance of the regulations that have been set forth.

31
32 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

33 And so when you were talking about not duplicating what's already
34 out there, what -- what's the niche you see this could fill?

35
36 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

37 Yeah, so we certainly have looked at some capital investments
38 around arts and cultural institutions investing in developing some
39 cultural anchors in downtown corridors and commercial sectors.
40 Really, we know that those industries have been tremendously
41 impacted. They have had some subsidy relief for capital expenses
42 but really investing in some potential long-term anchor resources
43 in downtown corridors, I think would be really great. We've seen
44 the successes elsewhere that strong cultural anchors can have
45 within a community such as, you know, feeders or YMCA's or other
46 institutions that really draw around community spaces, community
47 recreation and the additional businesses that can thrive once those
48 are set in place. That's certainly something that we want to look
49 at.

50
51 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

52 Are there downtowns that you look to target?

53
54 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

55 So we haven't done a tremendous amount of research. One of the
56 requirements with the federal funding is to look at

1 disproportionately impacted communities so that's certainly is going
2 to be a focus of ours to make sure that there is social equity in
3 the spending that we do.

4
5 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

6 Okay. I know and, yes, I guess I'm monopolizing. So, Legislator
7 Richberg and then Legislator Krupski.

8
9 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

10 Commissioner Wright, how you doing?

11
12 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

13 Good, how are you Legislator?

14
15 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

16 Good, good to see you. So with the downtown revitalization grants,
17 so are we -- I know my colleague, Deputy Presiding Officer Hahn
18 asked some of my questions but are we thinking like -- is it
19 businesses themselves are gonna be applying, are we thinking it's
20 going to be community associations, is it non-profits? Is it, you
21 know, cause it's downtown revitalization, does that mean, you know,
22 a farmer can apply? Does that mean, you know, if I'm a oyster, you
23 know -- you know, how do we see this fitting at this point?

24
25 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

26 Yes, though definitely there is a focus on -- on downtown
27 revitalization but also for small businesses. So we really have
28 discussed a portfolio of programs to provide support to several
29 different populations one of which is those capital investments,
30 somewhat similar to -- it could be to a private entity but sort of
31 similar to downtown revitalization funds but it probably of a
32 larger magnitude to be a little bit more impactful cause downtown
33 revitalization funds are relatively smaller grants that we usually
34 put forth.

35
36 Also, looking at individualized grants that may be available to
37 certain industry sectors that have additional need or that may be
38 have not have been able to access funds as much. That would also
39 be a potential opportunity for us. We have this small business
40 grant program now that we have, potentially expanding that to
41 additional industries through utilization of the recovery money.

42
43 And then also looking at organizations that really had a difficult
44 time in the beginning getting support so whether that's chambers of
45 commerce, bids, throughout the or -- throughout the County so that
46 we can support them because they were prohibited from receiving
47 funds earlier on and I don't know if, you know, because of their
48 particular status they were having trouble getting support although
49 we know that they are really an important link in drawing the
50 business -- individual businesses together around a strong mission
51 of revitalizing a particular corridor.

52
53 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

54 I thank you for that cause my worry is while there were a lot of
55 programs for many, you know, the federal government had the
56 Paycheck Protection Program and they had -- there was also some

1 small business administration funding. A lot of folks -- a lot of
2 businesses were not able to get them cause a lot of them were taken
3 up by larger conglomerates, especially the federal dollars. And so
4 my worry is that we have the smaller mom and pop, you know, places,
5 you know, like the, you know, the pizza place that Legislator
6 Trotta brings up in district all the time, you know, do, you know,
7 is that business going to be able to get the funding because I
8 don't want, you know, somebody who owns, you know, 400, you know,
9 places to get this funding when, you know, Mrs. Jones's, you know,
10 place didn't get it, you know, and that's my worry.

11
12 I'd really, really be interested in seeing how we're gonna -- how
13 we're going to safeguard this funding but on top of that, you know,
14 also are we gonna have any caps, you know, cause I don't want one
15 business to get a million dollars. I'd rather see, you know, a lot
16 more businesses, smaller businesses get, you know, \$50,000 grants
17 or, you know, \$60,000 grants than giving, you know, million dollar,
18 500,000 dollar grants. But I'll yield my time. Thank you.

19
20 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

21 And I'm also thinking that, you know, towns and villages, you know,
22 like I'm thinking like what could benefit whether it's a
23 streetscape, you know, expanding a sidewalk so that there can be
24 more capacity for outdoor seating and, you know, maybe adding
25 outdoor fire elements so that, you know, the season can be extended
26 longer or, you know, like I'm just trying to think of what could
27 help multiple businesses. Are those the kinds of things, like
28 could towns and villages apply to, you know, expand the sidewalk or
29 create an outdoor dining pavilion area for multiple businesses or
30 something like that, you know, a destination.

31
32 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

33 Yeah, so that's certainly -- that's certainly something that our
34 existing downtown revitalization program has an eligible use but
35 something that could be considered as part of the program design
36 here as well and something that may be a bid or a chamber of
37 commerce could do. You know, we've seen the expansion of outdoor
38 dining. We've seen it, sometimes it's arrived in a almost
39 haphazard fashion because each business is putting forth their own
40 and so maybe completing some esthetic improvements and some what's
41 the best word, sort of, standardization to create a standardized
42 more outdoor esthetic appeal if we are, if a particular town or
43 village or municipality is interested in retaining that outdoor
44 dining for a more permanent basis, could be a potential eligible
45 use.

46
47 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

48 Okay. Legislator Krupski.

49
50 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

51 Thank you, Kara, and thank you Commissioner Wright. So going back
52 to -- the question I had was going more along the lines of what
53 Kara just mentioned, you know, municipalities being -- using this
54 for capital, I'm thinking about municipalities that already have
55 business downtown but their parking situation's strained, you know,
56 so this could be used for a property acquisition to create new

1 parking? You're not -- you're not speculating on whether the
2 businesses are gonna thrive there, they're already -- they're
3 already existing and they're already in business and thriving so
4 this would be -- but the parking becomes a constraint so is that
5 something they could apply for to expand their -- their, you know,
6 to make it safer. And to Kara's point, you know, sidewalks for
7 connectivity.

8
9 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

10 Yeah, you know, I'd have to look and see if property acquisition is
11 -- if there's any prohibitions, obviously, I wouldn't want to speak
12 to that on a property acquisition but certainly something that we
13 could look into. And I think the broader point that maybe both of
14 you are making is that -- and Legislator Richberg made, which I
15 think are both valid points is the direct assistance to a business
16 is very important, right, there's -- there's meaningful impact
17 there but there's also equally meaningful impact by investing in
18 the infrastructure that allows a downtown corridor to function
19 well. And that then by having a well functioning infrastructure
20 for a downtown or commercial corridor thus allows more people to
21 access it, becomes more accessible, becomes more enjoyable,
22 therefore you have more customers and the businesses that are there
23 have that revenue to be supported or new businesses would like to
24 come there because it's a well functioning, you know --

25
26 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

27 Yeah, that's my point, you know, to make these businesses that are
28 already functioning to give them a collective -- some collective
29 help by --

30
31 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

32 Right.

33
34 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

35 -- providing that either connectivity or ease of parking, safe
36 parking.

37
38 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

39 And we're really -- when I say, you know, the investment of capital
40 and grant funds that's really, you know, the vision that I'm
41 looking to achieve is sort of strike a balance between those two --
42 those two efforts.

43
44 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

45 And so -- and I know this comes up in the 477 money if there's a
46 million little grants given out it becomes quite the administrative
47 challenge to manage all that as opposed to some larger ones where
48 you know you have someone who's going to -- your partner is going
49 to be able to manage the paperwork necessary to complete the
50 project and close the grant out. How are you set up internally in
51 your department to manage this and is there a timeline on spending
52 that 34 million? Are there time constraints?

53
54 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

55 Yep, so we are in the operating budget, we have requested three new
56 positions to help assist in implementing this funding so that is

1 part of the operating budget request. We do have other additional
2 staff that would be able to support us in this initiative and then
3 with regard to the regulations of the money, the cost need to be
4 incurred by December 31st, 2024, is the current deadline. So that
5 gives you some perspective on capital investments, you know, how
6 close these projects may need to be in terms of being able to
7 expend funds to utilize them for capital investment purposes.

8
9 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

10 And that's why, okay, yeah, that's why municipal parking could be
11 advantageous cause they would be able to supply some of the, you
12 know, the match in, you know, money or -- or labor.

13
14 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

15 Correct.

16
17 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

18 All right. Well, thank you, thank you, Commissioner. Thank you,
19 Kara.

20
21 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

22 Thank you, okay, Legislator Krupski's hand can go down. Anyone
23 else have questions? Legislator Trotta. Okay. How about from a
24 land preservation, you know, economic development and planning
25 perspective, how the staffing; can you speak a little bit to
26 staffing?

27
28 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

29 Yeah, so for staffing we, I mentioned, the three positions with
30 that are really tied to the ARPA, we have a request for an
31 additional other two positions those are really backfills. We had
32 to purchase within the department. We filled those -- we earmarked
33 them to really expand our transportation in Downtown Orient and
34 Development Division and now we could backfill those other
35 positions within the department. We have had as many departments
36 in the County overall has seen -- we've seen increased retirements
37 over the last couple of years but we continue to really assess the
38 bandwidth and maintain our capabilities within the department and
39 look within the department to make sure that we are putting new
40 resources where we need them and, you know, making sure that we are
41 keeping the hiring modest to maintain budgetary outcomes.

42
43 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

44 And in Real Estate I know we have lots of transactions that occur
45 in Real Estate and there's demand on -- on those positions. How
46 are we staffed there?

47
48 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

49 So Real Estate we just brought on a new director of Real Estate,
50 Sidney Joyner, he joined us not too long ago. We are -- he has
51 been working very diligently on getting the auction up and running
52 so I think you guys have all, all the Legislators may have received
53 communications related to that, looking to have that get up
54 onboard, hopefully, in just a few days here and the actual auction
55 to take place in November. So we're excited about that. Getting
56 underway, that will be first online auction for the County for our

1 Real Estate, which will be exciting and they've continued to, you
2 know, process all of the regular transactions, 72-h's, redemptions,
3 you know, to the extent feasible without the -- the moratoriums
4 that were in place but continue to do all the transactional work
5 that we -- we have on a day in and day out basis.

6
7 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

8 So you're satisfied with the -- the staffing levels that were in
9 the proposed budget?

10
11 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

12 Yes, yes, I am.

13
14 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

15 Other questions?

16
17 **LEG. TROTТА:**

18 When is that auction supposed to take place?

19
20 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

21 So we are hoping to open it up for registrations in, I believe,
22 tomorrow or within just the next couple of days and then the actual
23 auction is slated to take place in November.

24
25 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

26 Legislator Richberg has a quick question on that and, I guess, I'll
27 ask as well just, you know, how do -- how does someone register?
28 Can you send around, I know you probably already did, one more
29 time, send around the auction, the new auction rules for the online
30 version and how -- how people can participate and maybe a flier or
31 something we can post on social media to let people know about it,
32 whatever we can do.

33
34 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

35 Absolutely. As soon as that is fully live you guys will be, you
36 know, one of the first to know, we're really excited about this
37 next sort of phase of -- of the County's operation. So -- and want
38 to make sure that everybody's aware because the more -- the more
39 interesting opportunity in that auction is good for all of us.

40
41 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

42 Legislator Richberg.

43
44 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

45 So, Commissioner Wright, I've had some -- some folks have reached
46 out to us from the different towns and villages and libraries who
47 normally get a hardcopy book with all the list of the auctions and
48 all of, I can think of a majority of my libraries said they have
49 not received it yet and some of the, I think, the towns said the --
50 I think said they didn't receive it yet either, so do we know when
51 those books will be in because a lot of folks go to the libraries
52 and the towns, you know, asking for those properties.

53
54 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

55 Yep we're finalizing the book now. We, this year, are still going
56 to be printing books just as we had last year so there's no change

1 there so we are working to go finalize that, get those printed and
2 then we'll bring them to all of the locations as we would have in
3 the past.

4
5 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

6 Thank you. Do we have a ETA on that? Or --

7
8 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

9 You know, I'm hoping that it should be next week but let me confirm
10 for you.

11
12 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

13 Thank you.

14
15 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

16 Legislator Trotta.

17
18 **LEG. TROTТА:**

19 I'm good.

20
21 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

22 Okay. Legislator Gonzalez? Did you -- Mazzarella? Legislator
23 Berland or Spencer that are here? Oh, I'm sorry, Legislator
24 Krupski.

25
26 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

27 Thank you. Going back to the positions, so there's, you know,
28 there's, out of 477 there -- they are two fewer for next year,
29 which will free up some, well, will it? First of all, will it free
30 up some money for -- are the other 86 positions or the existing 84
31 positions that are funded out of 477, are they, because of
32 increases in salary and benefit costs, is there gonna be any extra
33 money for water -- actual water quality improvements?

34
35 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

36 You know, I don't have that answer for you right now but I can
37 certainly look into that.

38
39 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

40 I wonder if Budget Review would -- could provide us with that as we
41 -- as we go through this. You know what I'm saying, it'd be -- it
42 might be budget neutral, you're not paying two people out of the
43 477 fund but the price for the other 84 employees might be the --
44 equal out as far as the money goes.

45
46 And the -- going back to the -- the Main Street Recovery Program so
47 that -- it says it's 100% federally funded?

48
49 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

50 You're referencing the 35 million? Yes, those are all federal
51 dollars.

52
53 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

54 For three years. What happens to those three new employees and is
55 it three or is it the administrative aide helping with that also?

56

1 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

2 So the three were the program examiner, the neighborhood aide and,
3 I think, the office assistant were the three that were tied to the
4 federal, the ARPA money.

5
6 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

7 And what do they do after 2024 when the federal money's gone?
8

9 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

10 So I'm sure we'll hopefully have a lot of new initiatives and they
11 would continue to further the efforts of the department.
12

13 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

14 But not -- hopefully not paying them out of 477.
15

16 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

17 That is --
18

19 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

20 I don't think we could justify that.
21

22 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

23 Yeah.
24

25 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

26 But we do have BRO. BRO, I think, wanted to the answer your
27 question maybe or get a clarification on your question; Legislator
28 Krupski.
29

30 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

31 Thank you.
32

33 **MS. HALLORAN:**

34 Just in terms of the Water Quality percentage, the 477 funding,
35 basically, for next year the -- by the end of next year the --
36 should be a fund balance of approximately 6.5 million. However,
37 part of that is the existing fund balance that carried over and the
38 new piece of the revenue that will end up in the fund balance is
39 about 1.4 million so that's -- that's actually 13 million of fund
40 477 funds in 2022 for Water Quality but minus approximately 11.6
41 million in expenses built into the operating budget. So that gives
42 you the 1.4 million. And the only other thing to keep in mind is
43 that there are no transfers for capital projects included yet for
44 next year because there have been no resolutions yet, historically,
45 they wait for a resolution before they account for that. So that
46 would be expenses assuming sales tax comes in as expected.
47

48 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

49 No, I understand. Is it based on the unknown of the sales tax
50 revenue but my question is -- is, so if you're paying 86 positions
51 out that in one year, the next year if you're paying 84 positions
52 out of that; what's the delta?
53

54 **MS. HALLORAN:**

55 Right. Well, it always does depend on the positions that are
56 filled and the grades and benefits and they do tend to rise each

1 year, but, you're right in general but we can get back to you on
2 more specifics of that.

3
4 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

5 That'd be great. That's fine, thank you.

6
7 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

8 Okay. Any other questions? Okay. I don't know if Director
9 Lansdale, did you have any additions you wanted to the make since I
10 brought you in to the comments on this -- at this point.

11
12 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

13 Not at this point.

14
15 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

16 Okay. I'm just filibustering while Legislator Gonzalez got his
17 coffee. I don't think we have to -- this is joint meeting, right,
18 we don't have to adjourn, you can just take over now.

19
20 Government Operations, Personnel, IT & Diversity

21
22 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

23 Okay. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome once again,
24 well, not once again, but welcome to the Government Operations,
25 Personnel, IT & Diversity. Madam Clerk, do we have any cards for
26 anyone here to speak?

27
28 **MS. ELLIS:**

29 No, sir.

30
31 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

32 Thank you so very much. I'd like to -- can I get a motion?

33
34 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

35 And just for the record, we didn't have any for our other one.
36 Correct?

37
38 **MS. ELLIS:**

39 That's correct.

40
41 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

42 You had told me that before we went on the record.

43
44 **MS. ELLIS:**

45 Yes.

46
47 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

48 So, thank you. Thank you.

49
50 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

51 I don't need a motion or a second? All right, thank you very much.
52 So we are going to proceed. Right now we do have two agencies, I
53 believe they're -- they were there a little while ago. Okay. Here
54 we go, very nice. So we have Tom Melito, Director of Civil Service
55 and Commissioner of IT Scott Mastellon. So we will go with Mr. Tom
56 -- I'm sorry, for not being on the professional side. We'll

1 definitely go with Director Melito first. Thank you.

2
3 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

4 Okay. Great, thank you for taking the time to -- to meet with us
5 and, you know, I'd just like to say that first of all in terms of
6 our budget we're fairly satisfied that we have what we need to
7 continue the work that we've begun this year through next year.
8 We're really excited about it and, you know, one of the big things
9 we're doing is developing the Human Resource office and I've spoken
10 to some of you about this in a committee meeting recently where we
11 talked about work arrangements and how we, you know, deal with what
12 has changed in the world since the COVID-19 situation. But at the
13 end of the day the most important -- first of all, the most
14 expensive and precious resource we have is our people. The most
15 important factor in most of the research you're reading today in
16 organizational performance is the employee experience and we're
17 really excited to be developing this office that we'll be focusing
18 on the employees, our biggest resource and engaging them and making
19 sure that they feel comfortable and included in our workplace.
20 Just to give you a sense of it, a recent Gallup Poll in October of
21 2020 just said prior was the pandemic was getting going and
22 employing this engagement results in lost productivity of between
23 {483} and 605 billion dollars every year and our Office of Human
24 Resources is the place where this work towards making that better
25 takes place and so, in fact, there was just an article in today's
26 Newsday taught me about how important the employee experience is in
27 not only recruiting new employees but in making sure you keep the
28 employees that you have more productive so I guess I'll leave it at
29 that for the moment and respond to any questions as I can.

30
31 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ;**

32 Legislator Richberg has a question.

33
34 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

35 How you doing, Director Melito; surprise, surprise, I have a
36 question.

37
38 **LEG. TROTТА:**

39 Yeah, I want to know what it's for.

40
41 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

42 Rob, I'll tell you what my question is for in a second.

43
44 **LEG. TROTТА:**

45 Nothing in particular. Okay, all right. Thank you. Could you
46 e-mail me that?

47
48 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

49 Hey, Rob, can you mute --

50
51 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

52 Rob, you can e-mail us that as well, I think we'd all like to know.
53 So, Director, are you guys asking for any more positions in the
54 budget?

55
56 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

1 Not at this time. I think we are comfortable with what we have
2 gotten and we do have some vacancies that have been here that if we
3 need to we can address that next year in 2022. So we're pretty
4 comfortable right now.

5
6 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

7 Cause I know our Diversity Office, I know we were looking to
8 possibly put some positions there. Are there positions there cause
9 I didn't see them?

10
11 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

12 No, we have not put specific positions there but in conjunction
13 with our Workday implementation and the changing role of the
14 payroll reps and our introduction of Human Resources, in general,
15 we think that we can address that. We're in the process of working
16 on the outline of a diversity inclusion master plan, which will
17 include provisions for dealing with each individual office as we
18 go.

19
20 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

21 Okay. Thank you very much.

22
23 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

24 Thank you, Legislator Richberg. There is a question by Legislator
25 Al Krupski and then Legislator Berland.

26
27 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

28 Thank you, sir.

29
30 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

31 You're welcome, Al.

32
33 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

34 So I've gotta ask about the relationship that Civil Service has
35 with the -- through the municipalities, towns and villages and how
36 that's -- how that's been working.

37
38 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

39 What I would say to you is obviously through 2020, which is when I
40 first begun in this position, things changed dramatically and there
41 was not as much -- obviously we all know what went on and there
42 wasn't as much interaction. We had started meeting with some of
43 the towns and frankly what we've identified is a need across the
44 County and as you know, we service about 270 different agencies
45 across Suffolk County. The major ones, we want to start an ongoing
46 educational program as to how Civil Service rules work, how they
47 can promote people and how they can bring people in and classify
48 them in the appropriate way. So that is definitely in our plan for
49 2022 to really develop that relationship much more closely and also
50 as time goes on we introduce new technologies as we had do here, we
51 love to be able to change some of the ways we interact with the
52 outside agencies to be more digitally oriented as opposed to just
53 paper and e-mail oriented.

54
55 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

56 Yeah, thank you, I appreciate that, if you're gonna pull the

1 curtain back to let people see what -- what the rules are because I
2 know a lot of municipalities, of course, rely on -- on the County
3 and have clear guidance would be very helpful to everyone so
4 appreciate that.

5
6 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

7 One hundred percent. Thank you.

8
9 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

10 Thank you.

11
12 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

13 Thank you, Legislator Krupski. And now to Legislator Berland who
14 has a question.

15
16 **LEG. BERLAND:**

17 Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, one quick question. When we're doing
18 all of the requirements over computer, you know, all of like the
19 anti-bias training and all the trainings we have to do, as someone
20 who's profoundly dyslexic, very difficult for me to do this over
21 the computer, you know, and have the questions and then I'm like --
22 I wonder if I'm the only one in the County actually taking notes
23 when I'm doing it because I need, you know, that interaction when I
24 do it. So when it says, *this should take you 20 minutes*, it takes
25 me like two hours and 20 minutes so my question is is there, you
26 know, anything planned in the future for maybe there may be some
27 other employees like me who, you know, are really, it's not
28 advantageous for them to sit in front of a computer to do it but
29 may need that human class and I would ask that, you know, if
30 there's any money in your budget to maybe have, you know, someone
31 who can give us that alternative.

32
33 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

34 So -- so that's a good question. First of all, I'm gonna say
35 you're not the only who take notes when they do these because I do
36 as well cause there's a lot of information being given to us. But
37 certainly, Legislator Berland, you know, we are trying to develop a
38 full-fledged training program in many -- in various facet so if
39 there are employees -- honestly, this is the first I'm hearing of
40 this particular issue, if there employees that are having problems
41 we will definitely be able to make arrangements to accommodate
42 them. At the end of the day, you know, when you're responsible for
43 making sure 10,000 people do something, technology's the easiest
44 and most effective way to do but if there are exceptions we can
45 certainly address those, of course.

46
47 **LEG. BERLAND:**

48 Okay, yeah, I mean, clearly it's, you know, the numbers game it's
49 gotta be a lot easier for everybody to just press a button and have
50 it done but, you know, if you can let us know next round. I
51 finished all -- I finished all of them this time. (**Laughter**) It's
52 painful for me, it's hard. So, yeah, going forward if we can make
53 any arrangements, that'd be great. Thank you.

54
55 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

56 Sure.

1
2 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

3 Thank you, Legislator Berland. Are there any other questions?
4 Okay. So, thank you very, very much, Director --

5
6 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

7 Thank you.

8
9 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

10 -- for being here today, answering our questions and hopefully
11 we'll continue the same way you're going for '21 and '22. And,
12 next, thank you once again.

13
14 **DIRECTOR MELITO:**

15 Thank you.

16
17 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

18 And next we have Commissioner of IT, Scott Mastellon.

19
20 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

21 Good afternoon, everybody. How are we? Thank you for the
22 opportunity here. So with regard to our 2022 operating budget we
23 are certainly in line with the recommended executive budget. I
24 would like to thank the Executive's Office for, you know, working
25 with us, understanding, you know, the various needs and various
26 projects and allocating the -- the appropriate funding in support
27 of our initiatives. And furthermore, I'd like to thank BRO, you
28 know, it is certainly a challenge at times to understand all the
29 nuances and the technical aspects relative to technology in an
30 organization such as this but on a year-end -- year-end basis, they
31 do an amazing job at understanding, you know, what -- what those
32 issues are, summarizing them very well as part of the BRO report
33 and providing a set of recommendations that I also and we, from a
34 departmental standpoint, agree with.

35
36 So, you know, that being said, I'm certainly here to answer any
37 questions that anybody might have relative to the budget.

38
39 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

40 Are there any questions from my colleagues?

41
42 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

43 If I may, just quickly, I know most of your budget, director,
44 sorry, Commissioner Mastellon, is mostly capital and the -- the
45 staffing's obviously different but obviously you said you're
46 satisfied with the staff. Is there any positions that we should be
47 looking at that you were to fill this year that are -- that are,
48 you know, that you think are, you know, take precedent?

49
50 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

51 So that was part of, you know, the requests for 2022, there was
52 additional positions to allocate in support of -- of cyber
53 security. That was one of the areas that I felt, we felt, needed
54 some attention and, again, you know, through County Executive's
55 Office we were able to identify some additional positions, put them
56 into the budget and we will begin to identify those. So those

1 definitely come to the forefront, you know, as far as we're
2 concerned.

3
4 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

5 Thank you. I think cyber security is something that's important to
6 very many of us here, especially in this day and age. Thank you
7 very much. I yield my time.

8
9 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

10 Thank you.

11
12 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

13 Thank you. Legislator Krupski.

14
15 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

16 Thank you, Legislator Gonzalez. Scott, thanks for your expertise
17 here. So -- so the -- the question I have is, do you coordinate
18 when other, say, you look at all the IT initiatives in, I'll use an
19 example, in the transportation role, the AVL's and all other
20 systems and trying to get -- to make it easier for people to use
21 the Suffolk bus system. Are you involved in that coordination of
22 finding the right system and then installing it and getting the --
23 the users up and running as to how to, you know, how to make use of
24 it?

25
26 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

27 So, number one, we're always available to any agency, you know,
28 within -- within the County as a whole in support of whatever their
29 needs are. Specific to transportation, you know, we do provide a
30 significant amount of support relative to what I'll call more of
31 the infrastructure related items, so let's just say we need an
32 opportunity for hosting a server for providing different types of
33 service from our -- from that capacity, from the networking from a
34 -- from an infrastructure standpoint, we will go ahead and provide
35 that and have provided that. With regard to identifying new
36 technologies, again, we will -- we're here to support but more
37 often than not transportation, you know, works and collaborates
38 with, you know, experts within the industry relative to
39 transportation to identify some of those potential technologies
40 that would be more useful in a transportation setting and then
41 ultimately when those -- when those particular products and/or
42 solutions are brought to the County, we would effectively help
43 ensure that they're properly configured, installed, within our own
44 environment and obviously if there's any need for supporting users
45 getting involved, we can provide that, but again, I think a lot of
46 that comes from, you know, the vendor, the relationships that were
47 built within transportation given the fact that I do believe
48 there's a significant amount of federal funding coming forth to
49 support transportation specifically within -- within the County
50 here. So it's kind of a little bit of both, you know, we -- we're
51 here to help whoever we can and have. In fact, we are working
52 directly with Chris in Transportation at this point in time to
53 bring on a bunch of servers and technology available for transit at
54 this point in time. So, I'm not sure; does that answer your
55 question?

1 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

2 It does, thank you. I appreciate that.

3
4 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

5 Sure.

6
7 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

8 Thank you, Legislator Gonzalez.

9
10 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

11 No, thank you, Legislator Krupski. And are there any other
12 questions? Okay, seeing none, I am going to take a point of
13 privilege for one second. Well, first of all, I'd like to ask,
14 Lance -- Lance, is there anything that you'd like to say for this
15 committee and the agencies?

16
17 **MR. REINHEIMER:**

18 I just -- yes, just one thing in answer to Legislator Krupski's
19 question concerning positions that are transferred out of 477,
20 there were two positions -- in that of two positions for
21 approximately 108,000 in salaries. So I think that answers the
22 question that Legislator Krupski had.

23
24 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

25 It does. Thank you.

26
27 **MR. REINHEIMER:**

28 You're welcome. I have, no, I have no other comments concerning
29 the committees.

30
31 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

32 Thank you very much, Director. So I'd just like to take a point of
33 privilege as far as this committee. I'd like to thank everyone
34 here in my committee for asking the questions and I also want to
35 thank the County Executive's office and its staff for assisting.
36 Once again, all my colleagues and I'd like to say thank you, Madam
37 Chair, it was a pleasure to co-host our committees.

38
39 **CO-CHAIR HAHN:**

40 And it looks like Legislator Krupski wants to weigh in one more
41 time.

42
43 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

44 Okay, Legislator Krupski, I see that you have your hand up.

45
46 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

47 Thank you. So it's another question for Scott and it's about we
48 have, I know just -- just in this office we have a preponderance of
49 paper that we're saving. Historic things from, I don't know if
50 they're, honestly, I don't know if they're what their value is, but
51 we're saving everything; right and it's all paper and the filing
52 cabinets get filled up and then, you know, DPW's kind enough to
53 bring us more, so -- more empty ones. Is there -- how do you
54 manage all that paper countywide and is there -- is there like a
55 strategic plan for any department on how long to keep the records
56 for and where to keep them.

1
2 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

3 Sure. Well, first of all you're not alone. Ourselves included,
4 with regard to paper, there's a significant amount of paper
5 throughout the entire, you know, County. First and foremost there
6 is a retention policy as -- said, it's dictated by the State, the
7 State Department of Education that identifies for each and every
8 type of correspondence document that is maintained in a government
9 in a County setting that there are rules that require you to save
10 for X amount of years and at what point in time you may destroy or
11 if at any point in time you have the opportunity to destroy, there
12 are certain records that must remain in perpetuity, you know, in
13 some form or fashion. So that's one aspect as far as the
14 governance associated with -- with documents now from a technology
15 standpoint from a strategic technology standpoint we are currently
16 right now working on a -- working on program, working on an RFP, if
17 you will, that is going to allow us the ability to -- to provide an
18 electronic component for document capture, document storage,
19 document retention and all the other aspects that go along with
20 managing electronic information within today's day and age office.
21 So this is actually, you know, as we mention it before, we have
22 capital projects at least -- that -- that Legislator Richberg had
23 mentioned associated with our capital -- our technology
24 investments, one of those particular projects is a modernization
25 project which includes this particular initiative so our goal is to
26 release an RFP closer to the end of this year, if not, the
27 beginning of next year, which is gonna allow us the opportunity to
28 bring in technologies to support, you know, every office in the
29 County, you know, given the fact that there's a significant amount
30 obviously throughout the County as far as offices and documents, it
31 will take some time to -- to electronically convert this
32 information, to store it appropriately and to manage it but that is
33 the plan moving forward is to put technology in your hands, in our
34 hands, to effectively manage this -- this mass amount of
35 information.

36
37 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

38 Thank you. Send us the paperwork on that, please.

39
40 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

41 Yeah, right, of course.

42 *(*Laughter*)*

43
44 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

45 Thank you very much.

46
47 **COMMISSIONER MASTELLON:**

48 No problem.

49
50 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

51 Thanks, Legislator Gonzalez.

52
53 **CO-CHAIR GONZALEZ:**

54 Thank you, Al. Are there any other questions? Okay. So seeing
55 none, this committee on Government Operations, Personnel IT and
56 Diversity portion is adjourned and I pass it over, now I yield my

1 time to --

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CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Great, so we do have another meeting at 2:30 and I think we can close this one. We will close out this joint committee. Oh, you did; I'm sorry. Closed. I agree.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:26 PM

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