1. Full Leg Session 5-4-20

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FULL LEGISLATIVE SESSION, 05-04-20.PDF
NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

RICHARD NICOLELLO
PRESIDING OFFICER

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

County Executive and Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York

Monday, May 4, 2020
1:25 P.M.
APPEARANCES:

LEGISLATOR RICHARD J. NICOLELLO
Presiding Officer
9th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL
Deputy Presiding Officer
7th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD
Alternate Presiding Officer
4th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR KEVAN ABRAMS
Minority Leader
1st Legislative District

LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE
2nd Legislative District

LEGISLATOR CARRIE SOLAGES
3rd Legislative District
LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE
5th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR III
6th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR VINCENT T. MUSCARELLA
8th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR ELLEN BIRNBAUM
10th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON
11th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY
12th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR THOMAS MCKEVITT
13th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR LAURA SCHAEFER
14th Legislative District
LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI, JR.
15th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR ANDREW DRUCKER
16th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR ROSE WALKER
17th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR JOSHUA LAFAZAN
18th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS
19th Legislative District

MICHAEL PULITZER
Clerk of the Legislature
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LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I'm going to call this meeting of the Nassau County Legislature. We are going to have an emergency meeting and then a Rules Committee. But call the meeting to order and ask that Deputy Presiding Officer Kopel to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

We have a brief emergency calendar for today's legislature. Before we get to that obviously we have to call the roll.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Deputy Presiding Officer Kopel.

LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Ford.

LEGISLATOR FORD: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Solages.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Mule.
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LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Gaylor.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: The colonel is present.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Muscarella.

LEGISLATOR MUSCARELLA: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Birnbaum.

LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Kennedy.

LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Present.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator McKevitt.

LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Schaefer.

LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Here.
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LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Drucker.

LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Walker.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Lafazan.

LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator Rhoads.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Present.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Minority Leader Abrahams.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Here.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I am here. So all 19 of us are present either in person or via remote.

We have three emergency items. I'm going to call the emergency for all three.

The three items are 117, 118, 119. They are
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ordinances supplemental to the annual
appropriation ordinance in connection with the
Office of Housing and Community Development.
That's all three of those items.

We need a motion to establish the
emergency. Moved by Legislator Rhoads.
Seconded by Legislator Muscarella. Any
discussion or debate on the emergency nature
of these items?

Actually, Kevin, you can give us a
presentation on the items themselves that will
establish why there is a an emergency.

MR. CREAN: Thank you very much.
Thank you for considering it as an emergency
today. Kevin Crean from the Office Community
Development. These are items 117-20, 118-20
and 119-20. They represent supplemental
appropriations under two grants. Supplemental
funding from the US Department of Housing and
Urban Development under the Emergency
Solutions Grants, Coronavirus Grant and the
Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus
funding. About eight and a half million
dollars in CBDG funding Coronavirus and about
$4.2 million under the Emergency Solutions Grant Coronavirus funding.

The Emergency Solutions Grant is separated into two different supplementals. That's why we have three. Two different allocations but that grant is separated into two parts. Which just follows along the process before HUD merged two programs together as we just continue to keep them separate.

These funds are specifically appropriated by Congress and signed by the president to push funds out to local communities for items such as food banks, purchase of personal protective equipment and also some supplemental funding for general community development and Emergency Solutions Grants. The Emergency Solutions Grants program specifically addresses the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Yes, Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Ellen wanted to say something.
LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Ellen, can you hear us?

LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: I have a question. How will PPE be monitored and the expenditures to be sure that the funds are being expended properly?

MR. CREAN: These two programs are already administered by our office. So this is supplemental funding. The rules are generally the same although HUD has waived some of the requirements. For instance, they have waived caps on specific types of funding for different types of activities. But essentially the requirements are the same. So our office that's what we are tasked to do every year is to monitor the use of these funds. So that's no different.

Most of these funds will go out to various nonprofit organizations via contracts. So those contracts will be authorized and the payment to the nonprofits will be done by a voucher against those contracts. Those vouchers will be approved by the comptroller's office, checks issued by the comptroller's office, checks issued by the comptroller's office.
treasurer's office. It's the same process that our office follows generally.

LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Is there some sort of expedited procedure that you're going to have as opposed to the general procedures which will take some time? Obviously we want to get these monies into the hands of the nonprofits and others to administer these programs as quickly as possible.

MR. CREAN: That's why we asked for the supplemental to be done as an emergency so we can start entering into contracts. Whether we will have an expedited process for the contracts I can't say at this point. But right now we will be submitting the amendment that you approved two weeks ago to HUD for approval. They, hopefully, will have an expedited process, although we have not heard that.

We are still waiting for final regulations from HUD to come down. But they have encouraged municipalities to submit the
amendment and to get started with allocating funds in advance of the amendment. Most of the funding that we are authorizing do not require any waivers from HUD other than the waiver of the cap on public services and that's already been authorized. So we're not looking for anything special on this.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thanks. But I guess getting this to you today as opposed to two weeks from now it helps the process along.

MR. CREAN: Absolutely. This will allow us to enter into contracts and encumber funds.


LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So, if someone were to be interested in trying to get funding for like past electric bills that were due what would be the advice to them? To contact DSS?

MR. CREAN: Is this a renter?

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Just
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a constituent. In other words, how are we
getting this message out to people that this
is available?

MR. CREAN: We already had an
application portal -- we have a portal under
our regular grant funding, so we opened that
up to nonprofits and municipalities already.
So applications have already been received.

But for individuals who are looking
to access the funding they can contact my
office. We can put them in touch with a
nonprofit who may be providing those
services. If it's someone who is at risk, who
has not been able to pay their rent or not
been able to pay their electric utility bills
as a result of losing their job or loss of
income that's a program we already have in
existence. It's the Homeless Prevention
program. That's administered out of our
office. This is extra funding that will allow
us to reach a higher income threshold. So we
hopefully will be able to reach more people
with that program.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Just
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to make it easy, if we wanted to advertise, 
not advertise, make it known we would say to inquire about the Homeless Prevention Grant or service?

MR. CREAN: Correct.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I'm sorry to do this, but would you mind just giving me the phone number that they should call to make it easy?

MR. CREAN: Sure. It's 572-0100. We are coordinating with DSS on this because we are expecting the volume of applicants to increase. So the assessor is going to assist us with the higher income applicants and we are going to continue processing the lower income applicants through our office.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Thank you all for the work you are doing.

MR. CREAN: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any other questions on the emergency?

LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: I have a follow up to my first question. Is anyone in
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overall charge of monitoring the county's expenditures of COVID funding making sure we are in compliance with all the applicable laws regarding the regulations? Is there anyone in particular in the administration? How are you running this?

MR. CREAN: I'm the director of Office of Community Development. These funds are coming through my office. So I'm in charge of oversight. But we are in turn overseen by the comptroller's office which audits our office annually.

LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Okay.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Is that it Ellen? You good?

LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Yes.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Anyone else have any questions? Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I was happy that the funding that is going through this process is going to be tagged specifically COVID funding, correct?

MR. CREAN: Yes.
LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So anyone can just go back and trace it if there's any questions later?

MR. CREAN: Absolutely. Yes.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Which is much better than what we've had in the past. I think that's a great improvement.

MR. CREAN: Through the supplemental process we established a separate grant line. So you see the two digit extension. It's CBDG CV, which stands for COVID virus. Actually it's C1 in the county. HUD has termed it CV. We termed it C1 because we are expecting a second allocation of funding. That will be C2 when we receive that.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any other legislators? I need a motion to establish the emergency. Moved by Legislator Birnbaum. Seconded by Legislator McKevitt. All in favor of establishing the emergency signify by saying aye. Those opposed? The emergency has
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been established by a unanimous vote.

Now on the items themselves, 117, 118, 119, I will call them. These are ordinances supplemental to the annual appropriation ordinance in connection with the Office of Housing and Community Development.

Moved by Legislator Gaylor.

Seconded by Legislator Bynoe. We had discussion both on the emergency and on substance. If anyone has any additional questions you can ask them now. Hearing none, all in favor signify by saying aye. Those opposed? Passes unanimously.

MR. CREAN: Thank you for your attention to this. I appreciate it.

Motion to adjourn by Legislator Ferretti. Seconded by Legislator Lafazan. All in favor of adjourning the legislature signify by saying aye. The legislature is adjourned.

(Meeting was adjourned at 1:35 P.M.)
CERTIFICATION

I, FRANK GRAY, a Notary Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 12th day of May 2020

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FRANK GRAY