

1. Public Notice 10-6-2022

Documents:

[10-6-22 SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING.PDF](#)

2. 10-6-2022 Agenda

Documents:

[10.6.22 - BUDGET HEARING - PUBLIC SAFETY AND OMB - 1PM - AGENDA.PDF](#)

3. 10-6-2022 Special Meeting Full Budget

Documents:

[FULL BUDGET 10.06.2022 KL.PDF](#)



PUBLIC NOTICE
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT

THE NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE
WILL HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2022 AT 1:00 P.M.
IN

THE PETER J. SCHMITT MEMORIAL LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER
THEODORE ROOSEVELT EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
1550 FRANKLIN AVENUE, MINEOLA, NEW YORK 11501

AT WHICH TIME THE LEGISLATURE WILL HOLD A PUBLIC
HEARING REGARDING THE 2023 NASSAU COUNTY BUDGET
PERTAINING TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
NASSAU COUNTY COMPTROLLER, THE POLICE DEPARTMENT,
THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY, THE
FIRE COMMISSION AND THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

As per the Nassau County Fire Marshal's Office, the Peter J. Schmitt Memorial Legislative Chamber has a maximum occupancy of 200 people.

Attendees who would like to address the Legislature must submit a slip to the Clerk's office staff. Public comment is limited to three minutes per person. At meetings of the full Legislature, public comment will be heard only during the pre-calendar public comment period and during public hearings that are on the calendar. At meetings of the Legislature's committees, there is no pre-calendar public comment period. Public comment will be heard on agenda items. Public comment on any item may be emailed to the Clerk of the Legislature at LegPublicComment@nassaucountyny.gov and will be made part of the formal record of this Legislative meeting.

The Nassau County Legislature is committed to making its public meetings accessible to individuals with disabilities every reasonable accommodation will be made so that they can participate. Please contact the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature at 571-4252, or the Nassau County Office for the Physically Challenged at 227-7101 or TDD Telephone No. 227-8989 if any assistance is needed. Additionally, those for whom English is not their primary language, or for those who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing, language and communication assistance technology will be available at public meetings.

Every Legislative meeting is streamed live on
<http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/Legis/index.html>

MICHAEL C. PULITZER
Clerk of the Legislature
Nassau County, New York

DATED: September 29, 2022
Mineola, NY

NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Avenue, Mineola, New York 11501

2023 Nassau County Budget Hearing
October 6, 2022
1:00 P.M.

AGENDA

1.	Office of Management and Budget Andrew Persich, Budget Director
2.	Police Department Patrick Ryder, Commissioner
3.	Fire Commission Michael F. Uttaro, Chief Fire Marshal
4.	Sheriff's Department Anthony LaRocca, Acting Sheriff
5.	Probation Department John Plackis, Director of Probation

1
2 NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

3
4 FULL LEGISLATURE MEETING

5 *****

6 RICHARD NICOLELLO

7 PRESIDING OFFICER

8 *****

9 BUDGET

10 ***

11 OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

12 POLICE DEPARTMENT

13 FIRE COMMISSION

14 SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

15
16 County Executive and Legislative Building

17 1550 Franklin Avenue

18 Mineola, New York

19 *****

20 Thursday, October 6, 2022

21 1:19 p.m.

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23 1 of 2

24 TAKEN BY: KAREN LORENZO, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

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LEGISLATOR RICHARD J. NICOLELO
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 ABRAHAMS
Minority Leader
1st Legislative District

LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE
2nd Legislative District

LEGISLATOR CARRIE SOLAGES
3rd Legislative District

LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE
5th Legislative District

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LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR, III

6th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR JOHN J. GIUFFRE

8th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP

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

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LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI, JR.

15th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR ARNOLD W. DRUCKER

16th Legislative District

LEGISLATOR ROSE MARIE 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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A L S O A P P E A R E D :

PUBLIC COMMENT:

MARIA CERAULO

PEARL JACOBS

SUSAN GOTTEHRER

META MEREDAY

BRIAN SULLIVAN

CALENDAR IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE:

1. Office of Management and Budget

Andrew Persich, Budget Director

2. Police Department

Patrick Ryder, Commissioner

3. Fire Commission

Michael F. Uttaro, Chief Fire Marshal

4. Sheriff's Department

Anthony LaRocca, Acting Sheriff

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2 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I'm
3 going to call this meeting of the Nassau
4 County Legislature to order. There is a
5 no roll call. However, we are going to,
6 as we always do, lead things off with the
7 Pledge of Allegiance. Legislator
8 Deriggi-Whitton, please lead us.

9 (Whereupon, the Pledge of
10 Allegiance is recited.)

11 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
12 you very much.

13 We have several slips for public
14 comments. I'm going to call them up now
15 before we start proceeding. Brian
16 Sullivan, I will call you up when we do
17 the Corrections, Sheriff Department.

18 Starting off with Susan Gotterher.
19 By the way, if anyone else wants to
20 submit public comment, there are slips at
21 the table here up at the front. The
22 Clerk's Office who will provide you with
23 those slips. Fill it out and we will
24 call you up.

25 MS. GOTTEHRER: Good afternoon. My

1
2 Susan Gottehrer, I'm the Director of the
3 Nassau County New York Civil Liberties
4 Union. Thank you so much for holding the
5 hearing. I'm here today to ask some
6 questions regarding the Nassau County
7 Jail and the Police Department. It is
8 hard to look at a budget and have three
9 minutes to ask all the questions. This
10 is also my way of conveying to the Public
11 Safety Committee to please ask these
12 questions of the heads of the agencies if
13 we are not able to ask them directly.

14 For the sheriff I notice that you
15 open your budget statement by saying the
16 Corrections Division shall ensure a safe
17 and humane environment that incorporates
18 proved evidence-based rehabilitation and
19 reintegration initiatives; that's on page
20 149. And so I would like to know if
21 while you're providing your testimony, if
22 you could share with us the actual
23 programs that are in the jail as we speak
24 and what programs are going to be
25 introduced in the future.

1
2 I also see one of the goals is to
3 reduce the cost of incarceration and that
4 you have a building consolidation program
5 going on. I know that Mr. Spasato who
6 was recently appointed the Commissioner
7 of Corrections made a regular practice of
8 shutting down entire units for full days
9 while he was in charge of the jail as
10 Sheriff. There were also six suicides in
11 a year or two period during his tenure.
12 So I'm wondering about the opening
13 statement in the goal to reduce the cost
14 of incarceration. Does that include
15 medications, withdrawal medications?
16 Does that include shutting down full
17 buildings for full periods of time? Does
18 that include shutting down visits with
19 attorneys, cutting short visits with
20 families, etcetera? We're really looking
21 to exactly what you mean by that.

22 I would also like to know about the
23 SCAP program that is listed as \$1.5
24 million in revenue in the proposed
25 budget. If you could describe the SCAP

1
2 Meaning, are we holding people for ICE in
3 the Nassau County Jail at \$165 a day, or
4 is that part of a program to collect
5 money on people who have criminal charges
6 against them? As as we know, the
7 immigration system is a civil system.
8 I'm just looking for clarification on
9 what the SCAP a paragraph.

10 Also, what is your plan for
11 communicating with incarcerated people
12 and families during COVID, and do you
13 have in the budget money for masks and
14 PPE if there's another crisis?

15 For Commissioner Ryder, I see on
16 Page 240 that Fines and Forfeitures make
17 up a little under \$25 million worth of
18 projected revenue for 2023. This is one
19 of the highest numbers on the budget
20 proposal. I also see that Intelligence
21 and Asset Forfeiture are housed in the
22 same unit. If you could explain the link
23 between the two and given that amount of
24 expected income, how can the public be
25 sure that it's not an incentive on

1
2 policing tactics?

3 I would also like to ask you about
4 the 36 new officers respond to criminal
5 justice reforms, given that DCJS just
6 issued a report showing that rearrest
7 rates have not changed since before
8 reforms. Can you share with us the
9 evidenced-based data to ask for those 36
10 additional officers?

11 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
12 you. The three minutes are up.

13 We have also have an opportunity, if
14 you have something in writing, to submit
15 is to the Clerk's Office and it will be
16 made part of the record, and we have an
17 e-mail address to submit written comments
18 to supplement written comments to
19 supplement the three minutes you're
20 speaking here. That address is:

21 LegPublicComment@nassaucountyny.gov.

22 Do we have the address down there?

23 (Whereupon, Clerk's Office
24 confirms.)

25 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: All

1
2 right.

3 MS. GOTTEHRER: Thank you.

4 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Pearl
5 Jacobs.

6 MS. JACOBS: Good afternoon,
7 everyone. I come before to advocate for
8 Uniondale. A community that is
9 underserved, disenfranchised,
10 marginalized, suffers from disinvestment
11 and environmental injustice.

12 Ironically, Uniondale serves as a
13 donor community for Nassau County. Our
14 tax revenue base is huge; however, little
15 to know investment returns to our
16 community for infrastructure
17 improvements, facade improvements for
18 businesses, and health and safety
19 improvements.

20 In addition to all that I have just
21 mentioned, Uniondale is a community whose
22 boundaries continue to be infringed upon,
23 and the fight for Uniondale's identity
24 continues and will continue.

25 I strongly request that Uniondale

1
2 receives its fair share of monies from
3 this budget. In addition to my
4 aforementioned request, I would also ask
5 that monies be allocated for camera
6 technology.

7 Four years ago, I met with
8 Legislator Abrahams and the Nassau County
9 Police Department representatives to
10 advocate for camera technology. I again
11 came before this Legislative Body two
12 months ago requesting that technology be
13 implemented on Uniondale's main streets
14 beginning with Uniondale Avenue to assist
15 in reducing crime and improving quality
16 of life.

17 This past spring a young man was
18 murdered in Uniondale Park. This is a
19 priority for our community as business
20 owners and residents are complaining
21 about loitering on their properties,
22 vandalism, and people aimlessly wandering
23 around the community. I hope there are
24 not any more of those shelter homes,
25 because there's supposed to be a

1
2 moratorium on that. I will check with the
3 Department of Social Services on that.

4 Inspector Giuerer in the First
5 Precinct team does a great job serving
6 and protecting our community, but they
7 cannot be everywhere. Unless you plan to
8 clone the police, we want cameras on our
9 streets. I hope that's included in this
10 upcoming budget. Thank you.

11 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
12 you. Maria Cerualo.

13 MS. CERAULO: Good afternoon, my
14 name is Maria Ceraulo and I'm the
15 criminal justice chair for the National
16 Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI),
17 Queens/Nassau.

18 I'm coming before you to talk about
19 your desire to reduce the cost of
20 incarceration and expressed desire to
21 have humane treatment for people that are
22 incarcerated. As you may know,
23 disproportionate numbers of people are
24 incarcerated with mental illness in the
25 jails and prisons in America. I suggest

1
2 that you don't prosecute ill people, you
3 send them for treatment. Invest in
4 community resources to treat them. The
5 Governor has called and set aside funds
6 for crisis stabilization centers so that
7 when there is an emergency or crisis,
8 people can be sent to a stabilization
9 center where they'll receive services
10 where they will not be punished in the
11 jail or sent to an ER.

12 I wanted to say I know of a family,
13 and more than one, that are in the Nassau
14 County jail now. It hardly sounds humane
15 to me when they're still inside a keep
16 lock when it is illegal to put ill people
17 in solitary confinement in the state of
18 New York, the law was just passed. Yet
19 we incarcerate mentally ill people, we
20 don't medicate them. And then when they
21 act out, we prosecute them further. It's
22 a never ending cycle of punishment for
23 people who are mentally ill.

24 People that try to visit have had
25 real big problems trying to visit. Loved

1
2 ones have tried to file grievances that
3 somehow disappear and no one ever saw
4 them. This is hardly humane. I wanted
5 to ask all of you, if you didn't mind,
6 how many of you have been inside Nassau
7 County jail?

8 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I
9 think we all have.

10 MS. CERAULO: Have you?

11 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
12 Multiple times, yes.

13 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: You may
14 have heard the Vera Institute has drawn
15 attention to what's gone on in Riker's
16 Island, and there are pictures released
17 of what the conditions are like inside
18 that jail. Which to be an American
19 citizen, it's quite remarkable to think
20 this is what's happening in our own
21 country. Now I'm hoping that Nassau
22 County in better shape than that; I don't
23 know.

24 So I hope you will really do
25 everything you can to make this a humane

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response to a public health problem.

Mental illness is an illness. It is not
a violation of law, although they may do
minor crimes.

Okay. That's basically what I wanted
to say. Thank you very much.

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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET:

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Andy?

MR. PERSICH: Good afternoon,
everyone. Thank you for having me. Andy
Persich, Office of Management and Budget.
I am here to present to you County
Executive Blakeman's first proposed
budget. A fiscally balanced budget that
has not tax increases in it and adds some
heads in certain arenas that have been
discussed previously.

I'm going to give a brief
presentation; I hope to be brief.
There's not a lot to say about this
budget, other than it is another plain
vanilla budget that grows on a few
different areas.

I'm going to start if you want to
follow me through. First, I have to
thank my staff too before I forget that.
Every year we go this process and, I will
say it is a painstaking process to get
this done. Without them, I wouldn't be

1
2 sitting here in this position.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Please
4 also identify your staff.

5 MR. PERSICH: Sure. I just want
6 identify the people sitting next to me,
7 my Senior Team: Chris Nolan, Irfan
8 Qureshi, Irina Sedighi. They're my
9 senior team and I have a few staff
10 members out in the audience who have been
11 here with me for a few years and have
12 made the process a little bit better, but
13 like with everything else, there are some
14 challenges that we go through in
15 production and doing the numbers.

16 But that said, I'm going to give you
17 a historical prospective on how we
18 developed this budget and where we're at
19 in this budget. In order to get there,
20 I'm going to turn to slide one. You have
21 to get -- we use our baselines for what
22 we're projecting in 2022 to get to 2023.
23 I don't need to tell you all that.
24 That's why we're here. The one thing
25 that we're noticing is the sales tax

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2 number in '22 is significantly lower than
3 collections. We're projecting right now
4 a 5% increase in our projections.

5 There's some upside, but there's some
6 caution I want to make everybody you
7 aware of. There's some adjustment checks
8 that come from the State that we've been
9 notified that may go south a little bit
10 because of the way they calculated.

11 We're in a good spot conservative
12 with the budget for 2023, but the 2022
13 numbers are a little stronger. When we
14 grow the base in '23, it's off a higher
15 number in '22. We see 5% growth in '22,
16 that's what we're projecting. The '23
17 budget includes a 1.8% increase on top of
18 that 5%.

19 We're also getting back the
20 disproportionate hospital money that was
21 taken from us by our friends in New York
22 State and additionally the AIM money is
23 now being restored. They were
24 intercepting that from us to give back to
25 the towns and the hospitals, but the

1
2 State budget included the restoration of
3 those monies to us, which is
4 approximately \$20 million to the good.

5 In addition to that, we've included
6 in our baseline numbers the forgiveness
7 on the gasoline tax on the \$3 and over.
8 That's also included in that. As
9 everybody is aware, we're still actively
10 negotiating contracts with collective
11 bargaining units and that's ongoing. We
12 are hoping to get some resolution done
13 soon with some of them. It's a process, I
14 will say that.

15 If you turn to the next page, the
16 2023 Budget, as I said, no tax increase
17 budget. Sales tax I just covered. We're
18 paying down the referral of the last
19 piece of the amortization in the Police
20 District Fund. While it is not a real
21 big savings, it eliminates a liability in
22 the out years so we don't have recurring
23 money we owe to the State. It's
24 approximately \$35 million dollars. It
25 help us in the arena when we go through

1
2 our credit rating agencies. They like
3 that because we're getting rid of long
4 term liabilities. You're gonna here OPAB
5 and everybody complaining about that.
6 This is one of the things that actually
7 make sense when we have money to do stuff
8 like this. You've all been here long
9 enough to know that this is a different
10 position than we've been in many, many
11 years and the go forward piece is clearly
12 critical how we move forward fiscally
13 sound.

14 In addition, this budget includes a
15 \$25 million contingency. I've stated
16 before, the uncertainty in the economy.
17 The inflation numbers are going around.
18 We have to be prepared that while it
19 seems to be roaring right now or trending
20 a little choppy, we have to be ready for
21 that. Building the contingency into a
22 budget is a good fiscal practice. It's
23 accepted by some of our friends over at
24 NIFA too, I think, and it takes some of
25 the strain of what they might impose on

1
2 risk in this budget offsets it a little
3 bit.

4 The budget grows by \$166 million.
5 That's just from a couple of things.
6 Mostly has to do with labor and the debt
7 service piece going back up to
8 normalization.

9 The last piece of the NIFA benefit
10 we got was in '22. In '23, we're
11 restoring back to where we were in the
12 previous years. A little lower than
13 anticipated, but the savings achieved
14 from that both in '21 and '22 have helped
15 us put away money so it offsets some of
16 the future liabilities that we have out
17 there.

18 The head count is increasing by 86,
19 predominantly in the Public Safety arena,
20 mostly in the Police Department, Fire
21 Commission, Probation, DA's Office and a
22 couple of other areas.

23 One other anecdotal note I just want
24 to make to everybody is that in 2008, if
25 you recall, we entered into an IMA with

1
2 the City of Glen Cove. Those residents
3 will now be part of the collection and
4 disposal district and the sewer district.
5 It will hep offset some of the costs to
6 the residents.

7 The next slide just shows a
8 comparison year over year between 2022
9 and 2023. As you can see, the proposed
10 budget in salaries is going up by \$55
11 million. That's as a result of
12 collective bargaining agreements being
13 funded in the budget at the settled rate.
14 We've done this for the past couple of
15 years. We've segregated out what the
16 retro and the cola (phonetic) pieces in
17 the budget, but that's the driving force
18 of the number up. The '22 budget
19 included it too.

20 You'll see Fringe is dropping and
21 that's a result of we paid the pension
22 deferral in '22 back from the other
23 funds, which was approximately \$122
24 million, which I think we have in we
25 another slide. But that reduction in

1
2 fringe benefits was offset by the debt
3 service increase. If you looked on a
4 comparison basis, those are the two
5 driving forces that are making the
6 numbers go up and down.

7 We're also seeing some increases in
8 transportation as a result in a new bus
9 contract. The RFP is out there, so where
10 this lands exactly, I don't know. We've
11 estimated a little conservatively with
12 the numbers, but there is some inflation
13 factors that are factoring in, whether it
14 be the price of natural gas, gasoline,
15 diesel, equipment costs, everything else;
16 we factored that in.

17 Our direct assistance is going up a
18 little bit. OTPS we're seeing an uptick.
19 We have to keep in mind that the
20 inflation costs are driving up some of
21 our pricing for goods and services. We
22 factored that into the budget.

23 Gas, I mean, it is down, it's up.
24 You're hearing all different reports
25 right now. Probably that is one of the

1
2 main drivers here. But the cost of goods
3 and everything now that we are acquiring
4 now is costing us more money more for the
5 equipment we need for the departments.

6 As can you see, sales tax is going
7 up. I think I've discussed that. State
8 aide is going up primarily driven by the
9 STOA money for buses. Federal aide
10 slightly. And department revenues are
11 starting to decline a little bit. The
12 housing market is starting to hit the
13 headwinds. Transaction volume is going
14 down. Interest rates are rising, so
15 we've taken the number down
16 conservatively. I do think housing market
17 is a market, it will go down, it will
18 come back up. I think when you look in
19 the out years of the budget when we do
20 the multiyear plan, we have restoration
21 of those revenues, but all in all, I
22 think we've taken a fiscally conservative
23 approach on the revenue side to keep this
24 budget balanced.

25 That said, the budget's \$3.3 billion

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2 versus \$3.2 from last year. That's
3 exclusive of departmental, because that
4 gets a little crazy because we have to
5 do, I would say, budgetary things that is
6 much more complicated and has no impact
7 as far as expenses and revenues.

8 If you turn to next slide, which I
9 think is the sales tax slide, you can see
10 we're not being overly aggressive. If in
11 you see where we're at right now and
12 where we're going to, I think we're in
13 the ballpark of being in the comfort zone
14 of not over estimating this number. It's
15 the main driver of what this budget is
16 built on and it has been for a few years
17 now, because it is the largest revenue
18 source that the County has so we are very
19 cognoscente of it. And having some
20 cushion from 2021 from the money we put
21 into reserves to where we're at now, I
22 think has built us a financial structure
23 that will benefit us for the downturn.
24 We won't be running around here when we
25 have a large judgement or some anomaly

1
2 that comes out. I think we are in a
3 position now that we have never been in.
4 I've reiterated this in past hearings,
5 that we have just have to be cautious
6 with the go forward. When you get to the
7 out years, and I'll show that later on,
8 things get a little bit more difficult
9 because collective bargaining numbers get
10 higher in the out years.

11 I will turn to the next slide.
12 Again, I think we have addressed the
13 liability section. We've paid down \$123
14 million last year. We're looking to
15 settle some outside litigations. We
16 still have a lot of claims out there for
17 old Article 18 cases that date back to
18 the '90s. We're working on resolving
19 those. Those are significant numbers.
20 I've been in touch with the attorneys on
21 this one. It's a very, very large
22 number, but I don't think we're in a bad
23 place.

24 The other thing we've enacted is
25 doing structured settlements in some of

1
2 the things we do. The LIPA thing coming
3 off the books, and when I get to the next
4 slide with the CERTS of how we're
5 progressing with that, I think we will
6 finally rid ourselves of the backlog. It
7 is not going to be instantaneously, but
8 we're trying to pump it out as fast as we
9 can.

10 If you look at next slide, this is
11 what the CERT liability looks like. I
12 know this has been a hot topic for
13 everybody and I've been asked this. At
14 the end of 2021, we can call our
15 liability to be approximately \$447
16 million net of LIPA settlement. We've
17 put out the door approximately \$86
18 million dollars and it's not just special
19 revenue funds. We have all these other
20 resources which we are dipping into. If
21 you look in the system, it's not going to
22 be dollar-for-dollar of this special
23 revenue fund, but we have \$360 million of
24 outstanding liability as of now. We have
25 resources of approximately 343 to cover

1
2 that. There's a little slippage, but
3 it's a negotiation so, hopefully, we may
4 be able to get the number down a little
5 bit. I think we have some resources
6 built into some of the reserves that if
7 we run short, we will have the ability to
8 cover any shortfall in the CERT line.
9 Keep in mind, that we have now built in a
10 PAGO system for lack of a better thing.
11 We have DAF and we have operating funds
12 to cover approximately \$70 million of
13 that money. Once the assessment is
14 stabilized, I think that number will
15 probably close to being manageable. I
16 would say it would land between \$70-100
17 million annually as increase.

18 Finally, I just want to cover a few
19 things. If you look, this is the
20 multiyear plan we have to present as part
21 of the Charter and is one of the things
22 that NIFA focuses on. In '22-23 we're
23 okay because we have built contingencies.
24 In 2025, we're okay. In '26, we start to
25 get really tight because expenses and

1
2 rising costs we have to be concerned
3 about. So while I hate not to use it --
4 what I will say is we have some money in
5 the bank, let's be cautious about what
6 the future looks like, we don't want to
7 go back to the old days. I think this
8 Body and everybody else, we've all worked
9 together to get here where we are. I
10 think we're gonna continue down that
11 path. I just want to bring to light, in
12 four years from now, it's not as robust
13 as where it is. We have to be fiscally
14 minded if we have any surplus, how to
15 strategically place it so that when we
16 get there, we are free and clear of
17 having any of our friends at NIFA
18 scrutinize about how are we getting there
19 and what we did.

20 In closing, I have to bring up my
21 bond upgrades, I'm proud of those. Just
22 for argument's sake, but I have to bring
23 it up again: Two bond upgrades. We've
24 built a resilient budget and we have a
25 strong economic base here in this County

1
2 and we're starting to behave like that
3 fiscally. We can give the residents the
4 service they're entitled to, and we plan
5 on keeping this ship going down that
6 path. That has been my mission statement
7 from the County Executive: Keep this
8 budget balanced and be fiscally prudent.

9 We have the highest reserves we've
10 had in years. The continuity of my team,
11 which I have to give thanks to again,
12 that's helped make this process a little
13 easier. The budget is structurally
14 balanced and we've taken care of some of
15 our pension costs in CERT and other
16 liabilities out there. We are in the
17 strongest cash position we've been in in
18 years.

19 That is all I have to say about the
20 budget. I'm here to field your questions
21 and anything I left out, by all means,
22 you can throw at me.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: We
24 will open it up to the legislators, but I
25 have a couple. You indicated this is a no

1
2 tax increase budget, but I think you're
3 selling yourself a little short. There
4 was a proposed \$35 million increase in
5 taxes in the four year plan.

6 MR. PERSICH: Correct. Under the
7 previous administration, we included a
8 \$35 million tax or restoration of the \$70
9 million. We have held the line. The
10 plan includes a no tax increase for the
11 four years. Part of that's built on the
12 strength of the sales tax number and
13 that's what giving us the flexibility not
14 to do anything with taxes.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: The
16 bottom line is that the proposed \$35
17 million tax increase has been taken out
18 of the budget.

19 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I just
21 have one other question and then I'll
22 open it up.

23 What may the funds in this
24 contingency fund be spent on?

25 MR. PERSICH: Like with any other

1
2 thing, if we have a shortage in one of
3 the areas, whether it be fringe benefits,
4 because health insurance rates, I'm just
5 giving everybody a warning shot here,
6 they're going up. COVID is starting to
7 hit. All the free testing and all the
8 things that we thought were free are now
9 coming to fruition, I think. Health
10 insurance rates could be doubling. I
11 haven't gotten the NYSHIP rates. I doubt
12 they will be out before November. I'd
13 rather not say as why, but I do believe
14 they're going to be going up. So that
15 contingency could be use for anything
16 that we have shortages in on the
17 appropriation side. I would have to come
18 to this body and say I need to move
19 money. It goes in the BU budget. We've
20 had this in the past. I have to come to
21 you and say, we need money here and we're
22 gonna take it from the contingency to pay
23 for this. If don't use it, we then create
24 what I would say is the fiscally prudent
25 way of doing it. We have a rolling

1
2 surplus which is where we need to be and
3 we can rid ourselves of our partners at
4 NIFA.

5 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
6 you, Andy.

7 Any other legislators? Legislator
8 Ferretti and then Legislator Ford and
9 Legislator Rhoads.

10 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: How are you
11 doing? Thank you for your presentation,
12 Andy and your entire team. Thank you for
13 the hard work in putting this budget
14 together.

15 Just a couple of more questions
16 about what the Presiding Officer was
17 asking you about. The previous
18 administration's multiyear plan did not
19 call for just a property tax increase for
20 2023, correct?

21 MR. PERSICH: It called for property
22 tax increases in '23, '24, and '25.

23 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: The multiyear
24 plan put forth by County Executive
25 Blakeman and your team, does that do

1
2 anything with the out years in terms of

3 --

4 MR. PERSICH: No. The property tax
5 is still not going up. It's still frozen
6 at 755.

7 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So in other
8 words, it's not just removing the \$35
9 million property tax increase that was in
10 the multiyear plan by the administration
11 for '23, it is removing the proposed \$35
12 million property tax increase by the
13 prior administration in '24, and a \$10
14 million property tax increase for '25?

15 MR. PERSICH: That is correct. It's
16 \$150 in total that the plan was in the
17 previous administration, the reduction to
18 restore the \$150 million.

19 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: You just said
20 reduction.

21 MR. PERSICH: Right.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I just want to
23 make sure I understand. The previous
24 administration had proposed in their
25 multiyear plan a \$150 million property

1
2 increase, correct?

3 MR. PERSICH: Correct. That is
4 correct.

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And County
6 Executive Blakeman's multiyear plan is
7 proposing to remove the entire \$150
8 million property tax increase that the
9 prior administration proposed, correct?

10 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

11 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. As you
12 might recall the last two budgets, the
13 Majority had put in budget amendments for
14 rodent extermination programs.

15 MR. PERSICH: Correct.

16 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: They were
17 passed by this Body and then vetoed by
18 the previous Count Executive; do you
19 recall that?

20 MR. PERSICH: I do recall that.

21 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Does this
22 budget add any money in for a rodent
23 extermination program?

24 MR. PERSICH: It adds approximately
25 \$200,000 to the rodent extermination

1
2 budget. It is almost a half million
3 dollars in total. I would say increased
4 it by \$200,000 --

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: \$222,000.

6 MR. PERSICH: It's 222 to be exact.
7 I'm rounding. I apologize.

8 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: It' a couple
9 of extra rats there.

10 MR. PERSICH: Yes.

11 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: The
12 administration has already started
13 baiting sumps under the current budget;
14 is that correct?

15 MR. PERSICH: I cant answer that,
16 Legislator. I would assume yes, because
17 it's part of the program they have out
18 there.

19 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: All right.
20 But this budget does have money in there.
21 I know Legislator Walker, Legislator Ford
22 and myself have been working closely with
23 Ken Arnold in putting a program together.
24 I just want to make sure the money is in
25 there for the rat extermination program,

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correct?

MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Legislator Ford, then Legislator Rhoads.

LEGISLATOR FORD: Good afternoon.
Thank you very much for your
presentation.

I just want to make sure I
understand with the head count. For the
budget, the budgeted full time head count
is increased by 86 positions to 7,413.

MR. PERSICH: Correct.

LEGISLATOR FORD: You indicated they
would be police officers, fire, sheriff.
When you go through looking at the
various department, does this increased
head count, do we also take into
consideration the increases that are
proposed, like say for Parks and
Recreation. Right now, their full time
onboard is 131 and we're proposing 142.
Then for the Department of Public Works,
on board 345 as of September, and propose

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2 404; is there money in the budget that
3 these individuals can be hired?

4 MR. PERSICH: Yes. The budget
5 includes -- it's a growth over the '22
6 budget of 86 positions, but there are
7 vacancies in '22 that are not onboard.
8 The budget includes the funded vacancies
9 from '22 and '23. To answer your
10 question, yes it is --

11 LEGISLATOR FORD: So the money is
12 there. There's no deterrent to hiring
13 any of these people --

14 MR. PERSICH: No.

15 LEGISLATOR FORD: And fulfilling
16 these jobs?

17 MR. PERSICH: No.

18 LEGISLATOR FORD: All right. Thank
19 you.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
21 Legislator Rhoads.

22 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I appreciate it.
23 Thank you, Presiding Officer. Thank you
24 for your presentation, Andy. I
25 appreciate it.

1
2 Going back two years ago, we were
3 told by the previous administration,
4 County Executive Curran, and told by NIFA
5 that we had to restructure debt because
6 sales tax revenues were going to plummet,
7 correct?

8 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In fact, they
10 forecasted I believe a difference in
11 sales tax revenue of I believe a 20%
12 decrease in 2021 from 2020 levels.

13 MR. PERSICH: No. In 2020, if I
14 recall, it was a 20% decrease in the
15 budgeted numbers in 2020. That was the
16 middle of the pandemic. That was the
17 original estimate.

18 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Right. However,
19 the estimate for '21, as I recall, was
20 that there was going to be a decrease
21 from the the 2020 numbers despite the
22 fact the economy was reopening based upon
23 what they thought might happen.

24 MR. PERSICH: I have to go back and
25 check the exact numbers. But, yes --

1
2 there was a slight increase if I recall
3 from the 2020 to 2021 number, but the
4 base in '20 was so slow, it was still
5 lower than what we were collecting in
6 2020.

7 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: The bottom
8 line in spite of the forecasted decrease,
9 it looks like from the numbers that we're
10 being presented here that there, in fact,
11 was 34% increase in sales tax revenue in
12 2021 from 2020; is that correct?

13 MR. PERSICH: Correct.

14 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And that in
15 2022, it appears to be an additional 11%
16 increase from 2021.

17 MR. PERSICH: Correct.

18 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So the debt
19 restructuring that County Executive
20 Curran and NIFA forced this County to
21 adopt, at this point, we would agree
22 was based upon a false premise.

23 MR. PERSICH: Let me put a different
24 spin on it. I would say while the
25 opportunity presented itself to do the

1
2 debt restructuring at that point, the
3 uncertainty that we were sitting upstairs
4 with was a little different. We didn't
5 know what was going to happen. I think
6 being conservative in the sales tax
7 number has benefited us. The debt
8 restructuring has benefited us, I will
9 say. Even though we don't want the
10 partners, we were able to accumulate --
11 to your point, Legislator, I guess
12 because the sales tax number was so low
13 we ended up generating a surplus to fund
14 other things is what I will say.

15 I don't know if I answered your
16 question or confused you more. What I'm
17 saying is, I think at this point and time
18 had you presented that and the pandemic
19 wasn't going on which was -- I mean, we
20 were all here. It was the craziest time.
21 I don't what different solution might
22 have been out there.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I think the
24 difficulty that I'm having is that --
25 again stepping back two years -- the

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2 argument that we were having was the fact
3 that sales tax revenues in 2020 were
4 continuing to increase as the economy
5 reopened, yet we were being told that we
6 were forecasting a decrease in the sales
7 tax revenue in 2021 to justify the debt
8 restructuring; that's my recollection.

9 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And obviously,
11 everything on the record and that will
12 bear that out.

13 I do notice that this year, however,
14 since the debt restructuring was done,
15 that of the overall budget increase,
16 nearly half of that budget increase,
17 based on my math, about \$140 million of
18 our spending increase is as a result of
19 can being kicked down the road and now
20 it's time to pay the piper now that the
21 Curran Administration is gone, the
22 Blakeman Administration now has to deal
23 with making \$141 million in additional
24 debt servicing payments that have to be
25 incorporated into this budget.

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MR. PERSICH: Yes.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Overall -- I know you've just taken the position that somehow the debt restructuring was good in that it put is in a stronger cash position. However, overall, you would have to agree the debt restructuring, one, was not necessary; and, two, has actually put us in a more difficult position with respect to the overall budget, driving up our budget numbers as apposed to keeping the lower.

MR. PERSICH: Yes. To your point, I will say yes to that. But, again, at that point and time -- let me just take you back, though. If you look at the chart, sales tax in 2020 dropped by 7-8%, which --

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Overall, it did. It was originally forecasted to be down by 30%.

MR. PERSICH: And if we didn't do the debt restructuring, the scoop and chuck, I think in 2020 the conversation

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2 would be different. We wouldn't have a
3 structural balance budget. Part of the
4 component was taking \$75 million of 2020
5 money and scooping and chucking -- that
6 was the term we used to do this. This is
7 a scoop and chuck. I think it helped in
8 the short term; in the long term, yes. I
9 don't disagree with you. We've mortgaged
10 the future and now we're paying for it,
11 yes. There's no secret there. That is
12 the truth. We did push it out further.
13 Because we extended the life of the debt
14 is what we did do.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Well, you also
16 extended the life of NIFA an additional
17 ten years.

18 MR. PERSICH: Agreed, but. I think
19 the other thing too, there's two
20 components that get mixed up in it. We
21 used to be able to easily do debt
22 restructuring ourselves, but in 2017
23 there was a tax law change that
24 prohibited us from doing that. That
25 created a problem too. Now that we have

1
2 a better credit rating, I think going
3 forward I think to the point we do a debt
4 restructuring, we don't need any partners
5 anymore. If that helps us. I think
6 that's if one positive out of the whole
7 thing came out of it, I think that we've
8 positioned ourselves in a position that's
9 gonna benefit everybody for the future.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: However, I would
11 imagine that you would agree, as it turns
12 out, we would have been -- without the
13 debt restructuring, we would still be in
14 a sound financial position. It might not
15 be as good, we would have been fiscally
16 sound.

17 MR. PERSICH: We wouldn't be as
18 rosy. Remember, we were paying \$330
19 million of 300 and some odd million
20 dollars in debt service prior to the
21 restructuring. We took two years, I will
22 say, vacation for lack of a better thing.
23 The numbers went down. We didn't start
24 making the principal and interest
25 payments until '23. So I think it would

1
2 have been a little bit more of a struggle
3 of who is sitting here in '23 without
4 having that restructuring there.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Just out of
6 curiosity, do you happen to know as a
7 result of NIFA's life being extended
8 basically until 2035, can you tell what
9 is the additional cost to the County as a
10 result of NIFA's existence for probably
11 12 or 13 years longer as result of the
12 restructuring?

13 MR. PERSICH: Simple terms, off the
14 top of my head, the operating budget is
15 roughly around \$2 million, so 12 times
16 two is \$24 million.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So in addition
18 to the additional debt service we now
19 have to pay to the tune of about \$140
20 million, we're gonna be stuck over the
21 next 12 to 13 paying an additional \$20-26
22 million in NIFA expenses, which we have
23 no control over.

24 MR. PERSICH: Correct.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: NIFA spends what

1
2 it wants to spend. That's assuming that
3 they don't increase their spending over
4 the next 13 years, which historically
5 they've done on something of a regular
6 basis.

7 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Refusing to use
9 County office space and going out and
10 actually paying to rent for example.
11 Refusing to use County staff to actually
12 staff their office, going out and
13 spending money and hiring people on their
14 own. That's what they typically engage
15 in.

16 MR. PERSICH: Majority of their
17 expenses come in two fold: One is
18 personnel costs and some is outside
19 services that they're required to do.

20 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Like for
21 example, hiring their own individual to
22 participate in contract negotiations was
23 something else. Something we
24 specifically vetoed, but they elected to
25 do on their own regardless.

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MR. PERSICH: Yes. And there's some other things that they have to pay for, borrowing, banking fees --

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: By the way, the additional costs as a result of the debt restructuring, did that procurement cost of the actual restructuring itself?

MR. PERSICH: Yes, it did. Whenever we do a debt deal we roll it all in, it takes all the expenses and rolls it into the bond deal. This included that. The banker fees and everything else. The cost of issuance, that's what we call it.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: What were the costs of issuance?

MR. PERSICH: I have to go back. I don't think they were significant enough. We look at it Net PV; Net Present value. The deal was positive. That's how we had to do it. Otherwise, the State Comptroller doesn't allow us to do it. I think it all fit within confines of what we were saving.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: From a

1
2 historical standpoint, we've seen that
3 those procurement costs can be as much as
4 \$20-25 million per year.

5 MR. PERSICH: They could be, yes.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We are not
7 talking about --

8 MR. PERSICH: You're extending it
9 over the life.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Just a couple of
11 a hundred dollars is an insignificant
12 amount of money, but we're talking about
13 tens of millions of dollars that are
14 being spent on procurement costs for
15 borrowing that we may not have needed.

16 MR. PERSICH: Correct.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Do we know, is
18 there a reason those costs are unknown?
19 Has NIFA reported those costs to anyone?

20 MR. PERSICH: We are required in the
21 official statements to do those, I just
22 don't know them off the top of my head.
23 They're a required issuance when we do
24 ROS. When we did the restructuring, the
25 banker came in and said this is what the

1
2 cost of -- there's underwriting costs,
3 there's legal costs, there's a whole
4 bunch of different things that rolled up
5 into the debt restructuring. It's common
6 practice. It's called a cost of issuance
7 that you roll it into the deal and
8 stretch it over the time of the bond.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Again, looking
10 at the debt restructuring for a moment,
11 was the way that NIFA chose to
12 restructure the debt, the most efficient
13 way to restructure it over the life of
14 the deal, or was it essentially front
15 loaded to get the maximum benefit over
16 the course of the first two years of the
17 deal?

18 MR. PERSICH: It was structured to
19 bet the maximum benefit over the first
20 two-and-a-half-years. The P. V. may have
21 been a lit more favorable if we straight
22 lined the debt, meaning that we didn't
23 take all the money up front in the first
24 two years, the savings. I would argue
25 the point though, despite the sales tax

1
2 and everything being so low, that surplus
3 we generated in '21 was not a factor in
4 what we did in the debt restructuring to
5 help reduce that savings. We basically
6 benefited twice from doing the
7 restructuring up front, even though we
8 mortgaged the future, we got money up
9 front from the debt restructuring and
10 from the surplus generated from the debt
11 service savings.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Are we able to
13 calculate how much more, and I understand
14 the first two years you benefited, are we
15 able to calculate how much more it's
16 costing us now as a result of the
17 decision to front load the benefits of
18 the debt restructuring as opposed to
19 spreading it out over the course of the
20 15 years of the deal?

21 MR. PERSICH: I don't have that
22 number in front of me, but we did do an
23 analysis on that. I can get that for
24 you. I'm gonna it's between \$50-60
25 million is what I will say.

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LEGISLATOR RHOADS: That's over the
life. You're looking at \$50-60 million.

MR. PERSICH: Right.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I have no other
questions.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Minority Leader Abrahams, Legislator
Derrigi-Whitton, Legislator Bynoe.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: How are you,
Andy?

MR. PERSICH: I'm well. How are
you, Minority Leader?

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Good. Good.

I just have a couple of questions.
It really ties to some of the things
about the multiyear plan and some of the
sales tax -- property tax stuff that was
mentioned earlier.

You had mentioned before that the
multiyear plan now is flat. Meaning the
previous administration's tax increases
are no longer in the budget. You were
part of the offering of that; what
changed?

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2 MR. PERSICH: What changed was the
3 significant increase in sales tax that
4 the property tax increase was not
5 required because we have revenue to
6 offset it.

7 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: The enormous
8 growth in sales tax, was that known at
9 the time you offered the budget?

10 MR. PERSICH: At that point, no. But
11 now we know and --

12 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Yeah. So now
13 we know and we're able to change it. So
14 we could budget by crystal ball, like
15 some would suggest. Or we could go based
16 off the facts, which at the present time
17 which you were part of the offering of
18 that, would suggest we preserve and have
19 a conservative budget. It sounds like to
20 me -- and the previous county executive
21 doesn't need anyone to defend her -- but
22 it sounds like to me, due to her
23 conservative budgeting as it pertains to
24 the sales tax and other items, is the
25 reason why the current administration has

1
2 what they have, the resources they have,
3 to be able to do what they're doing;
4 would you agree?

5 MR. PERSICH: Yes. I would say that
6 some of the benefits we've done in the
7 past has benefited the future, but we're
8 here now and this is the hand we were
9 dealt. I mean back then, I will say,
10 Legislator, I did not have a crystal
11 ball. I was more nervous about what we
12 didn't have. We were all there. I which
13 I had hindsight back then.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I agree. We
15 were coming off a down year even though
16 it wasn't as down as we thought it would
17 be. We were coming off a down year in
18 2020. COVID is still around today, but
19 it was around as it was very much last
20 year. There was a lot of uncertainty. I
21 think from our standpoint, we wanted to
22 budget conservatively. I'm glad to see
23 we've come out of it to a large degree,
24 but at the time, I think it's a little
25 bit -- and this is not to you -- I think

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2 it's a little bit unfair to budget with
3 hindsight being 20/20. It's nice to say
4 things now and be able to budget based
5 off of things a year prior, that being
6 said.

7 More importantly, I do want to ask
8 you about some of the sales tax numbers
9 going forward for this year in terms of
10 those projections. Currently, how much
11 are we budgeting for sales tax for fiscal
12 year 2023?

13 MR. PERSICH: We are projecting a 5%
14 increase, or about 1.455 in 2022, which
15 is approximate 80 million over the
16 budget.

17 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Eighty
18 million over. And you feel that is
19 satisfactory to where we should be or
20 does that follow the same practice as
21 before in terms of sales tax projection?

22 MR. PERSICH: Hope is not a strategy
23 as I' have been told before. The way
24 their tending and the checks keep coming
25 in, I think we're gonna be okay. The

1
2 biggest part of sales tax comes in the
3 following year. We call it the holiday
4 season. We still have to cautiously wait
5 for 6-8 checks that come in 2023 for
6 2022. I'm optimistic. I think where
7 we're at as far as the numbers we've
8 presented is conservative, but there is
9 still the unknown.

10 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I do want to
11 talk a little bit about the unknown. I
12 think everyone up here and everyone out
13 there can agree that based on inflation
14 and what we're reading about a potential
15 recession and everything that's going on
16 in the world, not just here in New York
17 State, but everything that's going on in
18 the world, some would argue that we are
19 nearing a potential recession. Where, as
20 you know, everything in the economy will
21 begin to collapse and people will start
22 to spend less. Have you factored any of
23 that in the budgeting that we are seeing
24 before us today? I'm not asking you -- I
25 don't know if you have an economist that

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2 you guys consult with, but is there any
3 idea or anything you can share with us in
4 regard to the sales tax that pertains to
5 that?

6 MR. PERSICH: Good thing about the
7 base being as low as it was and what
8 we're growing it off of has helped to
9 give us a conservative approach even if
10 the numbers do take a turn sideways. We
11 use a bunch of different analytical
12 tools. We use Moody analytics to help us
13 assist us getting to the number. We don't
14 pick number the number right off the top.
15 We try to stay under the 2% range, which
16 has been a practice here since I've been
17 here. I don't want to go above growth of
18 more than 2%. The base has grown -- and
19 it holds true, which I agree, the
20 inflation thing is a benefit to sales tax
21 in the beginning.

22 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: It is.

23 MR. PERSICH: It is. And we hit the
24 recession -- and we may be in one now.
25 It's a lagging indicator when we get to

1
2 the recession. When the unemployment
3 number starts ticking up, that's when we
4 really gotta start paying attention.
5 That's when spending is gonna hit the
6 breaks. That's where you're gonna have a
7 lot more jobless claims and the resources
8 available are not gonna be like during
9 COVID. I think that's when we're scared.

10 As far as my numbers right now, I'm
11 okay with where we're at now and to the
12 future. I don't think we've over
13 estimated where we're going to be.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I asked the
15 question because I can imagine how hard
16 it is to budget. There's a period of time
17 where we are going through where we are
18 not collecting sales tax for gasoline,
19 but obviously, that will expire at some
20 point. That's actually helping the
21 number even more, but at the same time
22 you have the recession that's around the
23 corner -- or could be around the corner,
24 who knows.

25 MR. PERSICH: Let me just say this,

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2 when those checks come in all the time,
3 it's almost like watching the stock
4 market with me. I run around and try and
5 figure it out. Is it up, is it down. We
6 live and die by that number. I keep tabs
7 on it, my pulse on it, all the time.
8 We're very much in tune with it.

9 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Okay. Well,
10 Andy, again, I just want to thank you.
11 Your budgets presented have been honest,
12 been conservative, been forthright and I
13 appreciate that from you from that
14 standpoint. Again, thank you for your
15 testimony today.

16 MR. PERSICH: I thank the support of
17 this body. It's been some bumpy rides,
18 but we've managed to get into a place
19 that I will say we never thought we'd be
20 in.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: You're
22 doing a good job, Andy. I don't know
23 about the guy before you (laughter).

24 MR. PERSICH: It was him
25 (indicating).

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2 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Next,
3 Legislator Deriggi-Whitton.

4 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I also
5 want to concur with my colleagues. You
6 really did steer this boat through really
7 stormy waters.

8 I have a question: I remember when
9 we were doing the refinance, there was a
10 discussion of NIFA's role being extended.
11 Can you explain the difference versus how
12 this extended there?

13 MR. PERSICH: Legally, I don't know
14 the requirements. From my perspective
15 despite this Body's knowing, I have to
16 report to them more than anybody else.

17 Oversight to me would mean that we
18 have freedom to put the control back into
19 the elected officials hands, which is I
20 think everybody's goal here. Oversight
21 just means they look at the budget and
22 they say, eh, this is not good, that's
23 not good.

24 Right now, we're in total control
25 period: We have contracts, borrowing.

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Everything has to go through them.

Fairness to them, they bailed us out in 2000, so we're there with them, but now we're here. I would say oversight would be a better place for us at this point.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: And did the refinancing extend the control period with NIFA?

MR. PERSICH: The control period calculation is somewhat arbitrary. I don't know if it did or not. It extended theoretical life of NIFA, but the control period is established by the Board, not by us or anybody else.

I personally think even with the restructuring, that control period should probably not be in effect.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
Correct. That was a major concern. Believe me, we all want to see NIFA go. But the way I understand is that this refinancing was not going to extend the control period, there would be oversight

1
2 but not extend the control period.

3 MR. PERSICH: I can't say I heard
4 that or even have knowledge of that. My
5 understanding is it is a calculation
6 that's based on a calculation they
7 identify as risk which 1% of the budget.

8 If they identify \$30 million --
9 that's why what I did in this budget,
10 just so everybody is aware, the
11 contingency was built in there to take
12 some of the wind out of the sale, even
13 though there are risks in every budget.
14 Every budget has a risk.

15 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So in
16 your opinion did this refi help
17 accelerate us getting rid of NIFA in the
18 fact that it approved out financial
19 status?

20 MR. PERSICH: I would hope so.

21 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: So you
22 believe the refi that we did could
23 actually lower the amount of time we are
24 under control of NIFA?

25 MR. PERSICH: Yes, but there were

1
2 some things associated with it.

3 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: That's
4 a big thing. That's a really big thing.
5 That's how I saw it, honestly. It is not
6 going to be the same situation. They're
7 going to see it, keep an eye on it, as
8 they should most likely and it's another
9 checks and balances, but they will not
10 have the control, which is what we're all
11 looking to do.

12 MR. PERSICH: Just let me close with
13 this: I think our performance
14 financially, even during the tough times
15 has proven that we've behaved, that we
16 don't need them, because we're finishing
17 with surpluses. We're putting money away
18 responsibly to head off any future down
19 turns.

20 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Right.
21 I think that the refi was part of the
22 responsible reaction to an unprecedented
23 experience that we all lived through.

24 Again, I appreciate you getting us
25 through that time. You know what I like

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2 about you is you say the truth. I don't
3 feel that you waiver depending on who is
4 not going be happy with you later, but I
5 appreciate that. I saw you do it with the
6 prior administration too. That's really
7 the only way to lead and you're doing a
8 great job.

9 MR. PERSICH: Thank you very much, I
10 appreciate the complements.

11 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I just
12 have two quick questions:

13 One, under the revenues where it
14 says other revenues on Page 7, second to
15 last page, there is a \$30 million
16 increase from 23 to 26 under other
17 revenues.

18 MR. PERSICH: I don't know the
19 components of that. I see where you're
20 looking. I'm assuming it's got to do
21 with some of our collections and other
22 revenue streams, but I will get back to
23 you on that. I don't have the detailed
24 data behind it. I apologize. We try and
25 make these charts a little simpler

1
2 without all the details.

3 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Okay.
4 I was just curious because that is a big
5 increase.

6 My last question: Again, this may
7 not be privy to part of your budget, but
8 do you think you could come up with a
9 list of items that we could use the
10 funding right now both from the American
11 Cares Act Recovery Act, as well as the
12 Opioid settlement. I know they're very
13 restricted as to what we can use. But I
14 was speak to people recently about the
15 jail; we're concerned about the jail.
16 Especially if it was designed to address
17 the opioid problem which do exist at the
18 jail. A lot of people that go in there do
19 have issues. Maybe some money could be
20 used for infrastructure for creating drug
21 programs there.

22 MR. PERSICH: I will say, I can't
23 speak for the Administration on the plan,
24 but of course we're gonna entertain any
25 changes. The jail does have a program

1
2 now. I'm not the expert in the facility,
3 but I do have institutional knowledge of
4 watching the numbers there. The do have
5 programs there, they do have treatments
6 there. I know they offer the services
7 there. Whether we could use opioid
8 funding or not as part of the day-to-day
9 operations, maybe we could enhance the
10 programs. That's for, I guess, this Body
11 and the County Executive to figure out
12 how to use those resources.

13 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I would
14 love to look into that. I did speak with
15 different people that work in the jail.
16 It is something they would really be open
17 to. Even if it's only for
18 infrastructure. I understand how
19 technical it is with this funding. We may
20 only be able to --

21 MR. PERSICH: Opioids is a little
22 less restricted, I will say, than the
23 ARPA Fund.

24 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Okay.
25 Even if you took a million dollars out of

1
2 the 70 million and improved the room and
3 the facilities. Even if we could use it
4 for salary; I have no idea. I think it
5 would be a good step and take away money
6 that we would have to put in in other
7 avenues to the jail.

8 MR. PERSICH: I'm open to any
9 suggestions. I hate to say it, I'm not
10 the policy maker. I would defer to you
11 guys and the County Executive to figure
12 out the plan to do that. We'll
13 administer whatever we want to do. I'm
14 not the guy to tell you how to put the
15 money in the jail, where to put it. I
16 have institutional knowledge of some of
17 the things that happen there, but I'm not
18 fully entwined on day-to-day stuff there.

19 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I'm
20 trying to find somebody who knows how we
21 can use this money. I was hoping it was
22 you.

23 MR. PERSICH: Sorry.

24 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: All
25 right. Basically, that's it. Thank you

1
2 again. I say if I had to do it all over
3 again, I would do everything we did back
4 then in line with you.

5 MR. PERSICH: The answer to your
6 question about the other revenues, I just
7 got from my staff. It's three
8 components: Rents and recoveries are
9 going up; investment income is going up;
10 permits and fines are going back up.
11 Those are the revenue streams that we
12 have. They take dips and they go up
13 sometimes, but investment income is going
14 up as a result of the current market
15 conditions and what we are gaining on our
16 investments.

17 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Okay.
18 Rents for properties that we own?

19 MR. PERSICH: Rents, recoveries;
20 mostly capital recoveries.

21 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: All
22 right. Thank you.

23 MR. PERSICH: You're welcome.

24 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
25 Legislator Bynoe.

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LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you,
Presiding Officer.

Hi. How are you?

MR. PERSICH: Good afternoon. How
are you Legislator? So I will echo the
sentiments of my colleagues. I think
you've been excellent steward over the
taxpayer's money in terms of providing
plans that can steer the ship in the
right direction. Thank you for that.

MR. PERSICH: Thank you.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I have a question
regard that other revenue. You say it's
rents receivables and also fines and
fees.

MR. PERSICH: Correct.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: TPVA, their
numbers went down, you're projecting
they're going to go up?

MR. PERSICH: Based on traffic
volume. What I'm seeing personally is,
and if anybody has driven lately,
behavior is gonna go back to being what
it is. I think red light camera fees are

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2 going back up and fines will be going
3 back up. I think that's a large
4 component of what makes up fines and fees
5 is the red light camera program. That, I
6 think, is going to be restored as the
7 economy gets back to normal. Traffic has
8 been back to normal and I think there's
9 a lot more lights flashing with the
10 picture taking. I don't want to say
11 we're get back to the 2019 levels, but
12 I'm hopeful we are. When we start losing
13 revenue, we have to start thinking about
14 other things that we may have to adapt
15 to. That is why it is not a strategy,
16 hope, but I seeing indicators that the
17 numbers are going back up.

18 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So the dip wasn't
19 at all based on our ability to collect
20 outstanding fees and things of that
21 nature?

22 MR. PERSICH: Our ability to collect
23 I don't think is the problem. I think
24 it's the number of transactions that have
25 occurred.

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2 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: To that point,
3 the bus camera program. Where are we
4 with that? That is a piece of
5 legislation that this Body introduced for
6 the purpose of public safety. I'll tell
7 you, that someone called just the other
8 day and calm the other day said where is
9 bus arm because someone ran the bus arm
10 blatantly.

11 MR. PERSICH: I think the
12 Administration is exploring options with
13 the towns and the two cities for them to
14 do the enforcement through a third party,
15 and then we would get a piece of that by
16 handling the violation piece, processing
17 the violation piece. It's being
18 administered -- there's some town
19 components because of all the different
20 school districts and everything else, I
21 think the Administration's exploring the
22 possibility of using the townships to run
23 the violation through and we just process
24 the ticket, for lack of a better thing,
25 and get a piece of the pie. It's about

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\$3 million.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Can you explain how that would work? Why would the Town even be involved?

MR. PERSICH: I think because the towns --

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I can see the cities, but not the towns.

MR. PERSICH: Well, I think it's a little bit more complex than that because the individual townships and school districts reside within the Town and I think the towns better have control over this. I think that our point is that the administration probably would cost us more and we'd rather have the townships be involved in this because they would like some of the fine revenue too. So that's why I think they would get a piece from this third party vendor.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Because they want part of the revenue.

MR. PERSICH: I would say this, I don't know if it's gonna be a windfall of

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2 money that's gonna be out there. I think
3 the pot of money probably could be about
4 \$10-11 million in total that we're gonna
5 get a third of that.

6 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: That's a
7 considerable amount of money. But more
8 importantly, more importantly, if these
9 programs are driving that much revenue,
10 that means that people are blatantly
11 putting our children in jeopardy and that
12 is terrible.

13 MR. PERSICH: I concur with you.

14 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: We cannot stall
15 this any further. If we're inclined to
16 incorporate the towns in this, then let's
17 get this moving. Because it is not about
18 revenue. When I look at Suffolk County's
19 numbers and the number of violations,
20 they were outrageous. People are putting
21 our children in jeopardy.

22 MR. PERSICH: I concur
23 wholeheartedly. I would prefer that we
24 maybe get the Administration involved.
25 I'm not the most knowledgeable in what

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2 the program is. I have my hand in the
3 pot, but maybe we can have a side
4 discussion on that.

5 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Yeah. We gotta
6 move. I do know that the towns later
7 submitted their own legislation and kind
8 of slowed us down, but we've got to
9 implore them and also our administration
10 to sit down and get this moving.

11 MR. PERSICH: Understood.

12 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Great. Thanks.

13 I want to talk a little bit about
14 staffing levels. When I was looking
15 through this yesterday and earlier last
16 week, it was glaring to me all the
17 positions that are open. I know you
18 budget for them, but I do know that OMB
19 plays a role beyond budgeting for these
20 positions. OMB plays the role I think in
21 approving the PRFs?

22 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

23 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: My question is,
24 are PRFs issued? We have 78 open
25 positions. I know testing and training

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2 takes place for some of these positions
3 which include the corrections facility,
4 but we have 78 open positions there, we
5 have 25 open in Health, we have 10 open
6 in Human Services. They're vital at this
7 point, at every point and juncture, but
8 in particular where we are with COVID and
9 all the other behavioral health issues
10 that go along with it. Then we have 24
11 open positions in Probation, 60 in DPW,
12 87 open positions in Social Services.
13 These numbers are really staggering. We
14 have 314 in total across the County. Are
15 PRFs issued for every single one of these
16 positions? I know OMB is the one that's
17 supposed to do the final sign off on
18 that.

19 MR. PERSICH: Let me say this, I
20 personally can tell you that we move
21 potions as quickly as we can get them.
22 Some we have to look at. I can tell you,
23 I don't have the number. I used to keep
24 that stat of how many PRFs I have
25 approved that are not filled. That's a

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2 component of a couple of things. One is
3 the current contract of where it's at.
4 Some of the positions in DSS are not --
5 case workers and CPS workers, you have
6 high turnover there. If I hit the button
7 on 20, I may only get 10. And in those
8 10 may only last six months because the
9 job specs are not there. We go through
10 PRFs religiously with the administration
11 to see what can be filled, what's out
12 there and available. We do have high
13 turnover. One is is that some of the
14 lower salary structure is challenging
15 here.

16 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Should we be
17 looking at --

18 MR. PERSICH: I think when we get to
19 collective bargaining with CSEA, that's
20 one of the things we look at. That's one
21 of the things. I think attracting workers
22 to come to work for Nassau County -- the
23 other thing too is, the economy is a
24 little robust now. Meaning that people
25 are making more money because the

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2 recession is not there. They're short
3 sighted in that. I think that's a factor
4 --

5 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I think that's a
6 factor across all kind of vocations.

7 MR. PERSICH: The other thing too,
8 it's a generational thing. Working from
9 home is more attractive than driving in.
10 We in government, having done it, it's
11 almost physically impossible to work from
12 home doing the jobs that we do here.

13 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I hear that. I
14 hear you loud and clear.

15 MR. PERSICH: I think this challenge
16 is in recruiting.

17 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So my questions
18 specifically -- I get it. I hear all the
19 challenges. We're witnessing them across
20 all kinds of vocations. It's hard to
21 recruit in this day and age, especially
22 our younger folks who want to be able to
23 call the shots and want to be able to
24 work and limit that type of stress by
25 having to punch a clock and be somewhere

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2 everyday, but the numbers are staggering.

3 My question again is just around
4 PRFs. I would love to know what that
5 number is. You said you used to keep a
6 count. I'd love us to --

7 MR. PERSICH: I'll get you a stat
8 that shows that. It's not like we're
9 withholding. Certain things are based on
10 cycles. We're planning on doing, like
11 the Corrections Budget, we have
12 attritions like the Police Department. I
13 don't backfill one-for-one, we have to do
14 a classes. We wait for timing on that.
15 We're planning on doing a corrections
16 class of around 30 coming up in November
17 some time. The police class, we're on a
18 cycle with that. We have a pretty good
19 system worked out. We have a class in
20 November and then in May. We're trying to
21 get on cycles with classes.

22 Even with caseworkers in DSS. The
23 State program mandates only a certain
24 time of year that that program could be
25 administered.

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2 DPW, we just went through a whole
3 change with some of the equipment
4 operators because we realize we're
5 lacking in there. I just approved a
6 bunch of PRFs for that. I'm pressing the
7 button just about everyday.

8 We've got to be cautious too. We've
9 got to look at what we're doing and where
10 we're putting the resources. I'm not
11 withholding for any strategic reason
12 here. If I press the button -- I've
13 approved a lot, but they're not coming.

14 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: The other part, I
15 know there were a significant amount of
16 retirements that happened in DSS in
17 particular. So projecting into the
18 future for succession planning and we can
19 look and see and feel who's getting ready
20 to go. If we can start, knowing the
21 challenges we face in being able to
22 recruit, knowing the challenges that we
23 face specifically about being able to
24 maybe offer more attractive salaries that
25 can't happen until we move through CSEA,

1
2 knowing all those things, I think we
3 gotta start a little earlier when we know
4 that folks can retire and trying to
5 recruit. If there's a delay based on
6 hiring specifically in DSS regarding
7 State requirements and mandates for
8 training and the like, we may need to
9 speak to the State. Because 87 positions
10 there with the type of work they do --
11 we have had a hearing before that was
12 heartbreaking with the challenges that
13 happened out in Suffolk that were tragic,
14 and I don't want see us be in position
15 where we're not able to keep the pulse of
16 what's happening in the households of
17 these most vulnerable people: Our young
18 people.

19 I'd love to hear about the PRFs. I'd
20 love to hear some level of plan on how we
21 will try and offset some of these
22 challenges and see how we can how get
23 some of these departments staffed at the
24 appropriate level.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:

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2 Legislator Solages.

3 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you for
4 your presentation and I echo the
5 statements made by my colleagues before
6 pertaining to your stewardship.

7 MR. PERSICH: Thank you, Legislator.

8 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: In your
9 presentation, you describe in Chart 1
10 regarding the tax certiorari backlog, you
11 stated that when the assessment system is
12 stabilized. How do we get there? Can
13 you describe your plan more in detail;
14 how do we get there?

15 MR. PERSICH: I don't have the plan
16 for how do we handle the assessment
17 issue. But I will say we did the
18 reassessment last year or this year,
19 whatever tax year we did in, personally
20 -- I have to go back and recall. I think
21 once we have a more defensible role,
22 meaning that once the reassessment is
23 fully in place, I think the number of
24 challenges will drop because we will have
25 a better assessed value on properties.

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2 So I think the challenge is coming from
3 some of the Class 4 and everybody else
4 will be mitigated is what I'm alluding
5 to. The challenge is making the role
6 defendable. That's been the biggest
7 challenge of this county for years. We
8 have to establish what the role. Look,
9 it is not going be perfect. We all know
10 that, but I think we have to have a more
11 defensible role.

12 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: I thank my
13 colleague for recognizing vacancies in
14 other departments, but in the Department
15 of Assessment, we have 25 vacancies. How
16 can we get there with that number of
17 vacancies?

18 MR. PERSICH: I just approved a few
19 the other day. It is an ongoing process.
20 When you look at a vacancy number, there
21 could be someone retiring today or
22 tomorrow. There is process of getting
23 the person through the door. While you
24 look, today is 25, tomorrow we could hire
25 30 people just because of civil service

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2 restrictions, fingerprinting, timing of
3 candidates coming here. It's an ongoing
4 process is what I will say.

5 At any given point, this county
6 turns over people; between 200-300
7 annually. It's not anything I do, it's a
8 function of what happens here. It's an
9 attrition rating. That's what happens in
10 most companies. People get to the ripe
11 age. Hopefully, one day I will be there
12 and I will say, it was very nice, but it
13 is time to go. I'm not there yet, but I
14 think no matter what we do, we have
15 attrition of between 200-300. As much as
16 I want to fill them as fast as I can, I
17 don't know if I can -- it is not going to
18 be identical. So when one goes out, one
19 doesn't come back in.

20 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: The key is to
21 produce more accurate assessments.

22 MR. PERSICH: Yeah. I'm not holding
23 PRFs. Until we have a game plan of where
24 we're headed with assessment, I think
25 we're cautiously moving forward with

1
2 strategic PRFs that we have there.

3 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood. My
4 last comment, going back to Legislator
5 Bynoe's comment about the vacancies in
6 the Department of Social Services. Based
7 on my understanding, there is a very low
8 number of child protective service
9 employees for the County that speak
10 Spanish. There was a situation in the
11 Village of Hempstead about two months ago
12 in which a CPS worker was attacked by a
13 client. There was an issue of getting a
14 Spanish-speaking person to that home. I
15 just ask, respectfully, if we could work
16 more closely with the Department in
17 trying to address those vacancies.

18 MR. PERSICH: Legislator, I will say
19 this, one of the focuses is bilingual and
20 different languages that we need to be
21 cognizant of. We try and get bilingual
22 case workers or SWEXes or CPS workers.
23 The problem is is that there are not many
24 out there. I don't think the pool is
25 there, even though we try to get them.

1
2 We're working on rectifying that problem
3 with the Department, but it is a
4 challenge. I will say that much.

5 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
7 Legislatoar McKevitt.

8 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Mr. Persich, I
9 just want to go back to a quick
10 discussion regarding the refinancing of
11 the debt and NIFA's role. Whether we are
12 in a control period by NIFA is solely
13 within the purview of NIFA; isn't that
14 correct?

15 MR. PERSICH: Yes.

16 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: So no matter
17 what we felt -- and we've actually felt
18 in past years where we've exceeded the
19 parameters between revenue expenditures.
20 No matter what, NIFA is solely going to
21 determine whether we're still stuck in
22 control.

23 MR. PERSICH: Yes.

24 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: By refinancing
25 the debt, again, we had nothing to do

1
2 whether or not the control period is
3 gonna be extended or shortened because
4 that's within NIFAs purview. But one
5 thing we did do is increase by 10 years
6 the number of years NIFA is gonna be
7 around. Originally, NIFA would be
8 expiring the oversight in 2025, but the
9 refinance brought them out to 2035; is
10 that correct?

11 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

12 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Approximately
13 each year, NIFA costs this county at
14 least 2 million dollars in expenditures,
15 payments and salaries?

16 MR. PERSICH: That is correct.

17 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: So over those
18 ten years, it's a minimum of \$20 million
19 NIFA is going to cost the tax payers?

20 MR. PERSICH: Yes. That is correct.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
22 Legislator Giuffre and then Legislator
23 Rhoads.

24 LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Legislator
25 McKevitt just stole my thunder.

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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: You're not gonna ask it anyway (laughter)?

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I'll beat the dead horse (laughter).

Again, Andy, first off, I appreciate colleagues trying to defend what certainly in my opinion and I think on this side of the aisle is the indefensible. This is not directed as a criticism of you, Andy, you're there to advise the County Executive. The previous County Executive is the one that ultimately made the decisions. I have no idea what your advice to the previous county executive was, all I know is what the end product was. What we're seeing in the end product is a substantial cost to the County now that it appears as though we didn't have to incur.

We weren't asking anybody to use a crystal ball back in 2020, we were asking people to use common sense. You had a budget sales tax number that was projected once the pandemic hit and we

1
2 were in a full economic shut down that
3 was forecasted to decrease by 40% by the
4 end of fiscal year 2020. By the time we
5 were done our budget, it was clear that
6 the numbers were coming in much better
7 than we thought to the point where the
8 decrease was not 40%, it was only 8% from
9 what was projected to be over the full
10 year of 2020 had COVID never even
11 happened.

12 What wound up happening is that in
13 the projected budget not only did the
14 County Executive decide that she was
15 going to forecast a flat sales tax number
16 -- and I was wrong when I said it was
17 20%. She forecasted a 19% cut from 2020
18 with a full shut down in 2021 in order to
19 justify this borrowing that we did. We
20 used it to justify taking a cash advance
21 on the County's credit card, which is
22 essentially what we did with the debt
23 restructuring. As it turns out, revenues
24 were not 19% cut over 2020, we actually
25 collected about \$550 million more, over

1
2 half a billion dollars more than what was
3 forecasted by the County Executive in her
4 budget. And in order to pay for the debt
5 restructuring, we this year are facing an
6 additional \$140 million in debt service.

7 By the way, over the life of this
8 loan, can you project the increased cost
9 in debt service over what we would be
10 paying were it not for fact that we did
11 restructuring?

12 MR. PERSICH: I can get that. I
13 worked on this because I like to see
14 before and after effects is what I think
15 you're looking for. We did look at it,
16 so --

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: It is fair to
18 say I'm sure we're probably talking over
19 the life of repayment of the loan that
20 we're probably looking at, with the
21 understanding that the debt service will
22 decrease as more of the debt is paid off,
23 but you're probably looking at least half
24 a billion dollars in debt service
25 payments, aren't you, over the the life

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of the loan?

MR. PERSICH: I wouldn't go that far. Well, let me put it to you this way --

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Well, how many hundreds of millions do you think it is?

MR. PERSICH: I don't think it's hundreds of millions. I think it's probably --

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: This year it's \$140 million.

MR. PERSICH: We would have debt service payments no matter what. If we didn't do the NIFA restructuring --

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: This is the increase in the debt service payment that we're talking about. The 140 million is the increase.

MR. PERSICH: The 140 is off the base of 180 bringing it to 320. I think what happened is we dipped and then we came back into --

Let me just -- having a crystal ball and being hindsight now, one thing that

1
2 we did with this Body was put that
3 special revenue fund together and we're
4 not factoring into that 550 net PV.
5 Without that funds for the backlog of tax
6 certs, those resources now became
7 available not through borrowing. I guess
8 we didn't factor those things into light
9 when we were doing this deal, I can tell
10 you that.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: By the way, that
12 special revenue fund only existed because
13 we turned around and said to the County
14 Executive, you're crazy.

15 MR. PERSICH: I'm thankful for that,
16 trust me.

17 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: For thinking
18 that sales tax revenue wasn't going to
19 bounce back.

20 MR. PERSICH: It was the smartest
21 thing we ever did. I will tell you that
22 much. Because think about it, that \$300-
23 400 million backlog, if we didn't have
24 the resource to pay for it, how were we
25 gonna do it? That's one of the questions

1
2 that I don't think we factored in here.

3 To your point, it was an unpopular
4 decision at that point. The after
5 effects and the timing of everything, I
6 agree with you, probably wasn't presented
7 in the best manner. But I think,
8 unfortunately, the hand was dealt to us
9 and I gotta deal with it. I hear what
10 you're seeing. I can cut up these
11 numbers a little bit more and give you a
12 little bit more of a perspective on that,
13 if you would like. Just so you could see
14 where we would have been if we didn't do
15 it and if we did do it.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Yeah. If you
17 could get that, I'd appreciate it because
18 I know --

19 MR. PERSICH: I can get that for
20 you. I think it would be helpful.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Legislator
22 McKevitt just indicated, obviously now
23 with NIFA's life being extended, that's
24 an additional \$20 million we're gonna
25 have to expect to pay -- NIFA related

1
2 cost -- on top of the additional monies
3 that we had to pay for the cost of the
4 restructuring itself.

5 To move onto a different point. I
6 agree with the concerns that the minority
7 expressed with respect to forecasting
8 sales tax revenue going forward. The
9 minority is right. The Biden
10 administration is an absolute disaster
11 (laughter). The economy -- I agree.

12 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: You
13 also voted. You voted for the refinance.
14 If you're gonna say you were strong-armed
15 to vote for the refinance, that scares
16 the heck out of me if you're gonna go for
17 higher office.

18 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We had no
19 choice. But I agree with you. NIFA
20 forced us into that and you know it. The
21 same NIFA --

22 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: No one
23 should ever force you into a vote.

24 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Look.
25 Wait, wait, wait, wait. You weren't part

1
2 of the negotiations and NIFA made it
3 extremely clear that if we did not
4 approve the debt refinancing, they were
5 going to shut down elements of this
6 county in the middle of a pandemic. Call
7 it what you want, but they used every
8 leverage at their disposal to force us to
9 pay for that refinancing and we were
10 lucky to get that reserve fund out of
11 that negotiation.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Right.
13 Incidentally, the extended their own
14 life, so we're gonna be under their thumb
15 until 2035 at a minimum.

16 I just wanted to say that with
17 respect to -- I mean, look, the economy
18 is in recession, they've tried to change
19 the definition of it. We've had two
20 straight quarters of negative GDP. That
21 was the definition. Inflation is at 8.3%
22 and they seem to have no ability to be
23 able to control it. Are we confident
24 that in our forecasted number for sales
25 tax revenue increasing is accurate? Is

1
2 that something that you believe in your
3 expert opinion that we can rely upon?

4 MR. PERSICH: I believe that we are
5 conservatively budgeting the sales tax
6 number and I would think if things, even
7 if they take a turn south, there is a
8 little room for us to be comfortably
9 safe. It's a conservative number, the 18,
10 I will say that. It's not an aggressive
11 number based on what trends are going
12 with right now.

13 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you. Mr.
14 Persich.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
16 Legislator Ferretti.

17 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I do have a
18 few follow up questions, Mr. Persich, on
19 a different topic.

20 I wasn't gonna comment on anything
21 that we were talking about with the
22 borrowing, that wasn't my intent. Just
23 hearing words a couple of times now like
24 crystal ball and hindsight: Just to set
25 the record straight, we had hearings, we

1
2 spent hours talking about this where this
3 side of the aisle was screaming that the
4 projections were way, way off. You
5 remember that, right?

6 MR. PERSICH: Yes, Legislator; I do.

7 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And looking at
8 your bullet points on the slide shows,
9 your projections were way, way off,
10 right?

11 MR. PERSICH: They were probably on
12 the wrong side of where we actually --

13 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: We don't have
14 a crystal ball, but we have common sense.
15 When you have a year when the world shuts
16 down and then reopens at the end of the
17 year, it's probably not going to be as
18 bad as where the world shut down. In
19 fact, it was much better. And the year
20 the world shut down, the amount of actual
21 sales tax revenue was higher than the
22 projection than when the year it was open
23 for 2021. All accurate, right?

24 MR. PERSICH: Yes.

25 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: That ' not

1
2 crystal ball stuff, guys. That's common
3 sense. We knew it, we said it. The rest
4 is history.

5 My questions with regard to the
6 other topic. When we talk about the \$2
7 million a year, NIFA -- what is the exact
8 budget for NIFA. Is it exactly \$2
9 million?

10 MR. PERSICH: It's \$2 million. It
11 could vary 2.1-2.2, depending --

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Is it static
13 every year?

14 MR. PERSICH: No. It moves around
15 between 2-2.5 depending on what they're
16 doing. They're some legal things that
17 they're entitled to do.

18 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: They have
19 staff, right?

20 MR. PERSICH: I don't know what the
21 staff count is, five or six.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: They get
23 raises occasionally?

24 MR. PERSICH: I can't speak to that.

25 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Is it fair to

1
2 assume that in 2033, their budget is
3 going to be higher than this year?

4 MR. PERSICH: Yes. I would say so.

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So it's not \$2
6 million a year, it's going to be
7 something more than that. Like with
8 everything else, budgets go up.

9 MR. PERSICH: If it goes up by 2%,
10 you can do the math, it's gonna go up by
11 \$200,000.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And how much
13 of that budget is paid for the
14 Dellaverson.

15 MR. PERSICH: I don't have a break
16 down of that. I can get that for you.
17 They just give us a number. They
18 intercept it. I don't really get into
19 details of what they're giving to me.
20 They give me a number and if it's 2.5 or
21 1.5, either one of the two, they get it
22 no matter what because it's part of the
23 sales tax inter --

24 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: What do they
25 get? What does Dallaverson get?

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MR. PERSICH: I have no idea what
he's getting.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Are they still
getting paid?

MR. PERSICH: I can't answer that,
Legislator. I don't have access to their
books and records. I can't answer that
question.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Where does the
funding -- does NIFA fund themselves, who
funds NIFA?

MR. PERSICH: NIFA is funded through
the County sales tax. That's where it's
funded through. They intercept --

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: It comes out
of our budget.

MR. PERSICH: It comes out of our
budget. They take the revenue from the
sales tax first, is what they do.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. Thank
you.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
I'm gonna wrap things up with one
issue. You mentioned that the State's

1
2 going to be making adjustments with
3 respect to sales tax. Is it something
4 unusual or different in degree?

5 MR. PERSICH: No, it's not a
6 different degree. We received
7 correspondence from NYSAC which told us
8 that -- we get these sales tax adjustment
9 checks which they estimate. We received
10 correspondence that during the pandemic
11 they overstated the revenues that we
12 collected that should have gone to the
13 City, so there might be a negative
14 adjustment check in this quarterly check,
15 which could drop the number. I don't know
16 how significant. I'm just putting it out
17 there. The calculation coming up, they
18 warned us that collections could be a
19 little bit lower for the next quarterly
20 check.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Just
22 explain that a little bit more, it goes
23 to the City?

24 MR. PERSICH: Well, the quarterly
25 adjustment checks are based on

1
2 adjustments that are made because we
3 estimate collections and they give us
4 money. Then what happens is a
5 calculation of what portion goes to the
6 City and what comes to the counties.
7 It's an estimate. What they said was,
8 they had an error during the pandemic
9 with the numbers on those checks, so now
10 they're catching up or correcting that
11 number. They warned us that there could
12 be a negative impact on our collections.
13 I'm just throwing it out there that there
14 is a possibility that the next check
15 could be lower than what we anticipate.

16 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Why
17 does what the City collects have anything
18 to do with what the County collects?

19 MR. PERSICH: I'll be honest with
20 you, how the State comes up with the
21 calculations -- they send us back up
22 documents, but there is other
23 calculations they do in this number. It's
24 like AIM. AIM was another one that all of
25 a sudden we had to jump through hoops for

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because we had NIFA, we had to come to
you and say it's okay to do that. It
could be a black box up there of how they
calculate it. As long as it's going up,
I'm a little happier.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
you very much to you and your staff. We
appreciate the presentation.

MR. PERSICH: Thank you,
Legislators, I appreciate your time.

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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I
invite Commissioner Ryder up for the
presentation for the Police Department.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Okay.
Good afternoon and thank you for giving
us this opportunity to present our
budget.

If I may, before we start. It was a
little difficult today. There was a
crossing guard up in Glen Cove who was
struck and fighting for his life right
now. It is one of Glen Cove's crossing
guards, but --

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Thank
you for saying that. He's a really good
guy too.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I didn't
finish.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I heard
it was a DWI and he was caught.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The
police medics and the Aviation Bureau
took him up to Northwell and are taking
care of him.

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Also, I know you all know Steve Skrynecki, he passed about an hour and a half ago. Steve lost his battle with cancer. I spoke to his son yesterday. And today we moved him back to his house, as his wishes, and he passed today and they're preparing a statement now from the family. Tough time in law enforcement.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I'd like to take a moment of silence for Steve and the recovery for the crossing card in Glen Cove.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence is observed.)

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank you.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank you.

If I may, I'm just gonna jump at a couple of those questions that were thrown at us first before before we jump into the budget.

The first was on mental health. As

1
2 you all know during police reform, our
3 Mobile Crisis Unit was staffed up and
4 added extra bodies to it. I don't know
5 the percentage, but I know this number:
6 95% of the people that we deal with with
7 mental health, do not go to jail; 95%.
8 They go to the hospital where they need
9 to be for treatment. Now we work closely
10 with Mobile Crisis to make sure there is
11 follow up done and we're all working
12 together to make sure they get where they
13 should be, and that's getting that
14 treatment.

15 As far as the cameras in Uniondale,
16 it was Minority Legislator Kevan Abrahams
17 that requested cameras in Uniondale a
18 while ago. It took a while. I apologize,
19 but funding always does. I just spoke to
20 them before. Already approved on the
21 order. So they are coming in. There's
22 about \$80,000 worth of cameras that are
23 going to be deployed for that area for the
24 security.

25 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Great news.

1
2 Thank you, Commissioner.

3 (Whereupon, Ms. Jacobs is
4 addressed regarding her public
5 comment.)

6 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Thank you.

7 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The last
8 thing that was mentioned about head count
9 and why it was increased. We have UBS
10 Arena. UBS Arena has 280 events already
11 scheduled for next year. Already
12 scheduled. They take a 10-15 a night,
13 plus two supervisors that are mounted,
14 highway, traffic conditions. I know
15 Legislator Solages is a bit concerned
16 about the traffic in that area. We've
17 been working with the arena. That was a
18 reason to increase. The other reason is
19 school safety. We see the threats that
20 go on throughout the country. We are
21 constantly adding more resources into
22 homeland security. Lieutenant Robert
23 Connelly has done an outstanding job. We
24 have a great relationship with all of our
25 superintendents. Again, it's the bodies

1
2 that we need to fill that.

3 We also project -- as you heard Andy
4 say in the business model, we do classes
5 twice a year. It is not mix and match
6 and throwing things together. Every time
7 we through a class together, I bring in
8 police officers that not only are working
9 at the lower pay scale, but already
10 contribute to healthcare and to the
11 retirement pension. From a business
12 standpoint, it's the smart thing to do to
13 get ahead of the curve.

14 As attrition goes throughout, then
15 they go below. Already the 42 that was
16 predicted to go into the November class,
17 we are going to fall under our predicted
18 head count. We're always chasing it, but
19 at least we stay pretty well on top of
20 it. That is reason for the head count
21 numbers.

22 I will jump into both the budget
23 revenues and I think I'll jump right to
24 Fines and Forfeitures because it's been
25 brought up. It's not asset forfeiture.

1
2 Has nothing to do with asset forfeiture.
3 Fines and Forfeitures were probably done
4 during the boot and tow, time so it's
5 still in here. Those numbers that come
6 from this are mostly generated by Public
7 Safety fees, which are tickets and red
8 light cameras.

9 Our tickets dropped during COVID
10 from 250,000 a year to 125,000 a year. I
11 got a report this morning, we're up 50%
12 from where we were last year. I'm
13 getting calls from all of you about
14 traffic conditions in areas. We got new
15 officers, a ton of them out there.
16 They're doing a great job and they're
17 bringing the number back up to where we
18 should be. The projected numbers that
19 Andy is speaking about, we don't work
20 like that. I'm not working it as a
21 revenue, but I am telling you from a
22 safety standpoint, like cameras on buses,
23 that is what we push. That is why you
24 see that revenue number.

25 If you look at the revenues versus

1
2 the expenditures, it's a balances budget.
3 If there are questions on that, I'll take
4 them at the end.

5 Head count, I think I've already
6 addressed that. We increased the police
7 head count. It's now 2542.

8 Overtime Budget. You saw what
9 happened in '20. In '21, overtime went
10 through the rood from the pandemic,
11 protests, unrest, a lot of resources
12 expended. This year we got it back down
13 to 50. When I first got here six years
14 ago, it was at \$72 million on an average.
15 We will hit 50 this year and next year
16 we'll be shooting to make sure we stay
17 under the budget again.

18 Police Salary Budget. It's
19 self-explanatory the numbers that are in
20 there. There are increases, of course
21 from contracts negotiations with SOA/DAI
22 and then and then we'll see how we go
23 forward with the PBA.

24 Crime. It's nice to look at the
25 numbers that constantly go down. We

1
2 experienced three years now of being the
3 safest county in America, but numbers
4 went up last year.

5 If you flip to the next slide, it
6 shows you that. You see the green, all
7 of last year was down. Towards the end
8 of last year we started to spike. The
9 crime numbers really started to take off.
10 You could see what's happened this year.
11 We're going after the issue. Our murders
12 are down 17%; shootings are down; our
13 overdose deaths are down 20%; but
14 property crime is rising. That's the one
15 that is addressed. Unfortunately, I'm
16 not getting political here, but because
17 of bail reform and the new law changes
18 about who stays in and who doesn't, I'm
19 dealing with a lot of property crime.
20 You do a shooting, you're gonna stay in
21 jail. You do a homicide, you're gonna
22 stay in jail. Unfortunately, if you
23 overdose and die, we know the outcome,
24 but we go after those problems and
25 address them because we can control them.

1
2 We're going after stolen cars. If
3 you flip the slide, you'll see stolen
4 cars are up 112%. Four months ago, they
5 were up to 258%. We've gotten it down
6 because we took the fight to Newark, New
7 Jersey where we're trying to getting
8 aggressive working the the US Marshall's
9 Office and the US Attorney's Office to go
10 after these gentlemen that are coming
11 into Nassau County and stealing the cars
12 here in Nassau County along the same are
13 the catalytic converters.

14 Overall, major crime is up 52%. All
15 other crimes, which covers the cat-cons;
16 catalytic converters are the big issue
17 here. With the new law that was put of
18 forward here, we're now able to go after
19 the cat-cons and we're starting to bring
20 that number down. All other crimes are
21 up 22%, so the total crime number in
22 Nassau County is up 29%. Again, we're
23 struggling with it to get it back down to
24 where it is. I will leave like that.

25 That is my budget and my

1
2 presentation. I know there's ton of
3 questions, so I a ten I have them all
4 lined up and ready to go. I didn't want
5 to offer until I'm asked.

6 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Okay.
7 The catalytic converters, obviously the
8 numbers are exploding both in Nassau and
9 Suffolk. Any new initiatives that you
10 can talk about? Your staff did a great
11 job at a civic association I went to back
12 in late August pointing out that many of
13 the auto crimes are with vehicles with
14 the key fobs in them. Apparently, it's a
15 ridiculous number, like 97%. Specific to
16 catalytic converters, where are we going
17 with this?

18 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Real
19 quick on stole cars; 95% are stolen with
20 the fobs in them. We went after it in
21 educational program, handing out
22 pamphlets in the communities, community
23 presentations, and then we also went
24 after it from going after the group in
25 Newark, which has turned over real good

1
2 for us.

3 As far as cat-cons go, the literally
4 get underneath your car and in 30
5 seconds, they're gone with your catalytic
6 converter. It's got three precious metals
7 that are in it. Don't ask me to pronounce
8 them, because I can't. The three
9 precious metals get melted down and the
10 value is about \$1500 to \$2000 per ounce.
11 They go out and steal ten of them during
12 the course of a night and they make
13 \$2000. If they're caught, it's a
14 misdemeanor, the get an appearance ticket
15 at the station house and walking back out
16 the door. That's a problem for us. If we
17 catch them and we're able to charge them
18 with the damage to the vehicle, then
19 we're able to hold them in that
20 individual case, but again 10 to 15 cars
21 may be done before we get there.

22 Etching. You heard of etching in
23 Suffolk County. It does not work. It is
24 pretty thing, it's a nice thing. But
25 I've etched a vehicle. They don't see

1
2 the etch when they cut it off. They take
3 that, they go to the dealer, he melts it
4 takes the metals out. They're not looking
5 at it, or they cut the etching part off
6 of it. We don't believe -- New York
7 City's been doing it for a while. They
8 have not one arrest according to my guys.
9 Not one arrest regarding etching. We get
10 more from doing inspections at the end of
11 it. The buyer. Doing the junkyards and
12 stuff.

13 We have some cases that are going on
14 right now that I think are really going
15 to change the game. I'm pretty sure in a
16 month from now we'll be having a really
17 nice story to tell you about with our
18 cat-cons.

19 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Okay.
20 The only other question I had was
21 detective staffing. It's been a chronic
22 problem over the years. We amended the
23 contract to address the problem. Are we
24 up to where we should be with detective
25 staffing? And if we are or not, like our

1
2 gang unit, are they fully staffed?

3 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The
4 budgeted head count is 330. We dropped,
5 as of this morning, it was five down from
6 retirements. We're cutting an order today
7 that puts the five back. If I had 10,
8 I'd make 10. The County Exec would make
9 10. I don't have it. When the PBA
10 contract is adjusted and done, that will
11 then make the opening to go more to the
12 squad. But on the healthy side of it,
13 from the work that we've done, we have
14 been carrying a steady 330 as the
15 budgeted head count.

16 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: The
17 various units, Gang Unit, Cyber Crime
18 Unit, they're all fully staffed.

19 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: All
20 fully stacked, we can always use more in
21 our cyber crime world, as you know with
22 Suffolk County.

23 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Okay.
24 Legislator Ford.

25 LEGISLATOR FORD: Good afternoon,

1
2 Commissioner. Thank you very much. It's
3 good to hear about the catalytic
4 converters and how you're dealing with
5 that situation as it is everywhere in the
6 County. I'm hoping that we will have
7 good news in a month or two months.

8 I'm not going to go into too depth
9 of my questioning because I know we are
10 going to have a meeting in regard to the
11 police reform plan to we can get an
12 update as to where we are with that.

13 I'm probably going to jump around a
14 bit and I apologize. But I know that
15 when we talk about the camera technology,
16 it's good that it's coming into
17 Uniondale, but where are we with license
18 plate readers throughout the County?
19 I've been looking to get some on the
20 bridges that are coming into the barrier
21 island. I know it's hard because you
22 might have different approaches to a
23 neighborhood, but for me, on the barrier
24 island, there's only three ways to go in
25 or out.

1
2 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So a
3 couple of years ago, you all the
4 expenditure of \$3 million to buy license
5 plates readers. The are being deployed
6 still as we speak. Every plate reader
7 that we put up on a pole, we have to have
8 an agreement with PSEG. They work great
9 with us, by the way. And we put up our
10 pole and that's the first one. We worked
11 with Glen Cove. We just gave a couple to
12 Glen Cove. We gave a couple to Freeport
13 to add to their large program that they
14 have. It is productive for us because
15 it's covering the main roads. We've been
16 rolling out. Probably every week we roll
17 out a new site. We probably got another
18 50 to go because of grants. We've been
19 rolling them out all over the County of
20 Nassau.

21 LEGISLATOR FORD: All right. Thank
22 you. I'm going to go to some of my
23 favorite subjects. But first, we met in
24 regard -- I guess people are concerned
25 about the Language Access Line. In order

1
2 for residents to be able to report crime
3 or call in an emergency. And I know,
4 it's technology that I think has a lot
5 of faults to it. Even last week when I
6 called in to watch the redistricting
7 hearing in the City of Long Beach, the
8 Language Access Line did not work there.
9 I'm rather concerned about that. I know
10 even for people reporting hate crimes, I
11 know right now the procedure is report to
12 the precinct. The request is perhaps if
13 we had a centralized location. Is there
14 anything that can be done about that?

15 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Any
16 report in Nassau County, we come to you.
17 We never make you come to us. That's not
18 our policy. That's Suffolk's, not ours.
19 We always go to the customer. As far as
20 the centralized of hate crimes. It is
21 centralized. Each precinct records it.
22 It then goes through channels two ways:
23 Up to the Detective Division who
24 investigates it, through the Patrol
25 Division to the Chief of Department who

1
2 oversees to make sure there's
3 accountability, and then Detective
4 Sargant Sabrina Greg -- who is with me
5 here on my right -- she then makes sure
6 that the statistics for reporting
7 purposes are done correctly. It's
8 definitely centralized.

9 If you wanted to make a complaint
10 and there was language issue, you do it
11 online on top of Language Line. When we
12 come to you -- and I know there was a
13 report that was done in *Newsday* where
14 they reported the 94 cases, and 44 times
15 out of the 94 cases there was problems in
16 connection with the Language Line or the
17 officers hung up on them. We only
18 received 13 of those cases to look at.
19 Four out of the 14 were in favor of us,
20 if you read the report. Four of the 14
21 that we received information on were in
22 favor of us.

23 Example: Seventh Precinct answering
24 officer connected tester to an
25 interpreter after two minutes wait;

1
2 however the interpreter was unable to
3 hear the tester due to technical issues.
4 Total time used was 10 minutes. It was
5 conducted, but there was difficulty in
6 hearing.

7 Fifth Precinct. Answering officer
8 did not speak to the tester language line
9 but transferred the caller to a bilingual
10 officer who was very polite and answered
11 the testers questions. Total minutes:
12 Four minutes.

13 I looked at all of these cases.
14 What's happened is, we've done for the
15 year, a year-to-year, August-to-August,
16 we did over 12,094 calls, 12,094 calls.
17 Over 70,871 minutes on the phone. There
18 is not one complaint on file with the
19 Nassau County Police Department about
20 Language Line. Not one.

21 In fairness to our Police
22 Department, we went out and we spoke to
23 the group that did the report. I
24 personally gave them my cell phone; all
25 of them. I said the minute you get a

1
2 complaint against my officer, you call me
3 immediately. I don't care it's 3 o'clock
4 in the morning, or 3 o'clock in the
5 afternoon because I can't investigate
6 something that happened three months ago.
7 I don't know who picked up the phone. I
8 don't know who was sitting there.
9 There's three phones at the front desk. I
10 need to address it now, so it doesn't
11 happen five more times. So I have not
12 received those phone calls, but now
13 because of this investigation, I have
14 handed out 14 cases through IAU that are
15 being investigated. I said find out what
16 happened. And I said, as I showed you
17 four already came back they were
18 favorable in our favor.

19 Another example was that when they
20 talked about family court in a bubble in
21 the report. In the family court, I spoke
22 to Jeff Reynolds that morning. I
23 corrected that. It was the Hempstead
24 Police Department, not to blame them,
25 that called to the location. The waited

1
2 two hours to figure out, it is not us,
3 it's Nassau County. So, yes, there was a
4 two hour delay, but we didn't get
5 notified for two hours. It's kinda hard
6 to go somewhere where you don't know
7 what's happening.

8 The other one they talked about is
9 an illegal eviction. Our officers went to
10 the residence. Two people living in a
11 home, I'm not going to use their names.
12 I don't want to do that in public. The
13 two people Mrs. A and Mrs. B. Mrs. A was
14 acting as a landlord and subletting her
15 apartment. She was collecting rent from
16 Mrs. B. Mrs. B would pay Mrs. A. Mrs. A
17 paid nobody because they were squatting
18 in the place. Mrs. A left the location
19 because she received a notification she
20 ws gonna get evicted leaving Mrs. B
21 there. Mrs. B called 9-1-1 because she
22 thought it was an illegal eviction.
23 Nobody was being evicted. Fairfield just
24 bought the property. It was told the
25 water's not running, no heat, no

1
2 electricity. Not true. Water was
3 running. There was no hot water, but
4 water was running. There was heat in the
5 building. There was electricity. The
6 gas was shut off by National Grid and
7 lock was put on it. My officers went as
8 far to call the Fairfield Board at night
9 and when they got there, they said we
10 can't cut this lock, it's National Grids
11 lock for Failure to Pay.

12 We offered to bring her to housing
13 with her two children, she opted to stay.
14 We went above and beyond for the family
15 and the two kids that were left in there.
16 But again, not so fairly reported here in
17 the report.

18 I have not to date received a
19 complaint about any of my Language Line
20 issues. What I get is a report in
21 *Newsday* and then I read it and I say
22 well, I guess we got some problems here.
23 And now we start looking at the problems
24 spending tons of time to investigate.
25 But on those two cases when I was called,

1
2 it was handled immediately, immediately,
3 within a 24 hour period, condition
4 corrected. And that's what is supposed
5 to happen. But instead they call up
6 different numbers. I don't know who they
7 are. I don't have the dates, the times. I
8 would love to have the taped conversation
9 if they have it, because then I can
10 identify the officer and discipline that
11 officer. But I don't have it and I don't
12 believe my officers acted that way in
13 many of these calls.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
15 much for clearing that up. You know, and
16 I can attest, and I'm sure any of us,
17 that when we call you, you do respond.
18 Even if you're in a meeting a lot of
19 times, you'll just quickly text and say
20 I'll call back in five minutes or so. I
21 agree. I think that since you did make an
22 offer that if they let you know when
23 something is not working properly at that
24 time, it is better to investigate it. And
25 I know for a fact that in so many cases,

1
2 if not all, your officers and your staff
3 do go above and beyond with a lot of
4 this. I've had a lot of good compliments
5 from residents who deal with it.

6 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: And we
7 get complaints, and when we get a
8 complaint, we address the complaint.

9 LEGISLATOR FORD: And you've always
10 been very forthcoming when we do. Even
11 like right now, asking you a question out
12 in the open. You weren't prepared for.
13 You know you were thinking you were going
14 to talk budget, but you already had
15 everything ready so that you can respond,
16 inclined to let us know what is
17 happening.

18 Just quickly, I'm going to my
19 favorite topic and you know you could see
20 it on my face when I'm going to --

21 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Medics.

22 LEGISLATOR FORD: Medics and as well
23 as my school crossing guards. But let's
24 go to the medics, because I know that's
25 going to be, I guess, under the Fire

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2 Commission and I know that they they do
3 report under you. We're looking to, of
4 course, increase the number of medics --
5 we need them. One of the other issues
6 that had been brought up is that Medics
7 are the only ones -- I think in the
8 United States of America -- they sit
9 alone in the cab in the ambulance. That
10 could be one of the reasons why it's very
11 hard to keep the trainees. The people
12 who apply, and once they go through
13 training, I guess, when they realize
14 there going to be alone, that they don't
15 stay, that they go to other jobs. Where
16 are we now? Is there any talk or are we
17 pushing this to have -- and I know that
18 it was recommended during the many
19 meetings that we had that perhaps we
20 could look at EMTs that could ride with
21 them. That would be, I guess, seasonal
22 more so than part-time so that they're
23 not limited on the number of hours they
24 could work a week. Where are we with
25 that? Is that in the budget or can put

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2 in the budget, if necessary?

3 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So some
4 of the things that we've done -- and
5 look, it's been eight years for a
6 contract for the medics, and not fair. I
7 believe the County Exec is working very
8 hard to correct all of our union
9 negotiations. As far as today, we filed
10 with civil service to increase -- start
11 them at a higher pay scale. They are
12 coming in a \$38,000 a year. Well-skilled,
13 well-trained, goes through a tough
14 academy to go out there on a street and
15 drive in a bus by themselves; It's
16 difficult. So what we've done is filed to
17 raise their starting pay scale and jump
18 it. So that brings in a higher -- a
19 competitive rate, even though it's still
20 probably one of the lowest competitive
21 rates out there. That's been done.

22 As far as drivers, that discussion's
23 been back and forth, both myself and
24 Ronnie in the back earlier today were
25 talking about that. That's going to be a

1
2 negotiation that's going to take place
3 with the county-level. I can't discuss
4 that, but it is on the table.

5 As far as our medics go. We are,
6 we've hired and unfortunately, like
7 everything else, you try to stay ahead of
8 it. We hired 41 medics in the last two
9 years, 16 of them failed out of the
10 system, meaning that they didn't get
11 through the academy. So now every time
12 you lose one, it's another four-month
13 investigation. So we are constantly
14 cycling them through to stay ahead. But
15 that's a large number to lose out of 41
16 the 16. So again, we're pushing on that.
17 We are currently down as far as medics
18 go. I believe we are at 136 and budgeted
19 head count is 152, and there's been
20 recommendations to even raise that
21 number. But you can't talk about raising
22 the number until you at least try to get
23 to the number, and we're trying, but it's
24 not getting there.

25 LEGISLATOR FORD: When the medics

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2 leave, like the ones that we trained, in
3 like this 16, do we do exit interviews to
4 find out would be the reason why they are
5 leaving?

6 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I
7 believe that's done at the fire academy
8 where they go through their training, the
9 Police Medic Academy, and it's done by
10 the director and the deputy director.

11 LEGISLATOR FORD: Is there an
12 overriding or constant reason, is it
13 mainly the salary?

14 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Usually,
15 when we get them at that point, it's not
16 the salary as much as it is the challenge
17 of driving a single bus. We lose so many
18 in the beginning because of the salary.

19 LEGISLATOR FORD: All right.
20 Hopefully, we'll be able to achieve the
21 number of medics that we need, we
22 desperately need. And we're okay with
23 all the ambulances so far. I know that
24 we've brought in new ones.

25 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So like

1
2 the rest of the world, there was a
3 shortage of everything during the
4 pandemic. We have six new that are on the
5 street right now. We have four that are
6 at Proline that are getting released to
7 us in the next day or two. The reason for
8 that was we had Proline not understanding
9 the process of billing here -- it all
10 gets straightened out. We have four more
11 in that process. So that's 12 new. We got
12 three additional through a grant that
13 brings us up to 15 and in our 2023
14 proposal we're asking for 14 new
15 ambulances.

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: That's really good
17 news. Okay, thank you very much on that.

18 Just on the civilian side with the
19 employees that you have other than the
20 medic: The school crossing guards. I
21 don't have the the detailed budget on the
22 number of how many we have.

23 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We have
24 a total of 383 crossings. We have 279
25 part-time crossing guards and 96

1
2 full-time crossing guards.

3 So as of this year now at school, we
4 did a heavy campaign the early spring, so
5 over the summer we get them through the
6 process. We had a 100 people sign up for
7 the job. We got 14. That's again, a
8 struggle for us and people. They say they
9 want to do it. It's \$25 an hour. It's a
10 good part-time job, but when it gets down
11 to it, they decide not to do it. So we're
12 short every day in every command. We have
13 an agreement that we will never go over
14 six officers out of service to cover
15 those crossings. We'll never go above it.
16 We did two years ago. That won't happen
17 again. So the is number six. If we go
18 above that, it's overtime that is paid,
19 so it's not coming from the current roll
20 call and staff.

21 LEGISLATOR FORD: So that you're not
22 taking a car out of service where they
23 can't respond. So it'll be six that it
24 may happen to.

25 I know that we talked about it, this

1
2 part-time business really isn't working.
3 I just wish that everybody would just all
4 admit it, that it was not good decision
5 that was made so many years ago. Because
6 we didn't have this problem. We had
7 mostly women that worked full-time, they
8 were dedicated, they did a lot of other
9 jobs during that time and between the
10 crossings and everything. So I'm
11 beseeching you and everybody in this
12 administration to really, you know, face
13 the fact that these are people who stand
14 out in all kinds of weather. And
15 unfortunately, today we saw one that is
16 fighting for his life and I pray that he
17 gets through all of this. But when you
18 think about the sacrifices they make,
19 that you know and that these children and
20 these families count on those people to
21 be at these corners. And not only is it
22 during the school time, we also have many
23 that use crossing guards during religious
24 observances, especially when they can't
25 hit the buttons to be able to cross

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2 safely. The crossing guards, can do that
3 or help them to get across to they can go
4 to their services. When you think about
5 this, how many part-time? We can't keep
6 them either. You have 100 apply and 14
7 show up. I think this is going to become
8 a very, very big issue and something
9 very, very critical. And these women, I
10 guess mostly women, and men are the eyes
11 and ears for a lot of these kids. You
12 know they see a lot of things that go on,
13 especially children going to and from
14 school, dealing with their families. I'm
15 hoping that we can correct this and we
16 finally face the fact -- because I think
17 that whatever they make on an annual
18 basis, when you take how much we pay, and
19 how many hours we take out of a day for
20 six officers to cover crossings and then
21 you're going to be paying police officers
22 overtime, how much are we spending on
23 this to cover the shortfalls? I'm sure
24 that we will find in the long run that it
25 would be cheaper to finally bring a lot

1
2 of these people back on to full-time, and
3 that we don't have to have this
4 discussion any more and you don't have to
5 hear me about this.

6 But I also, I guess, even with our
7 mechanics, do we have the proper number
8 of mechanics, and are they getting they
9 turning around the police cars in a very
10 fast fashion?

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We are so
12 we are just at our head count with our
13 mechanics. We are always looking for a
14 better way. Because of the freeze and
15 the pandemic and we don't have new cars
16 coming, we're putting Band-Aids on old
17 cars. The mechanics are working overtime
18 seven days a week trying to keep up just
19 keeping the cars out there. Now that the
20 new cars are coming in and we're turning
21 the cars over, we have 56 coming. We have
22 another 23, I think, in the garage now
23 that they're turning over to put out, and
24 we've turned out a bunch over the last
25 couple of months. So it's easing up as

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2 far as it goes, but we can always use an
3 additional mechanical or two. But again,
4 we go back and and Andy's got a budget
5 that we all got to try to live with. So
6 it's difficult, but we get through it.

7 LEGISLATOR FORD: And then my last
8 thing would be on the public safety
9 officers. I know that they are the people
10 who you know actually work in this
11 building, they work on other facilities
12 they work in our parks. We are short on
13 them. They're another group that needs a
14 grade change.

15 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We are
16 short two full timers, but we are
17 basically at the head count, a little
18 shift into part-time. What we did over
19 the summer, a great idea and program. We
20 took our explorers and many of you know
21 Mario Doyle. He trained them all and
22 helped them get their public safety
23 license. So they all got a public safety
24 license and then all those that were of
25 age and and fit the requirements with

1
2 that license were then brought in. So we
3 brought in about 10 of them. Out of the
4 10, they were seasonal. So we just
5 worked to take them as a seasonal and
6 make them part-timers going forward.
7 It's it's a great program for the kids as
8 they're getting older, to get into a
9 program and earn some money while they're
10 going to school. So we are at the head
11 count. But the problem is like crossing
12 guard. If I ask all of you, you all have
13 another need for crossing guard, and
14 everybody has a concern about something
15 with public safety.

16 So we just took our crossings and
17 and evaluated every single crossing. What
18 can we shift? What can be changed?
19 Working with the school, we actually
20 reduced it a little bit. We're doing the
21 same with public safety. You know I don't
22 want to have a cop standing where a
23 public safety officer should be, and I'm
24 sure the public safety officer doesn't
25 want to stand where cop is. So we've

1
2 worked out and reevaluated many of our
3 post. Some of them didn't need to be
4 there, and some of them we needed to add
5 to. So we pay them the overtime with
6 these extras that we just brought on
7 literally last week because seasonal just
8 ended. They'll now be helping us with
9 filling the spots.

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
11 much, sir.

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
13 you.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
15 Legislator Ferretti and Rhoads.

16 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Hello,
17 Commissioner. Welcome. As always, thank
18 you for everything you do. Of course,
19 thank you to our men and women in blue
20 for everything.

21 I have some questions: The budget
22 calls for, if my math is correct, an
23 increase of 48 officers; Is that correct?

24 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's 36.

25 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: That's 36 full

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time head count?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's
36 full time head count.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: That's 36 more
officers.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thirty
six more officers.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I see in the
budget that there's an increase from '21
to '22 in the equipment line. Just
refresh my recollection. Is that because
of the body cameras?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Most of
that is IT stuff with our servers and
computers as they're out. As you saw what
happened in Suffolk, we're trying to stay
ahead of the curve regarding the way that
we present and put our servers that are
separate. We don't merge them. We have
silos in many of the different ways that
we do our phone service to computer
service, to internet access. So again,
ways that we protect it. So a lot of
that's going to be an uptick in our

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2 computers. Body cameras were mostly paid
3 out of last year. Storage for the body
4 cameras are in this year.

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay, so it's
6 going up this year from 2.5 to three.
7 Right. Is that on the same line, just to
8 keep up with the technology?

9 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes,
10 sir.

11 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: To some of the
12 things you were talking about earlier
13 with the catalytic converters and other
14 things, what I'm noticing a lot of in my
15 area is people catching on their home
16 cameras outside their front doors, people
17 are going checking the door handles,
18 always masked. Then they go through the
19 car and take stuff from the car. Are you
20 seeing an uptick in that kind of
21 complaint?

22 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Again,
23 it's right into our property crime issue
24 that we're having. A 100%, kids are going
25 around, "jigglers", as we call them. They

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2 jiggle the handle so they get one popped.
3 They go in and grab what they can.
4 Sometimes, if they find the key, if
5 they're going to step up to that car
6 theft level, they'll take the car. Most
7 of the time, if they're doing that,
8 they're not looking for the car, they're
9 looking for what's in the car.

10 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: All right, so
11 we'll call them jiggers, for lack of a
12 better term. These jigglers, let's
13 assume they don't take the car and they
14 just rummage through. Are there times
15 when we've caught these guys and gals?

16 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yup. We
17 just had a huge initiative that ended
18 September 30th. We took it through August
19 and September, run by our Patrol Division
20 and working with the DD, and that's where
21 we were up 74% in crime, we're down to
22 52%.

23 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So we have
24 caught a lot of them.

25 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We have

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caught them.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: If they just take stuff, the don't take the car; is that something that they would be released immediately under the bail reform?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: They get a ticket at the station house and released.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So yes. What if they go that extra step and they take the car and we catch them? Do they get released immediately under the bail reform?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: They will get released at arraignment in the morning, but again no bail.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So it's got to be very disheartening to the officers that that are working so hard to catch these people that they are immediately required to be released. Are you seeing anything in terms of morale of the officers as a result of this?

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2 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's
3 frustrating for the officers because of,
4 obviously the recidivism, the turn
5 around. But the other issue, our style
6 of policing. We will not chase anybody.
7 Everybody knows that, you know and the
8 bad guys know it, meaning in a car. I'm
9 not going to go into a pursuit of a
10 vehicle. We will slowly, we'll get
11 aviation involved. Last night we had one
12 that came out of Uniondale. We were able
13 to take him down the parkway, from
14 Uniondale all the way down to Exit 15 or
15 14 and then he jumped on a Cross Island
16 and he took off. He made us, and there
17 was no way we could stop. And when we're
18 not going to get into a pursuit. It's not
19 worth the value of the car to the loss of
20 a person. It's frustrating, it's
21 frustrating to a cop. It's frustrating to
22 a cop that when you lock somebody up,
23 he's out. It's even more frustrating when
24 you lock up somebody for possession of
25 drugs and you can't get him any help,

1
2 because he's getting the ticket. He's
3 walking out of the station house. So he's
4 here and it's removed the court system
5 where we used to push them and they'd end
6 up in Diversion Court for drugs. So
7 we've lost that, and that's frustrating.
8 And then that young man or that young
9 woman ends up overdosing and dying, or
10 even overdosing and reviving them. But
11 still it's very frustrating.

12 I'd like to think the morale of our
13 police officers is, is strong. We got
14 young caps that are well-trained, great
15 supervisors, and great detectives. But it
16 does send a negative message to you when
17 you can't keep the person in. In some
18 situations, not everybody deserves to be
19 put in there.

20 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Yeah, it's
21 just -- I'm grateful to you and the
22 leadership because, I'll be honest with
23 you. I have friends that are cops. I have
24 never heard this from one that's a Nassau
25 County cop, God's honest truth. But from

1
2 other departments I've heard them say, "
3 why would I lock them up? They're just
4 they're just going to be out again". And
5 that's something I think that we need to
6 make sure our officers in Nassau County
7 that they don't have that that mindset.
8 Because we need to keep doing what we can
9 to at least try to lock up the bag guys.
10 So thank you for that.

11 Have you seen an uptick in -- and I
12 know your numbers, you probably have
13 numbers on robberies, but specifically
14 bank robberies, and maybe that's just
15 something that --

16 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So over
17 the last two years bank robberies were
18 extremely low. Just this year we're
19 seeing an uptick across the board.
20 Again, you saw that chart. It was all
21 green when it was down. At the end of
22 last year, it started to spike, and then
23 it blew up this year.

24 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Bank
25 robberies?

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2 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Bank
3 robberies have gone up. They've almost
4 doubled, maybe tripled from where they
5 were, but they're still in low numbers in
6 the fact that they're in the single
7 digit. So we might have went from four to
8 maybe nine or 10.

9 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: In what period
10 of time?

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Over the
12 last seven months.

13 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Yeah, it's
14 just something -- I have family that
15 works in a bank and I just hear that it's
16 happening more often, and I can't help to
17 think that, two and a half years ago
18 somebody walked into a bank with a
19 mask --

20 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Wouldn't
21 happen.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: The cops would
23 be called, right. But now it's kind of
24 made easy for them. Come in with a mask
25 and it's not even even gloves sometimes

1
2 and it's not, doesn't even raise a red
3 flag.

4 And then the last line of
5 questioning I have for you is: Legislator
6 Ford was talking about the crossing
7 guards. We've had discussions recently
8 because a young lady from the middle
9 school was crossing. And what we talked
10 about was there's also a bus shortage for
11 a lot of these school districts. So since
12 they don't have a late bus anymore
13 because of the bus driver shortage, kids
14 are doing the after school activities and
15 then they have to cross major roadways
16 after the crossing guards have already
17 left. We're normally in years past
18 pre-pandemic, they would get a bus home.
19 Now they're they're crossing these roads.
20 And you were great working with me to to
21 alleviate that problem in that specific
22 instance.

23 But in terms of addressing --
24 because I think we would be fair to say,
25 we do have a shortage -- I don't know if

1
2 shortage is the right word, but we would
3 love to have more crossing guards, right?

4 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER:
5 Absolutely.

6 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: You know,
7 crossing guards call out, I don't know if
8 we always have somebody to take the place
9 right now, or do we?

10 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: No, we
11 don't. That's why we have a cop take it.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And so that's
13 obviously not something we want.

14 I understand that in years past \$25
15 an hour is a pretty good part-time wage.
16 I don't think it is any more. I mean I
17 don't even know what's the minimum wage
18 now at, 15? But I was outside Wendy's
19 just last week and we're advertising on
20 the window \$20 an hour. I know in banks,
21 for example, tellers, they're getting
22 paid more than that. And I think it's
23 obviously we have to realize that we're
24 in, hopefully we could say right now,
25 post-pandemic world where a lot of people

1
2 want to work from home. Obviously, \$25
3 an hour is not attracting enough people.
4 I mean, is there any possibility to to
5 increase that hourly wages?

6 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER:

7 Discussions are there to increase that,
8 but the problem is if I keep paying the
9 part-time more, the full-timer starts to
10 get a little discouraged also. I'm
11 hoping that the contracts get moving
12 forward. So you gotta bring that scale
13 up; you have to.

14 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Because 25 it
15 sounds okay. I don't even know if it is
16 in '22, but if you compare it to, let's
17 say, \$20 an hour in a bank, those people
18 number one, are not risking their lives,
19 like we've seen today.

20 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER:

21 Absolutely.

22 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: They're not
23 out in the rain, they're not out in the
24 cold and they can work an eight-hour day
25 right, whereas our part-time crossing

1
2 guards are working four hours a day an
3 they got to go two hours in the morning,
4 drive home to wherever home is and then
5 come back later in the day, right?

6 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.

7 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I mean I would
8 take \$20 an hour over \$25 if those were
9 the conditions. So I think that's
10 probably what we're running into. So
11 maybe that's something we could --
12 understand the issues with that it might
13 affect the full-time salaries, but maybe
14 they have to be raised too. But that's
15 something that can be negotiated, I
16 guess. But it's just something we got to
17 keep an eye on.

18 Because just like Legislator Bynoe
19 was was talking about the the cameras on
20 the buses. We've had these hearings
21 before, but we have to make sure that we
22 have these crossing guards at every
23 crossing every day. I know you're doing
24 your best with the resources you have and
25 I appreciate that. So thank you.

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POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
you.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Legislator Rhoads.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thanks. Good
afternoon, Commissioner.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good
afternoon.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: How are you?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good
sir.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Good, good.

Again, thank you so much for for
your presentation, for everything that
you do and your leadership of the
Department at a time which is
particularly challenging, certainly, to
say the least. You and your members
continue to do an outstanding job and you
know we're grateful. I'm sure to speak
for everyone here for everything it is
that you do and they do to to keep us
safe under these circumstances. And
again, please send our prayers and best

1
2 wishes to our crossing guard and their
3 family.

4 Just wanted to touch upon, and I'm
5 excited, by the way, that there is
6 finally some movement on on our police
7 medics, as you're aware. We have 12
8 additional ambulances, I believe, which
9 we're waiting on. I believe you indicated
10 that there's 14, hopefully, that will be
11 coming on the way.

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's
13 that's in the '23 capital project budget,
14 yes.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Do we have an
16 indication as to as to what the long term
17 plan is as far as increasing the head
18 count overall for our medics?

19 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So, as I
20 said earlier, our head count is 151. I
21 don't think we've seen 151 in years. And
22 the reason is the way through attrition,
23 salary, job description, and it's a tough
24 academy to go through. So by submitting
25 the paperwork that we did to Civil

1
2 Service today to the county executive
3 office, that will raise that starting
4 salary.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In order to be
6 able to attract people, you need --

7 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We make
8 it more attractive.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: -- to make it
10 more attractive in terms of salary.

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We're
12 also looking at drivers as part-time
13 again, in negotiations.

14 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: By the way, I
15 meant to ask this question: We don't
16 necessarily need to have additional
17 medics so that you have two medics in a
18 cab. Is it possible to hire chauffeurs?

19 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is
20 exactly the conversation we're having. I
21 can't go into discussions that the Union
22 have, but we've had in our prior
23 discussions about bringing in even an EMT
24 or even just a fireman that wants to
25 drive and make some extra money and come

1
2 in as a part-timer and drive on different
3 days for our ambulance.

4 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. So those
5 discussions are ongoing?

6 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is
7 correct.

8 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Because I will
9 tell you, you know, obviously over the
10 course of the -- I mean I am a fireman,
11 so I talked to a lot of fireman. But I'm
12 aware of the issues, certainly with
13 respect to my own department, and these
14 are just multiplied across the
15 departments that we have countywide. You
16 know I went back and scrolled through my
17 phone and we get -- the Wantagh Fire
18 Department will send out a text alert
19 when a call comes in. And I looked at
20 the calls that came in over the course of
21 the last week. So basically, since last
22 Thursday to today. Our department's been
23 alerted to 32 rescue calls. Sixteen of
24 those rescue calls have been toned out to
25 us as mutual aid to the Nassau County

1
2 Police Department. So that means that
3 those are calls that originated through
4 9-1-1. Then 9-1-1 bounced them to us
5 because we did not have a police
6 ambulance that was available to cover it.
7 So for just that one week period, and I
8 think the numbers are pretty consistent
9 throughout the year, half of the calls
10 that the volunteer fire departments are
11 responding to, are calls that came in
12 through our 9-1-1 system that are
13 supposed to be covered by our police
14 ambulances. But can't. From a fire
15 department perspective, that creates an
16 incredible strain on our department's
17 resources and on our manpower. You know,
18 because every time we have to respond to
19 a call, we're not paid to be there. We
20 have to respond from our houses or get
21 guys to respond from their houses from
22 their jobs, from wherever they happen to
23 be to come pick up that call. So I know
24 that there is frustration, certainly, out
25 there on the part of many of our fire

1
2 departments, and I am so grateful that it
3 sounds as though there is a long term
4 plan to be able to address that moving
5 forward. But I would hope that in the
6 future we can be more aggressive.

7 The first key to that plan is making
8 the job itself more competitive. As
9 you've indicated, they're going for the
10 two grade jumps at the Civil Service
11 Commission, which I understand will take
12 place at the end of this month, the 26th
13 or the 27th, I think.

14 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I think
15 it is yes.

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So hopefully
17 that gets approved. And then we can talk
18 about increasing the head count in terms
19 of the number of medics that we actually
20 have, and it sounds as though we're
21 talking about increasing the number of
22 buses that we have. Because as a long
23 term solution, it enables us to service
24 the public better and get a quicker
25 response instead of 9-1-1 getting a call,

1
2 figuring out that there's no one
3 available, bouncing it to the fire
4 department. Even though that transition
5 is seamless, it does take additional time
6 for that to happen, even if it's only
7 minutes and minutes can make a
8 difference. It enables us to provide
9 better service. It takes pressure off
10 stressed resources in the volunteer
11 ambulance companies and the volunteer
12 fire departments.

13 Additionally, it certainly appears
14 as though our ambulances are a money
15 maker for the County, in terms that if
16 the individual has insurance, then
17 obviously the Police Department, has the
18 ability to bill the insurance company for
19 the transport, which can cost, depending
20 upon the level of service, can cost as
21 much as I believe it's \$1200 transport,
22 if I'm not mistaken.

23 So you know, I'm glad to hear that
24 we're making positive strides, but we
25 really do need to keep on top of this to

1
2 ensure that that those strides are
3 greater so that we can try and solve what
4 is a long term problem.

5 I just want to thank you for your
6 leadership on that and I thank the
7 Administration and County Executive
8 Blakeman for his leadership on that as
9 well.

10 I know you indicated in your
11 presentation that there is I believe an
12 almost 53, a 52.8% increase in major
13 crimes 2021 or 2022. Do you happen to
14 know, by the way -- and you maybe not and
15 maybe you do -- In the percentage of
16 major crimes from the start of 2020 to
17 2022?

18 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I did not
19 have that analysis. I only did
20 year-to-date.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. So we know
22 2021-2022 was an increase of 53%. I'm
23 assuming that there was an increase in
24 major crimes 2020 to 2021.

25 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.

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LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But we don't we don't know what the -- do we happen to know what the 2021?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I know '21 to '22, we're at 52% right now. I don't have the number from '20 to '21. I don't have it with me. I can get it for you.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Not a problem. I appreciate that.

What's considered to be a felony assault? Because I see here the felony assaults are up almost 20%.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Assaults are one of the more difficult crimes that we deal with, because you can't really prevent it. You know you're reactive to that. There's there's no -- it's usually in a domestic setting. We're getting the call and there's an assault involved. A felony assault will be assault with a weapon; that will be a felony. A felony assault would be if it's a serious physical injury to the individual, like a

1
2 fractured skull. If you slammed them into
3 a wall and he cracked his head open, that
4 would be a serious physical injury and
5 that would fall into probably an Assault
6 2, but a felony.

7 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And with respect
8 to, I noticed the increase in stolen
9 vehicles is over 110% increase. Do we
10 have any idea what that's attributable
11 to?

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's
13 it's been out there in the press. We have
14 an issue with a large group of organized
15 crime coming from Newark. They come here,
16 they steal, they bring kids that are
17 under the legal age, so they're a 17
18 year-old or 16 year-old so they'll be
19 affected by Raise the Age and they'll go
20 to family court, not to criminal court.

21 They also know that there's --
22 listen, when you get caught stealing a
23 car. If you're caught, there's nobody
24 hurt or anything of that nature, you're
25 walking out. You're walking out in the

1
2 morning at arraignment, no bail. So
3 there's no penalty.

4 We've put the pressure on them in
5 Newark and try to keep it there where
6 that has not had to Raise the Age issue,
7 and we're able to then bring my numbers
8 down by over a 130 points in the last
9 three months.

10 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Are are you
11 dealing with that same issue with respect
12 to gang-related violence? Because my
13 understanding of Raise the Age is it's no
14 longer possible to charge anyone under
15 the age of 18 as an adult for any
16 criminal offense. And what I'm hearing,
17 and I'm curious if that's if that's the
18 case, is it now gang crimes that would be
19 committed are now being committed by 16
20 and 17-year-olds for the same reason that
21 that you just alluded to with respect to
22 stolen vehicles.

23 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Gangs
24 have adjusted their style. So our
25 shootings are down, our homicides are

1
2 down, but gang have gone into credit card
3 fraud. Gang has gone into the
4 "jigglers"; they're going around and
5 hitting handles. You can make a very good
6 profit that evening. There are still
7 gangs that are in predominantly the
8 Hempstead, Roosevelt, Uniondale area.
9 But our violence in gang activity in
10 Roosevelt and Uniondale has gone down. It
11 has increased slightly in Hempstead.

12 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And overall, an
13 I know we spoke about Raise the Age, and
14 obviously that eliminates the
15 consequences for many of these crimes,
16 actually all of these crimes. But even
17 with respect to bail reform generally, do
18 we have any indication as to how bail
19 reform has affected the overall crime
20 numbers?

21 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So
22 there's a correlation. When the crime
23 numbers have gone up, the bail reform has
24 been in effect. When the crime numbers
25 were down, obviously there was no bail

1
2 reform. So there is a correlation. But
3 it's kind of hard to match case to case,
4 right. We do have recidivist. We do have
5 a larceny group that runs out constantly.
6 And look at the other crime numbers as we
7 list them. Those numbers have gone up
8 and the reason they've gone up is because
9 they're going back into the malls and
10 they're stealing, and they're basically
11 getting a ticket and walking down the
12 street and then go stealing off another
13 place. We'll do a field arrest in that
14 case. We don't even bring them to the
15 station house. We'll fill the paper work
16 out in the street and give them the
17 ticket there. Then those individuals will
18 then go about their business and get
19 caught stealing somewhere else later or
20 the next day.

21 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So I know that
22 we keep statistics on the number of
23 individuals that are arrested repeatedly,
24 and I believe that there was one
25 individual who was actually arrested

1
2 eight times, including five times in one
3 week, and released each time. When they
4 do these recidivism statistics, are they
5 including the repeat offender, or is that
6 offender only counted once? In other
7 words, does the repeat offense include
8 not only the people, but the number of
9 crimes that are being committed while
10 they're out without bail?

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: If you
12 commit five larcenies while you're out,
13 that's five separate crimes. So larceny
14 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. You get arrested, get a
15 ticket; arrested, get a ticket; arrested,
16 get a ticket. There's never a point where
17 we say you got to go in. Until they hit
18 the 30 day or 45 days of the return on
19 the ticket, and on the return of the
20 ticket you don't show up, then the
21 warrant is issued for you. On the second
22 notice. They then call you, tell you miss
23 the date to give you the option to come
24 in. If you don't come in --

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I don't mean to

1
2 interrupt you, so if you are told to come
3 in for a court appearance that you
4 normally would have -- normally a judge
5 would set bail to compel your appearance
6 to come back and you don't show up, a
7 warrant's not issued right away? The
8 court staff actually has to call a second
9 time to ask you if you would agree to
10 come in?

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: There's
12 no initial bench warrant issued. They
13 give the opportunity to the offender.
14 They reach out say, hey, you missed your
15 court date. All right, I'll be in. The
16 next court day is Tuesday. You got to be
17 Tuesday, and we hope they come in on
18 Tuesday.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And then, if
20 they don't come in, only then can a
21 warrant be issued?

22 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I have no other
24 questions.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank

1
2 you, thank you.

3 Minority Leader Abrahams.

4 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Thank you,
5 Presiding Officer. How are you,
6 Commissioner?

7 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I'm
8 well, sir.

9 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: First I want
10 to thank you for the cameras along
11 Uniondale Avenue.

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It took
13 a while.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: It's been a
15 journey. Took a while. I know COVID
16 slowed down things, of course, but but
17 nonetheless, it took a long time. But I
18 appreciate you still putting forth the
19 effort to get it done. And I wanted to
20 thank you for being able to get it to
21 this point where we actually have money
22 appropriated to it. I just wanted to
23 also state for the record that if the
24 money does fall short, you know we do
25 have access to our CRP Funds and I would

1
2 be happy, as I offered in the past, to be
3 able to utilize those.

4 I just wanted to get from you, I
5 know it's not strictly a budgetary
6 question, but it came up with Pearl
7 bringing it up. What timeframe do you
8 anticipate being able to do it?

9 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So right
10 now it's at purchasing. And the bids have
11 all come in. So now it's a matter of
12 ordering it and having the check cut and
13 bring it in in. So within 30 days we
14 could be putting cameras up.

15 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Excellent news
16 (applause).

17 Commissioner, I want to ask you a
18 little bit about the budget numbers and
19 staffing. And I was noticing in the
20 budget also that it indicated that we
21 anticipate potentially, a 120 officers
22 will leave at the end of fiscal year
23 2023. However, at the same time we are
24 bringing in two new classes. This is the
25 part that I'm little bit confused about.

1
2 Is it two new classes of 75 each, which
3 150, or is it a total classes, that total
4 of 75?

5 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's
6 projected 75 and 75, but I can tell you
7 now, the November class that we thought
8 was going to be higher is actually lower.
9 It's all based on the head count and
10 retirements. If I don't have the number,
11 Andy's not going to let me hire it, it's
12 not going to happen.

13 We predict the class 75 and 75, 150.
14 Normal attrition rates, we lose about 75
15 to 100 people a year. It's been actually
16 higher in the past years, but we've
17 caught up coming out of the last
18 administration. So now it's predicting
19 forward and this is what we have. But if
20 the number is not there, it would be
21 reduced. It won't be 75, it'll drop to 50
22 if that's what the class is going to be.

23 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Fair enough.
24 Well, I mean, obviously we hope that
25 you're able to have the resources you

1
2 need to be able to provide safety and
3 safeness to the County.

4 The one thing that I would like to
5 stress and be able to get back to, based
6 on your presentation, you had indicated
7 the 52.98% increase in major crimes. I
8 truly believe, I'm a strong believer in
9 visibility. Making sure that our offices
10 are visible throughout the communities.
11 When I was growing up, I mean this is a
12 long time ago, not to date myself, but
13 there was a time when officers rode
14 bicycles. They were were walking more.
15 There were more outside of their vehicles
16 than they did. Not that crime doesn't
17 happen in Times Square, but I truly
18 believe when you have people in
19 centralized areas and you have officers
20 in centralized areas, people tend to
21 think twice.

22 So I was hoping that within the
23 ability of increasing the head count,
24 that we could start to even look at a
25 pilot program where we could start to get

1
2 -- I know it's some officers we do have
3 on the street, but if we can get it to a
4 more robust thing. I mean, especially, I
5 know notion guards (phonetic) is here and
6 know they would advocate and love to see
7 that, officers walking up Uniondale
8 Avenue, Jerusalem Avenue, part of the
9 major business corridors, assuming that's
10 where the need was and if crime was
11 existing. Is there resources, with the
12 increase in account, to be able to try to
13 add more to what we're doing?

14 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So what
15 we do is, we added bike patrols in the
16 last couple of summers. So it's great.
17 The bikes are out there. We've got all
18 the members in each command, all trained,
19 all the POP Cops. We've added POP Cops
20 into it. We went from one to now we have
21 four. We've added in Community Affairs
22 and we've had it in Homeland.

23 We mandate cops to do a park walk
24 and talk a day. Most of them are done in
25 the school. They're in school saying

1
2 hello, greeting, understanding for God
3 forbid, the active shooter comes. But
4 what we've also done is, we're doing it
5 now, we had seven foot posts that went
6 out the other night, Saturday night. So
7 we had seven places that we were
8 covering. We try to cover it where the
9 crime concerns are. It's all of my retail
10 stores right now. That's my biggest
11 problem: Home Depot, Walmart, CVS getting
12 hit. So we're putting cops in front of
13 these locations. They're getting out,
14 stopping walking. What we also do is ask
15 them to stop in a community, walk and see
16 the shop owners and say a hello. A
17 little meet and greet-type thing.

18 So in these additional officers,
19 that will give us some flexibility to do
20 more of it. Summer is always short
21 because vacations. Now we come to the
22 season, holiday season especially, we
23 flood the malls, that we have extra
24 resources and and again preventing any
25 kind of active shooter situations. But we

1
2 also take a BCO cert that are doing
3 sometimes crime-fighting and putting them
4 in the malls to be the predictive-style,
5 policing.

6 So yes, the answer is yes to your
7 question. Where, exactly, like a permit
8 foot post, we haven't touched that yet
9 until we see what a head count ends up
10 being. Because don't forget, we hire
11 them, but I don't see them for seven
12 months.

13 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I got it.
14 Commissioner, before I forget. I just
15 want to thank you on behalf of my office.
16 You've always been phenomenal at getting
17 back to us. Even though I know there has
18 been periods over your tenure, where
19 we've not always seen eye-to-eye or
20 sometimes disagreed, as a small-time, not
21 all the time --

22 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I'm
23 afraid of Robin (laughter).

24 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: But you have
25 always, and I think everyone up here can

1
2 agree. You've always responded very
3 quickly, especially if there's been any
4 incidents throughout my district, you've
5 responded very quickly.

6 Just to wrap up, I did want to ask
7 you finally: So as your report indicated
8 that the crime is up. Is Nassau County an
9 anomaly? Is crime up in Suffolk,
10 Westchester, New York City, North
11 Carolina, Virginia?

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Crime is
13 is up across the country.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Across the
15 country across, is their initiatives of
16 bail reform? Is there bail reform in
17 North Carolina or Virginia?

18 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I have
19 no idea.

20 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Within your
21 report, the amount of people that are
22 repeating crime -- because obviously the
23 whole point is we want to prevent the
24 crime and getting officers there. The
25 amount of people that are repeating the

1
2 crime, is that number going up?

3 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: So the number
4 we always use, and I've said it a 100
5 times up here: 90% of the crime is done
6 by 10% of the population. That 10% of the
7 population, maybe five percent of them,
8 have become that constant recidivist
9 rate. So when you look at these crime
10 numbers and you see this for arguments
11 take, so far this year in Nassau County
12 there's been 20,000 crimes that were
13 committed. Of those 20,000 crimes, it's
14 done by 10% of the population. It's a
15 small percentage that causes me the
16 problem. The reason the numbers go up is
17 because that percentage are not staying
18 in jail or not having a penalty or not,
19 you know, reporting to court in a timely
20 fashion.

21 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Your officers
22 are arresting someone on Tuesday and then
23 arresting them again on Friday?

24 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So we,
25 we just did the top 10 recidivist and I

1
2 have them in my office. The top 10
3 recidivist have been arrested -- each one
4 of the arrested at a minimum seven times
5 in the last two months. And they keep
6 popping out. But again and focus on that.
7 That's that 10% percent. It's not the
8 majority. Is not a community that says
9 that community is all bad, it's that 10%
10 of that population and it's in all
11 communities.

12 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Proactively,
13 what can be done? I mean the crimes they
14 committed, are they done the same
15 geographic area? Is there ways to
16 protect those areas? I mean you talked
17 about how this Newark gang is coming to
18 Nassau County. Is it widespread in
19 Nassau County or is it specific to
20 certain zip codes?

21 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's
22 widespread and it's all retail. It's it's
23 Green Acres mall, it's Roosevelt Field,
24 it's Broadway Mall, it's a CVS and Valley
25 Stream and it's up in Syosset, where

1
2 they'll go in and just take advantage and
3 take stuff and just walk out.

4 Many of our retail stores and this
5 is one of our biggest problems. They're
6 not getting involved, they step back,
7 they, they steal, they'll call 911, but
8 by the time we get there, they're gone.
9 Some of them won't even sign a complaint.
10 They said our headquarters doesn't want
11 to. They've gotten to that point now
12 where they're not going to sign
13 complaints because it's just wasting the
14 time of the stores. It's not, and I keep
15 trying to tell it, we need those reports
16 to see what those crime numbers are.

17 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Commissioner,
18 if you could -- I'm going to ask you I
19 guess, a difficult question. I mean,
20 obviously as you said before, crime is up
21 all throughout the country. All
22 different types of reasons depending on
23 where you live in the country, this is
24 the highest I've seen crime in my 20
25 years of service as a legislator.

1
2 There's many different factors, and I've
3 talked to many different people from the
4 social aspect, the community aspect, and
5 they give it their perspective. From a
6 law enforcement perspective, why do you
7 believe -- I mean obviously this might be
8 the highest number that you've probably
9 seen since your time here as well -- Why
10 do you feel the number is at such a high
11 point? Is it how we're reporting? Is
12 that reporting different than it has been
13 in the past? Are we capturing more
14 categories?

15 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: If you look
16 at that one shot that I gave you, right.
17 The orange one. So around 1978 I think it
18 was, 75. We had 4,000 police officers.
19 Since that time our head count went down
20 under 2,500 way under. I think we were
21 one to 2100.

22 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I remember in
23 the early two thousands.

24 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The
25 crime had come down further and further

1
2 and further.

3 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Yes.

4 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Right,
5 and I always say, there's checks and
6 balances. Sooner or later something's
7 going to go up that goes down. But the
8 reason we're seeing directly and if look
9 at this other chart that we provided, we
10 were down almost all of the years.

11 So 2020 pandemic, even though there
12 was bail reform and everything else,
13 there was a pandemic. People stayed
14 inside. In 2021, same thing. Stores
15 are opening up now. The unrest that we
16 had in this country. It's a direct
17 correlation to there's no penalty no
18 more. This 17 year-old kid knows he's
19 not going to jail.

20 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Commissioner,
21 not to cut you off. You're saying the 52%
22 is related to there being no penalty on
23 the bail reform completely?

24 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: No, no.
25 I didn't say that.

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LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Oh, okay.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I said things go up, go down. I know there's adjustments. But the way our numbers have skyrocketed, especially in this last this year, it's because we just -- again, we know where the kids are coming from: Newark and other places where there is no Raise the Age. So the 17 year-old kid is coming here, committing a crime, stolen cars, especially, which is one of my highest numbers, knowing that even if we catch him, he's not staying in.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Because of the Raise the Age.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's right.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I understand what you're saying.

But I mean, I guess I'm not asking you the factor that into what percentage of the crime that we're seeing that's going up, but I think, everyone in this room can agree that the Newark kid that's

1
2 coming over or even the the guy that
3 steals \$20 from a cash register, whatever
4 is considered to be a misdemeanor, that's
5 not the reason why we're seeing a 52% --
6 If that was the case, then we would be
7 seeing -- I know full well, I got family
8 and friends that live in states that
9 don't have bail reform and they're seeing
10 higher increases, so that can't be the
11 reason that we're seeing 52.98%, right?

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It is
13 not the sole reason.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I just want to
15 make sure of that. I don't want to fear
16 people into that as well. Could it be a
17 factor? I think there was a study that
18 kind of determined that bail reform is
19 less of a factor, but --

20 (Whereupon, public
21 interruption.)

22 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS Just this to
23 summarize. Just getting back to the head
24 count, I guess the 2544?

25 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: 42.

1
2 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Is that an
3 ideal number? Or would you like to see
4 that number go up over the years? That's
5 my last question.

6 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: This is
7 the first time it's been raised in years
8 in the County Exec understood the
9 discussion we had about UBS and crime,
10 school safety. Would I like to see
11 higher? Absolutely, I'd like it higher.
12 But there is budget restraints and
13 everything else that we deal with. I
14 understand that. So right now, I always
15 manage what I'm given, and we've given
16 always a good return. So as we go
17 forward, you want a foot post? I'd love
18 to seen more foot posts in Nassau County,
19 but again we're not at that number of
20 that flexibility. I'll have some --

21 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: What number do
22 you need to be at to get that
23 flexibility?

24 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: If I was
25 at, 2,600 would be in a better place.

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LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: That's good to know. Three classes instead of the two.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: But then don't forget, you'll lose that 100, so they're only backfilling.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: I know I said one more question. Do you find, because I find that I see some officers in the city use those segways; do you find that effective?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: No, sir. I'd be having more injuries than you can imagine.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: So we'll stick to the foot patrol and the bikes.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes, sir.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Thank you. Commissioner.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Legislator Deriggi-Whitton.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Thank

1
2 you. You know, I know we had a moment of
3 silence, but I just have to say I went to
4 high school with Carlos Vasquez. I
5 remember his first accident. This poor
6 guy was an incredible athlete -- he's
7 still alive. But he was a track runner
8 and we thought he was going to make the
9 Olympics. He had a motorcycle and he
10 made a curve at a bend and went under a
11 car and lost his leg right below the
12 knee. But he was the most positive man
13 you could ever meet and he was so happy
14 to get this job as a crossing guard,
15 because he could do it. And he still
16 remained very strong. So I'm just hoping
17 to God that his strength is there. He
18 always asked me about my parents. Every
19 time I saw him. He sent me birthday
20 messages all the time, all these
21 wonderful things. So I just wanted to
22 give that background. So when you do
23 think of him, just know he's an
24 incredible man, and I really am praying
25 for him.

1
2 The other thing is just a quick
3 note. There was a report from the
4 Treasurer's Office that came out and I'm
5 just keep bringing it up to everyone to
6 find out if anyone can figure out what's
7 going on. But there's a \$147 million
8 dollars allocated through this part, in
9 other words authorized through the
10 Legislature. I'm sure some of it is
11 allocated for different things, but I'm
12 hearing that the older bonds especially
13 might not be, might might need a second
14 look. But I mean we worry about cars
15 being repaired, ambulances being bought.
16 I mean it's a lot of money. That is money
17 that we already gave the okay for you to
18 use for public safety only, not the other
19 categories. It's like 300 something for
20 DPW, but there is that money available.
21 It's in the Treasurer's Office report. If
22 you need help finding it, I'd be happy to
23 help you.

24 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
25 you.

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LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: But I really think we should find out if that's still available. Because we want to see the funding that we authorized going to public safety.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I think the biggest problem is that for the first time, probably in a long, long time, we've got money to spend, but we can't spend because there's nobody selling. I can't buy a car. We just asked about unmarked cars the other day and we said we'll see in the third quarter of 2023. It's difficult.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I believe that because we did a streetscape and I heard that stop signs are in backorder because of the supply demand, which is amazing because I think we took ours down and now we don't have one there. So anyway, it's amazing how much that's hitting us.

But I would just -- maybe if you ask, you'll get the answer. It might

1
2 take a little time, but someone has to
3 look at that much money, because that's
4 money we all approved for you and for
5 your men and women, so we want it to be
6 used that way.

7 Thank you for all you do and thank
8 you.

9 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
10 you.

11 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I hope
12 all of our prayers work with the special
13 guy.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
15 Legislator Bynoe.

16 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you,
17 Presiding Officer. Hi, Commissioner; how
18 are you?

19 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good
20 afternoon. How are you?

21 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I won't squander
22 the opportunity to thank you as well. You
23 are phenomenal, you are responsive, and
24 always accessible and I appreciate that.

25 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank

1
2 you.

3 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: A lot of the
4 questions were asked. I just want to go
5 back to one of your opening remarks
6 regarding the Mobile Crisis unit and
7 maybe get a little more detail from you.
8 What you reported sounds great. You said
9 95% of the folks --

10 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's
11 correct.

12 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Get a referral
13 someplace else and then the Mobile Crisis
14 unit is actually doing follow-ups. Do
15 you have an idea of how many or a
16 percentage of times where there is a
17 mentally aided call, where Mobile Crisis
18 unit does respond with the police?
19 Because I know the idea was to have four
20 different zones, and the like.

21 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The
22 minute a call comes in, sometimes the
23 calls are referred right to Mobile
24 Crisis. No threat of any injuries or any
25 danger. So we send it right to Mobile

1
2 Crisis. They handle and they do a great
3 job.

4 The second phase would be if there's
5 someone at the residence that is
6 contemplating suicide, we're going. Cop
7 going, ambulance is going; Mobile Crisis
8 notified, Mobile Crisis coming. Sometimes
9 we're there and it's already resolved
10 before Mobile Crisis gets there. But we
11 don't leave till Mobile Crisis arrives,
12 because sometimes they'll be fully
13 staffed. Sometimes, like everybody else,
14 there might be less of a staff but
15 they're coming. They're always notified
16 so they're always giving history and data
17 that we can then back up and support that
18 person's aftercare a visit, I always like
19 to say. And that's done by Mobile Christ
20 and not by the Police Department. But now
21 we're also backing up files in 9-1-1,
22 that we know it's a repeat call and we
23 know that person's name. So we're going
24 to go see "Johnny" and "Johnny" is
25 supposed to be on medication. When we're

1
2 getting there, we got a little history of
3 what we're going into, again shared with
4 Mobile Crisis. Mobile Crisis has a
5 history that we don't know about, that
6 they are also sharing with us now.

7 So it's been -- I don't know the
8 exact percentage, I could get that data
9 for you and I will. But they do arrive
10 on a lot of our calls. To date, we've had
11 no issues, no arguments, no
12 disagreements. The RESU Unit when they
13 go out, when there's a potential threat
14 of violence or the person is acting
15 irrational, they talk the Mobile Crisis
16 person and if they say, listen, you got
17 this, you go handle this, we'll get them
18 when it's over. That's exactly -- But if
19 there's a discussion to have, give me a
20 chance, we give em a chance to do it. So
21 we're all about making sure that they get
22 the proper place and the proper treatment
23 they should.

24 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: That's excellent,
25 really, really good to hear. It would be

1
2 great to get some of that data. I'll get
3 it for you, yeah, and also the number of
4 calls. And is it your office that's
5 contracting these Mobile Crisis folks, or
6 is this is Human Services?

7 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Not us.
8 Yup.

9 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Well, I'll ask
10 Human Services. I'm wondering how many
11 coals go directly to that line as opposed
12 to coming to you.

13 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: A whole
14 bunch. I know that because we speak to
15 them and they're like we know them,
16 they've already called us several times.
17 They know.

18 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Good stuff.
19 People are getting the help they need, I
20 hope. Thank you.

21 Then my colleague, Legislator Ford,
22 touched on this earlier about hate crimes
23 and how we're responding. And we met
24 with a coalition who was really concerned
25 regarding crimes here in Nassau County

1
2 and concerned about whether there could
3 be some level of an improvement or a
4 change in how we're we're managing those.
5 So they used as an example one of the
6 local jurisdictions neighboring Nassau
7 and they said specifically they have a
8 division that solely responds and
9 investigate these hate crimes. When they
10 looked at the numbers that are reported
11 for the level of hate crimes in that
12 municipality versus what we are
13 reporting, the numbers dropped
14 dramatically, that we don't have the same
15 number of hate crimes.

16 Now I'd like to think, because it's
17 not an issue, but I would think that
18 maybe if we used a different approach,
19 that we could really capture the amount
20 of hate crimes that are happening and
21 really aid folks that are maybe suffering
22 silently and not reporting.

23 I do believe language access is key
24 and I also believe that by building out a
25 unit that will respond to the hate crimes

1
2 and also investigate the hate crimes and
3 we could build a unit with some level of
4 diversity, I think that it could get us
5 where we need to be as a county. We can
6 reduce those incidents that are occurring
7 and then the victimizations that are
8 happening to folks, If we can properly
9 identify folks that are doing these
10 crimes.

11 We got a real great lesson in what
12 was from detective sergeant about what is
13 an actual hate crime, because not not
14 everything is a hate crime. I think
15 having a specialized unit that fully
16 understands exactly what the hate crime
17 is and being able to be trained in a way
18 to interface with those that have been
19 victimized. Just like domestic violence
20 or someone who's been unfortunately
21 sexually assaulted, there's a competency
22 that goes along with being able to talk
23 to that person and get the information
24 from them and put them at peace of mind
25 when they're probably at the highest

1
2 level of anxiety based on being a victim
3 of a crime.

4 I thought the approach was was
5 great. We wanted to have an opportunity
6 to speak to you about that. I know you're
7 bringing on new officers, so I wanted to
8 plant that seed. Because as you're
9 bringing on new officers, I'd love to see
10 you know some consideration granted
11 towards being able to do that.

12 So that dovetails into my next
13 comment, which is diversity in our
14 recruiting. Diversity in our recruiting.
15 So the other -- I think it was, yeah, it
16 was just Monday. We had a presentation
17 from DCE Anissa Moore regarding this new
18 Diversity Equity Inclusion Division
19 that's going to be birthed out of Human
20 Rights and she was explaining what their
21 role would be. I asked her specifically
22 if she would be working with the Nassau
23 County Police Department regarding their
24 recruiting and training and all the
25 things that would go a long with having

1
2 someone successfully enter the academy
3 and be able to successfully graduate and
4 become a part of our law enforcement
5 here. She said that this was one county
6 and we would be working together to make
7 sure that that happened. I just wanted to
8 know whether some resources from your
9 department have isolated to work along
10 with that particular department.

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I've had
12 numerous conversations from the County
13 Exec with DCE Moore. Tomorrow she and I
14 are meeting with the Black Clergy at nine
15 a.m. also in the recruitment side. She's
16 meeting with Jimmy Pettenato, our
17 lieutenant over in Community Affairs,
18 who's responsible for recruitment. We're
19 already out there doing heavy, heavy
20 recruitment, but she will be in the
21 process with us the whole way.

22 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Very good, that
23 was real -- that's great. That was a big
24 conversation that we had here on the
25 floor about having to have someone with

1
2 that type of background, be able to play
3 a role in making that connection. So
4 happy to hear that that's happening.

5 So I think that exhausts my
6 questions for you. Again, very much
7 appreciates you. Thank you.

8 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
9 you.

10 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Good afternoon,
11 Commissioner. How you doing today?

12 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good,
13 sir.

14 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.
15 Thank you again. I echo the comments of
16 my colleagues. We thank the Department
17 for its professionalism, its courage, and
18 keeping Nassau County safe. Thank you to
19 all the members of your department.

20 The budget calls for an increase in
21 head count by 36 and also \$356 million in
22 salaries. How does the Police Department
23 plan on using increases in funding and
24 staff to improve diversity and inclusion
25 in the department? You answered that

1
2 question in part with Legislator Bynoe.

3 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes. The
4 reason for part of our increase in head
5 count is because we've enhanced on so
6 many of those community support units:
7 POP, Community Affairs, Homeland, all of
8 those officers that have been now pushed
9 into those areas. We've added the two
10 PALs. As you know, one is added in
11 Elmont. So we've pushed the resources
12 there. That means you're taking them from
13 the street side of enforcement and doing
14 the day-to-day operations of the Police
15 Department.

16 So we intend on both using those
17 officers. The last class that we just
18 brought in had I believe it was 30%
19 minorities in the class and you know that
20 was a big jump for us and we have not
21 lost one kid in that class -- I call them
22 kids, excuse me. But we have not lost
23 one recruit in that class and they're
24 about to go on field training in two
25 weeks. So we've kept that number. So

1
2 that's been good.

3 The list, as we've all spoken over
4 in the past, because of looking at
5 diversity, because of consent decree, we
6 have been able to sustain it and go
7 lower. And it's not a quality of who's a
8 better, smarter kid, it's you get lucky,
9 and you said "B" and I said "A". But
10 that separates a lot of kids. But those
11 numbers that are in there because of the
12 consent decree are now actually getting
13 to it and they're actually rolling out.

14 And then going forward with DCE
15 Moore and Community Affairs, we've
16 already started the recruitment drive.
17 We've been down into Roosevelt, we've be
18 down into the Uniondale at the schools.
19 Where we have a great relationship with
20 the superintendents. We've been up in
21 Westbury. We just did something last
22 week. And we have LBG doing it next week
23 at the school.

24 So again, these are the ways that
25 we're interacting as far as getting the

1
2 diversity within the Police Department
3 better.

4 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.

5 According to the Administration, 36
6 sworn officers will be designated to
7 community safety. Are these officers
8 focused on communication and community
9 outreach? What are the Nassau County
10 Police Department's strategies to
11 strengthen relations with our
12 communities?

13 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So it's
14 moving them all around. Those 36 are
15 going to be patrol cops; no doubt about
16 it. But taking the 36 from within, and
17 we've already done, put them into those
18 places, is where it's helping recruitment
19 in diversity.

20 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood.

21 Minority police officers play a very
22 vital role in the relations between
23 community and the police -- like my
24 father who was a police officer in New
25 York City -- Currently, what are your

1
2 goals for the next year's class in terms
3 of increasing, and are we losing any of
4 these recruits or candidates to other
5 departments that may offer attractive
6 packages?

7 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So we
8 are definitely losing, especially when it
9 comes to minority officers, because the
10 Village of Hempstead hires from within
11 the village, the Village of Freeport
12 hires within the village, and Glen Cove
13 gives priority to the village. So we lose
14 a lot of choices within that hiring
15 process. I think I answered that.

16 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Before
17 Legislator Rhoads asked you for the
18 numbers for major crimes during 2020 to
19 '21, if you may please provide that as
20 well, I would appreciate that.

21 Going back to the point to the
22 Department of Criminal Justice Services.
23 They have stated that the recidivism has
24 remained steady and is actually
25 decreasing, not increasing. Do you agree

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with that, sir?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: My data does not show that. That report gave State data excluding the City of New York.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Our report, does it include the Village of Valley stream, for example, in my district?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes, sir, it does.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you. To my understanding there was a report that Did not include the villages, but it does include villages.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The quarterly report that we pushed to all of you, that has that data in there. It shows that it has increased and that includes our villages. Yes, it does.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Understood. Thank you.

Andy before was here and we were talking about future projections and a crystal ball was mentioned. We can't

1
2 account or predict accurately how
3 inflation or a recession may impact the
4 County's revenue projections. In the
5 same way, Commissioner, I ask you:
6 Conceal carry. Many people are applying
7 for concealed carries in light of the
8 recent Supreme Court decision. How might
9 it impact the rates of violent crime to
10 increase the number of concealed carry
11 firearms? As the County Executive has
12 stated in his desire, how will the impact
13 of safety of law enforcement
14 professionals as they conduct traffic
15 safety stops to do their jobs which are
16 already dangerous enough? How do you
17 believe that change in the law for
18 conceal carry, how do you believe that
19 that will affect crime here in Nassau?

20 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So all
21 that I can say is that we have taken more
22 guns off the street this year than ever
23 before in Nassau County. And the City
24 has also done the same. There's a lot of
25 guns out there.

1
2 As far as it comes to the Second
3 Amendment and the right of somebody. We
4 follow the law. Whatever the law says,
5 we follow.

6 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Yes, sir, the
7 Implementation of body camera program
8 seems to have had a positive impact on
9 both police officers and the community.
10 Speaking to our officers, many of them
11 have become comfortable and favorable of
12 the program. Have the cameras resulted in
13 a decrease in the cost of the County's
14 litigation? What we spend, in terms of,
15 you know, having County employees in
16 court on County time.

17 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So we,
18 we've just had a full-year of it. So we
19 don't know.

20 I can tell you this: My complaints
21 are down, which, which is good. My cops
22 have embraced it. They've done a great
23 job. And many scenes that I've watched
24 where, if I heard the story, you might
25 say: Come on. And then you look at the

1
2 video and you say nice job officer. And
3 that's and I'm saying nice job officer
4 every single time. They've done a great
5 job.

6 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you,
7 Commissioner.

8 Lastly, Legislator Ford mentioned
9 the upcoming hearing in November
10 regarding the Reform plan, which myself
11 and two of my colleagues did not vote
12 for. I look forward to submitting
13 questions for that hearing in the future
14 regarding transparency and
15 accountability. But as a glimpse of the
16 upcoming hearing, what are other ways in
17 which the Nassau County Police Department
18 plans to improve transparency and
19 accountability within the Department?

20 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: The
21 Nassau County Police Department is very
22 transparent. We post our numbers, as we
23 promised, during reform. We've done
24 everything that was asked during the
25 reform process under County Executive

1
2 Curran has been completed and continues
3 to go forward in the reporting process,
4 and we are totally transparent. We give
5 everything that is asked of us.

6 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: My last
7 question: Your department will receive
8 an increase in resources, which I'm
9 thankful for, but to what extent of any
10 of the increase of resources will be
11 dedicated towards providing more
12 transparency and accountability? Will
13 you dedicate any additional officers to
14 Internal Affairs or other departments?

15 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Our
16 Internal Affairs is fully staffed. If
17 there's a need, they always get the
18 staffing that they need. Our Internal
19 Affairs, as you know, reports everything
20 that has any hint of criminality to the
21 District Attorney's Office and now to the
22 Attorney General's Office. So again, we
23 been very transparent in all of our
24 complaints.

25 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you very

1
2 much, Commissioner.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
4 Legislator Rhoads.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Commissioner, I
6 know you said that approximately 10% or
7 so are the sort of bad apples that commit
8 these repeat crimes. I think you also
9 indicated that you have a list of the
10 sort of top 10 for 2022. Of those 10
11 individuals, can you tell me -- do you
12 have the list with you?

13 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I have
14 it on my phone.

15 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Of those 10
16 individuals, can you approximate how many
17 crimes those 10 individuals have
18 committed?

19 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER:
20 (Perusing) I can tell you that, after
21 looking at this, on average they did
22 about seven to eight crimes.

23 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. So those
24 ten individuals are responsible for about
25 70 or 80 crimes within the county of

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Nassau. Correct?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's correct.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Of the crimes they committed, were any of those crimes eligible for bail?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: You mean eligible to get an appearance ticket?

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In other words, were all of those individual arrests, did they result in the issuance of an appearance ticket as opposed to going before a judge?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So none of them actually went before a judge?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: No, sir.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: In the past, would that have been the case?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Well, again, bail is for the purpose of securing that person returning to court and they're not a threat to society. And

1
2 if I had had a repeat individual, I'm not
3 giving an appearance the second time. I'm
4 sending him over to jail. I would
5 require bail.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Right, in other
7 words, for all of those 70 repeat
8 offences, there would have been -- all
9 right. Let's take out the first ten,
10 because that's not a repeat offense at
11 that point. So for and 60 of the crimes
12 that were committed in Nassau County by
13 just those 10 individuals, on those 60
14 occasions they would have been before a
15 judge to review whether or not to be held
16 on bail.

17 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's
18 correct.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And, in fact,
20 even if those 60 individuals were brought
21 today before a judge and if they weren't
22 issued an appearance ticket, is the judge
23 allowed to consider the dangers of the
24 criminal in making a decision as to
25 whether to assign bail?

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POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I can answer it this way, the judge will not require bail, but if he is a threat to somebody, I can't answer that. But I can tell you that the law states that you're not to hold them unless there's extenuating circumstances, and I don't know what that would be.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Right. And, in fact, there's very little guidance that's actually given on that and that results in judges simply not issuing bail so as not to be in violation of the law.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So for 60 of the 70 crimes that are committed by these 10 individuals, they would have received bail before bail reform and they are not receiving bail today.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That is correct.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Do those numbers go into your crime statistics?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes,

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they do.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So every one of those 60 crimes is included in the increase of crime that you see all across the county: The overall 30% increase in crime, 53% increase in major crimes.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's correct.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So would we conclude from these numbers that bail reform has a direct impact on the increase in crime? Because now individuals who would previously be held on bail, just like these 10 individuals who went on to commit 70 crimes, would have been held and now are not.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So I stay with the stats. Those 60 would be 60, so the answer is yes with those 10 people.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. We're talking about the top 10.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Right. That list

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POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Goes
down.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Goes down. And
that list is extensive, Correct?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So I'm correct
in concluding that there is a direct
impact between the effects of bail reform
and the crime rates here in Nassau County
and across the state?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Correct.
As I said, there is definitely that
correlation.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Legislator Ferretti.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Commissioner,
heard a lot today, a lot of good
information, so I thank you for that.

One thing you said earlier, though,
really stuck with me. You mentioned
something and I won't ask you, obviously,
to say this specific corporation or

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2 business, but you mentioned something
3 that there's actually policy out there
4 that you're aware of, where stores are
5 instructing their employees not to call
6 9-1-1 or file reports when robberies are
7 committed because of --

8 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Not
9 robberies, we're talking larceny, right.
10 And they are instructed to let the
11 individual go and then call 9-1-1.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: They're
13 instructed to let the individual go and
14 then call 9-1-1. Is there a policy in
15 place that you're aware of by any of
16 these companies to not file a report when
17 the police --

18 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We've
19 had problems where they are saying that
20 Corporate has said that they are not to
21 file a report with police, and that's
22 when we get involved, calling Corporate
23 saying, what are you doing?

24 And so, yes. The answer to your
25 question is yes.

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LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: What does corporate say when you say what are you doing?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's our policy.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Are you aware if that's their policy nationwide or specific to New York state or Nassau County or somewhere else?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I can only answer from cooperate to Nassau County.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Look, I'm not going to sit here on my soapbox. But when we have a situation where there are companies instructing their employees not to file police reports when crimes occur, something is very, very wrong. Something very, very wrong. Whether you agree with what's going on out of Albany or not, something's up. Thank you.

LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Just in the opposite direction of the question by Legislator Ferretti, there is a pilot

1
2 program in place in San Francisco in
3 which their police department is working
4 with stores where they're accessing their
5 live feed -- video feed -- in order to
6 gain knowledge as to criminal activity.
7 Is there any consideration in Nassau
8 County for such a program that would help
9 stores combat the increase in crime?

10 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So we
11 have a monthly meeting with all of our
12 store security personnel regarding --
13 that's how we know who these repeat
14 offenders are in the fact that we, when
15 we arrest them -- we meet monthly with
16 them and we discuss. They give us access.
17 They don't give us direct access, they
18 give the access to us. But again, our job
19 is not to be the security for that store.
20 I'm trying not to use names either. But
21 my job is not to be the security for that
22 store. My job is to effect and enforce
23 the laws that are being broken in that
24 store.
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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Legislator Giuffre.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Commissioner,
Thank. Well, you already know that I'm a
fan. We'll leave it at that.

If stores in Nassau County -- chain
stores, big stores -- have a policy of
not calling the police when the larcenies
take place, would that affect your crime
statistics?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes.
And I need to clarify, they're being
instructed not to call us while it's
happening. Let them leave and then call
9-1-1. And then some don't file a report.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: If there's no
report file, does that affect the
statistics?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes.

LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: That was my
question, that's it. Thank you.

LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: You stole my
question, John, like, like John did
yours.

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LEGISLATOR WALKER: Commissioner, I just want to thank you too, and thank all the men and women in blue who protect us day in and day out. And I'm sorry, I can be annoying sometimes at three o'clock on a Sunday.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Yes, you can, Rose. It's either you are Robin; either one, and I love you both (laughter). You do a great job.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: But, as a Legislator Ferretti said, these stores are being instructed to not call till after the crime takes place, the individual leaves the store. But then corporate, for some of them, are telling them, even if they call, you're not filling out any report. I mean, obviously individuals who are going to go into stores and do that no matter what they're taking, I'm sure they're sharing that with some of their buddies, and so it only makes the situation worse which is just very, very, very sad. And is there

1
2 anything that can be done dealing with
3 these corporations? Saying like, look
4 what are we doing?

5 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: So
6 actually, some of them have been told:
7 Call the police, take the report but
8 refused to have anybody arrested and they
9 use the report for their insurance
10 policies. And we have spoken to cooperate
11 on some very large companies, some we've
12 gotten some positive change and some have
13 said that's our policy. And it's
14 difficult when -- again, that's why I'm
15 putting cops standing on foot posts, as
16 Legislator Abraham's talking about, I'm
17 putting these cups standing in front of a
18 chain store and again, just to be
19 security. And as Legislator Solages is
20 saying, it's not an effective use of my
21 resources, that's for darn sure. But if
22 I don't stop it, sooner or later, it just
23 keeps going and so it becomes very
24 complicated.

25 But we do -- I will tell you my

1
2 chief of patrol doesn't take much from
3 the corporate and he goes at him and at
4 the end of the day sometimes we get some
5 changes. Most of the time we don't.

6 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Which is very
7 sad for all of our residents and
8 certainly all of our officers.

9 So all right, thank you.

10 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER:

11 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you. Just
12 quickly. I may have missed something, but
13 why would they instruct their staff not
14 to call until after the perpetrator has
15 left? Is it because they don't want a
16 confrontation between their --

17 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: 100%.
18 They don't want the confutation.

19 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Thank you,
20 Commissioner. How are you?

21 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Good.

22 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Great job by the
23 men in blue, always.

24 I'm going to bounce around a couple
25 of subjects. They're not really

1
2 budget-related, but since you're sitting
3 there, I'm Going to hit you up.

4 I didn't hear you discuss anything
5 about the opioid crisis that we're facing
6 here in the county. So just if you could
7 give a short, maybe one minute summary of
8 what are we doing to combat this terrible
9 --

10 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: As you
11 all know, what's coming, the newest thing
12 is press pills and they're putting
13 Fentanyl in the pills. We saw great
14 success in 2019 into '20. We had a 30%
15 reduction in our overdoses; Operation
16 Natalie. It skyrocketed during the
17 pandemic because kids are home using
18 drugs, using pills from the cabinets,
19 getting that addicted.

20 Our detective division again,
21 pushing Operation Natalie, working with
22 Patrol and Enforcement, we went after it
23 pretty hard this year. So we have been
24 very fortunate, very fortunate, that are
25 fatal overdoses, heroin-related, are down

1
2 20%, and our non-fatal are down 26%. But
3 I'm still losing kids. And I'm losing
4 them because the hottest thing now is
5 they're making it look like skittles and
6 candy and it's got Fentanyl in it. Just
7 a little drop of Fentanyl will kill you.

8 Sometimes the Fentanyl that is being
9 used -- and you saw with the military
10 individuals that were down in Florida
11 went to give mouth to mouth to somebody
12 and was infected with the Fentanyl and he
13 died.

14 It's dangerous stuff. We've been
15 working very good with our Federal
16 partners and State partners. Again, we've
17 gotten a reduction, but still in 2022
18 alone, as far as non-fatal we've had a
19 107 cases. Total back for '22, between
20 non-fatal and fatal: 545 cases. And you
21 Narcan a kid, you bring them back, you
22 drive him to a hospital, the cop puts him
23 in a bed, he gets some fluids or whatever
24 happens, he gets up and he walks out.
25 Nothing being done. We're not helping

1
2 these kids.

3 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Okay. Falling
4 into the next line of questioning: The
5 Mobile Crisis team; do they get involve
6 on drug overdoses?

7 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: No. Not
8 on my end.

9 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR:: The Mobile
10 Crisis team, what does it consist of?

11 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: It's not
12 my Mobile Crisis team, so I can't really
13 speak to it. I just know there's social
14 workers that are working with them.

15 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Social workers.
16 So why aren't we using the mental health
17 laws to mandate or put somebody into the
18 hospital and put them on a hold because
19 they are a threat to themselves or
20 society.

21 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: I'm not
22 the lawyer, but I think the mental health
23 law is meant for mental health, not for
24 drug use. And so I would love to find a
25 way to keep them to recovery.

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LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Fair enough,
fair enough.

You mentioned that you've taken guns
off the streets. Those legal guns or
illegal guns?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Illegal
guns.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Finally, I was
watching a show called UK Cops. It seems
the United Kingdom, England has testing
device like a breathalyzer for marijuana
or other substances. Are we looking into
to obtaining such kind of testing devices
where you blow into something and it
could tell you the amount THC in your
system and combat the incidents where
people are driving under the influence?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: We are.
We are working with all of our partners
about developing and having something for
us. But I don't know that instrument
that's being used. I do know it's a
problem for us because we can't test for
it.

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LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: You can't test currently because you don't have a device or a hand held device?

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: That's correct.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: All right. But they're out there on the market, obviously, if the other police departments are using them.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Like I said, I'm not aware, but I will say that my CTS group is the group that lectures all over the state of New York. They they're considered one of the best. We don't have it yet, we're trying.

LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Very good. Thank you, Commissioner.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Legislator Pilip.

LEGISLATOR PILIP: Commissioner, thank you so much for coming here and answering all my colleagues' questions.

I also personally would love to see more minority joining the police

1
2 department. I think it's going to help us
3 to build a strong community.

4 I grew up in Israel. Back then we
5 had an issue with my community and the
6 police department in Israel really did a
7 lot to include more minority. And I'm
8 proud to say now we see more and more
9 women and men in blue in Israel. One of
10 them is my sister and that really helped
11 us to build a strong community back in
12 Israel.

13 So I do believe we can come up good
14 plan and we should do more efforts to
15 include the minority to join our police
16 department.

17 In addition, I would love to thank
18 you personally. Since I took office, It
19 have been has been an amazing experience
20 working with you and with your team, and
21 you have been doing a great job and thank
22 you so much for that.

23 POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
24 you.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Any

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other legislators?

(Whereupon, no verbal
response.)

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I
think we're good. Thank you very much.

POLICE COMMISSIONER RYDER: Thank
you, all.

(Whereupon, a brief recess
is taken, 4:49 p.m.)

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(Whereupon, hearing resumes,
4:51 p.m.)

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Fire
Commission is next.

CHIEF UTTARO: All right, good
afternoon. Basically, in reviewing our
budget this year it's been another busy
year coming out of the pandemic, things
are picking up, constructions picking up
exponentially. We have a lot of new
initiatives on board, which will be
coming in the ordinance which you guys
should be seeing, hopefully in a couple
of weeks before the end of the year, so
we can adopt that. New things that came
down from the State that are good,
positive fire safety initiatives.

Construction is up significantly.
Thankfully, fires have been down, but
we're coming into the busy season. We're
dealing with a lot of stuff with the
e-bikes and the lithium batteries, so

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2 those have been causing imposing
3 challenges to the fire service.

4 As you know, we've been working with
5 the County Executive's office, on the EMS
6 side. We've made a lot of positive
7 strides. We just had a meeting early this
8 afternoon, so things are really moving in
9 the right direction and we picked up
10 steam on several different things that
11 we're doing, including, an addition to
12 our CAD system for Firecom dispatch,
13 which is going to enable a lot better
14 cooperation, coordination between the 71
15 volunteer fire departments, which we've
16 never had before.

17 So that being said, I'll entertain
18 any questions you may have regarding our
19 budget, but we're satisfied right now and
20 open it up to you.

21 LEGISLATOR FORD: Good afternoon,
22 Chief. Thank you very much.

23 I know that we've met all during
24 this year to talk about specifically EMS,
25 and I always thank you very much for

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2 coordinating and chairing those meetings,
3 because they've been, I believe, very
4 productive.

5 So when you talked about this
6 communication system, which I think is,
7 you know, just very revolutionary, where
8 maybe you can explain that it will tie in
9 the 71 fire departments so that it'll be
10 a more effective way of despatching
11 ambulances throughout Nassau County; am I
12 correct?

13 CHIEF UTTARO: Yes, it's an
14 enhancement to the new system we have
15 now, which really brought us from 1980's
16 technology into the 21st century. It's
17 it's web-based and this new licensing
18 agreement, which they call Crew Force,
19 which they've been great vendor to work
20 with, and sometimes you don't have great
21 vendors, but they've been very good. It
22 will allow us to let them utilize tough
23 books, laptops, I-pads, tablets, and then
24 the MDTs that you find in police cars and
25 in front of most ambulances and fire

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2 trucks now. And when they enable it, it
3 has GPS ability, we will be able to see
4 where these units are. We will be able
5 to track them. When you have a large fire
6 scene, we'll be able to see where they
7 are on the fire scene. And when it comes
8 to ambulances, we'll see people leaving
9 the hospital that are available and we
10 can get help that much quicker. We'll
11 also be able to see our departments that
12 are on standby, that have standby crews
13 of emergency medical technicians or
14 paramedic with drivers. It will enable
15 them to put them in the system, and more
16 sparingly use our police ambulances right
17 now as you build up their stock, as you
18 were talking about with Commissioner
19 Ryder.

20 So it's fantastic. It also ties in
21 all the patch centers. Not everybody is
22 dispatched by Nassau County Firecom.
23 There are several other dispatch agencies
24 spread across the county. It will tie all
25 those in electronically as well. They'll

1
2 be able to see the same things that
3 Firecom sees and be able to share their
4 information back and forth. So it really
5 is, for the first time ever, unifying the
6 71 departments.

7 LEGISLATOR FORD: I know the
8 funding. I think the cost is probably
9 about \$400-500,000, I believe. That we
10 will be able to get that through ARPA
11 Funding?

12 CHIEF UTTARO: Yes. Through some
13 research that Chris Ostuni had done, yes,
14 it is AROA Funding eligible. I think
15 it's about \$456,000 the initial outlay,
16 and then we have budgeted in for its
17 continued use -- what you have to pay,
18 basically to keep the program going. The
19 names eluding me, but.

20 LEGISLATOR FORD: As soon as that
21 funding is available, how long will it
22 take to actually get this system and have
23 it up and running?

24 CHIEF UTTARO: These guys call me
25 twice a week. They are very eager to get

1
2 it off the ground. We're going to be
3 probably one of the bigger municipalities
4 using it. They came and did a demo for us
5 which we were very impressed with. From
6 what I'm understanding from my
7 conversations with IT this morning, I
8 think they're looking to get some of this
9 information at least to Finance and
10 Rules, by the end of the month. So as
11 soon as that's in play, we could have
12 this ready to go by the end of the year.

13 LEGISLATOR FORD: Wonderful, that's
14 very good news.

15 I'm looking at your proposed budget.
16 Currently you have 91 employees on board
17 and that the proposed is 113. Where are
18 you with to be able to achieve that goal?
19 You know, is there an open list that you
20 can hire from, or do people have to take
21 tests? I know you usually hire from the
22 fire services, right? In the various
23 fire departments. If, given the
24 opportunity, how soon would you be able
25 to bring those employees in?

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2 CHIEF UTTARO: We're actively
3 working on all of them right now. There
4 are they built into that '22. There are
5 several, there's two clerical positions.
6 One as an accountant we're actively now
7 going over a list to be able to hire.
8 There's also included in there open
9 positions for eight fire marshals that
10 we're actually interviewing in two weeks
11 from an established list. And it also is
12 going to have an additional five fire
13 marshals for the 2023. So that is going
14 to push our staffing up.

15 There are active lists. The other
16 one is Firecom. They're going to be
17 adding five Firecom Tech-1 next year. We
18 are awaiting that list to be certified by
19 the State right now. So that's the only
20 list we're going to be waiting on. We
21 understand it should be ready to go by
22 the end of October, the State's moving a
23 little slow these days, especially in
24 civil service, but we anticipate to have
25 that ready to go and start beginning to

1
2 higher after the first of the year.

3 LEGISLATOR FORD: And then, with the
4 current number of employees that you
5 have, how are you with the inspections? I
6 know that you have to go out sometimes
7 for new businesses, you do the
8 inspections. Are there any delays with
9 them, or do you feel that you're
10 responding in a timely manner?

11 CHIEF UTTARO:: I think we're
12 responding in a timely manner. I'm
13 definitely blessed with a staff that
14 doesn't say no often. They do get out
15 there and get the work done. They have a
16 lot of pride in what they do. We do have
17 the ability that we have guys that work
18 after-hours to get work done when there's
19 a job that has to get done and it's
20 behind. There are a lot of deadlines.
21 And, like I said, there's a lot of large
22 projects, including one going up in Long
23 Beach right now. That's going to keep our
24 time consumed pretty well.

25 We are hitting those goals. We have

1
2 six people presently as fire marshal
3 trainees. The other eight, hopefully,
4 that we will be hiring in two weeks. It
5 takes a little time for them to come on.
6 And it does take about two years to get
7 them trained. But everything fell into
8 place with this first six and we were
9 able to get almost all of their training
10 done already in the first about seven or
11 eight months of employment, which has
12 been fantastic. So we think those guys
13 might be ready to hit the street by the
14 end of the year, which is probably about
15 a year early, so that that really worked
16 out well.

17 But between codes training and
18 hazmat training they go through several
19 different training evolutions, including
20 peace officer and firearms. It does take
21 time. It's not a quick three, four or
22 five months academy and then they're out
23 on the street, so it does take some time.

24 LEGISLATOR FORD: Like on the job
25 training.

1
2 CHIEF UTTARO: Yes. But we've
3 already started that. We have them moving
4 through the different divisions so they
5 can learn how things work, teaching them
6 how to review plans, how to do site
7 inspections. Also, it's about gaining
8 knowledge over time. Codes are very
9 difficult to navigate and understand
10 sometimes. So it helps let them get a
11 leg up on things and this way they'll be
12 productive when they get out in the
13 street.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
15 much. They really are doing a great job.
16 I mean, you know, way back in the past
17 sometimes we'd get complaints and not on
18 wood; so far so good. And I think a lot
19 of times things fall into place because
20 of good leadership. So I thank you very
21 much for doing this and everybody who
22 works there, because you really are a
23 jewel of Nassau County. Thank you.

24 CHIEF UTTARO: Appreciate it. Thank
25 you.

1
2 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Could
3 you just give us an update on the Police
4 Medics.

5 CHIEF UTTARO: I was listening to
6 what Police Commissioner Ryder was
7 saying. They are adding, I understand, to
8 their budget, which is going to help.
9 That's going to help staff the ambulances
10 that they have. And I know they have
11 other ambulances on order, which is also
12 going to help.

13 This crew force thing that we're
14 talking about, that CAD upgrade that's
15 going to be becoming before you soon for
16 funding from ARPA, that is going to help
17 also. Right now, which I know,
18 Legislator Ford has been in some of these
19 meetings that have lasted some time
20 sometimes, there's been a lot of active
21 discussions about how to utilize the
22 volunteers better. So you don't have --
23 there's cases that sometimes we have
24 three ambulances going to the same call.
25 This crew force program allows us to

1
2 basically peel off one or two of those
3 ambulances when they're not needed. If
4 it's a serious case like a cardiac rest
5 or some type of serious trauma, obviously
6 having more hands is better for the
7 patient so they'll keep them coming in.
8 But many times it's for a sick person or
9 for, as we call it, a basic life support
10 cas, that you have two or three resources
11 coming in that don't know that each other
12 are coming in. This will enable us to
13 help use the resources better and get
14 them to where they need to be. So I'm
15 hoping that answers your question
16 somewhat.

17 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Yeah.
18 The other issue is, obviously, salary.
19 There's been discussions about changes in
20 grade, etcetera. Are those discussions
21 on-going?

22 CHIEF UTTARO: Yes, from my
23 understanding they've come to a position
24 where they're going to be able to offer a
25 better starting salary for the paramedics

1
2 or the police medics. New York City just
3 recently raised all of its salaries,
4 which made it made us not competitive.
5 Stonybrook has raised its salaries and
6 then some of the private carriers as
7 well: Northwell, the hospital-based,
8 along with our fire districts that hire
9 these men and women *per diem* to staff
10 their paramedic programs there, it puts a
11 strain on the system.

12 Nationwide, paramedics and EMTs are
13 down, people just aren't -- it's not even
14 volunteering. They're just not taking
15 the courses to become paramedics and EMTs
16 which is a troubling trend. So we're
17 hoping at least the ones that we have
18 here and because we have such a populous
19 region, we'll be able to, with a better
20 salary, to lure more people in and better
21 enhance things. Not only for police
22 medics, but also for the fire districts
23 and fire companies that hire them
24 part-time to help out with getting the
25 ambulances out.

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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
you.

LEGISLATOR FORD: Just speaking
about the EMTs and I see Don out in the
audience, I know that a lot of the
school districts have these programs, I
guess the seniors, you help with offering
EMT classes so that seniors are able to
take the class and become a qualified
EMT. Do you find any more expansion in
this or has it been -- is it because of
personal? Do you do the training?

CHIEF UTTARO: A lot of the training
is done by VEEB, which is the group that
operates both our Nassau County Fire
Service Academy Training of the Volunteer
Fire Fighters and they have an EMS
Academy as well that VEEB operates.

But yes, getting that expanded is
kind of like a juniors program. There's
junior firefighter programs in a lot of
different departments. It's a great
recruitment tool. It gets them early,
they get hooked on becoming a volunteer

1
2 firefighter and then they move themselves
3 into, you know, firefighters when they
4 turn 17. There is not such really a good
5 program for EMTs and this would be a
6 great program in schools.

7 Also, you know it's the type of
8 thing that they learn how to become an in
9 school as one of their electives. It
10 gives them a career path when they leave
11 high school because of the unbelievable
12 demand right now for for people in that
13 industry. So, and it also would help get
14 them into volunteer roles that we could
15 start basically getting people from
16 wherever it may be: Manhasset, Westbury,
17 Elmont, Massapequa. If all these school
18 districts did programs like this, it
19 would definitely help.

20 CHIEF UTTARO: Long Beach used to
21 offer it, and they're hoping to be able
22 to establish it. I hope they've been
23 communicating with you, but thank you
24 very much.

25 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Anyone

1
2 else? Legislator Deriggi-Whitton.

3 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Hi.
4 I'm asking this question on behalf of
5 Legislator Debra Mule, who's not feeling
6 well. She said she's been speaking with
7 you about something called Swimplay,
8 which, I have to admit, I've never heard
9 of until just now.

10 CHIEF UTTARO: Swimplay, I think
11 it's called. It's it's a version of
12 Airbnb. People rent out their swimming
13 pools. She was alluding that she's had a
14 problem in her district, that folks would
15 rent out their swimming pools, and a
16 certain group of individuals would then
17 throw a party there, which would be a
18 couple of 100 people, which are often got
19 out of control, and there was very little
20 they can do about dealing with it. So we
21 were talking about some innovative ways
22 that both the fire marshal staff, with
23 enforcing the fire and safety codes,
24 along with the building departments,
25 could treat that place like a public

1
2 assembly, because that's what it's being
3 used as. And hopefully, not put the
4 people out of business, but keep the
5 legitimate parties happening and keep
6 these wild parties that are affecting
7 neighborhoods under control. Something
8 to talk about when the swim season
9 begins, again in the in the spring.

10 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Yeah, it
11 would probably be good to do a mailer.
12 I've never heard of it, but I guess
13 there's a lot that I haven't.

14 CHIEF UTTARO: Lots of entrepreneurs
15 out there.

16 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I had
17 one other question. You know we're so
18 worried about Fentanyl because it's such
19 a small amount can do such damage. Are
20 you using the Fentanyl strips or anything
21 when you go to an OD, and do you know
22 anyone does that?

23 CHIEF UTTARO: We don't. We
24 wouldn't get into anything with that.
25 That wouldn't be something -- the only

1
2 hazard it causes is exactly what Police
3 Commissioner Ryder had alluded to, is the
4 first responders responding and
5 accidentally coming in contact with this
6 very potent drug. That's a concern.
7 We've had incidents where we've had to
8 decon police officers and a firefighters
9 and EMTs because of exposure to it, but
10 that's probably the biggest hazard we
11 would face.

12 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Have
13 you had that? You have had that?

14 CHIEF UTTARO: They had it some time
15 ago. A few years ago we had an incident
16 where they made a car stop and I guess
17 they came upon this and they wanted the
18 decon to make sure everybody was safe.
19 You want to make sure it's off your
20 clothes, off yourself. It's a dangerous,
21 dangerous thing.

22 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I've
23 been worried about that. Even with
24 Narcan training. You're asking someone
25 to do mouth-to-mouth. You use the guard

1
2 and all, but such a small amount can do
3 so much damage that it just almost
4 seems--

5 CHIEF UTTARO: Absolutely. It's
6 something that they learn about in EMT
7 classes and refresher classes. To be
8 aware of it, to be safe. When possible,
9 utilize gloves and masks and all that to
10 make sure that you don't come in contact.

11 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Thank
12 you. What has it been, a year?

13 CHIEF UTTARO: Yes. I'm still
14 smiling. It's it's been crazy year, but
15 we've gotten a lot accomplished, so we're
16 very happy and we appreciate your help in
17 getting there.

18 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: We
19 appreciate you.

20 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I think you
21 stated before that you've really been
22 trying to stay on top of our businesses
23 and everything. I know in the past
24 sometimes we were struggling with that.
25 The businesses were behind trying to get

1
2 approval from the fire marshals to move
3 forward, especially after COVID, many of
4 them suffering during that time. Have we
5 caught up from all those past things that
6 had to be checked so that they made sure
7 they got all that they needed to open
8 their business? And the new ones you
9 said you're really trying to stay on top
10 of, so you get them everything they need
11 as quick as possible?

12 CHIEF UTTARO: I believe we're
13 pretty much for the most part, staying on
14 top of things. There are jobs that fall
15 behind and we try to pay special
16 attention to try to work them through the
17 process. We've also had a lot more
18 meetings before big projects get
19 underway, before the shovels go on ground
20 of what they need to do so they have
21 awareness. So they're not surprised at
22 the tail end of the job that they have to
23 do something that they wished they knew
24 at the beginning of the job.

25 Another thing which we didn't have

1
2 in here, but we're hopefully going to get
3 off the ground by the end of the year, is
4 an enhancement to our computer system
5 that the fire marshal staff utilizes for
6 the past about 10 or 11 years through
7 Locality Media. It's going to allow a
8 portal so that our contractors and
9 business owners would be able to look
10 into our system and see where their plans
11 are and allow them to do a lot more stuff
12 online. So when I have more statistics on
13 that, I'll definitely make you guys aware
14 of it so you can get it out there.
15 Everybody's asking to pay things online
16 to help move their plans along;
17 electronic filing, all that. So that'll
18 bring us to that point and hopefully
19 we'll be ready to go after the first of
20 the year.

21 LEGISLATOR WALKER: And I do think
22 it's great that you try to meet with
23 them, especially say it's a new business,
24 some doing remodeling or whatever,
25 because oftentimes they get going and

1
2 then all of a sudden, oh yeah, yeah, you
3 have to do that and then it holds
4 everything up and they get frustrated.
5 They start calling us and we're calling
6 you and it just creates havoc with that.

7 And I think this new IT system is
8 going to really help in the
9 communications between all of you. And I
10 really do look forward to everything we
11 can do to enhance our fire departments,
12 certainly our medics and everything we do
13 for them because you play such a vital
14 role in the County and to our residents.

15 So again, I just want to thank you
16 for all your hard work, and hopefully you
17 keep smiling.

18 CHIEF UTTARO: Thank you. Thank you
19 for your support.

20 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
21 Legislator Bynoe.

22 CHIEF UTTARO: Thank you, Presiding
23 Officer. Hi. How are you?

24 CHIEF UTTARO: Hi. How are you?

25 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Good, good.

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So in Hempstead where the fire occurred, it was alleged that it was some level of a motorized scooter or something, the battery of that device. Is that accurate?

CHIEF UTTARO: It was a fatal fire, so right now we can't say much more.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay. So don't go any further then.

CHIEF UTTARO: Yeah. I can't say much more than that.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: But you mentioned earlier that you've been very busy based on lithium batteries and the sort; could could you talk a little bit about how we might be able to better inform our constituents on how to mitigate any type of risk related to that?

CHIEF UTTARO: Well, I know in Hempstead, I don't know if it's happened yet, but they did reach out to us to ask us, the Village asked us for some information that they can send to their residents and post on their websites. The

1
2 Fire Department was talking about
3 possibly doing some type of an open house
4 type of thing to educate the public and
5 educate the residents in the village
6 about the dangers of the lithium
7 batteries, especially the off market
8 stuff that you could buy at a discount
9 store or you buy over the internet that
10 may not be a true and tested battery. It
11 may not be a true and tested piece of
12 charging equipment. Those seem to be the
13 things that are causing the biggest
14 hazards, because you're using stuff
15 that's off market, it's not tested, it
16 may not be UL listed, factory tested,
17 coming in from overseas. A lot of times
18 they have failures. That's some of the
19 things that you read about.

20 You've seen in New York City. They
21 had an eight-year old girl that passed
22 away. They were charging E-bike in the
23 apartment went on fire. The problem with
24 these things too, is they burn quickly,
25 they burn rapidly and it doesn't afford

1
2 people a lot of time to get out. So the
3 biggest, biggest piece of advice is to
4 try not to charge these things in a
5 pathway that's you know, between you and
6 your exit.

7 But getting the word out and we
8 welcome if you had something in any
9 community that you represent, you like us
10 to come --

11 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: So I represent
12 Hempstead and because of the density and
13 people living in apartment buildings, it
14 could be catastrophic. But I think any
15 one of us up here would want to be able
16 to be in a position to at least put out a
17 mailer or use our social media to be able
18 to provide our community with something
19 as simple as what you just stated: Don't
20 charge those devices between you and your
21 exit and the like.

22 If you could help us provide us some
23 technical assistance and the language and
24 how to best present that to our
25 community, I think I think it would be

1
2 extremely helpful.

3 CHIEF UTTARO: Absolutely, we just
4 attended a seminar with FDNY. We learned
5 a lot from there. We actually purchased
6 some equipment and our guys, thankfully,
7 are handy and full of ideas. They put
8 their own kits together with existing
9 stuff that we had in the garages to help
10 mitigate these. When you come upon a
11 scene, how to dispose of it correctly,
12 how to contain it. But we are also
13 putting together some social media stuff
14 and some handouts as well. As soon as
15 they're complete, I can send it to the
16 Leg (sic) and you guys can get it out.

17 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: That would be
18 extremely, extremely helpful.

19 Just a question. I know you're
20 trying to get your staffing levels up,
21 but if we were able to put something
22 together in our communities, is that
23 something that your staff would be able
24 come and help us with.

25 CHIEF UTTARO: Absolutely.

1
2 Especially, we try our best following a
3 fatal fire. We did talk to the Hempstead
4 chiefs and just waiting to hear back from
5 them. There's a lot of fire prevention
6 things coming up now in the next couple
7 of weeks. Next week's fire prevention
8 week.

9 So, yes, if you have something,
10 especially after we've had a fatal fire,
11 we have smoke detectors that we can bring
12 along. We have informational paperwork,
13 bilingual informational paperwork too
14 from NFPA. We can display it and put it
15 out there for the residents.

16 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: That would be
17 great. I did some fire prevention stuff
18 in Newcastle and in Hempstead. In
19 particular what was really, really
20 helpful was I worked with the Red Cross.
21 And we were able to get those detectors
22 where you can't pull out the battery. A
23 lot of times, people pull out the
24 battery. We worked with some of the
25 larger landlords, who were able to make

1
2 those installs in the apartments. I
3 think that probably is very helpful. We
4 did that right after the fatal fire.
5 Well, it wasn't fatal, but it was
6 extremely damaging to 100 Terrace.

7 So, yeah, I would love to work with
8 you in doing some of that.

9 CHIEF UTTARO: Absolutely. The Red
10 Cross is a great group. They they
11 actually do a lot of outreach with smoke
12 detectors for Veterans' groups, the
13 elderly communities that can't get access
14 to them. In the 21st century, nobody
15 should be without a smoke detector at
16 this point.

17 CHIEF UTTARO: Do you think you
18 could give us something timely to to use
19 for next week, since it is fire
20 prevention week, to to be able to put up
21 on our social media?

22 CHIEF UTTARO: Sure. I'll get some
23 stuff together from the guys that are
24 doing it back in the office and I'll get
25 it out to you so that you can post-it.

1
2 Absolutely.

3 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
4 Legislator Walker?

5 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I just had one
6 other question: Speaking about the
7 lithium batteries, did we ever move
8 forward on anything with the larger
9 propane tanks that people have? Not the
10 ones we have by our barbecues or
11 whatever, not that they're not going to
12 be very serious too. You shouldn't keep
13 them so close to your home or whatever.

14 But I believe, was it in East
15 Meadow, Tom, that had that fire with
16 the -- I'm not sure -- with the bigger
17 propane tank? Nobody knew was there. Is
18 there anything like any type of -- or
19 something we should work with you to make
20 sure that people have to register? Like
21 make sure that if you have a propane tank
22 that size -- because even our
23 firefighters wouldn't even know it's
24 there and I think it blew up.

25 CHIEF UTTARO: Well, two things

1
2 we've done is we do presently have a
3 system in place that if you're going to
4 do a propane installation at your home or
5 your business, you have to file plans.
6 You have to show us where the tank's
7 going to be. We come and inspect the set
8 up to make sure it's correct before they
9 actually attach the propane. I believe
10 possibly the one that happened that you
11 were referring to was an illegal
12 installation and it did actually ignite
13 and, as we call it, the tank bled
14 (phonetic) and blew. Thank God nobody got
15 hurt, but it was quite a fireball and
16 sure the guys on scene were a little
17 rattled from it.

18 But we do have something, but we
19 could put some kind of like public
20 service announcement together that
21 basically says, if you're thinking of
22 doing something like this, this is what
23 you have to do and we'll give them a
24 contact number. We also were sharing the
25 information now at the fire service where

1
2 we have large tank installations when
3 you're talking about in excess of a 1000
4 gallon propane tanks. So this way they
5 have awareness of where these things are
6 and when they're fighting a fire at home,
7 they'll know that that tank might be on
8 property and to be aware of it.

9 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Okay.
10 Anyone else?

11 (Whereupon, no verbal
12 response.)

13 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
14 you very much.

15 CHIEF UTTARO: Thank you very much,
16 everyone.

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2 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: And the
3 Sheriff's Department we have acting
4 Sheriff Anthony LaRocca.

5 Actually before we do that, Brian
6 Sullivan, the president of the the
7 Correction Officers Benevolent
8 Association would like to say a few
9 words.

10 MR. SULLIVAN: Good afternoon,
11 everybody. Brian Sullivan. President
12 Nassau County Correction Officers
13 Benevolent Association. I'll be brief.
14 That's a joke. I may go a minute over.
15 Thank you for giving me a couple of
16 minutes to speak here.

17 Just touching on what's something
18 that the police commissioner actually
19 said earlier. There was a question about
20 mental health inmates that are at the
21 jail. Commissioner Ryder actually said
22 that 98% of people that are involved with
23 mental health issues don't come into the
24 system. That I do believe to be
25 completely correct. Also what we are

1
2 holding, just to be sure, since bail
3 reform, what we are holding in our
4 correctional facility now are the
5 absolute bad guys. Everybody gets
6 released. Our head count is down
7 precipitously from where it was several
8 years ago, but we are absolutely holding
9 the worst of the worst in our facility.
10 Violent people that commit bad crimes.
11 This is the stuff that we're dealing
12 with.

13 Again I want to -- I'll take this
14 opportunity quick to congratulate Anthony
15 Larocca being named the acting Sheriff
16 for now. I've known Anthony quite a long
17 time and I'm looking forward to,
18 hopefully, a fruitful and good
19 relationship with him. I think we are
20 both on the same page on many, many
21 issues. Since he was named, we made
22 significant progress on several issues
23 that I couldn't get done with the prior
24 two administrations, as much as I was
25 banging my head against the wall with

1
2 with things. But again, I appreciate this
3 because it is a bit of an effort, when
4 you work in corrections, to get the
5 message out from behind the walls. We're
6 not the police, we're not outside, we're
7 not even probation. When things go on
8 behind the walls for correctional
9 facility, it's hard to get the message
10 out.

11 The one thing that I need to stress
12 my message is again -- I joked about all
13 the stuff. These are my notes going back
14 2016, 2017. I can probably submit this to
15 you and your going to hear a lot of the
16 same stuff that talked about before.

17 Number one on the agenda is
18 staffing. We've heard a lot about
19 staffing here today in other departments.
20 I've been at this podium countless times
21 over the past couple of years. It's on
22 top of my agenda.

23 For informational purposes, last
24 year I stated here that since January of
25 2018 we've hired 131 correction officers.

1
2 In that same time period, we lost 191.
3 That equates to a net loss of 60
4 correction officers in three years up
5 until last year.

6 I can update those numbers with the
7 following: Since January of 2018 to
8 today, we've hired 155 correction
9 officers and lost 234, equating to an
10 updated net loss of 79. That's 19 more in
11 the hole than we were this time last
12 year. When I brought this up numerous
13 times to the Curran Administration, I was
14 met several times with the same reaction:
15 "Staffing is still an issue? We just
16 hired 48 people. We thought we corrected
17 your issues there".

18 Simply put, over the last several
19 years we're not keeping up with
20 attrition, resignations. One thing that
21 we have in this job is losses to other
22 jobs. People don't want to work in
23 corrections. When you get called for
24 something else, you leave. So we don't
25 keep up with the attrition.

1
2 In a little more detail, in 2018 we
3 hired 57 officers, lost 46. In 2019, we
4 hired 23, lost 42. In 2020, the year of
5 COVID. We hired zero because of COVID and
6 lost 68 correction officers to
7 retirement. In 2021 we hired 48, lost 51.
8 And to date this year we've hired 27 and
9 to date have lost 27 this year.

10 We have a significant staffing
11 problem in this department. Had a
12 staffing problem this time last year. Our
13 officers are forced to work a lot of
14 mandated overtime. It's an ongoing issue
15 that doesn't even ever seem to get
16 resolved. We have retention problems and
17 certainly have recruitment problems. We
18 have to address these issues so we don't
19 go any further down this rabbit hole.

20 Yes, our department has contracted
21 due to the insanity of bail reform. That
22 we all continue to grapple with. If you
23 all remember us in corrections going back
24 four or five years ago, we're up here
25 sounding -- I was here numerous times and

1
2 in Albany sounding the bell on bail
3 reform, and everybody thought we were
4 lying. I was nuts. I just wanted more
5 overtime for correction officers. What a
6 difference we have now. It's the
7 rallying cry for everybody, but I
8 digress.

9 Currently, in our present state, we
10 calculate that we should have a little
11 over 800 officers working here, including
12 through supervisory ranks. This budget
13 proposed budget, calls for a head count
14 790. We disagree by a few. That's fine.
15 The problem is actually hiring and
16 backfilling that 790. Last year, the
17 Department had an approved budget of 783,
18 our actual onboard head count was 726.
19 That's 57 less bodies than was budgeted.
20 Yet, year after year we keep hearing
21 about cost of overtime at the jail.

22 As of today we have 98 COBA members,
23 through all ranks, with 25 years or more
24 on our job. Once again, our retirement
25 is based on 25 years of service, so those

1
2 people could go at any time at their
3 option. We currently have 40 COBA members
4 with 30 or more years on the job. By mid
5 2023 we will have an additional 23 hit
6 that 30-year mark. That's 63 by mid-year
7 2023, with over 30 years on the job. Some
8 of them stick around for another year or
9 two are depending on how old they are.
10 You have to be 55 to leave.

11 This all has to be taken into
12 account, much like it is in the Police
13 Department -- as I'll talk about in one
14 quick second. For comparison, I point to
15 the public safety summary in the proposed
16 budget. As stated clearly every year
17 under the Police Department, their
18 proposed Budget maintains a sworn head
19 count that includes additional classes
20 offset anticipated attrition. It also
21 increases their supervisory head count.

22 For the Sheriff's Department, the
23 Budget funds two classes of up to 30
24 correction officers in March and July of
25 2023. And last year's proposed Budget

1
2 there was supposed to be two classes of
3 40 recruits hired in '22. To date, like
4 I said, we hired 27; again, we lost 27.
5 So again, I ask why we can never seem to
6 get over this hump and this disparity of
7 having these queues ready to replace
8 people as they go.

9 Additionally, it has to be noted
10 that this problem in hiring and proper
11 staffing reverberates through the rank
12 structure of our department, as it
13 prevents us from properly promoting staff
14 into the higher ranks. What is not taken
15 into account with much of the attrition
16 is that our higher-ranking staff are
17 amongst those that usually retire more
18 often.

19 It's not just an officer issue.
20 Currently we're short dozens of
21 corporals, sergeants, lieutenants,
22 captains throughout our rank structure.
23 We haven't done any meaningful promotions
24 here in almost five years. I know there
25 is talk about promotions now and I'm

1
2 hopeful that it's going to happen soon.
3 But we haven't had any meaningful
4 promotions in about five years. We have
5 lost close to 40 supervisors through all
6 ranks and only promoted to my knowledge
7 about six in that same time-frame.

8 Onto training. Over all, our
9 training regiment continues to remain
10 severely lacking when compared to other
11 municipalities where a 40-hour yearly
12 training regiment is the norm. It applies
13 particularly in our supervisory ranks
14 where training for supervisors is almost
15 non-existent here for years. That's a
16 holdover from prior administrations;
17 needs to be addressed. In the end, lack
18 of training relates to liability on the
19 part of the County.

20 Again, as I stated last year, this
21 proposed budget summary under goals
22 states that Department shall create
23 policies and procedures designed to
24 maintain officer safety; maintain or
25 increase the current level of training,

1
2 policies, and procedures; hold officers
3 accountable for their understanding of
4 policies and procedures. And I say here
5 year after year: What exactly are our
6 officers expected to understand and be
7 held accountable for if they're lacking
8 training on an ongoing basis?

9 As to other issues, I've talked here
10 several times and you've probably, if you
11 follow any of my social media, about
12 HALT. The average person in the street
13 doesn't understand what HALT is -- Humane
14 Alternatives to Long Term solitary
15 confinement. That is misnomer in and of
16 itself. Solitary confinement does not
17 exist in New York state, no matter how
18 much some of you can stand up here and
19 say that it does. What we have in New
20 York is administrative segregation. It's
21 basically jail within a jail. If you
22 commit a crime in jail, you have to be
23 separated from the general population to
24 keep the inmates and the officers safe.
25 HALT is not only not humane, it's a

1
2 complete fallacy.

3 This past April, HALT legislation
4 that was imposed by the State was put
5 into place. Our union, along with our
6 downstate partners in corrections, fought
7 this legislation because it's dangerous,
8 promotes violence in our jail, and more
9 importantly for our purposes here today,
10 is an unfunded mandate. We are no longer
11 able to separate violent predatory
12 inmates from the general population of
13 inmates. It is our job to protect the
14 general population from predators, and
15 that job was made almost impossible by
16 the New York State Legislature and signed
17 into law by the former Governor Cuomo.

18 Since April of this year, when HALT
19 went into effect, incidents necessitating
20 the use of force by officers to stop
21 violent acts of inmates has doubled. This
22 is a direct result of HALT. If you're not
23 familiar with HALT, it's basically, like
24 I said, bail reform in jail, open up the
25 door and let everybody out together. You

1
2 cannot separate violent creditors.

3 The entire premise behind it is a
4 fallacy based on false narrative that not
5 only endangers our staff but the inmate
6 population. We need to address locally
7 what the State has dumped on us and
8 refuses to acknowledge the trail of
9 wreckage that it has created. I'll be
10 glad to sit-down with any of you and go
11 over the details of that. That's not for
12 today.

13 As for being budget-related, we in
14 the unions fought to have Chapter
15 amendments done to this law to roll back
16 some of the HALT provisions to make our
17 jail safer. We were minimally successful,
18 but one amendment that was made by the
19 State and without our agreement was to
20 carve out mandated training both in the
21 recruit academy and for yearly in-service
22 training that was in the original law but
23 removed because of the associated
24 expenses. So now we're stuck with HALT,
25 its ramifications, its unfunded mandates

1
2 on the counties, the carve out of any
3 associated training, and, most assuredly,
4 civil liability to the counties, all
5 counties in New York state that they will
6 now bear -- and it's obvious that we're
7 living in the bizarro world in New York
8 state. I think everybody here can to a
9 certain amount agree with that.

10 We sincerely hope -- and I've talked
11 about this before -- I think I said last
12 year about the the opioid money that came
13 in that, whatever the 100 and something
14 million dollars, that part of that money
15 can be carved out for the Sheriff's
16 Department, the Division of Correction
17 for the jail to provide programs and
18 training in the Sheriff's Department
19 where we deal with violent, many times,
20 mentally unstable and drug-addicted
21 individuals on a daily basis.

22 Particularly, in the wake of halt, we
23 have to find ways to combat insane
24 legislation that comes down from Albany
25 and protect our officers and help our

1
2 officers protect inmates from violent
3 inmates. It's just insane that people
4 think this stuff works.

5 As we see every year now, not just
6 in Nassau County but all over the state,
7 the prioritized objective coming down
8 from the State with corrections is to get
9 people out of the system and back on the
10 street as soon as possible, all in the
11 name of saving on the cost of
12 incarceration. That all started with the
13 insanity bail reform. This is not reform.
14 This is all an effort to cut the cost of
15 incarceration, get people out of the
16 system while providing no safety nets,
17 drug programs, mental health treatment,
18 etcetera, for that offender to dump them
19 back with no public safety considerations
20 with the simple release of people who
21 need help in the first place and many
22 times only get it when they are
23 incarcerated and they're put there under
24 a judge's order and forced into programs.

25 Absolutely no regard for the victims

1
2 of crime, many times violent crime, who
3 we all see plain as day, including our
4 law enforcement officers, are completely
5 left out of any conversation when it
6 comes to criminal justice reforms
7 statewide. I don't know what it's going
8 to for this mindset to turn around, but
9 putting the onus only on the violent
10 predators, violent people that are
11 committing crimes in our state, leaving
12 people in the street unprotected, leaving
13 correction officers unprotected in jails
14 and inmates in jails that we're sworn to
15 protect does not work. And If the State
16 won't do it, I come to you and I come to
17 the people in the County to help us
18 figure out how to do it on a local level.

19 I'll send you a copy of my thing
20 here today and I'll send you a copy of
21 things that I've said over and over and
22 over again. I joke sometimes like
23 Khrushchev and I'm banging by my shoe on
24 the table, but I thank you for your time.

25 Thank you, thank you.

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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Thank
you, Brian, as always.

ACTING SHERIFF LARocca: Good
afternoon. I would like to thank
presiding Officer Nicolello and Minority
Leader Abrahams for inviting me here
today.

My name is Anthony LaRocca and I am
the acting sheriff. My priorities are
maintain a safe and secure correctional
center for both inmates and staff while
always keeping on the objective by being
fiscally prudent and keeping in mind the
wallets of the taxpaying residents.

In my first week as acting sheriff
directed SER Team to do a facility wide
search, which has not been done during
the tenure of the past two sheriffs. This
provided to be fruitful by uncovering a
large assortment of contraband including
weapons and drugs. This successful
operation made the lives of officers and
inmates alike safer.

Following this search, I have

1
2 implemented the use of the Tech-84 to
3 such inmates upon leaving the visiting
4 area before returning to their respective
5 housing units.

6 Now I will briefly discuss my 2023
7 Budget presentation.

8 The correction officers budgeted
9 head count is 790. Currently, we have
10 726 on board. We'll be putting in a
11 correction officer's class which will
12 keep us up to the attrition and budgeted
13 head count.

14 Since the onset of bail reform, the
15 inmate count has been low. We are
16 averaging approximately 730 inmates. I
17 have been put in a request with the
18 County Executive Office and have approved
19 50 promotions. In comparison under the
20 previous administrations, only five
21 promotions were made. This depleted all
22 supervisory rank and create unnecessary
23 overtime expenses. This will boost
24 morale, spread responsibilities
25 throughout the ranks and reduce the

1
2 overtime spending.

3 Also, I am reviewing all staffing
4 and lineups and my administrative to
5 ensure that were utilizing the correct
6 amount of post coverage and staffing.

7 After a careful review of the 2021
8 and 2022 Budget, I am confident that
9 we'll be able to mitigate the 2023
10 overtime cost down to the projected
11 amount. I have already begun assessing
12 all available resources and restructuring
13 of staffing plans and post coverages in
14 order to ensure maximum utilization of
15 all staff while also providing safety to
16 all Correction Center employees and
17 inmates.

18 Many of these changes we will be
19 implementing is to correct the
20 mismanagement practices of the prior two
21 sheriffs over the last fours. We have
22 established a new relationship with NUMC.
23 I have toured the former lock ward in the
24 hospital and we are working with the
25 hospital administration to get the prison

1
2 ward updated and functional as soon
3 possible. The reason we decided to open
4 this ward is Twofold: Safety and security
5 for all staff, patients, and their
6 families, and a tremendous overtime
7 savings by placing inmates in a secure
8 area.

9 I would never sacrifice the safety
10 of or security of either the staff or the
11 inmates to save money. This is why I am
12 doing a comprehensive top to bottom
13 assessment of all operations.

14 Thank you.

15 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I have
16 a couple of questions.

17 In terms of staffing, is there a
18 plan for another class this year?

19 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: I believe
20 so. By the end of the year there will be
21 another class.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: What's
23 the projected number of that class?

24 MR. PERSICH: If I may, we're
25 planning and doing this class of 40,

1
2 probably in November. That's what the
3 time-frame is.

4 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: So as
5 of now they're recruiting people. Is
6 there an indication that you're actually
7 gonna get to 40?

8 MR. PERSICH: Yes, I believe so. We
9 have 40 ready to go. It's a question of
10 timing and getting into the building and
11 finishing up the last few steps of
12 processing.

13 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: And
14 the plan for 2023?

15 MR. PERSICH: It's two classes of
16 30. I'll say it this way: If there's a
17 need for more, we will adjust that. But
18 right now we planned on getting back to
19 the same numbers as where we're at.

20 The overtime number in the
21 correctional facility, from a budgetary
22 standpoint, not from an operational side
23 the sheriff stated was astronomical. We
24 found some things that were not managed
25 correctly and to throw more people at it

1
2 at the beginning until we had a structure
3 and give the sheriff his due time, we
4 didn't think it was prudent to just keep
5 throwing a lot of classes at it. I have
6 a little bit more confidence now that --

7 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: I
8 understand what you're saying, but when
9 staffing reaches record lows and it's
10 dropping every year, I think you have to
11 expect overtime to go up, you simply
12 don't have the same bodies.

13 MR. PERSICH: Agreed.

14 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: So are
15 you going to be able the reverse the
16 trend that Brian spoke about of attrition
17 exceeding the number of incoming
18 recruits, corrections officers?

19 MR. PERSICH: I would say yes, we're
20 going to get back up to the number to
21 contain overtime as a result of that.

22 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: All
23 right. We'll be watching and we'll be
24 pushing from our end.

25 MR. PERSICH: We appreciate that.

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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Also,
on the civil side, I also have an
understanding that the deputy sheriff's
numbers are down.

MR. PERSICH: We're adding 10 new
deputy sheriffs. There's some testing
issue. I'll defer Sheriff Larocca here,
but there was some testing issue that
prevented us from hiring or something
like that. I'm not very informed on that,
but we had an additional 10 for the next
year bringing that number up.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Has
that issue been resolved?

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: I believe
so.

MR. PERSICH: It was something to do
with the state testing is what what I
understand.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: We'll
follow-up tomorrow to get more concrete
information.

LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
much.

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You're hiring the 40 from a current list that we have, correct? How many applicants are still on that for next year? Do you have a large pool?

ACTING SHERIFF LARocca:
Approximately 40 more.

MR. PERSICH: Yeah, there's an additional 40 on for the next tranche.

LEGISLATOR FORD: What I'm saying is how big is the list? That's what I should say.

MR. PERSICH: I don't know the answer to that.

LEGISLATOR FORD: When was this test given? Was this the recent test?

MR. PERSICH: It's a State test. I don't know the dates on that. I will say that.

LEGISLATOR FORD: But it would have been administered by the County.

MR. PERSICH: Yeah, but it's through the State. The State sets the guidelines when the test dates are for that.

LEGISLATOR FORD: Because I know

1
2 that you'll give a test and then you
3 establish a list based on civil service.
4 And then, if you have like 800 people on
5 the list, you start hiring and then,
6 after a certain amount of time, we give
7 another test so that list is now void and
8 we start new. Do we have enough people on
9 this list to -- for the 40 that you want
10 to bring in this year? And then you're
11 saying for next year you want to hire
12 only 60, a total of 60?

13 MR. PERSICH: That's the plan right
14 now to get us up. But if the attrition
15 numbers starts spiking up, we may have to
16 adjust the third.

17 So let me go back to your point. I
18 think there's enough on the list to get
19 to the next 40, and I think there might
20 be more on there to give us more for what
21 we need for next years classes.

22 LEGISLATOR FORD: Because then that
23 then that leads me to ask then: If we
24 know that we have attrition and you're
25 giving a class -- I never attended any of

1
2 these academies, so I don't know. But if
3 you're utilizing instructors in an
4 academy to instruct like, say, 40
5 candidates or 30 candidates, wouldn't it
6 be more cost-effective to bring in next
7 year, at the beginning of the year, the
8 60 new people? If you're going to hire a
9 total of 60 in 2023, wouldn't it be more
10 cost-effective to bring them in all at
11 once, because you're going to utilize the
12 same instructors? The classrooms of the
13 schools should be big enough to be able
14 to accommodate 60 candidates. Like you
15 know, you're paying people to teach them.
16 So if you, instead of teaching 30 and 30,
17 teach 60 all at once, wouldn't that be
18 better?

19 MR. PERSICH: I'll say it this way:
20 Is that this class is a shorter class
21 than I would say the police class, so I
22 don't know if the number -- I can't
23 answer that on the training side. If we
24 do a class in November, we can do another
25 class in January on top of it and keep

1
2 the instructors moving in the same
3 direction. We can accelerate classes, we
4 can slow them down. There's a way of
5 doing it with overtime with the
6 instructors and everything else. We can
7 do two classes if we have to, I think.
8 There is a method to the madness. I
9 don't know how it's going to impact
10 training. That's what I don't know. I'm
11 not the expert.

12 LEGISLATOR FORD: Because I think
13 that we need to look at how can we bring
14 them in sooner -- these new correction
15 offices, sooner rather than later. You
16 may find all of a sudden in the summer
17 those 98 members that are eligible to
18 retire may all of a sudden decide. You
19 know what? For some odd reason, Florida
20 is beckoning them and they want out of
21 here. So I would encourage you.

22 I think maybe I read in this that
23 you were looking to consolidate some of
24 the buildings. What exactly does that
25 entail?

1
2 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Basically,
3 we can move inmates into areas that
4 aren't full; for instance, dorms and
5 tiers. And that would close down another
6 parts of the correctional center which
7 also would have an effect on manpower,
8 correctional officers, and will actually
9 cut the overtime by doing so.

10 LEGISLATOR FORD: But I know that
11 one of the issues that we have is that a
12 lot of the people who are incarcerated
13 seem to be from gangs. For the safety of
14 the other inmates as well as the
15 correction officers, that it seems to be
16 better to have the different gang members
17 separated from rival gangs.

18 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: The problem
19 with that is there is no segregation at
20 this time. We can't take them and
21 segregate them based on their gang
22 affiliations. So what happens, what I've
23 witnesses myself from touring the
24 creation center in the past three weeks,
25 is some of these gang members, what

1
2 they'll do is they'll go into PC. As a
3 group there'll be 20, or even 30 of them
4 in one dorm or one tier. They segregate
5 themselves.

6 LEGISLATOR FORD: All right, I'm
7 just considering the safety. Even with
8 the mental health component. I know that
9 President Sullivan was talking about
10 possibly using opioid funding to help
11 address that because of the inmates that
12 do have mental health issues. And
13 sometimes we think that they should have
14 gotten help before. It's sad that they
15 end up in jail, but there they are. You
16 know, are you looking at trying to apply
17 for this and and do you have any
18 programs? Are you're looking to enhance
19 anything with the programs to help a lot
20 of these people who have these mental
21 health issues?

22 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Not that
23 I'm aware of. Like I said, I've only
24 been here three weeks. It's pretty
25 overwhelming.

1
2 MR. PERSICH: If I may, I think on
3 intake there's an evaluation done of the
4 inmate when they come through the door if
5 there is a need for mental health and
6 that's what happens, it's on intake. They
7 evaluate them. It's through NUMC. I think
8 they come over and they do an evaluation
9 of the inmate when they walk through the
10 door, if there is a mental condition that
11 needs to be addressed.

12 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: But you
13 mean by funding your actually talking
14 about these monies that were being sent
15 from the Federal Government?

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: Yeah.

17 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: That I'm
18 not aware of it this moment.

19 LEGISLATOR FORD: We will hopefully
20 see if there's anything that can be done
21 to help in that situation. I do like the
22 approach that you want to open up the
23 hospital ward back in the jail to help,
24 you know, take care of them. And
25 obviously you'll be staffing it with

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Nassau County CSEA people.

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Staffing as doctors and nurses.

LEGISLATOR FORD: They probably would come from NUMC.

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Right.

MR. PERSICH: Part of the current contract we have with them right now.

LEGISLATOR FORD: I do like this.

My last thing also is, I know that we've always had issues with the visitors centers, and so I'm hoping that we can continue to improve it so that it's easier for the inmates to have visits from their family and friends.

I don't know if you still do any other remote. Because I know during COVID, sometimes you allowed to Zoom meetings or whatever. I don't know what, I don't even know.

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: I believe right now we're back to post pandemic visitation. The pandemic, the CDC guidelines are no longer in effect.

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LEGISLATOR FORD: The last time I was there, I know that they were going to build a new visitor center, holding center, where they could stay which is covered. You know, so that if the weather is bad, they're not out in the snow and rain, and whatever. Has that -- I haven't been there since --

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: There is a shelter that sits in the parking lot adjacent to the 832 building.

LEGISLATOR FORD: It's like a trailer, right?

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: No, it's not a trailer. Actually, it's just an enclosed looks like a pexi-glass shelter.

LEGISLATOR FORD: I'm going to take a visit. I want to take a look at that. Because I know that I was under the impression that they were going to put in something that had heat, or maybe air conditioning, while they were waiting. But I could be wrong, so we'll have a discussion later. Thank you very much.

1
2 And I encourage you to please let's
3 accelerate this hiring.

4 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: And
5 other legislators? Legislator Walker.

6 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Thank you,
7 Presiding Officer.

8 Brian, thank you for always being so
9 right on and telling us just what's
10 happening over there. We appreciate that.

11 Sheriff, you certainly hit the
12 ground running.

13 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Thank you.

14 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I too am very
15 concerned about getting the numbers up
16 for our corrections officers for the
17 safety of those prisoners who are there
18 and certainly for the safety of our
19 workers. Because when they're forced to
20 work overtime -- you know overtime is
21 great and you say, oh, it's nice money,
22 nice money. But sometimes after a while
23 and they're there really too long. I
24 always worry, because that's when
25 mistakes can happen. And they get tired.

1
2 And you know you don't want to put them
3 in a bad position and you certainly don't
4 want to put the inmates in a bad position
5 either because of that situation. So I
6 really hope that we can increase those
7 numbers as quickly as possible.

8 And it's a little scary when you
9 describe things. We've all toured
10 facility, but when you think that you
11 have rival gangs and you're not allowed
12 to segregate them and things that you're
13 not allowed to do by law, yet it could
14 really present a dangerous situation for
15 themselves, as well as for our workers
16 there. And I guess if there's anything
17 that we can help you with, like you said,
18 if it's not working on a state-level and
19 Brian with his up too, if it's not
20 happening up there, then if we have to
21 work on a local level, what we can do to
22 ensure the safety of of everyone, I think
23 we all need to be on the same page with
24 that.

25 Again, I thank you very much for

1
2 your presentation. Like I said, you
3 really did hit the ground running.

4 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Any
5 other legislators? Legislator Bynoe.

6 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Greetings.
7 Question about how you -- first of all
8 nice to meet you.

9 ACTING SHERIFF LARocca: Thank you.

10 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Never met you
11 before.

12 I've visited the jail along with my
13 colleagues on both sides of this aisle,
14 and I do recollect that we were going to
15 do something a little bit more
16 substantive for folks that we're visiting
17 the facility. So I will join Legislator
18 Ford in looking at that.

19 But in terms of the physical plant,
20 physical conditions there. We visited
21 and there were things that were
22 concerning some time ago there were
23 hazards for both our officers and the
24 inmates. One of the things that we were
25 really concerned about, which I spoke to

1
2 DPW about just the other day, were roof
3 leaks. And you know you said you're
4 doing a topdown review of the facility.
5 I'd really like to have you debrief us at
6 some point when you get there. But in
7 particular, I'd like to hear about your
8 assessment, your physical assessment of
9 the facility.

10 We have been very concerned over the
11 years of the conditions there. I know
12 that under the prior administration there
13 was there was some level of advancement
14 as to technology that was going to be
15 installed and things like that. But I'd
16 like to get an assessment from you really
17 as soon as you can, about the conditions
18 there, because it's important that we
19 address those things.

20 In terms of the relationship between
21 the jail and the medical center, I
22 definitely would love to see oversight
23 there as well. To this point, since we've
24 moved from armor, I think we've we've
25 made significant headway and I wouldn't

1
2 want to see us spin out of control and go
3 back to those days.

4 So my question also is regarding
5 recreational and educational resources
6 within the facility and ministerial
7 services they're getting. You know, you
8 say that you're you're back to pre COVID
9 days in terms of visits. How are we
10 doing with having chaplains and the folks
11 that come back into the facility?

12 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: I'm pretty
13 certain I've noticed that they've been
14 here every day. Quite a few that come
15 into the correctional center on a daily
16 basis. So it is back to normal as far as
17 that aspect goes. And they're able to
18 have the Sunday services? Because I've
19 actually attended Good Friday service
20 there and a couple of other services, so
21 they're doing those services?

22 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Yes.

23 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: And how about
24 like educational resources?

25 ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: I think

1
2 there is a group that comes in with
3 educational resources on a regular basis
4 also.

5 DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: I
6 Sorry, I can. I can just add a few
7 things.

8 So yes, and I think last week,
9 Sheriff, you had a meeting with the
10 clergy at your office to introduce
11 themselves and go over all the concerns
12 with Sunday service and to get them ID
13 cards that were revoked so when they come
14 in they can easily come in and it's not a
15 whole ordeal. So that was a successful
16 meeting. That was a big step forward.

17 Also with education, we have groups
18 that come in that volunteer. We work
19 with LTI, we work with the school
20 district. We do have resources, but are
21 always willing to explore that further.
22 Absolutely.

23 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I think the work
24 program that's a women's group that comes
25 in.

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DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: Yes,
they're phenomenal.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I found that
there were less resources for women that
we're in there. I'd love to see if we
could bolster that a bit more.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: Yes.,
I'm drawing a blank on the woman's name
starts with -- I think her last name is
Ligouri.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Serena Ligouri.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: I know
she has a great program, so yeah,
definitely something we could explore.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Okay, very good.
And then I glossed over it when I talking
about the medical center, but it's a
health-related issue. So if folks need to
be vaccinated, whether they feel that
they're you know, for whatever reason --
are we able to get folks vaccinated?
Whether it be COVID vaccines, monkeypox,
whatever.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: Yes.

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LEGISLATOR BYNOE: They can do that
on-site or are they being transported?

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: I
believe they do it right there in the
clinic.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: All right,
thank you.

COVID numbers; how are they looking?
I think we're contained right now. We
segregate the housing unit? I believe we
just have one.

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: I believe
there is one or two at this time.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you very
much.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Any
other legislators?

(Whereupon, no verbal
response.)

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: If I
could, just some things that were asked,
I just want to touch on.

Someone asked a question about the
list, I think Legislator Ford. So right

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2 now we have, I believe, it's 2018 list
3 that we're going through. Right behind
4 it, we have a 2019 list, once we exhaust
5 this list, and then we have a third list
6 that can be established. So we're in good
7 shape with regard to the lists. So just
8 so you know.

9 And we, we have 28 applicants ready,
10 they're fully vetted and we have another
11 approximately 30 that are in phase two,
12 which means they get their psych and
13 their medical, and once that's cleared we
14 have them ready to go. So we're in a good
15 place for our next class.

16 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: That's
17 the next class expected to be done this
18 year?

19 DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: Yes,
20 hopefully November.

21 PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Very
22 good. How long does a list last? I mean
23 the 2018 list is probably a little stale
24 at this point.

25 DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: I

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believe four years.

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Four years
is the max with the extensions.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: And
someone asked about deputy sheriffs.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: Yes.
I did.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: We
just did promotions for deputy sheriffs
in the spring. The deputy sheriff's list
is expiring, I believe, in April and I
believe the next exam is in June. That's
all controlled by the State. That's why
we are putting in 10 to hire in advance,
because we will have a short period of
time without a list.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: So
which list will that be off, the expiring
list?

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: That's
a separate list, the list I talked about
before for corrections. Deputy sheriffs,
we don't have a backup list because the
test got bounced because of COVID.

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PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: So you
can hire them provisionally?

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: We're
going to hire 10 while we still have the
list. We have until April.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO: All
right, thank you.

DEPUTY COUNTY EXECUTIVE FOX: Of
course.

PRESIDING OFFICER NICOLELLO:
Appreciate all of you being here. Andy,
thanks for sticking around all day.

ACTING SHERIFF LAROCCA: Thank you
very much.

(Whereupon, hearing
concludes, 5:56 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : SS.:
COUNTY OF NASSAU)

I, KAREN LORENZO, a Notary Public for and
within the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the above is a correct transcription
of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand this 6th day of October, 2022.

Karen Lorenzo
KAREN LORENZO

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