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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

RICHARD NICOLELLO,
Presiding Officer

VETERAN AND SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

JOHN FERRETTI, Chairman

1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York

Monday, June 4, 2018
3:57 P.M.

1

2 A P P E A R A N C E S:

3

4 JOHN FERRETTI,
Chairman5 C. WILLIAM GAYLOR III
Vice Chairman

6

ROSEMARIE WALKER

7

STEVE RHOADS

8

9 DEBRA MULE,
Ranking

10 DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

11 ELLEN BIRNBAUM

12 MICHAEL PULITZER,
Clerk of the Legislature

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LIST OF SPEAKERS

ERROL WILLIAMS	6
LARRY SKLAR	12
RALPH ESPOSITO	21

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: At this time
3 I will call the Veteran and Senior Affairs
4 Committee to order. I'll ask the clerk to
5 call the roll.

6 CLERK PULITZER: Thank you,
7 Chairman. Veteran and Senior Affairs
8 Committee. Legislator Ellen Birnbaum?

9 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Here.

10 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Delia
11 DeRiggi-Whitton?

12 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
13 Here.

14 CLERK PULITZER: Ranking Member
15 Debra Mule?

16 LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

17 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator
18 Steven Rhoads?

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Present.

20 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator
21 Rosemarie Walker?

22 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

23 CLERK PULITZER: Vice Chairman C.
24 William Gaylor III?

25 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Present.

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 CLERK PULITZER: Chairman John
3 Ferretti?

4 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Here.

5 CLERK PULITZER: We have a
6 quorum, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Thank you,
8 Mr. Clerk. We have a quorum. We have two
9 items on the agenda today. They are Clerk
10 Items 215-18 and 254-18.

11 I would like to start with Clerk
12 Item 215-18 which is a resolution
13 authorizing the County Executive to execute
14 an intermunicipal agreement with the village
15 of Freeport in relation to the collection of
16 delinquent taxes, satisfaction and discharge
17 of tax liens and disposition of properties
18 acquired by the tax collection procedures of
19 Nassau County, administrative code and
20 village charter and code of ordinances.

21 May I have a motion?

22 LEGISLATOR WALKER: So moved.

23 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Second.

24 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Moved by
25 Legislator Walker, seconded by Legislator

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 Gaylor. The item is before us. Who from
3 the administration do we have to speak about
4 this item?

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Errol Williams,
6 Deputy County Attorney.

7 This is a resolution, an IMA
8 between the county and the Village of
9 Freeport concerning the sale of property
10 that the county acquired by tax deed.

11 The agreement is such that the
12 proceeds of the sale would be split 50
13 percent between the county and 50 percent
14 between the village of Freeport to satisfy
15 tax liens, put the property back on the tax
16 rolls, and Mr. Sklar here will build a home
17 for veterans on the property.

18 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Thank you,
19 Mr. Williams. We have some questions for
20 you, Mr. Williams, before we get to
21 Mr. Sklar.

22 At the outset let me say this
23 sounds like an outstanding transaction, it
24 will benefit the veteran community and
25 Nassau County as a whole. So I want to

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 preface my questions with that and say that
3 it definitely sounds like a great deal.

4 That being said, when I put the
5 section, block and lot into my Nassau County
6 property.com just to view the property and
7 see what the information is with regard to
8 it I get an error message that no properties
9 are found. Are you aware of that?

10 MR. WILLIAMS: I wasn't aware of
11 that and I'm not quite sure what it means.
12 The property is owned by the county.

13 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: I'm just
14 trying to find the information on the
15 section 55, block 324, lot 2.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm not sure when
17 you put the information into the land
18 records but we were just informed that it's
19 there.

20 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: The whole
21 website is down?

22 MR. WILLIAMS: The system is
23 down.

24 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Maybe that's
25 why because I just put it in.

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 Now, the sale price is \$56,250;
3 is that correct?

4 MR. WILLIAMS: That's correct.

5 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Do we have
6 anybody from the County Attorney's Office,
7 Mr. Walsh maybe, or maybe you know, do we do
8 an appraisal?

9 MR. WILLIAMS: An appraisal was
10 done. The original appraisal, the property
11 came in valued at \$76,000, but because we
12 decided to impose a condition on the
13 property that it would be restricted to our
14 veterans only that of course depressed the
15 price, so with that condition the value was
16 \$56,000.

17 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Now, this is
18 where my confusion comes in. Reading the
19 backups on this, the first \$25,000 would go
20 to the village; is that correct?

21 MR. WILLIAMS: No. The sales
22 price after associated costs would be split
23 between the village and the county. The
24 Village of Freeport has outstanding tax
25 liens of over \$100,000. In order to induce

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 them to agree to the sale \$130,000.

3 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: That's the
4 village is \$130,000?

5 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. Mr. Sklar
6 has agreed to kick in an extra \$25,000 off
7 his own funds of his corporation to the
8 village.

9 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: In addition
10 to the \$56,000?

11 MR. WILLIAMS: The \$56,000 sales
12 price will be split equally between the
13 county.

14 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: So where does
15 the \$25,000 come in?

16 MR. WILLIAMS: From the purchase
17 of the property.

18 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: So that's in
19 excess of the \$56,000?

20 MR. WILLIAMS: That's correct.

21 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: So
22 essentially it's really more like \$80,000
23 that they're putting into this purchase,
24 correct?

25 MR. WILLIAMS: Actually will be

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 putting in more than that because he's agree
3 to satisfy the lien buyers.

4 So on its face, in terms of a
5 business deal, it's not a great business
6 deal on his part, but he's putting the
7 property into the hands of a homeless
8 veteran and putting it back on the tax
9 rolls.

10 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Let me ask
11 you that. I read in the backup putting it
12 back on the tax roll, you're saying putting
13 it back on the tax roll, but as a 501C3,
14 wouldn't the organization be exempt?

15 MR. WILLIAMS: It will be sold to
16 a veteran. The 501C3 will develop the
17 property. It will be sold to a veteran.
18 They'll be a restriction in the deed so that
19 whoever purchases the home, if they sell it,
20 it has to be owned by a veteran.

21 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: So this is a
22 single family property?

23 MR. WILLIAMS: That's correct.

24 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Mr. Sklar,
25 after the organization purchases it, it's

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 going to be sold to a veteran?

3 MR. WILLIAMS: That's correct.

4 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Is there any,
5 in terms of the sale price that you can list
6 it for, is there any restrictions?

7 MR. WILLIAMS: The only
8 restriction is that it has to go to a
9 veteran and has to stay with a veteran.

10 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: \$130,000 was
11 the tax lien to the village, what was the
12 lien with the county?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: The county
14 acquired by tax deed and those liens were
15 extinguished.

16 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Understood.
17 Does anyone else have any questions?
18 Legislator Rhoads.

19 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman. Would the veteran be able to
21 purchase the home at some sort of discounted
22 price than market value? How does that work
23 exactly?

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Can you repeat the
25 question?

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: The question
3 was, at the end of this, after the home is
4 fixed up and is ready for sale, I understand
5 it has to go to a veteran, but is there some
6 sort of discount that the veteran is
7 receiving below market -- how does that
8 exactly work?

9 MR. SKLAR: Let's go backwards.
10 The last time we bought a piece from the
11 county, we built a house in Hicksville. The
12 name of our non-profit is, Homes for our
13 Homecoming Heros.com. You can go see the
14 most beautiful house that was built that was
15 appraised for \$600,000. And the veteran
16 bought it for \$210,000 with one percent down
17 and no closing costs.

18 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Exactly the
19 answer I was looking for.

20 MR. SKLAR: Not only are we a
21 501C3, we are a 100 percent voluntary
22 organization. We only pay those that we
23 have to and try never to pay anybody if we
24 can.

25 We build this house with all

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 volunteers. Carpenters union comes in and
3 they stand up the house. We have all kinds
4 of contractors that come in and work for
5 free or just for a roast beef sandwich and a
6 can of beer at the end of the day.

7 We don't build Habitat House. I
8 was the founding director of Habitat 20
9 years ago in Nassau County. Here we build a
10 real house, hardwood floors throughout the
11 house, all stainless steel appliances, we do
12 not give them a black top driveway, we give
13 them paved driveways, paved porch, a jungle
14 gym set for his kids if he has them. We
15 build without a garage but we give them a
16 10x10 storage shed. We finish the shed in
17 the same finish as the house, okay?

18 You got to understanding
19 something. We're not building for homeless
20 veterans. This is a step up program for
21 veterans. The veteran has to have a job.
22 He has to be able to handle the taxes and
23 the mortgage. We never had a foreclosed on
24 house yet. We always seem to get lucky with
25 a good veteran that maintains his property

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 and everything else.

3 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: You wind up
4 holding the note, holding the mortgage?

5 MR. SKLAR: We have a big
6 commitment. We're the laughing stock on the
7 street. I have a \$10 million commitment
8 from SUNY Mae for permanent financing. I
9 have nothing on the front end on the bill.
10 So we have plenty of money.

11 The corporation has a quarter of
12 a million dollars in cash on hand to build a
13 house and hopefully we will be able to put a
14 veteran -- even if the cost is a little
15 high, the land cost us about \$90,000, and we
16 still didn't dig a hole. We don't know if
17 we have a dirty hole there because there was
18 a house that burnt down or a good hole.

19 We build it on slab. We planned
20 here a 1500 foot ranch house, two full
21 bathrooms, everything the house needs.
22 Hopefully we will be able to build it in
23 less than four months.

24 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Sounds
25 amazing, Mr. Sklar. Thank you very much.

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 We are always looking for land. We also
3 can build multiple. There isn't anything we
4 can't build.

5 We are the only builders that
6 have no problems whatsoever. We have all
7 the money in the world to do this and all
8 the people to help us.

9 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you
10 very much.

11 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Legislator
12 Walker.

13 LEGISLATOR WALKER: I can just
14 say I watched the house in Hicksville be
15 built and it's a beautiful home in a
16 beautiful residential area and went to a
17 young veteran family, same conditions that
18 Larry just spoke about.

19 The house, actually, we dedicated
20 that house with a plaque on the house and
21 it's dedicated to our navy seal, Mike
22 Murphy.

23 So the program is amazing, the
24 home is amazing. If you have the
25 opportunity and you want to go by, I know

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 what it was like before they built the house
3 and what it's like now. Certainly this
4 young family has become a very big part of
5 our community and I can only say it's a
6 wonderful wonderful program.

7 MR. SKLAR: Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Legislator
9 Birnbaum.

10 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Thank you.
11 I want to commend you for what you're doing.
12 I think this sounds like a wonderful idea
13 for veterans. We heard time and time again
14 how we need homes for veterans.

15 Two questions; your organization,
16 the Homecoming Heroes, besides the house in
17 Hicksville, how many other homes have you
18 done for veterans?

19 MR. SKLAR: Two so far. It's
20 finding land. And I have to tell you, we
21 were here, you approved this first sale on
22 June 12th last year. It's been over two
23 years just to get this project started.

24 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Where are
25 the other ones, other two homes?

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 MR. SKLAR: The legislature
3 approved the sale of this at the original
4 price on June 12th last year.

5 One is in Hicksville and one is
6 out in Bay Shore.

7 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: So two
8 others. And what is the process for a
9 veteran to get this home because we know
10 there are so many in need of homes; how does
11 the selection get made?

12 MR. SKLAR: We do it through a
13 lottery, the only fair way to do it. We'll
14 advertise it through the community all over.

15 Originally our mission statement
16 was for anybody that served the last 15
17 years which would make him a war veteran,
18 whether he was in Iraq, Afghanistan or not,
19 we found out that there wasn't a big demand
20 and there was no federal funding because
21 they said pick such a small group.

22 So we changed our mission
23 statement and our papers with the IRS and
24 the state and we opened up to any honorably
25 discharged veteran, qualifies to go into the

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 pool. It's two different classes; one that
3 never bought a house gets a lower down
4 payment, and one that previously did own a
5 house would have to pay a little higher
6 rate.

7 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: For the
8 home in Bethpage, can you tell us how many
9 people were in this lottery?

10 MR. SKLAR: About eight. You
11 don't want to hear problem number two, go
12 find me some qualified veterans that qualify
13 for the mortgage. That's the biggest
14 problem. We had a captain making \$90,000 a
15 year living in Mitchell Field Housing paying
16 \$4,000 a month rent who had an application
17 with a 420 point FICA report. How do we
18 help that person?

19 So any veteran that comes in
20 close to 560, 570, we have them go back and
21 go check and get it cleaned up because it's
22 usually some late payments or missed
23 payment.

24 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Legislator

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 Mule.

3 LEGISLATOR MULE: Yes. I also
4 want to commend you on this project. As a
5 Freeport resident, former village of
6 Freeport trustee, I think this is going to
7 be a win for everybody involved; the village
8 and the county and whoever the lucky person
9 is to get the home.

10 So I want to add my
11 congratulations and best wishes for the
12 success of this project.

13 MR. SKLAR: Thank you. There's a
14 lot of property in your community, you know?

15 LEGISLATOR MULE: I know.

16 MR. SKLAR: Mayor is a tough guy.

17 LEGISLATOR MULE: I'll talk to
18 him.

19 MR. SKLAR: I want you to know, I
20 built my second Habitat House, the City of
21 Glen Cove had a problem, and it's the white
22 house that sits on the hill of Glen Cove Ave
23 old bug sign, we built that house, that was
24 for a habitat family. Thank you.

25 LEGISLATOR MULE: I will talk to

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 the mayor for you.

3 MR. SKLAR: Thank you. I only
4 had one other question. Howard, if you are
5 the right hand man to the officer, why are
6 you sitting on his left side? Have a good
7 day.

8 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Mr. Sklar?
9 Legislator Gaylor.

10 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Mr. Sklar, I
11 just wanted to say, as a veteran, on behalf
12 of all veterans, thank you for the service
13 that you do and please thank all your
14 volunteers who help build these houses. We
15 as the veterans truly appreciate it. God
16 bless you.

17 MR. SKLAR: Thank you. And I
18 welcome Mr. McKevitt, I can't say he's my
19 old friend because I'm the older guy, but he
20 was a close friend for many years.
21 Congratulations for being here.

22 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Thank, you
23 Mr. Sklar, and thank you for your service.
24 Do we have any further debate or discussion
25 among the legislators?

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 (No verbal response.)

3 Is there any public comment?

4 (No verbal response.)

5 All those in favor of passing
6 this item signify by saying aye.

7 (Aye.)

8 Those opposed?

9 (No verbal response.)

10 The item passes unanimously.

11 Clerk Item 254-18 is a resolution
12 to accept a gift offered by VFW post 325 in
13 Garden City to the Nassau County Veterans
14 Service Agency.

15 May I have a motion?

16 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So moved.

17 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Moved by
19 Legislator Rhoads, seconded by Legislator
20 Gaylor. The item is before us. Who from
21 the administration do we have to speak about
22 this item? Mr. Esposito.

23 MR. ESPOSITO: Yes. Thank you.

24 We were asked if we needed a vehicle for our
25 handicapped veterans to transport them and

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 we did.

3 The VFW 325 of Garden City and
4 West Hempstead offered us this vehicle free
5 of charge. I'm not coming for money, I'm
6 giving money, thank God. It's a beautiful
7 2017 brand new Dodge Caravan wheelchair
8 accessible. And that's what we were looking
9 for. We are in need of wheel chair
10 accessible vehicles to transport our
11 veterans to one of our four locations,
12 actually Northport, Valley Stream, East
13 Meadow, and Hicksville, that's the locations
14 we transport to.

15 We have presently over 300
16 veterans that need rides. We supply them
17 weekly and daily, I should say, to each one
18 of these veterans. That's about it. That's
19 all I have. It's a freebie.

20 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Great. Thank
21 you so much. I think we all owe the Garden
22 City VFW our thanks. It sounds like it's a
23 real blessing.

24 MR. ESPOSITO: Fifth one I got.

25 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: And those

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 vans they're certainly not cheap.

3 MR. ESPOSITO: 40 grand.

4 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Do we have
5 any debate or discussion among the
6 legislators? Legislator Gaylor.

7 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: First of all,
8 Mr. Esposito, thank you for all the efforts
9 you do on behalf of all of us veterans,
10 truly outstanding, I want to publically
11 recognize you for all your efforts you keep
12 doing each day, you and your staff are doing
13 a great job. Thank you very much.

14 MR. ESPOSITO: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Any other
16 comment?

17 (No verbal response.)

18 Is there any public comment?

19 (No verbal response.)

20 There being none, all those in
21 favor signify by saying aye.

22 (Aye.)

23 Those opposed?

24 (No verbal response.)

25 The item passes unanimously.

1 Veterans Sr. Affairs/6-4-18

2 There is no other business in front of this
3 committee. Motion to adjourn?

4 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So moved.

5 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN FERRETTI: Moved by
7 Legislator Rhoads, seconded by Legislator
8 Birnbaum. All those in favor?

9 (Aye.)

10 Those opposed?

11 (No verbal response.)

12 This committee is now adjourned.

13 (Whereupon, the Veterans and

14 Senior Affairs Committee adjourned at 4:17
15 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

THAT I attended at the time and place
above mentioned and took stenographic record
of the proceedings in the above-entitled
matter;

THAT the foregoing transcript is a true
and accurate transcript of the same and the
whole thereof, according to the best of my
ability and belief.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand this 18th day of June, 2018.

FRANK GRAY