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6 NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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8 RICHARD NICOLELLO

9 PRESIDING OFFICER

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11 INSPECTOR GENERAL COMMITTEE

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13 LEGISLATOR RICHARD NICOLELLO

14 CHAIR

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17 Theodore Roosevelt Building

18 1550 Franklin Avenue

19 Mineola, New York

20

21

22 December 3, 2018

23 2:44 P.M.

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2     A P P E A R A N C E S:

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4     LEGISLATOR RICHARD NICOLELLO

5                     Chair

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7     LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

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9     LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL

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11    LEGISLATOR KEVAN ABRAHAMS

12                     Ranking member

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14    LEGISLATOR ARNOLD DRUCKER

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1           Inspector General - 12-3-18

2                   LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:     Call the  
3   Inspector General Search Committee to order  
4   Call the roll.

5                   MR. PULITZER:     Thank you. Roll  
6   call for Inspector General Committee.  
7   Legislator Arnold Drucker.

8                   LEGISLATOR DRUCKER:     Here.

9                   MR. PULITZER:     Legislator Kevan  
10   Abrahams.

11                   LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS:     Here.

12                   MR. PULITZER:     Legislator Denise  
13   Ford.

14                   LEGISLATOR FORD:     Here.

15                   MR. PULITZER:     Legislator Howard  
16   Kopel.

17                   LEGISLATOR KOPEL:     Here.

18                   MR. PULITZER:     Legislator Richard  
19   Nicolello.

20                   LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:     Here.

21                   MR. PULITZER:     We have a quorum.

22                   LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:     I guess  
23   there is no chair. We will share the duties.  
24   A resolution as to procedure to appoint the  
25   Nassau County Inspector General. Moved by

1           Inspector General - 12-3-18

2   Minority Leader Abrahams. I will second that  
3   motion. Make a statement.

4                   This resolution regarding an  
5   appointment follows a robust nationwide search  
6   and selection process. Advertisements for  
7   this position were posted on the county  
8   website, Newsday, online and in print, the  
9   Wall Street Journal online and the New York  
10   Law Journal, in print and online, as well as  
11   the Association of Inspector Generals  
12   website.

13                   We received well over 30 resumes.  
14   We all read, evaluated each of those resumes  
15   and ultimately decided mutually on several  
16   candidates to be interviewed. I think every  
17   member of this committee was impressed not  
18   only with the candidates that expressed an  
19   interest in this position, but the truly  
20   impressive credentials each brought to the  
21   public. This was completely bipartisan  
22   process.

23                   At the conclusion of the interview  
24   process, we selected a candidate that we  
25   believe will be best fit to establish the

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2       support in office. Our selection, Ms. Jodi  
3       Franzese, is currently a senior inspector  
4       general with the New York City Department of  
5       Investigation. In this capacity Ms. Franzese  
6       manages inspector general's staff, conducts  
7       investigations and analyzes a wide variety of  
8       areas and works proactively to identify  
9       vulnerabilities in corruption hazards in New  
10      York City government.

11                It is our expectation that  
12      Ms. Franzese will serve as a watchful eye to  
13      assist up in proactively detecting weaknesses  
14      in our internal processes and to investigate  
15      and identify potential waste, fraud and abuse  
16      to the county.

17                Ms. Franzese will be here before us  
18      with the full legislature on December 17th.

19      It is our hope that at that time the full  
20      legislature will unanimously support what we  
21      think is an outstanding candidate for this  
22      importance office. Now I will turn it over to  
23      Minority Leader Abrahams.

24                LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS:     Thank you  
25      Presiding Officer. I wanted to agree with the

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2       Presiding Officer assessment in terms of the  
3       process. It was a very robust process. The  
4       committee interviewed numerous candidates. We  
5       looked over dozens of resumes and we came to  
6       the conclusion that Ms. Franzese is the best  
7       candidate. I think what's more prudent  
8       regarding this process is that Ms. Franzese  
9       will be an independent authority with the  
10      ability, with a sizeable staff to be able to  
11      investigate as well as research anything in  
12      regards to procurement practices in the  
13      county.

14                   We look forward to her start once,  
15      hopefully, she is approved by the full  
16      legislature. Then look forward to her start.  
17      I think the Presiding Officer identified parts  
18      of her resume that we were very impressed  
19      with. The fact that she was a senior  
20      inspector general already in the capacity of  
21      an inspector general working in New York City  
22      was tremendous. And I think from that  
23      standpoint I'm encouraging our side to  
24      strongly endorse her as well.

25                   LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:       Any other

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2       statements or discussion among the  
3       legislators? If not, all in favor signify by  
4       saying aye. Public comment?

5                   MS. MEREDAY:       Meta J. Mereday. I  
6       am very encouraged by this considering I was  
7       one of those voices that kind of spoke to this  
8       and that miraculous post election decision to  
9       kind of decide the county actually needed  
10      this. I am encouraged as I said. I am  
11      hopeful that the candidate will come to the  
12      table with all of the accomplishments that  
13      you've noted in the resume. But I'm hoping  
14      more so that she is going to be given the  
15      resources by this body to do the actual work  
16      as opposed to one person being charged with  
17      creating an environment that's going to clean  
18      up a situation that took awhile to put in  
19      place.

20                   My question as it pertains to the  
21      position itself is, what are the resources?  
22      Because that can already be decided. Or if  
23      it's already been decided, because it's been  
24      almost a year now, what are the resources that  
25      are going to be put in place so that she can

1           Inspector General - 12-3-18

2   hit the ground running and do what she needs  
3   to do?

4                   Lastly, what type of regulatory  
5   powers is she going to have? Is this just  
6   going to be kind of she makes some  
7   recommendation and statements and it just  
8   seems to be business as usual? Those are the  
9   issues that I know I am most concerned about  
10   and I'm sure as other residents, who  
11   unfortunately cannot be at these meetings to  
12   express their concerns, over the long haul  
13   with regard to the much needed position of an  
14   inspector general.

15                  So again, I'm hoping that you're  
16   not envisioning bringing in one person and  
17   she's going to tackle everything and get  
18   overloaded and not have the resources and  
19   things are going continuing to go downhill and  
20   increasing with zombie homes and the lack of  
21   inclusion and diversity that seems to run  
22   rampant here. As I continue to get reports  
23   about what's going on in our veteran and  
24   minority and women business space because that  
25   just doesn't seem to resonate here.



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2                   As I said, I am hopeful and stand  
3 ready to assist her or whoever is working in  
4 this regard as it pertains to procurement and  
5 inclusion, because this is 2018, and from what  
6 I'm hearing even from some of these contracts,  
7 there still doesn't seem to be much movement  
8 or change. That disappoints me greatly. I  
9 don't know how many other ways I can say it or  
10 put it out there other than reading these  
11 reports about the problems that we are already  
12 having at the Northport VA. I know it's a  
13 federal facility but veterans in Nassau County  
14 do utilize that facility and I think that we  
15 need to do a better job as it pertains to our  
16 underserved communities and constituency.  
17 Thank you.

18                   LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS:     Just so you  
19 know, a couple of things maybe for the record  
20 as well. The office will be staffed with a  
21 \$700,000 budget. Ms. Franzese will have the  
22 opportunity, assuming she is confirmed by the  
23 legislative body, the opportunity to hire the  
24 office as she see fits. We only specified for  
25 budget purposes a recommendation in terms of

1           Inspector General - 12-3-18  
2   investigators and counsel and so on and so  
3   forth. But she'll be able to determine the  
4   salary levels as well as who she wants to  
5   hire.

6                   And to answer your questions in  
7   terms of her power, she will have subpoena  
8   power. She will have the ability to subpoena  
9   documents if they are not forthcoming. You're  
10   welcome.

11                   LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:     The only  
12   thing I would echo is what Minority Leader  
13   just said in terms of detail. If you look at  
14   the statute in which we created this position  
15   last year, it gives tremendously broad power  
16   and discretion to this position. The  
17   inspector general can be involved and  
18   authorized to be involved in virtually every  
19   area of the operation of county government.  
20   Basically the administration. It's a  
21   tremendously powerful position. And that's  
22   it.

23                   Any other discussion or debate? We  
24   were in the middle of a vote. All in favor  
25   signify by saying aye. Those opposed?

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2       Carries unanimously.  Legislator Kopel makes a  
3       motion to adjourn.  Seconded by Legislator  
4       Ford.  All in favor of adjourning signify by  
5       saying aye.  Those opposed?  We are adjourned.

6                       (Meeting adjourned at 2:53 P.M.)

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CERTIFICATION

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

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have  
hereunto set my hand this sixth day of  
December 2018

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FRANK GRAY