NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE
RICHARD NICOLELLO
PRESIDING OFFICER
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD
CHAIR
Theodore Roosevelt Building
1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York
July 18, 2022
2:58 P.M.

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    A P P E A R A N C E S:
    LEGISLATOR ROSE MARIE WALKER
    LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS
        Vice Chair
    LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP
    LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI
    LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON
        Ranking member
        LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE
    LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE
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LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We will call
the Public Safety Committee to order. I will
be serving -- as Rose Walker will be
substituting for Chairwoman Denise Ford --
I'll be serving as chair and I will ask the clerk to please call the roll.

MR. PULITZER: Thank you.
Legislator Debra Mule.
LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.
MR. PULITZER: Thank you.
Legislator Siela Bynoe.
LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.
MR. PULITZER: Ranking member
Delia DeRiggi-Whitton.
LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
Here.

> MR. PULITZER: Legislator John

Ferretti.
LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.
MR. PULITZER: Legislator Mazi
Pilip.
LEGISLATOR PILIP: Here.
MR. PULITZER: Vice Chairman
Steven Rhoads.

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LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Present. MR. PULITZER: Chairwoman, substituting as you say, Rose Walker.

LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.
MR. PULITZER: Thank you. We have a quorum.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you Mr.
Clerk. We have three items on the agenda today. Items 200-22, 201-22 and 203-22. The first is clerk item 200-22 which is an ordinance supplemental to the annual appropriation ordinance in connection with the police department.

Can I have a motion? Motion by Legislator Ferretti. Seconded by Legislator Walker. That item is now before us. Do we have someone here from the administration?

MR. MURPHY: Deputy Inspector Tom Murphy from the police department.

We have two items. The first item is an appropriation of $\$ 50,000$ in funds to be received from the New York State Office of Homeland Security. This program is designed to provide the Nassau County Police Department

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Marine Bureau extra patrols to enhance border and waterway security in strategic locations, it's comprehensive enforcement of all applicable statutes. Further to enhance law enforcement presence. Is intended to disrupt and deter criminal activity. Utilize the goals to reduce the criminal activity traversing local waterways.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you for the presentation. Do we have any questions by legislators. Do we have any comments by the legislators. Do we have any public comment? We will call for a vote. All those in favor of item 200-22 please signify so by saying aye. Those opposed say nay. That item is agreed to and is passed on to Finance. Next we will call clerk item 201-22, which is an ordinance supplemental to the annual appropriation ordinance in connection with the office of the district attorney.

May I have a motion on that. I have a motion from Legislator Bynoe. Seconded by Legislator Pilip that item is now before

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us. Mr. McDermott.
MR. MCDERMOTT: This is
supplemental appropriation of $\$ 109,326$ for a grant that was awarded to the district attorney's office by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services as part of their gun involved violence elimination initiative.

In this the grant we focus on four elements. It's the people and the individuals that the police find most responsible for guns. The locations where most violent incidents are occurred. Coordinating crime fighting efforts and strategies among law enforcement and local violence prevention groups and involving key stakeholders and the community at large to build support for efforts to reduce gun violence.

If you have any questions.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Do the
legislators have any questions? Where there any comments? Any public comment?

MS. MEREDAY: Meta J. Mereday.
With regard to the four components I'm just

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interested in how this is going to be determined and who outlines the stakeholders in the actual areas where this would be taking place? Because in terms of where the actual guns come from and where they seem to populate it's almost like polar opposites. I'm just also concerned how these funds are going to be distributed and what input you'll actually have from the community.

MR. MCDERMOTT: Actually, this part of the grant, again, it's awarded a few times a year, this actually is going towards salaries in the district attorney's office to the bureaus that prosecute gun crimes. So that's this particular aspect.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So the overall program involves the communities as you described, however this particular portion of the grant --

MR. MCDERMOTT: This particular
portion goes to salaries.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: However, this
particular portion of the grant is going towards funding the salaries of those district

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attorney employees who work in connection with the program?

MR. MCDERMOTT: That is correct.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Okay. Ms.
Mereday does that satisfy your inquiry?
MS. MEREDAY: No. Because it outlines four specific components. I get it as far as how these grants work in terms of they bring in funding for different areas and different utilizations. But it's still a very vital program and it's important and essential in this period of time. And I think, again, this type of thing, this type of scenario and initiative really needs to be I would think more effectively vetted and provide for input from community residents who are impacted by gun violence and the unfortunate nature of more ammunition coming into their communities not by their direct action.

So, I understand as it pertains to this, but I still think that there still needs to be a little more information now that this has kind of been brought to the table even in this context so that community members,

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community leaders and key stakeholders can have their input or know who they can share their input with so that other aspects of the funding, when it becomes available, they're not told after the fact or it becomes a tragic situation and the community leaders and individuals who are impacted had no awareness or knowledge of this type of information, this type of resource or this type of outlet to be more preventative as opposed to reactive. But I'm done.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Ms. Mereday,
I appreciate your comments. And Mr. McDermott I'm assuming before this matter is considered by the full legislature we will have the opportunity to get the information regarding the overall program?

MR. MCDERMOTT: That can certainly be done legislator.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you
very much. I appreciate it.
Do we have any other public
comment? Are there any additional questions from legislators? I will call for a vote.

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All of those in favor of clerk item 201-22 please signify so by saying aye. Those opposed say nay. The item is agreed to and is passed on to Finance.

At this point $I$ am going to put the Public Safety Committee in recess because I understand that we are reconvening the full legislature. So I would ask the members of the legislature to please take their seats. We are not quite apparently ready for the full legislature, so we are going to reconvene.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
Minority is not ready.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We are not quite ready apparently to reconvene the full legislature. We still need a few more minutes. Which means that we will be able to move on with the public safety agenda. All of the members are still present and in their seats.

So, the next item for our consideration is clerk item 203 of '22, which is an ordinance supplemental to the annual

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appropriation ordinance in connection with the probation department.

Motion by Legislator Walker.
Seconded by Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton. That item is now before us. Who do we have to speak on behalf of the administration?

MR. LANSMAN: Good afternoon.
Doug Lansman, Nassau probation.
Good afternoon Vice Chairman
Rhoads, all legislators. The item before you, number 203-22, is a renewal mandatory grant for New York State DCJS. This is a request for a supplemental appropriation approval for a one-year DCJS grant alternatives to incarceration in the amount of $\$ 307,672$.

The main objective of the grant is to operate programs that divert offenders from costly local incarceration and to provide pretrial release when reporting to the courts. Release of an offender at arraignment provides the most substantial cost savings to the county as the first several days of confinement are typically the most expensive.

The priority function of pretrial

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service is to determine defendant eligibility for release and to provide any community ties with regard to residence and employment. The information provided to the courts is critical for the courts in determining whether to release the defendant.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I have a couple of questions on this. Just to sort of aid me in my own understanding of what this program actually is. My understanding is this is a state mandated program, correct? MR. LANSMAN: Correct. LEGISLATOR RHOADS: This is something that the county is doing because the state is requiring us to do it? MR. LANSMAN: Yes.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: My
understanding is the only individuals that are actually being held on bail at this point are violent felons, correct?

MR. LANSMAN: That's my understanding.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So, if the
idea of this program that the state is

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requiring us to run is releasing individuals who are low risk from incarceration pending their trial and the only ones that are being held in jail pending trial are those who are violent felons who are we releasing?

MR. LANSMAN: These, again, are going to be low risk individuals.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: But these are low risk violent felons?

MR. LANSMAN: You know what? I can't give you exactly the detail on it because I'm not as familiar with the program as the programatic people in our department. I can get back to you on that.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: It's kind of a big issue, right? Because if the state is indicating that the only people who are bail eligible -- that the only people who are held on bail are violent felons and the program is designed to release low risk violent felons back into our communities I've got a problem with that. Who would be best to actually have that answer?

MR. LANSMAN: That would be the

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director of probation.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I'm assuming the director of probation is not available at this time?

MR. LANSMAN: He's not here right now but we can -- I can certainly contact him to come over.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Because I'm not entirely comfortable -- I'm speaking for myself at this point -- I'm not entirely comfortable considering this item unless we get answers to those questions. I understand it's not the probation department's idea. It's something that's imposed on the probation department from the state. But I need some additional information before $I$ feel comfortable voting on this. I would entertain a motion to table -- go ahead.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you. Good afternoon. So, this item appropriates $\$ 307,672$ towards this program. What is the total course of the program?

MR. LANSMAN: The total cost of the program is somewhere upwards of around \$2

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million.
LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So the remainder is paid for out of county funds?

MR. LANSMAN: Correct.
LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So it's essentially another unfunded mandate, correct?

MR. LANSMAN: Correct.
LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I also
share in the concerns of Legislator Rhoads.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I would make
a motion to table. I assume I'm allowed to do that. Seconded by Legislator Ferretti. All those in favor of tabling this item please signify so by saying aye. Those opposed say nay. The item is tabled.

You seem to be having some reservation. Procedurally, no. We just took a vote. Are there abstentions?

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: On
the motion $I$ think I'm more inclined to abstain at this point with the caveat that, as you mentioned, we're mandated to do this. And it's a possibility I suppose that -- I

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understand your logic which is with the bail reform the whole idea that it's really only going to be violent criminals that are held. But there's always the possibility that there might be a few candidates that don't fit into that category that could be released under this program and this would save us a substantial amount of money for the county.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I don't know that that possibility really exists. One, by not approving this now it's not as though we're killing the program because the county is funding the program right now. This is supplementing funding that is already existing for the program through the county.

Two, the only people that are being held on bail are violent criminals. So, the idea that there would be a nonviolent felon held on bail is a nonexistent possibility unless there's been some sort of judicial error.

## LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Correct. Which could absolutely happen. But I also think if we take the $\$ 307,000$ from the

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state, I'm sorry, that would free up some of our money, which $I$ welcome at this point. And again, this is in place should they need the funding. For us to say no, we're not going to take the money from the state but we're still going to have the county money there, it might mitigate the amount of county money we have to use if we take the 307. Are you doing it based on principle or based on the fact that you don't want to take the $\$ 307,000$ from the state for something that the county is going to be responsible for? LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I'm doing it based on the fact that before we actually vote on a particular item we should understand the details of the program behind which -- to which that funding is going. I am for myself, again only speaking for me, $I$ am very uncomfortable with this particular program based on my limited understanding of the parameters and until I get a further explanation of the parameters I feel uncomfortable voting on it. Which was the basis for my motion and the basis for the

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second by Mr. Ferretti.
Did you have a comment Legislator Ferretti?

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: In terms of the dollars and cents of it, it sounds like -first of all, let me just say, this is a motion to table. It's not a motion where we're voting no on appropriating this money. But putting that aside, the dollars and cents of it it sounds like and what we're asking really is, will anyone qualify under this program to be released? Because if people are not being held anyway who's being released under this program?

Now, in terms of the dollars and cents of it, if the answer to that is nobody or close to nobody then what we really have is a $\$ 2$ million mandate by New York State thrust upon us and them giving us $\$ 307,000$. That's not a savings to this county. That's our residents paying for more heinous nonsense coming out of Albany. That's why we have these questions and until we get the answers to it, like I said, I support Legislator

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Rhoads's motion to at least table this and get these answers.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Can
I ask you a question? You would probably know better than us. Are we still using this program?

MR. LANSMAN: Yes.
LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Do you think we're going to use the $\$ 300,000$ ?

MR. LANSMAN: Yes. Certainly this money is offsetting and defraying the total cost of operating. It somewhat makes a dent in the program.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I
think we owe that to our taxpayers that if this is going to mitigate the amount of money that the county has to put in, which it should, even if we don't spend the whole $\$ 2$ million, we don't have to spend the whole $\$ 2$ million on this program, it's per case, correct? Might as well take the state money. Maybe that's all we'll have to spend.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I think
that these are questions that we have that

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need to be answered. We can talk dollars and cents but if even one criminal is let out of jail when they shouldn't be --

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: But that's not what we're voting on.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I don't know how you can put a price tag on that.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Hold on. That's not what we're voting on. What we're voting on is an appropriation of $\$ 307,000$. So we're going to take that money from the state. We do this with many programs. We're not the ones here saying who's going to be let out and who isn't. That's up to the judges and that's up to the DAs. What we're voting for is the financial end of it and I can't see why we would turn our backs on $\$ 307,000$ from the state.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: How are we turning our backs legislator? We're simply asking for additional information before we vote. Which is also something that we do on a regular basis. This program is not going to stop as a result of tabling this particular

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item. The program is going to continue. What we are also losing sight of is the fact that we're actually in the middle of a vote where we have four votes in favor, we have no one voting in opposition as of yet and the question ultimately is, do you want to oppose it, abstain or go with the majority?

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I understand what you're saying. But my point is you're saying that we're voting to release people. We're not. We're voting on whether or not we should accept an appropriation from the state. We asked -- I'm so sorry your name again?

MR. LANSMAN: Douglas Lansman.
LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
Thank you so much.
Whether or not this program is being used and whether or not these expenses are being, you know, utilized and he said yes. So, I think what you're concerned about is not really pertinent to this one.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I think that whether we're releasing violent felons into

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our community is pertinent to any discussion that we have on the floor of this legislature. LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I'm sorry, Legislator Rhoads. We're not voting on whether we're going to be able to release anyone who has been incarcerated. That's not what we do. That's not what this body does. I find it incredible that we would be turning up our nose at $\$ 307,000$ that would defray costs but we were willing to spend $\$ 667,000$ on a system that we knew had kinks in it. That we know have a problem in it. We wouldn't table that item. We wouldn't table that. But now we want to table an item that's going to defray costs. This just reeks of anything other than our responsibilities as legislators. It just doesn't make any sense to me. So, if you're moving forward with your table move forward with it. But let's be clear what you're really voting on in this moment. You're voting on defraying the costs associated with the incarceration of individuals in Nassau County. That's what we're voting on.

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LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Nope. What I
am voting on --
LEGISLATOR BYNOE: We're not voting on who gets incarcerated versus others. LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Hold on. We're voting on whether to table the item. LEGISLATOR BYNOE: No. The item -- no, that's what you're voting on. That's what your vote is. But the item that was originally before this legislative body was to accept grant funds from the state to defray costs.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: For a
program --
LEGISLATOR BYNOE: For a state mandated obligation on this county, that we'll later say is unfunded. I mean, so, I don't really understand where you're going with this but I understand why we're doing it. I understand exactly why we're doing it. If you want to vote on your table go ahead and vote on your table. But don't start mixing up the issue for anything then for what it is.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Legislator

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Bynoe, I'm not going to permit you to mischaracterize what my table vote is for.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: You're mischaracterizing what the item is.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I am
absolutely not.
LEGISLATOR BYNOE: The item
before us is simply to defray the cost to this county for the purpose of incarcerating individuals who have been arrested. That's what this item is for. That's it.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So if the only individuals that are being held on bail are violent criminals --

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: This gentleman just told you that there are still individuals who qualify for this program. There are still individuals who qualify for the program.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Who?
LEGISLATOR BYNOE: He just said it. Who are they sir?

MR. LANSMAN: These would be very substantive crimes that are committed in Nassau County. I can't give you specific

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crimes. I don't know all the details. LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And all I'm asking for before we vote on this I would like to know what those specifics are. I am fascinated by the fact --

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: But we voted on spending money in double the sum where we know there were problems. That were documented issues.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Because
you're dealing with sole source and the only ones that are able to produce -- we're not going to get into --

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I vote no on the table. I'm done. Let's move on.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: I am not going to get into an argument on an item in a different committee.

LEGISLATOR BYNOE: I vote no on the table.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I vote no.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Legislator Mule.

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LEGISLATOR MULE: I'm going to go with my colleagues and vote no.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: By a vote of
four to three the item is tabled.
There being no further business before the committee I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Motion by Legislator Ferretti. LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: Can

I ask this gentleman one question before he leaves. Is there an end date as to the date we can accept this funding?

MR. LANSMAN: The grant has been accepted. The grant is given by the state. Now it would be up to the legislature to approve the funding so it can get posted into the accounting system.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: So there is no time limit?

MR. LANSMAN: No. It's a one-year grant. It began July 1 of '22 going through June of next year.

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: The money is sitting there. So we just have to accept it and then we can use it to offset any

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county funds?
MR. LANSMAN: Yes. By the way, this grant has been in effect for at least 25 years.

## LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:

Yeah. I know. You know, I still do believe, as you said, we're relying on your word which is that it's needed. Let's try to get this -all I can ask the administration or anyone is to just have it brought up for a reconsideration as soon as possible. Possibly when the other chairwoman is there.

MR. LANSMAN: Are you able to do that today?

LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: It probably has to be the next time. But let's try to do it as soon as possible because I really hate to have this much money sitting there not being used when we could be using that instead of our own taxpayer' hard earned money. Thank you.

MR. LANSMAN: Thank you.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Legislator
Ferretti.

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LEGISLATOR FERRETTI:
Mr. Lansman, I appreciate you bringing up the fact that this program has been in place for an extended period of time. Has anything changed in the last couple of years that changes the eligibility for those who can participate in the program?

MR. LANSMAN: Recently was of course bail reform.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Okay. So, it's somewhat disingenuous to bring up the last 25 years when the world, the criminal laws in this state have been turned on their heads a couple of years ago. We have every right to ask these questions.

So let me ask you, sir, who is currently -- what crimes are currently eligible for this program? MR. LANSMAN: Again, I would have defer to the administration.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: So you don't know?

MR. LANSMAN: I don't know
details, no.

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LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Could it be none?

MR. LANSMAN: I'm not going to say. I don't know.

LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: That's why we're asking to table this because that's a pretty damn important question $I$ think and we don't have an answer. It's completely reasonable for us to get an answer before we vote on this.

LEGISLATOR RHOADS: The item has been tabled. We have a motion to adjourn by Legislator Ferretti which has been seconded by Legislator Walker. Please note for the record that Legislators Bynoe and DeRiggi-Whitton have left.

All those in favor of adjourning please signify so by saying aye. All those opposed say nay. We are adjourned by a vote of five nothing. Legislator Mule I'm assuming is here.

LEGISLATOR MULE: I am here.
That is a yes vote for adjourning.
LEGISLATOR RHOADS: We are

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CERTIFICATION

I, FRANK GRAY, a Notary Public in and for the State of New

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 27 th day of

FRANK GRAY

