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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

RICHARD NICOLELLO  
PRESIDING OFFICER

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

Monday, June 27, 2022  
1:13 P.M.

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2     A P P E A R A N C E S:

3

4     LEGISLATOR RICHARD J. NICOLELLO

5             Presiding Officer

6             9th Legislative District

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8     LEGISLATOR HOWARD KOPEL

9             Deputy Presiding Officer

10            7th Legislative District

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12    LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

13            Alternate Presiding Officer

14            4th Legislative District

15

16    LEGISLATOR KEVAN ABRAHAMS

17            Minority Leader

18            1st Legislative District

19

20    LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE

21            2nd Legislative District

22

23    LEGISLATOR CARRIE SOLAGES

24            3rd Legislative District

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3     LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

4             5th Legislative District

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6     LEGISLATOR C. WILLIAM GAYLOR III

7             6th Legislative District

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9     LEGISLATOR JOHN GIUFFRE

10            8th Legislative District

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12     LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP

13            10th Legislative District

14

15     LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

16            11th Legislative District

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18     LEGISLATOR JAMES KENNEDY

19            12th Legislative District

20

21     LEGISLATOR THOMAS MCKEVITT

22            13th Legislative District

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24     LEGISLATOR LAURA SCHAEFER

25            14th Legislative District

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3     LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI, JR.

4             15th Legislative District

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6     LEGISLATOR ANDREW DRUCKER

7             16th Legislative District

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9     LEGISLATOR ROSE WALKER

10            17th Legislative District

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12     LEGISLATOR JOSHUA LAFAZAN

13            18th Legislative District

14

15     LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS

16            19th Legislative District

17

18     MICHAEL PULITZER

19            Clerk of the Legislature

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2 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I'm going  
3 to call this meeting of the Nassau County  
4 Legislature to order and ask Legislator Bill  
5 Gaylor to lead us in the Pledge of  
6 Allegiance. Thank you Bill.

7 Mike could you call the role  
8 please?

9 MR. PULITZER: Thank you  
10 Presiding Officer. Roll call. Deputy  
11 Presiding Officer Howard Kopel.

12 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Here.

13 MR. PULITZER: Alternate Deputy  
14 Presiding Officer Denise Ford.

15 LEGISLATOR FORD: Here.

16 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Siela  
17 Bynoe.

18 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Here.

19 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Carrie  
20 Solages.

21 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

22 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Debra  
23 Mule.

24 LEGISLATOR MULE: Here.

25 MR. PULITZER: Legislator C.

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2 William Gaylor III.

3 LEGISLATOR GAYLOR: Present.

4 MR. PULITZER: Legislator John  
5 Giuffre.

6 LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: Here.

7 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Mazi  
8 Pilip.

9 LEGISLATOR PILIP: Here.

10 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Delia  
11 DeRiggi-Whitton.

12 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
13 Here.

14 MR. PULITZER: Legislator James  
15 Kennedy.

16 LEGISLATOR KENNEDY: Here.

17 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Thomas  
18 McKevitt.

19 LEGISLATOR MCKEVITT: Here.

20 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Laura  
21 Schaefer.

22 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Here.

23 MR. PULITZER: Legislator John  
24 Ferretti.

25 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Here.

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2 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Arnold  
3 Drucker.

4 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Here.

5 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Rose  
6 Marie Walker.

7 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

8 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Joshua  
9 Lafazan.

10 LEGISLATOR LAFAZAN: Here.

11 MR. PULITZER: Legislator Steven  
12 Rhoads. He is present. Thank you.

13 Minority Leader Kevan Abrahams.

14 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Here.

15 MR. PULITZER: Presiding Officer  
16 Richard Nicolello.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Here.

18 MR. PULITZER: We have a quorum  
19 sir.

20 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank  
21 you. We have, as we always start our  
22 meetings, we have our top cops presentation  
23 today as well as a couple of points of  
24 personal privilege. After that there will be  
25 a public comment period. And anyone who

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2 wishes to speak on any item they can do so  
3 during that period but we ask that you fill  
4 out a slip, which you can get from the clerk's  
5 table here and then we'll put you on the list  
6 to speak during the public comment portion and  
7 following that will be the business portion of  
8 the meeting.

9 To start things off we would like  
10 to recognize our top cops and first off is the  
11 Nassau County PBA. I'm not sure who's  
12 presenting. If Tom Shevlin's here? No.  
13 Kevin Mullin will be here, the first vice  
14 president of the PBA.

15 MR. MULLIN: Good afternoon  
16 everyone. President Shevlin apologizes he  
17 couldn't make it today. It's my privilege and  
18 honor to present the top cops and also the  
19 medics today for the month of May 2022.

20 On May 6, 2022 at approximately  
21 6:30 p.m. Fifth Precinct officers were  
22 dispatched to a call in Franklin Square for a  
23 male not breathing at a local restaurant.  
24 Police officer Milone was first on scene and  
25 observed the aided being placed on the ground



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2 by a few members of the Franklin Square Fire  
3 Department. He did not have a pulse and he  
4 was not breathing. CPR was activated by the  
5 fire department and officers Milone and Polzer  
6 attached his AED. After shock they got a  
7 pulse back.

8 Police medics Murphy and Katz  
9 arrived on scene and attached their monitor to  
10 the patient. The patient had shallow  
11 breathing and an irregular rhythm. After a  
12 second shock the patient had a stronger pulse  
13 and better breathing. The patient was placed  
14 in a police ambulance and was administered  
15 medicines through an IO which is an  
16 intraosseous infusion. That is when the  
17 police medic drills into the shinbone in order  
18 to get medicine into the body quicker. The  
19 officers then transported him to Winthrop  
20 Hospital for further treatment.

21 The patient, who is here today and  
22 his name is John Ballestria and his wife  
23 Barbara, spent almost two weeks in the  
24 hospital. He is expected to make a full  
25 recovery. He had a pacemaker defibrillator

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2 implanted.

3 If it was not for the quick  
4 response of these officers, their training and  
5 being calm under pressure in this situation it  
6 could have been a very different outcome.

7 Nassau County PBA is proud to  
8 announce police officers Sal Milone, Robert  
9 Polzer, police medics Ryan Murphy and Jason  
10 Katz as the top legislative cops for June  
11 2022.

12 By the way, John is a retired New  
13 York City police officer.

14 MR. BALLESTRIA: Good afternoon.  
15 Thank you for having me. I would not be here  
16 if it were not for the efforts of the  
17 gentlemen behind me and a nurse that could not  
18 be here. She's from New Jersey and as soon as  
19 I collapsed she immediately started CPR. Her  
20 name was Angelica DeFlipper. By the grace of  
21 God I'm here and the gentlemen behind me,  
22 police officers, all the EMTs, Dr. Fein from  
23 Winthrop Hospital and all the doctors and  
24 nurses that's the only reason I'm still  
25 standing here today and thank you and God

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2 bless them. Thank you very much.

3 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any of the  
4 medics or officers want to say anything?

5 MR. MULLIN: No thank you.

6 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
7 Giuffre would you like to say a few things?

8 LEGISLATOR GIUFFRE: You  
9 gentlemen are in the 8th Legislative District  
10 which I represent. You saved the life of one  
11 of our community members and a retired police  
12 officer. I just want to recognize you and  
13 thank you for what you've done. I've known  
14 officer Milone since he was a little boy  
15 because he grew up around the corner from my  
16 house. It's nice to see that you grew into a  
17 fine young man. And I knew your dad, God rest  
18 his soul. He was wonderful.

19 But for all of you, you are in the  
20 best traditions of Nassau County's finest. So  
21 we thank you for your quick response for  
22 applying your training and for saving a life.  
23 Thank you. God bless you.

24 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
25 Legislator Giuffre. In a few moments we'll

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2 have you come up and we'd like to take a  
3 photograph with you. In the mean time we will  
4 have the detectives as well.

5 For the presentation with respect  
6 to the detectives I would ask Jeff Gross, the  
7 president of the Detectives Association, Inc.

8 MR. GROSS: I'm a little taller  
9 than Kevin. Sorry Kevin.

10 I just want to thank the Presiding  
11 Officer, Rich Nicolello, Minority Leader Kevan  
12 Abrahams and the full legislative body for  
13 taking the time out to honor 8th Squad  
14 detectives Jonathan Delmore, Steven Lerner,  
15 Anthony Montesano and Michael Neglia.

16 This is a case that is kind of old  
17 fashion police work. It's the tenacity in  
18 this that we really honor.

19 On February 16th, a 52 year old  
20 woman in Levittown was robbed in her driveway  
21 at gunpoint. They had nothing to go on other  
22 than the description from the victim. It  
23 ended up developing probable cause to make  
24 this the arrest but it took three weeks to do  
25 it. And what they did was, they were able to

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2 recover the purse that was stolen and the cell  
3 phone. They canvassed the area where those  
4 items were recovered. One was in Queens and  
5 the other was in Nassau County. They were  
6 able to get videotapes of those places and use  
7 that to help their investigation.

8 This woman who was robbed worked at  
9 a used car dealer shop and she had \$40,000 in  
10 cash in her purse and they were able to  
11 investigate that and determine only a few  
12 people had known about that.

13 They watched the videotape from the  
14 car dealership and they were able to see a car  
15 that drove by and then they recognized the  
16 same car where the other items were  
17 recovered. They noticed a particular sticker  
18 on the car. Through 20 or more different  
19 video canvasses in areas they were able to  
20 develop a plate but the plate ended up coming  
21 back stolen. Through more police work and  
22 tenacity they were able to get a description  
23 of the vehicle. They notified NCIS on the  
24 license plate. The vehicle was wanted armed  
25 and dangerous, suspects possible and they put

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2 the description of the vehicle in there and  
3 they asked if anybody had seen that car to  
4 notify them. They put it out on a license  
5 plate reader. The car ended up coming up in  
6 Hempstead. They went to the area.

7 Nassau County police stopped the  
8 vehicle. The guy came out shooting. A gun  
9 battle ensued. Luckily nobody was hurt or  
10 injured. The suspect was arrested. They  
11 closed out other multiple cases of shootings  
12 and robberies with the suspect. And Nassau  
13 County is a safer place for them because of  
14 the work that these gentlemen did.

15 I know I'm just summing it up, but  
16 if you think about it, for three weeks they're  
17 working on this case while working on other  
18 cases that are coming in every day. It's  
19 basically a triage situation. The four of  
20 them worked on this when they had the time  
21 which was a lot of time and often times on  
22 their own times. Ran in to do a photo array  
23 to show the victim to make the identification.

24 And so my congratulations to these  
25 gentlemen for doing what I consider above and

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2 beyond. It was old fashion police work with  
3 technology and these guys worked above and  
4 beyond on county time and their own time to  
5 get a dangerous person off the street and I  
6 want to congratulate them for that.

7 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any of  
8 detectives want to say a few words?

9 MR. GROSS: Thank you.

10 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
11 legislator Ferretti.

12 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you  
13 Presiding Officer. Detectives, you know, I  
14 think any time you hear of a heinous crime  
15 committed like this in one of your individual  
16 districts you take particular notice. For  
17 this one it was actually even -- I took even  
18 more notice because it actually happened about  
19 25 feet away from my front door. That's where  
20 this crime happened.

21 So I was on the phone with  
22 Commissioner Ryder the night of and what  
23 really strikes me about all the work that all  
24 of you put into solving this crime was the  
25 video that you were able to look at and

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2 somehow figure out that this was the car that  
3 was used for this crime. Because one of the  
4 videos you saw was actually the Ring video  
5 from my sister's house right next door. I'm a  
6 car guy and I could not figure out what type  
7 of car that was.

8 It's really incredible and it's a  
9 testament to not just your work but our entire  
10 police department that we have the resources  
11 in place and this technology that has assisted  
12 you in solving this crime.

13 And the work you did was  
14 incredible. I want to thank you from the  
15 bottom of my heart, from our community's heart  
16 for what you do because as we can see from  
17 what happened with the PBA members, the police  
18 officers who stopped the car this was a very  
19 dangerous man who was willing to shoot people  
20 if he got caught. Who knows what other  
21 heinous crimes he would have committed had you  
22 not put in the time and effort that you did to  
23 solve this crime? Thank you all very much and  
24 God bless you.

25 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Come on up



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2 for a presentation.

3 We are kind of regretfully going to  
4 be losing one of our leaders at the end of  
5 this coming month and that would be our  
6 commissioner of health, Dr. Larry Eisenstein.  
7 Come on up Dr. Eisenstein.

8 Dr. Eisenstein has been the  
9 county's health commissioner since 2011.  
10 Under his leadership the department received  
11 public health accreditation in 2017. In 2018  
12 the county health department was the local  
13 health department of the year as identified by  
14 the National Association of County and City  
15 Health Officials. We have received 22 model  
16 promising innovative practice awards. And in  
17 2020 Nassau County Health Department was  
18 ranked first in New York State in both major  
19 categories by the University of Wisconsin  
20 health rankings.

21 Dr. Eisenstein was our health  
22 leader during the most extreme circumstances,  
23 the most difficult times, the biggest health  
24 emergency this county has probably ever seen.  
25 His outstanding leadership during the pandemic

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2 certainly was felt by all of us and by our  
3 residents as well. He was a leader on the  
4 team that responded to the pandemic, a liaison  
5 with all of the public health systems. Under  
6 his leadership and guidance we set up some of  
7 the first testing sites. Ran it the most  
8 efficient, effective way as possible in this  
9 entire state.

10 Under his leadership our county  
11 health department, our county created some of  
12 the first vaccine sites and has continued to  
13 do those throughout when the boosters came out  
14 and, again, did it some of the most effective  
15 efficient ways in the state of New York.

16 He assisted constituents in need  
17 any time we called upon him.

18 Personally, for us, for the 19 of  
19 us, during the height of the pandemic when all  
20 of us were starved for information we had  
21 weekly briefings which were given to us by  
22 Dr. Eisenstein. He gave us the information  
23 that we needed at this most severe, severe  
24 public health crisis in a calm, reasoned way.  
25 He enabled us to understand what the

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2 statistics and what the trends made. He gave  
3 us a realistic outlook. He provided firm  
4 leadership that avoided the extremes of the  
5 issue and some of the hysteria that was going  
6 on.

7 All of us used that information to  
8 communicate to our residents. Thousands upon  
9 thousands upon thousands of our residents were  
10 receiving this information indirectly from  
11 you, Dr. Eisenstein. Again, your leadership  
12 during the course of this pandemic has been  
13 extraordinary. All of us are grateful. All  
14 our residents who are aware are grateful.  
15 Certainly for me and I think for all of us  
16 it's been honor and privilege to serve with  
17 you. We thank you for all your service to the  
18 county.

19 DR. EISENSTEIN: Thank you.

20 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Before you  
21 go, Legislator Walker, Legislator Ford and  
22 anyone else who wants to join in.

23 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Thank you  
24 Presiding Officer. I've had the pleasure of  
25 serving as the health chair committee the

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2 entire time that Dr. Eisenstein has been here  
3 and as long as I have been on the  
4 legislature. I can honestly say no matter  
5 what I reached out for, no matter what  
6 question I had, no matter how many times I  
7 might have bothered him, and especially as  
8 presiding officer said, during those COVID  
9 times when residents would call or a school  
10 district would call and have a question and  
11 could reach out, even if he couldn't get back  
12 to us immediately he would always get back to  
13 us.

14 I cannot thank you for all that you  
15 have done for us in this entire time you have  
16 been here 12 plus years and wish you the very,  
17 very best in your new position.

18 And aside from that, on a personal  
19 note, for being such a dear friend and our  
20 friendship has grown over these 12 and a half  
21 years and I can tell you that I will miss your  
22 expert knowledge here but I will especially  
23 miss a friend I had here over these years.  
24 God bless you and our friendship will  
25 continue.

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2 DR. EISENSTEIN: Thank you.

3 LEGISLATOR FORD: You are going  
4 to be missed Dr. Eisenstein. I remember you  
5 like whatever emergencies or disasters  
6 impacted our county you were always there at  
7 the ready to be able to guide us through it.  
8 I know most recently of course through this  
9 pandemic. But I'll never forget that like  
10 rainy sort of day that we got together I guess  
11 it was the day after Sandy hit the south shore  
12 and especially the City of Long Beach and we  
13 were there, you were there to take a look at  
14 the situation. You visited the communities to  
15 see how impacted they were. The water  
16 levels. What kind of damage has been done.  
17 What possible health problems we were going to  
18 face. The fact that our sewage treatment  
19 plants weren't working. Water wasn't  
20 drinkable at that point.

21 So, and I'll never forget too -- on  
22 behalf of the many residents that lived at the  
23 Hina Komanoff Center I credit you with making  
24 sure that they got to a safe designation  
25 before that storm hit.

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2 And, you know, a lot of times  
3 everybody likes to be polite and like not step  
4 on anybody's toes but sometimes you got to be  
5 that person that. This is not common  
6 knowledge, I hope I'm not embarrassing you,  
7 but Dr. Eisenstein, we had somebody who was  
8 running a facility and they wanted to wait  
9 until the last possible minute to evacuate our  
10 seniors. Dr. Eisenstein was telling me that  
11 when he first had coordinated to get all those  
12 ambulances to go down on a Sunday to remove  
13 the patients and they were turned away and he  
14 wanted to throw his hands up and say it's not  
15 my problem. But he just thought of those  
16 people down in Louisiana that were left behind  
17 and felt that he needed to, even if he was  
18 going to make enemies, he'd rather do it with  
19 a clean conscious.

20 So he made a call to our state  
21 Department of Health chair Dr. Shari I believe  
22 it was, who then had agencies go down on that  
23 Monday morning right before the storm hit. We  
24 were able to take those people out of the  
25 nursing home and bring them to places to so

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2 that they remained safe. And of course the  
3 nursing home as well as the hospital did go  
4 under water because it's right on the bay.

5 So, you showed great initiative and  
6 I also think great courage because sometimes  
7 you don't know how people are going to react  
8 when you do push. I always thank you for  
9 being that person.

10 Because regardless of what issue I  
11 spoke with you about, whether or not we had  
12 our problems with our water, parents felt that  
13 their children were being -- it was tainted  
14 water affecting their health, you personally  
15 went down and met with the families, spoke  
16 with them. You made them feel comfortable.  
17 You gave them assurances. No matter what hit  
18 Long Beach you were always there. Whatever  
19 hit the county. I have to say you really are  
20 a great leader and with all the awards that  
21 you have received on the national level I just  
22 think you're a phenomenal individual and I  
23 wish you luck in where ever you go. But I  
24 want to tell you you're breaking my heart.

25 DR. EISENSTEIN: I'm not going

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2 far.

3 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
4 Ferretti and then Legislator Rhoads.

5 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Dr.  
6 Eisenstein, not to belabor the point but the  
7 job that you and your entire team did during  
8 the COVID pandemic was really second to none.  
9 I can't thank you enough for all that. But I  
10 don't think -- obviously we all know the job  
11 you did which was tops I would think in the  
12 country during COVID, but you've done so many  
13 other great things as your time as  
14 commissioner. Whether it be spending your  
15 Fourth of July talking to me about mice in a  
16 movie theater. Which, by the way, Monday is  
17 the Fourth of July.

18 But even as recently as the  
19 Legionnaire outbreak that happened in my  
20 district, me and Steve Rhoads' district, just  
21 a few months ago, I mean, coming off of or at  
22 least towards the tail end of the pandemic  
23 another outbreak and you handled it so  
24 efficiently and professionally and gave our  
25 residents that you had everything under



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2 control and you did. I'll be pretty short but  
3 just thank you for everything. Good luck in  
4 the future. God bless you.

5 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Larry, the  
6 work that you've done is simply incredible.  
7 You always hear the phrase that sometimes the  
8 man finds the moment, sometimes the moment  
9 finds the man. When the man happens to step  
10 up in occasion after occasion I don't know how  
11 to adequately describe that. You are and were  
12 an exceptional health commissioner, an  
13 exceptional person. I want to thank you for  
14 your consistency, for your leadership.  
15 Whether it was Legionnaires or whether it was  
16 COVID you were the person that when we were  
17 getting hysteria from everywhere else,  
18 everywhere you turned, every time you turned  
19 on the news, every time you listened to what  
20 was coming out of the federal government, the  
21 conflicting information that was coming out of  
22 the state government, as an infectious disease  
23 specialist yourself you were the perfect  
24 person to have in the moment where Nassau  
25 County residents needed you most.

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2 And as Denise said, it breaks my  
3 heart that we're not going to have you as that  
4 resource. But something tells me when I need  
5 to pick up the phone to call for advice on  
6 what to say on the next Coronavirus update,  
7 hopefully there are no more of those ever,  
8 when we have an issue going on with whether  
9 it's safe for schools to meet or the youth  
10 ministry program that I run, safe for us to  
11 conduct an activity you were always there for  
12 us. Always there with accurate, reasoned,  
13 rational information. And trust comes very  
14 easily. I trust you more than some of the  
15 information, almost all of the information  
16 that we get out of any other source.

17 I want to thank you for everything  
18 that you've done for Nassau County residents.  
19 It's a shame that today obviously we're  
20 drawing some attention to it but the work that  
21 you did during COVID, your work was equally as  
22 amazing throughout your term as commissioner.

23 It's a shame that the residents of  
24 Nassau County don't know that because if they  
25 did the accolades would be pouring in for

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2 everything that you've done for all of us over  
3 the course of your 11 years here working for  
4 the county.

5 So, Larry, I want to wish you the  
6 best of luck. I know you're not moving far  
7 and I know that we will still be in touch, but  
8 just an amazing job. Thank you so much for  
9 everything that you've done.

10 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Commissioner  
11 Eisenstein, I'd like to echo the sentiments of  
12 my colleagues. I won't belabor the point as  
13 well but I really thank you for being always  
14 accessible. Calling you at any hours of the  
15 day, the night, the morning and not only  
16 counseling me in how to better communicate to  
17 the residents of Legislative District 2 but  
18 also speaking directly to school personnel and  
19 the like to make sure that they got timely  
20 information and as accurate as one could be in  
21 an ever changing fluid situation.

22 I also want to thank you because we  
23 had very candid conversations about  
24 identifying disparities and being able to  
25 deliver testing and vaccines into our

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2 communities and for our underserved  
3 communities and also our elderly.

4 You and I spoke very early on when  
5 there was only that internet access and we got  
6 together and talked about setting up a phone  
7 line so that the elderly could call in or the  
8 visually impaired or whoever didn't have  
9 access to computers. Then we worked to make  
10 sure that there was some equity built in to  
11 access to the vaccines. For that I say thank  
12 you. Thank you for being culturally competent  
13 in that fashion and for delivering, and I wish  
14 you all the best in your future endeavors.  
15 Take good care.

16 DR. EISENSTEIN: Thank you and  
17 very kind words. Very humbling. I'm normally  
18 not a nervous public speaker but today it's a  
19 little weird. It's an exciting time.  
20 Obviously a very emotional time because people  
21 don't know that the work of the health  
22 commissioner and until you've done it -- I  
23 thought when I was new I would understand what  
24 it is but it truly is 24 hours a day 365  
25 days. My term is ending, my second term. The

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2 term for a commissioner of health is a  
3 six-year termed appointed by the state health  
4 department and I take the term seriously and I  
5 felt that at this point it was time for me to  
6 try new endeavors rather than commit to  
7 another six-year term. Very appreciative.

8 Legislator Nicoletto, nobody could  
9 have been more respectful as a presiding  
10 officer of me and the health department. Any  
11 time we needed anything you were responsive  
12 and receptive and I greatly appreciate the  
13 respect you have shown to me and my department  
14 and I'll talk about them in a minute because  
15 there's a lot of kinds words coming to me but  
16 it doesn't matter how good I am there's only  
17 so much we could achieve without the  
18 incredible department of health staff behind  
19 me. So I do want to talk about them briefly.

20 I can tell stories of work I've  
21 done with basically all of you over the  
22 years. And Sandy's, what I thought was going  
23 to be the landmark work of my life and none of  
24 us predicted COVID would come. As an  
25 infectious disease specialist we understand

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2 that respiratory pandemics can and likely will  
3 happen but I don't think any of us thought of  
4 the impact that we were going to see.

5 Legislator Walker, you've become  
6 like family. Since I have been the  
7 commissioner of health you've been the  
8 chairman of the health committee. So that  
9 naturally put us together on numerous issues.  
10 I've enjoyed our discussions and I have  
11 enjoyed all that we have been able to achieve  
12 and you've been a wonderful friend and I think  
13 of you as family so thank you.

14 I could literally tell a story  
15 probably about all of you but just a few  
16 moments stand out in my mind.

17 Legislator Ford, I was going to not  
18 bring up what happened with the hospital there  
19 but I was going to talk about e-coli and the  
20 water as a quick example. But when I look  
21 back if you were to ask me the single most  
22 important decision that I made -- I was not  
23 going to bring this up but since you did --  
24 was absolutely mandating that those facilities  
25 on the waterfront were evacuated. It's

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2 dangerous and very costly to evacuate  
3 facilities. After the year before we had  
4 Hurricane Irene which turned inland and didn't  
5 hit us after we evacuated, we stuck with the  
6 plan and mandated them to evacuated and many  
7 people would have died had we not made that  
8 decision. If you ask me, my single most  
9 important decision it wasn't with COVID at  
10 all, it was with Sandy a decade ago or  
11 whenever that was. Thank you for all of that.

12 And Legislator Bynoe, I was going  
13 to mention the work that we did and the  
14 partnership that you provided.

15 You know, the health department  
16 really is simple. We just want people to live  
17 and we want them to be healthy. That's it.  
18 There's no other motive. Live and be  
19 healthy. And the work that we did together in  
20 your community, bringing the residents of  
21 Westbury in for vaccinations absolutely saved  
22 lives and I thank you for that.

23 And Legislator Solages I was  
24 thinking back when there was -- we needed to  
25 do some education regarding the water supply

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2 of Elmont's and the myths that were going  
3 around about how the water was responsible for  
4 prostate cancer. We did great work educating  
5 the community with yourself and with  
6 Assemblywoman Solages as well. Please thank  
7 her for that as well.

8 Those are the moments I think back  
9 where when you're a practicing doctor and you  
10 somebody get better, they shake your hand and  
11 they give you a hug and you get that personal  
12 satisfaction. When you go into public health  
13 you don't get that. But you have to go to  
14 sleep knowing that what you've did improved  
15 lives and saved lives. And I am between COVID  
16 and all of these other moments so aware of  
17 what we've done to help people in Nassau  
18 County live longer and live healthier. I'm  
19 very proud of that.

20 And Legislator Ferretti we can tell  
21 the story about rats in the movie theater and  
22 I was going to bring that up. I have so many  
23 stories I could go through for everybody but  
24 I'm just very, very appreciative.

25 Legislator Rhoads, I still live in



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2 your district. So now I get to call you about  
3 the pot holes and whatever else I'm going to  
4 deal with. But I am here as a resource.

5 I do want to share that I've  
6 accepted a position at Catholic Health. I'm  
7 going to be the vice president of community  
8 and public health and impacting the public  
9 health disparity measures and making sure  
10 there that we continue, especially with the  
11 new Medicaid requirements for payment, it's  
12 going to be responsibility that was very  
13 exciting to me at a time when I wasn't ready  
14 to commit to another six-year term.

15 Most important for that, when  
16 you're the commissioner of health it's 365  
17 days a year. Even on vacation, my wife, who's  
18 watching from a little bungalow at a sleep  
19 away camp upstate, hello to my beautiful wife  
20 who has given me the strength to do this.  
21 It's not easy on them. It's not easy when we  
22 finally get date night to go out to dinner and  
23 calls come in. Every single day of the year  
24 and I loved it. It's addicting almost.

25 But I need to pay more attention to

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2 my wife and my kids. My older daughter is  
3 going off to college. It happens so fast you  
4 don't even realize it. So I want to thank  
5 them.

6 The staff of the health department  
7 that you have -- the commissioner doesn't win  
8 health department of the year. The health  
9 department and the community together. Our  
10 health department with our infrastructure of  
11 incredible hospitals, our partners at  
12 Northwell, Mount Sinai, NYU and of course  
13 Catholic they are second to none. It doesn't  
14 matter which hospital you end up in you're  
15 going to get really great care. That's  
16 something that makes it a little bit easier to  
17 be the health commissioner here. But I am  
18 just so grateful.

19 This was a job that it's once in a  
20 lifetime. There are more people on the  
21 Yankees and Mets pitching staffs right now  
22 then have ever been the Nassau County  
23 commissioner of health. So I don't for a  
24 second take it for granted. I loved every  
25 minute of it. It was a very hard decision.

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2 I am particularly grateful the  
3 County Executive Blakeman who discussed with  
4 me various ways that maybe I would stay and I  
5 appreciate that opportunity. I appreciate all  
6 of the county executives I worked for. County  
7 Executive was with me throughout COVID. And  
8 County Executive Mangano gave me this  
9 opportunity after County Executive Suozzi had  
10 hired me as deputy commissioner. That's two  
11 Republicans and two Democrats. I'm so proud  
12 that I have been able to work with everybody  
13 on both sides.

14 Because public health really  
15 doesn't care about politics. Public health is  
16 about helping people live longer and  
17 healthier, period. That's it.

18 So to all of you it's been an honor  
19 and a pleasure. You all had Mary Ellen here  
20 representing me. She retired. Now you have  
21 Ann DiSimone who has lead our emergency  
22 preparedness bureau and our communicable  
23 disease director now took over that in the  
24 middle of COVID. Think about that.

25 And Dr. Buchman, who is our

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2 schools' liaison. Our head epidemiologist and  
3 as good as there is. And of course one of my  
4 personal most important people in my life  
5 who's become a very, very close lifelong  
6 friend and my attorney and every good  
7 commissioner needs an attorney Jerry's here.

8 The staff at the health department  
9 is incredible. You mentioned 22 model and  
10 promising practice awards, national awards,  
11 that's more I believe, if not it's pretty  
12 close, more than the other 58 counties of New  
13 York combined. And that includes New York  
14 City. I don't know. Albany won a couple and  
15 Tompkins. You know, the Cornell people  
16 they've won a couple lately. So it might not  
17 be more than all of them combined. But until  
18 a year or two ago it was more than all of them  
19 combined.

20 I'm not the one writing all of  
21 these. I'm pushing it and motivating  
22 everybody. But you have an incredible health  
23 department. The only thing I would ask is,  
24 I'll be at Catholic Health hopefully impacting  
25 public health from there and providing

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2 whatever support to any of you and the new  
3 health commissioner, whoever that will be.  
4 And of course I'll stay out of their hair  
5 because I won't be there anymore.

6 But once COVID passes people tend  
7 to forget about public health and you  
8 shouldn't because it's about the water that we  
9 drink and the food that we eat and the air  
10 that we breathe and the diseases that are in  
11 our community. So I always say it's a time  
12 when people recognize and acknowledge public  
13 health. But my one plea, when COVID's long a  
14 memory, please support as much as you can the  
15 public health department because they save  
16 lives. And we've seen it from start to  
17 finish. I'm so grateful for this  
18 opportunity. Again, I'll never take it for  
19 granted.

20 Thank you to all of you. Thank you  
21 to the county executives who've given me their  
22 trust and faith. Thank you to the best health  
23 department in the United States of America.  
24 And we have the medals on the wall to support  
25 that. To our health care infrastructure which

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2 is the best. I am here until the end of July  
3 and hope to get to speak with anybody and then  
4 I'm very excited about the next opportunity.  
5 Thank you.

6 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: We have  
7 one more point of personal privilege. That  
8 would be Legislator John Ferretti.

9 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you  
10 Presiding Officer and Dr. Tonie McDonald I'll  
11 like to take a moment to recognize you.

12 It's an honor and privilege to  
13 recognize Levittown superintendent of schools  
14 Dr. Tonie McDonald here today. Dr. McDonald  
15 is a true Levittown success story. Where she  
16 entered the Levittown school district as a  
17 sixth grader and graduated Levittown Memorial  
18 High School in 1977.

19 After graduating Adelphi University  
20 with a BA in social sciences in '92 and an MA  
21 in secondary education in '95 she obtained a  
22 teaching position at Division Avenue High  
23 School. Where, incidentally, she was lucky  
24 enough to have me as a student. Or maybe  
25 unfortunate enough to have me as a student.

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2 While teaching, she continued to  
3 pursue her education at Hofstra University  
4 earning a certificate of advanced study and  
5 policy and administration studies in 2000 and  
6 a doctorate in education and foundation  
7 leadership and policy studies in 2013.

8 2003 Dr. McDonald was promoted to  
9 social studies chair. In '05 to director of  
10 people services. In '08 to assistant business  
11 manager and in '09 to assistant superintendent  
12 for business and finance.

13 In 2010 Dr. McDonald left Levittown  
14 school district and entered the Plainview  
15 school system. The Levittown school district  
16 was not the same until 2014 when Dr. McDonald  
17 came back as our superintendent of schools.

18 Since taking over as superintendent  
19 she has continued to ensure the district's  
20 mantra of success for every student that was  
21 not just a tag line but a reality.

22 Most recently she's lead our  
23 district through the pandemic having great  
24 success limiting the spread of COVID-19 within  
25 the schools. Not just as a legislator who

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2 works closely with the district, but as a  
3 father with children in the district I knew my  
4 children were safe going to school every  
5 single day during the pandemic and that's a  
6 true testament to your leadership Dr.  
7 McDonald.

8 Recently Dr. McDonald was named  
9 president of the Nassau County Counsel of  
10 School Superintendents, which has made our  
11 entire community so proud.

12 But perhaps more important than all  
13 the accolades and awards Dr. McDonald has  
14 received, and there's been plenty of them,  
15 like the New York State Senate Liberty Award,  
16 the New York State Assembly Woman of  
17 Distinction Award, the Nassau County  
18 Trailblazer Award and so many others, is that  
19 Dr. McDonald is incredibly involved in our  
20 community. She's at every sports game in our  
21 schools, every award night, every moving  
22 ceremony and graduation. She's a member of  
23 the Levittown community organization and is a  
24 true Levittown icon.

25 On July 5th Dr. McDonald will be



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2 retiring after 27 years in the education  
3 system. While the Levittown community of  
4 course wishes you the best in your retirement  
5 you will be sorely missed. You made such a  
6 tremendous impact on generations of students,  
7 teachers, parents and faculty.

8 Just a few weeks ago I was watching  
9 TV with my son, which was almost certainly  
10 either a Met game or Star Trek, two things  
11 that we share in common a love for,  
12 Dr. McDonald, and he said, Dad, I saw on Abby  
13 Action News, which is like a movie skit the  
14 kids put together in fourth and fifth grade,  
15 that Dr. McDonald was retiring. He said she's  
16 so nice. I'm going to miss her. I said me  
17 too Johnny. He said yeah, well, she's the  
18 only person at more stuff in Levittown than  
19 you. I said you're right.

20 But I hope that doesn't change Dr.  
21 McDonald. We still need you at everything.

22 In closing, I want to thank you for  
23 everything that you've done for former  
24 students like me, current students, parents,  
25 teachers, faculty and the community as a

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2 whole. But Pat, her husband is here today,  
3 don't get used to having her around because  
4 she's going to be, just like I said, she's  
5 going to be just as much out in the community  
6 as always.

7 Again, congratulations on your  
8 retirement. I wish you the best and God  
9 bless. Thank you.

10 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Would you  
11 like to say a few words Dr. McDonald?

12 DR. MCDONALD: Thank you so much  
13 for having me. I'm humbled to be here with  
14 the top cops of Nassau and Dr. Eisenstein who  
15 was wonderful. I'm just very lucky to be in a  
16 school district in the greatest county in the  
17 world. Thank you very much for your hard  
18 work. Thank you.

19 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: We will  
20 move on to the public portion of our meeting.  
21 Before I do I know that Faren Siminoff has  
22 submitted a slip. She's the president of the  
23 Nassau County Community College Faculty  
24 Association and full-time faculty. But I  
25 believe you want to speak on the item itself.

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2 So, I will hold off on calling you up until we  
3 call the item in a little while.

4 So we will go to our speakers.  
5 First of which is a familiar speaker who's  
6 been with us for many, many years as the  
7 liaison from the PBA who will be retiring  
8 soon. Officer, Mr. Todd Torchia. Come on  
9 up.

10 Todd, it's been a pleasure to have  
11 you here. It's been a great working  
12 relationship and we appreciate all the hours  
13 that you've put in listening to our meetings.  
14 Probably should have gotten combat pay for  
15 that. But thank you for your service to us  
16 and to residents of Nassau County.

17 MR. TORCHIA: Todd Torchia. I  
18 just wanted to say a few words. I'm really  
19 not a public speaker per se but I just want to  
20 tell you how much I appreciate and how much I  
21 understand how much work that this whole board  
22 does for the citizens of Nassau County.

23 I started on John Ferretti's post  
24 36 years ago in Levittown. I've been an  
25 officer with the PBA for 32 years. And I have

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2 been on PAC for all those 32 years, political  
3 action committee. The people behind me know  
4 what that is.

5 In 1995 I heard of this new branch  
6 that was coming to Nassau County. It was the  
7 legislature. I worked on -- I might have even  
8 worked on Richard's campaign back then. I've  
9 been working those campaigns, you know,  
10 walking the streets and spreading your words.  
11 But I never really fully understood or  
12 appreciated how much time, how much effort and  
13 how much compassion you have for everybody in  
14 this county. Especially during COVID where  
15 both sides got together and did something that  
16 I was taught 36 years ago by Gary Dellaraba  
17 and also the cops that I worked with, just do  
18 the right thing. For your whole career just  
19 do the right thing and I believe I have. I  
20 believe the Nassau County Police Department  
21 does that.

22 You guys have the best police  
23 department in the country. Maybe even in the  
24 world. Which you are familiar with now doing  
25 the top cops and you can see all the great

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2 things they do. Just stay with doing the work  
3 you do and continue supporting the police.

4 That's all I ask. Thank you and good luck.

5 And good luck to Dr. Eisenstein. Thank you.

6 LEGISLATOR FORD: Todd, you are  
7 going to be missed. I don't know what we're  
8 going to do without the pastries you bring.  
9 The sugar rush. Helps us get through these  
10 meetings.

11 But in all honesty, as a police  
12 officer we thank you very much for your  
13 service to our community because it is a tough  
14 job and it's a dangerous job. And for you,  
15 always having you here at our meetings, always  
16 advocating for the officers for the police  
17 department and for the communities. Because I  
18 know that even with the backpack giveaway, I  
19 don't think I would have known about and how  
20 important it was until you brought it to my  
21 attention to say hey, how about we send some  
22 guys out? Pick a neighborhood. And so it's  
23 nice that we're able to go out with your  
24 fellow police officers and provide school  
25 supplies and backpacks to students who are in

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2 great need. And it's always been a great  
3 event and it's something that underscores how  
4 involved our police are with our children and  
5 with their communities without having to be in  
6 uniform or anything like that. Just more on a  
7 human, personal level.

8 But you've always been one of those  
9 people that we know we can go over and speak  
10 with you, ask you questions, make sure we  
11 don't make a fool of ourselves in front of the  
12 police department. You've always been honest  
13 with us and I do appreciate this. I think  
14 that even your fellow officers and your  
15 members of the PBA are going to miss you  
16 greatly as well because you're one of those  
17 standout people. And I have to say wish you  
18 good luck in your retirement and don't be a  
19 stranger. Thank you.

20 MR. TORCHIA: Thank you for the  
21 kind words. Take care everybody.

22 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Brent Hill  
23 regarding the Five Towns Community Center.

24 MR. HILL: Brent Hill Executive  
25 director at Five Towns Community Center. Good

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2 afternoon.

3 Thank you for giving me the  
4 opportunity for being here. As I said, I'm  
5 the executive director of the Five Towns  
6 Community Center. I'm very humbled and proud  
7 to be the executive director of an  
8 organization that's been around this July 115  
9 years. We've been in our exact location where  
10 we are now for 115 years. For those of you  
11 that are doing the math that means we were  
12 founded in 1907 for those of you who are kind  
13 of calculating in your head there.

14 During those 115 years we've  
15 provided services for thousands and thousands  
16 of people. During Hurricane Sandy we were  
17 actually a refuge for folks who lost their own  
18 homes. In today's era, we actually never shut  
19 our doors during the pandemic. We were open  
20 100 percent for our food pantry.

21 We also partnered with the county  
22 and we partnered with several hospitals for  
23 vaccine distributions, mask distributions  
24 booster shots and testing as well. So we're a  
25 vital part of the community.

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2 The reason we're here today is  
3 because we started in 1907 as I said, but in  
4 the 1970s we entered into a partnership with  
5 the county. So the building we're in is a  
6 county building. We were given a 50 year  
7 lease. In the 1970s we entered into a  
8 partnership with the county. We have a  
9 50-year lease which is up in July of 2024.

10 The reason we're here today is to  
11 ask you for your support in bringing our lease  
12 renewal and renegotiating of our release up to  
13 this body. And I brought with me a number of  
14 individuals who are going to speak on behalf  
15 of the agency. Let me look at my notes.

16 Our budget is two and a half  
17 million dollars annually. We serve about  
18 seven to 10,000 people annually. We have 100  
19 employees. I think that's all I'm going to  
20 say for now. I'm going to ask a few people to  
21 speak because time is limited.

22 MS. DIMATOS: My name is Gina  
23 Marie Dimatos. I am the Five Towns Head Start  
24 program director.

25 Did you know that a single mother



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2 earning \$50,000 a year with two children under  
3 the age of five would pay more than 60 percent  
4 of her income for childcare. Here in Nassau  
5 County the average cost of a center-based care  
6 is \$15,000 annually for an infant. \$13,000  
7 annually for a toddler and \$12,000 for  
8 preschoolers.

9 While many Long Island families'  
10 budgets are already stretched thin, the cost  
11 of childcare is expected to increase by an  
12 average of \$468 per year. And in ten years  
13 the average cost of childcare will consume  
14 more than 16 percent of a median family's  
15 income. That's a 33 percent cost increase  
16 over the next ten-year period.

17 Only ten percent of four-year olds  
18 on Long Island have access to publicly funded  
19 prekindergarten programs compared to universal  
20 access in New York City where 100 percent of  
21 four-year olds can attend public pre-K.

22 So, what can policymakers do to  
23 ensure that affordable childcare is possible,  
24 because all children deserve a quality setting  
25 with an educated workforce regardless of their

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2 zip code.

3 Children in Head Start get  
4 nutritious meals, heat screenings. Families  
5 get support in accessing the health services  
6 they need at Head Start programs. We help  
7 parents and families achieve their own goals  
8 including employment, housing and adult  
9 education. Readiness for school and beyond is  
10 fostered through individual learning  
11 experiences, the relationships with adults,  
12 playing and spontaneous instruction children  
13 grow in many aspects of their development.  
14 Social skills, emotional well being, language,  
15 literacy, mathematics and science concepts.

16 At the Five Towns Head Start we  
17 serve 76 children and families from 8 a.m. to  
18 3 p.m. for income eligible families. Thank  
19 you for your time.

20 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon  
21 distinguished legislators. I am Portia  
22 Robinson. I am the program director for Five  
23 Towns counseling services. Formally known as  
24 CODA. CODA counseling services started in  
25 1969 in a response to the lack of drug

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2 treatment services for heroin users in  
3 Lawrence and Inwood and the surrounding Five  
4 Towns community. It is a privilege to be with  
5 you today to share with you the mission.

6 Our mission is to provide these  
7 services with professional staff to make them  
8 abreast of the latest treatment modalities to  
9 meet the needs of those seeking assistance for  
10 themselves or someone that they know where  
11 substance use or addiction disorders had  
12 interfered with employment, health, education,  
13 family and self image and relationships. Life  
14 in general.

15 Five Towns counseling services',  
16 formally known as CODA, vision is to be the  
17 preferred provider. Where we focus on  
18 solution focus substance use disorder  
19 servicing the Lawrence, Inwood and surrounding  
20 Five Towns community. Our philosophy at Five  
21 Towns community counseling services is to  
22 provide this continuum of care for alcohol and  
23 substance use addicted persons.

24 We also specialize in gambling  
25 counseling. Our clinical treatment team takes

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2 great pride in themselves offering these  
3 integrated services that are holistic and also  
4 trauma informed. We treat addiction as a  
5 primary chronic disease. It does affect the  
6 brain reward system, motivation memory and all  
7 of its functions. This shows up in our  
8 patients and those seeking services  
9 biologically, psychologically, socially and  
10 yes, even their spirituality. Without  
11 treatment or engagement in recovery  
12 activities, addiction is progressive.

13 I stand here before you today  
14 asking for your support to continue these  
15 vital services in the Five Towns and Lawrence  
16 community. Currently we are reaching out not  
17 only to the chemically addicted but also to  
18 the reentry population. This is a health care  
19 disparity and I was grateful to hear that as  
20 an attention here in this chambers.

21 Currently we are working to address  
22 some of the health care disparities for the  
23 reentry population that is in the Lawrence and  
24 Five Towns community. New York State Criminal  
25 Justice Service reports in Lawrence, New York

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2 and Nassau women and men have the highest rate  
3 of incarceration and recidivism due to  
4 contributing factors of extreme poverty, lack  
5 of supportive resources, health care and  
6 addiction and accessible mental health  
7 services. Five Towns Community Center  
8 provides this. We provide services on a fee  
9 scale for those who do not have insurance as  
10 well as for those who have insurance. We  
11 accept multiple insurances.

12 New York State Division of Criminal  
13 Justice Service connects both male and female  
14 incarceration and recidivism rates to at least  
15 be connected to DWI and drug arrests. This is  
16 important data and this is the reason why we  
17 have now started our reentry program to also  
18 serve this population. Why you say? What  
19 kind of impact will this have? This will have  
20 a substantial impact because stabilizing the  
21 reentry population will address the poverty,  
22 the housing and the mental health needs as  
23 well as the addiction and wellness needs for  
24 individuals, families and communities to all  
25 become stronger.

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2 I would like to leave you with  
3 this. Five Towns Community Center is a strong  
4 hope for families and a pathfinder for  
5 children. Please support our future of the  
6 citizens depending on these much needed  
7 services. Thank you for your time.

8 MS. YOUNG: Good morning. My  
9 name is Sasha Young and I work at the Five  
10 Towns Community Center. I'm the summer camp  
11 director, the afterschool director, the food  
12 pantry director among other things.

13 I'm here today because it's  
14 important to note that our community is one of  
15 the most economically challenged on Long  
16 Island. While a lot of people are very  
17 affluent and there's a lot of money in other  
18 towns surrounding us, in Inwood, in our school  
19 district, more than 70 percent of the children  
20 are living below poverty level.

21 Right now, during the COVID crisis,  
22 we have a food pantry that is serving over  
23 5,000 families on the south shore of Long  
24 Island from Elmont to Point Lookout.

25 While there are other pantries

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2 available maybe in the surrounding areas more  
3 local to them, our community center is able to  
4 provide services in multilingual and services  
5 that are not provided in other food pantry  
6 locations.

7 It was funny that Dr. Eisenstein  
8 was here today because our community center  
9 actually partnered with him under Laura  
10 Curran's administration and we were a location  
11 for not only testing but vaccine distribution  
12 through drive-throughs and in our building. I  
13 just want to piggyback that.

14 Also, Hurricane Sandy, myself  
15 included, we lost everything. Our house was  
16 under ten feet of water. If it hadn't been  
17 for the services that were available through  
18 the community center I'm not sure how we would  
19 have survived.

20 In the last two years our youth  
21 advocacy group met with Police Commissioner  
22 Ryder. They reestablished the PAL in our  
23 location after 30 years. We have so many  
24 parents involved with the children now. We  
25 have hundreds of children registered.

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2 We also have an afterschool program  
3 in which we service not only our community but  
4 the Hewlett, Franklin and Ogdon schools.

5 Right now it seems that we have  
6 entered into a food desert. All of our local  
7 grocery stores have closed and the nearest one  
8 is a mile away where families have to walk to  
9 actually get to there. So our food pantry is  
10 actually saving lives daily. Our youngest  
11 volunteer is four. Our oldest volunteer that  
12 volunteers weekly is 95. So we are bringing  
13 families together. Across generationally.

14 We have a community garden in which  
15 we also grow food to sustain in our  
16 community. We have partnerships with Trader  
17 Joe's, Costco, Target, Gourmet Glatt, Rock and  
18 Wrap It Up. We also work with Rock and Wrap  
19 It Up to hold the veterans farmers market. I  
20 know many of you know Sid Mandelbaum and the  
21 awesome work that he does. We work with him  
22 twice a week. All the food that he brings  
23 from his location ends up in Gammy's Pantry.

24 Quickly, as far as safety in  
25 keeping our neighborhood safe, we have over



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2 400 teens registered in our afterschool sports  
3 programs. Idle hands get themselves into  
4 trouble. It's not luck that we have been able  
5 to keep our neighborhood safe. It's all of  
6 the work that we are putting in through our  
7 youth advocacy group which meets with the  
8 Fourth Precinct monthly talking about issues  
9 that we have.

10 Lastly, I just wanted to say,  
11 piggybacking again on Dr. Eisenstein, I've  
12 also be the recipient of the Nassau County  
13 Trailblazer Award and Assemblywoman Miller's,  
14 Woman of Distinction. But that is all due to  
15 the hard work that we do at Five Towns  
16 Community Center. There are thousands of  
17 families that will not have services if we  
18 can't get a lease. There is no other location  
19 for safety for our children and family except  
20 for our building.

21 I'm very grateful and thankful for  
22 you listening to us and I really look forward  
23 to seeing a new lease soon. I noticed it was  
24 important to work politically with both sides,  
25 it's a political time, but the challenges in

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2 our community have not changed due to the  
3 changing politics. Thank you very much.

4 DR. POWER: Thank you very much  
5 for giving me this time. My name is Dr.  
6 Robert Power. I work with Portia Robinson,  
7 who is the substance abuse program director.  
8 I am the clinical doctor. But I am a product  
9 of Five Towns Community Center. I was born  
10 and raised in the area. The community center  
11 not only supported me but my family and it  
12 helped us to overcome some of the social  
13 determinants of health that the community  
14 has.

15 No child can decide in what  
16 community they're born in. However, we can  
17 put the resources in place to support them to  
18 overcome some of the barriers from income,  
19 health assessments and things of that nature.

20 With the help and support of Portia  
21 Robinson, our program director, we developed a  
22 program for people who are outside of our  
23 clinic's scope where we can support these  
24 people who may just need a little help. Who  
25 may need to be connected to services. Who may

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2 need more than just counseling but just learn  
3 how to ask the right questions with the right  
4 people.

5 Part of that at Five Towns is we  
6 have a supportive system there from the food  
7 pantry to health equity to supporting  
8 individuals who are undocumented and all these  
9 things together help make my community, which  
10 is Five Towns, a much better and healthier  
11 place. And not having that support system  
12 would take away a lot of benefits that's  
13 keeping and supporting the neighborhood and  
14 may even affect the neighborhood in a more  
15 negative impacted way.

16 So we ask that this legislature  
17 please consider, move quickly to make sure and  
18 instill that these services are also  
19 maintained and provided. Thank you.

20 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: We also  
21 have a slip from Timothy Benston.

22 MR. BENSTON: Good afternoon. My  
23 name is Timothy Benston. I also am an  
24 employee at the Five Towns Community Center.  
25 I am director of the health and prevention

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2 services which is that arm of the organization  
3 that provides HIV prevention counseling and  
4 testing services to the people in the  
5 community of Five Towns.

6 I don't have to really go into  
7 detail too much about the types of folks we  
8 see because my colleagues have already  
9 explained that. However, I do want to talk  
10 about the sort of heightened public health  
11 emergencies that we had to face in the last  
12 two years dealing with providing services for  
13 those who are both infected and affected by  
14 HIV but also dealing with COVID.

15 As you know, COVID really exposed  
16 sort of once again how our society is  
17 stratified in terms of health care and health  
18 access and health inequities.

19 I will say that Five Towns is one  
20 of the more fortunate organizations that have  
21 received funding from the multiple services  
22 agency contract from the New York State  
23 Department of Health for 30 years. That's a  
24 record. What we want to do is make sure we  
25 continue to receive that funding that provides

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2 sort of overall care to those families that  
3 come in to receive prevention and care  
4 services. We link people to primary care. We  
5 link them to testing. But also we also  
6 deliver broad community messages about HIV  
7 prevention, care and treatment.

8 What I want to say is that it's  
9 really vital we have a lease, that we stay in  
10 this location because A, the funding depends  
11 on it but also the people in the community  
12 know who we are, know that we're there and  
13 come there to receive these services. So, it  
14 is really important that we get this lease  
15 signed and I thank you for your time.

16 MR. HILL: I would just like to  
17 thank members of the youth services coalition  
18 for being here. Many executive directors from  
19 other organizations are here to support our  
20 efforts and we appreciate that.

21 The reason that this is so crucial  
22 to us, some of you may have heard that the  
23 lease is up in July 2024 and oh, they have  
24 time, we do not have time because in addition  
25 to the community needing it, we have several

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2 federal, state and of course county contracts,  
3 multiyear contracts, we need to get some of  
4 those contracts renewed in a timely fashion.  
5 And of course we need a space to continue our  
6 great work. Thank you so much for your time.

7 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
8 Solages.

9 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you  
10 Presiding Officer. I would like to thank  
11 everyone who came here today to speak on  
12 behalf of the community center and everyone.  
13 The building is important and the lease is  
14 very important but the people who make the  
15 building a house of service, a house where  
16 people can get help, a refuge for the  
17 community, you truly are the spirit of that  
18 building. We want to thank you so much for  
19 the very difficult work that you do at the  
20 community center.

21 I want you to understand that I  
22 have expressed this concern with my colleagues  
23 that this is very important. I have written  
24 several letters to the county executive and  
25 also the former county executive who indicated

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2 an interest in extending the lease. I'm  
3 hoping that the current county executive can  
4 fullfil that commitment as well.

5 We have a letter that I shared with  
6 my colleagues dated April 26th stating many of  
7 the important things you stated. Stating many  
8 of the important services provided from that  
9 center. I say to myself if we don't have that  
10 center where else will these many services be  
11 provided for the community at large? It  
12 extends beyond the Inwood community and into  
13 the Five Towns.

14 I want to thank you so much.  
15 Anyone is welcome to go there. You will see  
16 that there are people all across the spectrum  
17 there. The financial spectrum, the economic  
18 spectrum, the social spectrum and cultural  
19 spectrum who use that center.

20 I share this letter with my  
21 colleagues and I will continue to advocate to  
22 the county executive to push this. Although  
23 2024 may seem far away it is not because as  
24 many people from the youth board have come  
25 here before, they are operating on budgets in

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2 which they have to make decisions today to  
3 determine services that will occur two to  
4 three years out. So thank you very much.

5 There is also a capital budget line  
6 for various work that I will have my staff to  
7 speak with you after. I know that there are  
8 some important construction needs and building  
9 needs there. But again, thank you. This  
10 center is more than public safety and public  
11 health and the general safety of the community  
12 and we thank you for being here.

13 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
14 Ferretti.

15 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Thank you  
16 Presiding Officer. I want to thank you all  
17 for your testimony here today as well. I do  
18 just have a few short follow-up questions  
19 maybe for the director if you don't mind.  
20 Just some background information. I  
21 understand this lease is not up before us now  
22 but I do just have a couple of questions.  
23 Since you're here maybe you can provide just  
24 some information. The size of the budget?

25 MR. HILL: Two and a half million



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2 annually.

3 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: And how  
4 employees are there?

5 MR. HILL: Just under 100.

6 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: What  
7 portion of the two and a half million is  
8 dedicated to employees?

9 MR. HILL: Where's my  
10 comptroller? She's not here today but that's  
11 a good question. I'm not sure. I will get  
12 back to you on that.

13 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: I'd be very  
14 interested to know that.

15 MR. HILL: I will reach out to  
16 your office today.

17 LEGISLATOR FERRETTI: Perfect.  
18 Thank you. That's all.

19 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: It was great  
20 to hear from all of you. I have been involved  
21 to one extent or another in discussions with  
22 the community center and its leaders for many,  
23 many years now. Probably going back as far as  
24 2011, 2012. Including the late Pete Sobel who  
25 did magnificent work in the community. I am

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2 very interested in having discussions. As I  
3 mentioned to you before the meeting. I have a  
4 meeting coincidentally, maybe fortuitously,  
5 I'm meeting with Gwen Campbell tomorrow  
6 evening. I got an appointment to see her and  
7 discuss some of these issues.

8 The issues being the governance. I  
9 would like to understand and I would like to  
10 see representation by a more representative  
11 part of the Five Towns community. I'd like to  
12 see the financial arrangements, as  
13 Mr. Ferretti just pointed out, as well. The  
14 sustainability. The center is rather  
15 decrepit. It needs to be rehabilitated. It  
16 is vastly underutilized. A good part of it is  
17 empty. These are all issues that need to be  
18 taken care of and at that point, once we  
19 understand each other and develop a real plan,  
20 it would make sense to move forward.

21 So, I will look forward to working  
22 with Ms. Campbell and all of you as a matter  
23 of fact and let's see if we can get something  
24 done. Thank you.

25 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank

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2 you. Next speaker is Levada Felder.

3 MS. FELDER: Hi county Executive  
4 Blakeman, legislators, citizens in the  
5 community. I'm here to talk a little bit  
6 about homelessness. For the past 14 years  
7 Eager to Serve, of which I am the executive  
8 director, has been providing emergency  
9 services to the homeless. In particular the  
10 services include basic needs, food, clothing  
11 and shelter and including essential services.  
12 This has been made possible through an  
13 agreement with Nassau County Department of  
14 Social Services and the Office of Community  
15 Development.

16 During the past 14 years there was  
17 inconsistency in the homeless shelter  
18 invoicing payment process. It did not improve  
19 over time. ETS introduced the concerns in  
20 meetings face-to-face with Nassau County  
21 Department of Social Services, administrators,  
22 Nassau County legislators. Later meetings  
23 were held with shelter providers for  
24 approximately two years. Participating in the  
25 meeting were shelter providers, legislators,

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2 representatives from the state and from DSS.

3 Later the meetings ceased and the problems

4 still occurred.

5 According to the mission of Nassau  
6 County Department of Social Services, it  
7 states that it is DSS is committed to  
8 strengthening and preserving families by  
9 providing financial assistance, services to  
10 residents of Nassau County in accordance with  
11 state and federal laws.

12 Between April 26th and 27th a  
13 representative from Nassau County Department  
14 of Social Services stated that DSS is closing  
15 down the shelter that ETS operates. My  
16 response to the closing of the shelter I said  
17 to myself you're not the building department  
18 and the place, Sunshine residence, is not  
19 inhabitable or is not out of compliance. I  
20 further said to myself it's not your own  
21 business and you cannot do whatever you want  
22 with a government entity and the taxpayers'  
23 money.

24 According to statistics in 2019  
25 homeless shelter directory Helping the Needy

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2 of America, 3,843 persons in Nassau County in  
3 2019 were homeless. Does this behavior by  
4 representatives of Nassau County Department of  
5 Social Services maintain or create  
6 homelessness, prevent or perpetuate  
7 homelessness? Will ETS once again get  
8 assistance from the local government to assist  
9 the homeless. Any questions?

10 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Hey Levada,  
11 how are you? I thought that was you when I  
12 saw you out there but I wasn't too sure. You  
13 haven't aged a bit. You look good from the  
14 last time I saw you. The correspondence that  
15 you are reading from is that something that  
16 you can share with all of us?

17 MS. FELDER: I gave a copy to the  
18 body there and she said she'll make copies and  
19 email because I didn't know I should bring  
20 more than one.

21 LEGISLATOR ABRAHAMS: Mike, did  
22 you pass it around? It wasn't this one  
23 right?

24 I think I got a copy from  
25 Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton. Obviously I

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2 think, probably more than anyone else up here,  
3 can attest to the services that you provide  
4 and serving that population, homeless  
5 population, is extremely important. And while  
6 you were talking I was reaching out to Robin  
7 Wheat, which I'm sure you know Robin in my  
8 office, to find out if she was aware of some  
9 of these issues. She wrote back to me that  
10 she was not.

11 We are all trying to help you. I  
12 think we have to unpack it a little bit which  
13 may require us to caught up to speed. But  
14 let's try to set up a time where you can sit  
15 down in my office and we can try to figure  
16 this part out.

17 If I'm understanding what you were  
18 saying, obviously its dealing with the  
19 Department of Social Services in Nassau  
20 County, not the health and human services of  
21 the state. So, we want to be able to try to  
22 help you in this.

23 So, you have our office number,  
24 correct? And then I'm going to ask Robin --  
25 can you stay for like five or ten minutes?

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2 I'm going to ask Robin to come down as well.  
3 Definitely we will be there to help you  
4 throughout this. .

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
6 Levada. We appreciate you coming down today.  
7 Meta Mereday.

8 MS. MEREDAY: I should put in my  
9 quote for equal time but the afternoon is  
10 drawing near. I'll try to stick to the three  
11 minutes plus. A couple of issues. I was a  
12 little concerned that I had to see in the news  
13 that Juneteenth is not among Nassau County's  
14 list of paid holidays. I'll leave that at  
15 that with my concern about that.

16 I participate in a number of  
17 community meetings. I'm very familiar with  
18 the Five Towns Community Center back when it  
19 was CODA. Familiar with it because of working  
20 directly with the agency as an intern with the  
21 Nassau County Department of Alcohol Addiction  
22 and then community outreach specialist for  
23 that agency. I am hopeful that whatever  
24 concerns with regard to the state of the  
25 property etcetera can be addressed and that

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2 the pleas of the community that were so  
3 eloquently presented by the representatives  
4 today will be heard.

5 Considering I'm reading in Newsday  
6 that the county executive is pondering what to  
7 do with over \$200 million of taxpayer funding  
8 I think that would be a more than an adequate  
9 resource and facility for that to be  
10 utilized.

11 As most of you know, my major  
12 concern, my major issue here is about our  
13 veterans. And I was encouraged to here that a  
14 bipartisan group in the US senate passed an  
15 historic bill regarding for the burn pits for  
16 veterans. I had brought this issue to this  
17 body with my ongoing concern about the lack of  
18 utilization of the Nassau University Medical  
19 Center, which is our paid hospital, and the  
20 resources that could be incorporated into that  
21 facility to address this issue because this is  
22 going to be major.

23 3.5 million veterans have been  
24 potentially exposed to those dangerous burn  
25 pits. Particularly in Vietnam but also in the



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2 war in Iraq and Afghanistan. That's an  
3 opportunity for us because the funding is  
4 going to come through and we all know that our  
5 VA is struggling on a number of issues. But  
6 we have the facility which is a public  
7 hospital that can be utilized for that.

8 I have posed to this body before  
9 that if we elevated our very hard and  
10 dedicated veteran services office to an agency  
11 we would already be open to state and federal  
12 funding that could incorporate a number of  
13 things.

14 So, again, I'm posting that because  
15 I can't seem to get any response from  
16 Newsday. I guess I need to do the angry black  
17 woman, throw a brick in a window, maybe that  
18 would get attention from them.

19 But lastly, I wanted to address  
20 just a comment or quote that I read years  
21 ago. May 1962. The most disrespected person  
22 in America is the black woman. The most  
23 unprotected person in America is the black  
24 woman. The most neglected person in America  
25 is the black woman. That was Malcolm X in

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2 1962. We're now in 2022.

3 Our black women represent now a  
4 third of all the women in our military.  
5 Unfortunately right now I'm in the midst of  
6 working with a number of groups across the  
7 country to address the pandemic or epidemic of  
8 suicides in, within our military and our  
9 veteran community. It's very disheartening  
10 because there isn't that much research  
11 regarding the issues that are impacting women  
12 of color as well as men of color in our  
13 military and they're becoming the increasing  
14 recruiting base for the military.

15 Again, this is an opportunity for  
16 Nassau County to lead. We are America's first  
17 suburb. Many people have spoken earlier about  
18 this being the best county. I think it's a  
19 good county. I've been here -- there's three  
20 generations of my family that have been here.  
21 Many of the buildings that we stand upon,  
22 roads that we drive upon my family members  
23 have helped to pave the way literally and  
24 figuratively. But there's still work that  
25 needs to be done.

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2 I think if we start with our  
3 military and our veteran community and  
4 actively and progressively and proactively  
5 address those issues and generate the funding  
6 we can address many of the issues that were  
7 brought up today. Homelessness, lack of  
8 support services for substance abuse. The  
9 lack of contracting. I myself was the one  
10 that was the inspiration for the legislation  
11 for the service disabled veteran procurement  
12 act in this county. Going on almost ten years  
13 now. There's dust on that bill.

14 I'm wrapping it up.

15 I'm just hoping that again if it's  
16 not this body that somebody will step up and  
17 really perpetuate what we need to get done in  
18 this county so that we can be a role model for  
19 others. Because there are health challenges  
20 and health crises. Let's start today.

21 Last thing I need to say. I was  
22 very saddened to hear on a community Zoom  
23 meeting that we have young people who are  
24 demonstrating very disturbing performances  
25 with our athletic activities. For example,

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2 there is a group, and I will not give the high  
3 school but I'm sure at some point there's a  
4 social media posting about that.

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Meta --

6 MR. MEREDAY: I just need one  
7 more minute.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: No, no.  
9 You're way over three minutes.

10 MS. MEREDAY: I know but there  
11 have been others that have been up here and  
12 you had personal -- I just need -- all I need  
13 is 30 seconds. The debate will take longer  
14 than what I need to say.

15 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: We have a  
16 director of a facility here to speak and I  
17 gave him little extra time. So if you can't  
18 wrap it up I'll ask the next speaker up.

19 MS. MEREDAY: I will. I'm going  
20 to wrap it up. As I said, there are postings  
21 on social media where we have our young people  
22 holding up bananas for certain people from  
23 certain communities who are coming to their  
24 high school events. And we're talking about  
25 schools and school districts and the images

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2 that we're putting across we need to address  
3 that collectively. And I will take my seat.  
4 Thank you.

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Sal Lupo.

6 MR. LUPPO: Good afternoon. I'm a  
7 little nervous. I haven't done this before.  
8 Please forgive me. I have a copy for the  
9 committee. I'll also send a copy via email.  
10 I wasn't sure if I have to go to each  
11 individual person or there's one spot where I  
12 send it and it gets forwarded to everybody  
13 else.

14 I'm with Audit New York. We're a  
15 volunteer organization. We're here really  
16 about voting integrity. The last election in  
17 2020 there are a lot of improprieties and a  
18 lot of violations of the provision of New York  
19 State election law. This copy of this has  
20 already been forwarded to the attorney general  
21 Letitia James and New York State Board of  
22 Elections.

23 When you get it, if you look about  
24 the third page it goes through the Nassau  
25 County facts and a lot of the violations

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2 there. All we're asking is that you take a  
3 look at and if you agree want some sort of  
4 investigation and just really from this point  
5 going forward to be a little bit more aware of  
6 people's rights and really focus on the  
7 integrity of the elections. That's really all  
8 I have. I appreciate your time. Thank you  
9 very much.

10 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
11 Mr. Lupo.

12 So, going to the business portion  
13 of the meeting, we have a consent calendar  
14 which features items that went through  
15 committees a couple of weeks ago. The  
16 majority and minority agree that no further  
17 debate or discussion is necessary with respect  
18 to these items. After that we're going to  
19 consider the several appointments and then  
20 we'll have the Nassau County Community College  
21 hearing and vote on the budget.

22 So, as to the consent calendar  
23 we'll start with item 6, Ordinance 37. Item  
24 7, Ordinance 38. Item 8, Ordinance 39. Item  
25 nine, Ordinance 40. Item ten, Ordinance 41.

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2 Item 11, Ordinance 42. Item 12, Ordinance --  
3 I'm sorry. Resolution 97. Item 12,  
4 Resolution 97. Item 14, Resolution 99. 15,  
5 Resolution 100. 16, Resolution 101. 17,  
6 Resolution 102. 18, Resolution 103. 19,  
7 Resolution 104. 20, Resolution 105. 21,  
8 Resolution 106. 22, Resolution 107. 23,  
9 Resolution 108. 24, Resolution 109. 25,  
10 Resolution 110. 26, Resolution 111. 27,  
11 Resolution 112. We drop down to 34,  
12 Resolution 119. 34, Resolution 119. 35,  
13 Resolution 120. 36, Resolution 121. 37,  
14 Resolution 122. 38, Resolution 123. 39,  
15 Resolution 124.

16 Motion by Deputy Presiding Officer  
17 Kopel. Seconded by Minority Leader Abrahams.  
18 Any debate or discussion among the  
19 legislators? Hearing none, all in favor  
20 signify by saying aye. Those opposed? Those  
21 items carry unanimously.

22 Now we go to the appointments. We  
23 have 29, Resolution 114 which is a resolution  
24 to confirm the county executive's  
25 reappointment of the Honorable Carnell T.

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2 Foskey to the Civil Service Commission.

3 Moved by Legislator Walker.

4 Seconded by Legislator Rhoads. Judge Foskey.

5 MR. FOSKEY: Good afternoon.

6 Thank you. Just quickly by way of background,  
7 I have been a member of the commission since  
8 2017. Prior to that time I was a Nassau  
9 County attorney for four years and prior to  
10 that time I was a Nassau County park  
11 commissioner for four years and held various  
12 other positions including deputy county clerk  
13 and a member of the judiciary for 17 years.  
14 Thank you for the opportunity to tell you a  
15 little bit about my background.

16 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
17 Judge Foskey. Any questions or discussion?  
18 Thank you very much. All in favor of the  
19 appointment of Judge Foskey signify by saying  
20 aye. Those opposed? His appointment carries  
21 unanimously. Congratulations and thank you  
22 for your continued service.

23 The next two appointments are to  
24 the Nassau County Industrial Development  
25 Agency. They are Item 30, Resolution 115, is



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2 a resolution to confirm the county executive's  
3 appointment of Vincent LaGreca to the Nassau  
4 County IDA. And 31 is a resolution to confirm  
5 the county executive's appointment of Raymond  
6 Pinto to the IDA.

7 Motion by Legislator Giuffre.

8 Seconded by Legislator Ferretti. Mr. LaGreca  
9 and Mr. Pinto you want to approach the mic.

10 MR. LAGRECA: Good afternoon  
11 members of the Nassau County legislature.  
12 It's a pleasure to be here and it's an honor  
13 to be considered for the position on the  
14 industrial development board. My background  
15 is in law enforcement for many years and in  
16 labor for the last 35 years. I think you  
17 received a handout that give you a little  
18 overview of what I've done.

19 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
20 for your service. Obviously in law  
21 enforcement and for your service in labor. We  
22 appreciate that. Does anyone have any  
23 questions for Mr. LaGreca? No? Thank you.

24 MR. LAGRECA: Thank you.

25 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:

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2 Mr. LaGreca thank you.

3 Mr. Pinto.

4 MR. PINTO: My name is Raymond  
5 Pinto. I'd like to thank you for being  
6 considered for this position. If there's any  
7 questions.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Briefly  
9 you want to just tell us about your  
10 background.

11 MR. PINTO: Born and raised here  
12 in Nassau County. Came back to school.  
13 Worked in construction. Engineer. Currently  
14 work in sales for an engineering firm.

15 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any  
16 questions for Mr. Pinto? Thank you sir. All  
17 in favor of the appointments signify by saying  
18 aye. Those opposed? Any abstentions? It's  
19 unanimous. Congratulations to both of you and  
20 thank you for your service.

21 Number 32, Resolution 117 is a  
22 resolution to confirm the county executive's  
23 appointment of Denise Gold to the Nassau  
24 County Planning Commission.

25 Motion by Legislator Schaefer.

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2 Seconded by Legislator Kennedy. Ms. Gold.

3 MS. GOLD: Thank you for  
4 considering me. I'm an attorney for 32  
5 years. Spent most of my adult life living on  
6 Long Island here in Nassau County. I've  
7 raised two children here. I love it here and  
8 I thank all of you for all the hard work you  
9 put in to make this such a wonderful place to  
10 live and raise a family.

11 I do have some experience and I'd  
12 like to give back to the community. I sit on  
13 the board for the landmarks preservation  
14 committee for the Town of Oyster Bay and I  
15 think I can be an asset to the planning  
16 department.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any  
18 questions for Ms. Gold? Thank you very much.  
19 Any debate or discussion? Hearing none, all  
20 in favor signify by saying aye. Any opposed?  
21 It passes unanimously. Congratulations  
22 Ms. Gold.

23 Item 33, Resolution number 118 is a  
24 resolution to appoint members to the board of  
25 directors of the Nassau County Local Economic

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2 Assistance and Finance Corporation. These  
3 appointments include Mr. LaGreca, Pinto,  
4 Rocansis and Spinello.

5 Motion by Legislator Gaylor.

6 Seconded by Legislator McKevitt. This is a  
7 board it's actually -- traditionally it's the  
8 same members appointed to this board who serve  
9 on the IDA. So we're simply reappointing  
10 members who serve on the IDA to this board.

11 Any debate or discussion on these  
12 items? All in favor signify by saying aye.  
13 Those opposed? Carries unanimously.

14 Let's go back to the Nassau County  
15 Community College number one. It's a hearing  
16 on Ordinance 34 of 2022. It's an ordinance to  
17 adopt the Nassau County budget for the Nassau  
18 Community College for the fiscal year  
19 commencing September 1, 2022 and ending August  
20 31, 2023 and to appropriate revenues and the  
21 total amounts of monies to be raised by  
22 taxation etcetera.

23 Motion to open the hearing by  
24 Legislator Ford. Seconded by Deputy Presiding  
25 Officer Kopel. The hearing open. Ask the

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2 college to please approach the mic and give a  
3 presentation about the budget.

4 MS. CONZATTI: Good afternoon.

5 I'm Dr. Maria Conzatti. I'm the interim  
6 president of Nassau Community College. I have  
7 been at the institution for 33 years and 12 of  
8 those were served as a full-time faculty  
9 member in the NCCFT union. I still carry the  
10 distinction of being an adjunct faculty member  
11 for the institution.

12 The budget as presented for this  
13 year will allow the institution to continue to  
14 offer the high quality education it always has  
15 to all who attend it. I'm here to answer any  
16 questions if the legislature has any.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I think we  
18 want more details in terms of the budget. We  
19 didn't really get a presentation in  
20 committees. I know that you were kind enough  
21 with your staff to provide presentations to  
22 the majority and minority caucus but I think  
23 we need more detail.

24 MS. CONZATTI: The overall budget  
25 uses \$19 million of HEERF funds to balance the

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2 budget for this year. The institution was  
3 afforded \$78 million of HEERF funds over the  
4 past few years to balance the budget. Those  
5 budgets have been used to offset costs and  
6 losses in some of the revenue areas due to the  
7 COVID pandemic.

8 There are a number of strategies in  
9 the budget again addressing issues if there is  
10 a recession. There are certainly ways,  
11 initiatives that are put in there for cost  
12 savings. There's \$5.1 million in cost savings  
13 in there. Certainly if the institution faces  
14 a recession, which normally increases our  
15 enrollments, we can back off of some of those  
16 cost savings, those initiatives. There are  
17 certainly opportunities for growth in our  
18 workforce development areas. We do need to  
19 add vocational education programs which are in  
20 need in the community. There is certainly  
21 opportunity there for growth in all of those  
22 areas.

23 There are increases in contractual  
24 services of \$0.8 million. Those are increases  
25 in services where we have now used a number of

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2 software packages to increase uploads of  
3 financial aid packaging for our students. The  
4 use of the opportunities for us to continue to  
5 offer courses in our number of formats. We  
6 offer hybrid fully online courses. We are  
7 using software to facilitate all of that. We  
8 have suffered enrollment decline certainly  
9 over the past several years. That is a  
10 national trend. And again, we are looking at  
11 adding new programs and new degree programs to  
12 attract new students. Certainly adult  
13 students in the workforce development areas.  
14 We're also increasing the number of  
15 scholarships that we offer first-time students  
16 in various areas.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: The  
18 enrollment decline has been a particular  
19 concern for all of us. My understanding is  
20 the decline has been something in the  
21 neighborhood of 50 percent over the last seven  
22 or eight years. What new initiatives does the  
23 college have to start attracting more students  
24 to attend there?

25 MS. CONZATTI: We certainly need

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2 to start offering vocational education  
3 programs which we have not done. We will be  
4 adding those this coming year. Students are  
5 looking more and more to the trades to earn a  
6 livable wage here on Long Island. Certainly a  
7 wonderful county but an expensive county to  
8 live in. We will be adding programing to  
9 doing that.

10 In addition, we will also engage in  
11 what we call a guided pathways effort, which I  
12 have spoken about before. That guided  
13 pathways effort is really a full-fledged  
14 operational relook look at the institution.  
15 The degrees it offers. Sunsetting some of  
16 those programs. Adding new programs that are  
17 transfer oriented. Certainly Long Island is a  
18 service economy. Adding areas such as medical  
19 assistant program, which we've added to  
20 attract more students in the medical areas to  
21 serve the needs of Long Island and its  
22 community. So, there are a number of efforts  
23 underway that started last year and will  
24 continue this year.

25 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: One of the



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2 issues that's been brought to our attention is  
3 the fact that there's no online application  
4 for the college and there hasn't been for a  
5 while. We've spoken about this and you  
6 indicated that efforts were underway to  
7 restore the online application. Where are  
8 those efforts and when can we see that  
9 application?

10 MS. CONZATTI: That will be  
11 launching this month. That has been taken  
12 care of.

13 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Obviously,  
14 especially with younger generations, most of  
15 their transactions are using technology,  
16 phones, etcetera. So, the fact that that was  
17 not available I think would be a hinderance to  
18 enrollment.

19 Is the college gearing up more to  
20 become an in person instruction? Obviously  
21 with the pandemic there was a tremendous  
22 amount of remote learning. Not just you  
23 obviously, all over. I think it would be  
24 beneficial to have more of the students on  
25 campus also.

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2 MS. CONZATTI: Agreed. The  
3 students are offered now a variety of courses  
4 back on campus. Personnel is back on campus  
5 full throttle. So the community is back and  
6 we expect to be fully operational for the  
7 fall.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Just in  
9 terms of increasing enrollment, you mentioned  
10 vocational education, guided pathways. I  
11 think the legislators would like to see a  
12 specific plan for that that the college has.  
13 Because, again, it's something we've talked  
14 about for a number of years. Obviously it's  
15 not a secret that it's been an issue in many  
16 places. We've talked about it with Dr.  
17 Williams. It just doesn't seem as if much of  
18 what you're saying is different than what  
19 we've been told in the past. So, we would  
20 encourage every effort to be made to increase  
21 that enrollment. We believe that's one of the  
22 greatest value in education there is is our  
23 college and we want more people to take  
24 advantage of it.

25 In terms of the facilities, we were

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2 given a tour of the facilities. There were  
3 obviously a number of issues of great concern  
4 to us. First that comes to mind is the second  
5 floor of the library which looks like it's  
6 something that's dated from the '70s.

7 MS. CONZATTI: Agreed.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO:

9 Traditionally we in the legislature have  
10 supported capital projects every time they've  
11 been proposed to us to benefit the college.  
12 What type of upgrades are in the near future?

13 MS. CONZATTI: The upgrades are  
14 happening as we speak. You have certainly  
15 been very generous as a county and we thank  
16 you for offering the funds and granting us the  
17 funds for capital expenditures.

18 We have a brand new team in our  
19 facilities area that is now taking care of the  
20 extreme deferred maintenance in many of the  
21 areas of the campus. You will certainly see  
22 that carpeting gone and tile floors now in the  
23 library and upgrades to all of our  
24 infrastructure. There is a plan now to spend  
25 down the monies that were offered to us by the

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2 county to upgrade the institution across the  
3 board from its technology infrastructure to  
4 physical facility infrastructures.

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I'm going  
6 to turn it over to other legislators, but I  
7 guess just to sum up, the question I have for  
8 you as the president is this, the budget you  
9 proposed for the 2022-23 school year is that  
10 budget sufficient to allow the college to  
11 achieve its mission for this coming year and  
12 serve its students and faculty and staff to  
13 the extent they can?

14 MS. CONZATTI: Yes, it is.

15 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
16 Ford, Legislator Drucker, Legislator Mule.

17 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very  
18 much. I was under the impression that the  
19 community college already offered some of  
20 those programs to help students learn like  
21 different trades and everything. Was I  
22 mistaken?

23 MS. CONZATTI: There are a few of  
24 those. They are certainly not where our  
25 constituents are asking them for. They are

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2 for CDL certifications. They're looking for  
3 plumbing, HVAC, all of that and the college  
4 currently does not offer any of that  
5 programing.

6 LEGISLATOR FORD: When do you  
7 anticipate that you'll be able to offer those  
8 programs?

9 MS. CONZATTI: I would say no  
10 later than next fall. We will spend the year  
11 bringing up those programings, putting the  
12 curriculum in place, hiring faculty to teach  
13 that.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: It wouldn't be  
15 until fall of '23?

16 MS. CONZATTI: If we cannot bring  
17 up the curriculum before that, yes. We cannot  
18 start that until the fall.

19 LEGISLATOR FORD: I thought maybe  
20 we'd be able to expedite something like that.  
21 Because then that would attract more students  
22 to come to the college and provide them --  
23 because we have a lot of these jobs. When I  
24 look at the monies coming from the federal  
25 government with the Build Back America or

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2     whatever it is, I forget the name, a lot of it  
3     with the construction trades. They're  
4     focusing a lot on roads, bridges. By perhaps  
5     working with some of even the local unions  
6     maybe they can help you expedite that. Maybe  
7     you can bring those programs sooner rather  
8     than later so that we can get maybe give those  
9     opportunities to many of our residents, our  
10    young residents, where they'll be able to get  
11    jobs that are well paying and maybe stay here  
12    on Long Island.

13                   I'm glad to hear that you're going  
14    to do some capital improvements. And I was  
15    with the presiding officer during that tour,  
16    which was very interesting. It was nice to  
17    see Nassau Community College again. I'm glad  
18    you're getting rid of the rug. And I hope  
19    there will be other improvements as well. I  
20    predicted the orange rug, didn't I? Yes.

21                   But with the theater, I know that  
22    sometimes when you have these specialty  
23    departments, we have the medical arts where  
24    you started nursing and other programs such as  
25    that, theater also. It was very impressive to

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2 see the students that attended there. Of  
3 course I currently live in Long Beach, which  
4 is the hometown of Billy Crystal, probably the  
5 most famous of all the alumni that went  
6 through that program.

7 They did show and they did  
8 demonstrate some areas where work needs to be  
9 done. Whether or not it's leaky windows,  
10 roofs, air conditioning, whatever. I hope  
11 that those projects are on your radar  
12 currently so when we do go back for another  
13 tour we see a different facility, a much  
14 better facility.

15 It was brought to our attention  
16 thought that there is a possibility of a \$22  
17 million matching grant that New York State has  
18 offered Nassau Community College for the  
19 theater section of the college and that would  
20 have to be matched by Nassau County.

21 I know that when I was first  
22 elected a legislator way back when it was at  
23 time the college advocated for -- they brought  
24 legislators there to take a tour and gave us  
25 the arguments in favor of our joining with

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2 them and providing the \$25 million matching  
3 grant so the medical arts building could be  
4 built and so that those programs and courses  
5 could be offered to students. And as a  
6 result, we did pass that and you have an  
7 excellent nursing program. I know a couple of  
8 people that have gone through that. So that  
9 is a shining example of partnering with the  
10 county and thinking outside the box.

11 Are you aware of this grant? And  
12 if so, are you going to try to reach out to  
13 see if it's something that can be done by  
14 partnering with us and maybe by providing  
15 another shining star in the college?

16 MS. CONZATTI: Currently the  
17 theater department is going through their  
18 curriculum. They're upgrading curriculum,  
19 updating websites. Similar to the Billy  
20 Crystal story there are many success stories  
21 coming out of our theater department.

22 So, yes, I'm aware of the grant  
23 that was gotten many, many years ago to build  
24 a new theater building. At the time part of  
25 the complications were we had Middle States



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2 visitation and the question was why would you  
3 invest? Again, Middle States is very much  
4 about budgetary connection with programing  
5 growth areas. So, a little different than  
6 nursing at the time. Certainly, again, Long  
7 Island being a service area, a growth area for  
8 nursing. So, we have a new chief academic  
9 officer and a new academic team that will be  
10 working with the theater to revamp so of its  
11 curriculum and then certainly take a look at  
12 that as well.

13 LEGISLATOR FORD: I hope you do  
14 because, you know, we've also like over the  
15 years we've seen great, many more movies and  
16 TV shows and so forth and we're looking at I'm  
17 sure when the grant was first proposed, even  
18 for the Middle States consideration, we didn't  
19 have maybe the Grumman studios, the Gold  
20 Coast. We weren't up in Sands Point. We  
21 didn't have as many shows being filmed here.  
22 And there are a lot of supporting jobs and  
23 different businesses that are working hand in  
24 hand when they do the filming. Whether or not  
25 its food service, set decorating or they can

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2 do costume design or whatever. There's like  
3 so many elements, editing, whatever.

4 That would be something that I  
5 think that Nassau Community College then can  
6 offer to help these students learn these  
7 trades so that they can enter into a well  
8 paying job. I'm proud that it's a union job.

9 Also, when you look at a lot of  
10 these theaters in Long Island are revamping  
11 themselves. As much as people like going to  
12 Broadway, a lot of times people also like  
13 staying in Long Island for whatever reason.  
14 So, it's something that maybe we can  
15 capitalize on. And I envision that, hoping  
16 that through the efforts we would be able to  
17 enhance the whole theater experience and bring  
18 something back or create something new in Long  
19 Island that would be a benefit for all. Thank  
20 you.

21 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
22 Drucker.

23 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you  
24 Presiding Officer. Dr. Conzatti, nice to see  
25 you again. How are you?

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2 MS. CONZATTI: You as well.

3 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER:

4 Notwithstanding your projected decrease in  
5 enrollment in fiscal year '22-23, your tuition  
6 is remaining constant; is that correct?

7 MS. CONZATTI: It is sir.

8 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: What  
9 percentage of your annual budget is tied to  
10 salaries and fringe benefits?

11 MS. CONZATTI: 87 percent.

12 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: So you have  
13 no wiggle room when it comes to 87 percent of  
14 your budget?

15 MS. CONZATTI: No.

16 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: It's only  
17 the 13 percent that's --

18 MS. CONZATTI: Correct. Other  
19 than personnel services, contractual.

20 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Where do you  
21 stand with Middle States now? When is your  
22 next evaluation, do you know?

23 MS. CONZATTI: We have a report  
24 due, it's a midyear, it's an eight-year  
25 visitation cycle. So, we have a report due in

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2 the fall with them checking on us and another  
3 four years after that.

4 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Do you think  
5 that you are in compliance with their  
6 criteria? I know the college has worked  
7 really hard in last few years and you have  
8 made tremendous strides in that regard. Do  
9 you feel that you are still on track to  
10 satisfy their criteria?

11 MS. CONZATTI: We are on track.  
12 We certainly look forward to satisfying their  
13 criteria fully and then in four years for the  
14 fall visit to continue to be in full  
15 compliance.

16 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you.  
17 Good to see you again.

18 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
19 Mule.

20 LEGISLATOR MULE: Thank you  
21 Presiding Officer. Hi. I just wanted to  
22 piggyback on some of the questions that I  
23 heard. In terms of getting increasing  
24 enrollment, I heard what you say in terms of  
25 it depends upon what the national economy is

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2 as to how much enrollment you have and also  
3 that this is a trend that's happening  
4 everywhere, not just here in Nassau County. I  
5 think it's important for us to remember that.

6 But I'm wondering, do you do  
7 recruiting at the high schools? Do you  
8 actually go to the high schools and do like  
9 the automatic admittance? I know some schools  
10 the kids just go and meet with someone from  
11 whatever college and then they're given  
12 admittance right then and there. Is that  
13 something that you do?

14 MS. CONZATTI: We do. We are  
15 physically at the high schools doing  
16 recruitment meeting. We have open admission  
17 nights that we do. There's a whole rotation  
18 of all the local high schools that we go to.  
19 We have days in June, July and August which  
20 are open admits where students can physically  
21 come to campus and we'll go through the entire  
22 admissions process with them on campus. We  
23 attend all fares. We actually host the SUNY  
24 fair on our campus. That's open to all  
25 students inside of New York State and

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2 certainly here in Nassau County. So yes, we  
3 do.

4 LEGISLATOR MULE: So you do  
5 actually go to high schools and admit students  
6 right then and there?

7 MS. CONZATTI: We take their  
8 applications. We discuss them. Any options  
9 that they have. Any questions. Financial  
10 aid. All of that. Yes, we do.

11 LEGISLATOR MULE: I think I got  
12 my answer. Then in terms of the programs that  
13 you're looking to bring on, it sounds like  
14 they're the things you hear on the commercials  
15 for the for-profit companies that teach, you  
16 mentioned HVAC and that type of thing. And  
17 that sounds like a very smart idea to me that  
18 you would go after what people are paying lots  
19 of money to do and bring that to the community  
20 college so people don't have to spend a lot of  
21 money and come out with a certificate or  
22 whatever it is that they need to come out with  
23 to get these high-paying jobs without having  
24 all of the financial obligations that we hear  
25 so much about with the for-profit educational

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2 institutions. So, I'm very much in favor of  
3 that and glad to hear it. Thank you.

4 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
5 Rhoads.

6 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Just a couple  
7 of quick questions and thank you again for  
8 your presentation. I know one of the items  
9 that we had discussed on our Zoom call was  
10 student input into the process. It sounds as  
11 though part of the issue is that we may not be  
12 offering the kinds of classes that students  
13 today are necessarily interested in. And what  
14 is the role of student input in that process?

15 In the tour that we had I spent  
16 probably no more than five minutes in one of  
17 the classrooms, computer classrooms, speaking  
18 to the students directly about what types of  
19 things they would like to see offered. They  
20 had no less than four suggestions for  
21 different course offerings that they would  
22 love to see happen. That they would be  
23 interested in taking.

24 Considering the fact that they are  
25 the end users, they're the customer, is there

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2 a plan in place now? It kind of sounded as  
3 though on the Zoom call we were kind of afraid  
4 to ask the question. Which might not be the  
5 right way to go about it. I think the  
6 response was the expectation, if students have  
7 input into the process, is that there's going  
8 to be changes which we may or may not be able  
9 to make. I don't think that should prevent us  
10 from asking the question though. Are we going  
11 to put in place a process whereby students  
12 will have some input as to what offerings are  
13 made by the college? Ultimately I think  
14 that's part of the solution that has to happen  
15 is that they have to be part of the process.  
16 If there are things that they want us to offer  
17 that they will use that's what any business  
18 would do.

19 MS. CONZATTI: Sure. We can  
20 certainly engage our student government  
21 leadership in those conversations. I've  
22 scheduled monthly meetings with them to engage  
23 them in those conversations. Certainly we'll  
24 have all of cabinet engaged in conversations  
25 with the student government so that we can



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2 have an exchange of ideas and hear students  
3 out as a full cabinet. Which includes our  
4 chief academic officer as well as fiscal  
5 officer and the like.

6 So, we will certainly begin with  
7 that process and engaging our students so that  
8 leadership to leadership they can express what  
9 they feel the institution should be doing and  
10 where the direction will go.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: And how  
12 exactly is the college identifying which  
13 vocational training it's going to be  
14 offering?

15 MS. CONZATTI: It's based on,  
16 again, feedback that we've gotten from the  
17 community. We get phone calls all the time  
18 asking for a specific programing. Do we have  
19 it? Do we offer it? We've gotten phone calls  
20 from, you know, individuals within unions. Do  
21 you offer this? Do you offer welding? Do you  
22 offer this? Do you offer that? It's been a  
23 collection of data coming into the  
24 institution.

25 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: It might not

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2 be a bad idea to engage the unions directly  
3 with respect to that. Because as I mentioned  
4 on the Zoom call, I think that there's a real  
5 opportunity, especially with the county having  
6 been provided some ARPA funds for us to  
7 strengthen our vocational training and to  
8 offer scholarships for individuals who lost  
9 their jobs as a result of COVID or family  
10 members who have lost their jobs as a result  
11 of COVID, to offer the opportunity at  
12 discounted or free tuition with the use of  
13 ARPA funds to not only increase the enrollment  
14 of the college but get much needed vocational  
15 training for people that needed to change  
16 their jobs. I think it's a very effective and  
17 proper use of that funding. For us to provide  
18 relief to our residents in terms of job  
19 retraining. So, vocational training is the  
20 key to that.

21 The problem is we can't really  
22 create a program like that without having the  
23 course offerings that people will want to  
24 enroll in. So, the quicker that we can get up  
25 to speed on developing a curriculum,

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2 identifying first the areas where there's need  
3 and then developing a curriculum that will  
4 meet requirements, licensing requirements it  
5 certainly is paramount. Is there a process in  
6 place to be able to do that?

7 MS. CONZATTI: We certainly have  
8 board members that are on our board of  
9 trustees that can certainly provide us a venue  
10 to have those conversations.

11 LEGISLATOR RHOADS: Thank you  
12 very much.

13 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
14 DeRiggi-Whitton.

15 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I  
16 know it's difficult to compete, as we were  
17 discussing in our caucus room, with the state  
18 right now who's giving free tuition to  
19 families that are making under \$125,000 per  
20 year to their colleges. Have you done any  
21 type of lobbying to try to -- I know it's  
22 separate between the state and county  
23 obviously. Do you know if there is any  
24 opportunity for the county to also be either  
25 reimbursed partially or through the state? Do

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2 you think there's a need for that that you can  
3 focus on?

4 MS. CONZATTI: You're talking  
5 about politicking the state for additional  
6 funding, is that what you mean?

7 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
8 Basically since their last effort -- when was  
9 that -- like three years ago to now be  
10 providing free tuition. How do we compete  
11 with that? I don't know if there's a way. I  
12 don't know what their funding is like on that  
13 line. Possibly they could partner with the  
14 county schools. Because some kids can't go to  
15 Albany. It would involve some thinking out of  
16 the box and some major effort. I respect  
17 that. But maybe the counties can work  
18 together to see if that would be a possibility  
19 through the state.

20 As my colleague mentioned, with the  
21 American Cares Act funding, I don't know, I'd  
22 have to look at it a little closer, but if  
23 there is a line there that would qualify  
24 tuition. The world's changing. I think it's  
25 great to offer -- the millenials are very

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2 practical from what I can see. They want to  
3 graduate and have a job lined up.

4 As my colleague Siela Bynoe  
5 mentioned, we need to get employers involved  
6 also. If kids can come and know that they can  
7 get a job with this electric company or  
8 whomever. That's how I think these young  
9 kids' minds work. They really want to see  
10 what they can get for their effort. I think  
11 it would be worth looking into the state to  
12 see if there is funding available. Because,  
13 again, with zero tuition it's very difficult  
14 to compete with that. So, I don't know if  
15 you're in contact with other community  
16 colleges but I think it would be worth an  
17 attempt anyway.

18 MS. CONZATTI: We can certainly  
19 reach out to Suffolk and see.

20 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: And  
21 see if the state would be open to that. I  
22 have to look it up again but I did hear there  
23 was a good amount of funding available through  
24 that program. So maybe they would be willing  
25 do it this way as well.

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2 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Legislator  
3 Bynoe.

4 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Hi. So, I'm  
5 really excited to hear about the workforce  
6 development, the vocation. We talked on the  
7 Zoom. We've been engaging with Nassau  
8 County. When I say we, I mean the folks with  
9 the Hub redevelopment there in terms of the --  
10 I cochair the workforce development. So I  
11 know we've been in constant communication.  
12 Unfortunately, COVID has kind of slowed our  
13 pace down in being able to identify  
14 opportunities that would allow the college to  
15 put together some level of vocational  
16 training, workforce development training.

17 But that being said, Delia touched  
18 on it. We have a lot of employers in our  
19 area. Right in proximity we have Sloan  
20 Kettering and the like. And I'm assured that  
21 you're interfacing with them to find out what  
22 their needs are. I know that we want to hear  
23 from the students and the community at large  
24 in terms of individuals who might enroll, but  
25 getting the business organizations, the

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2 government involved.

3 We have a national shortage on FAA,  
4 on flight controllers, and we have an entity  
5 just across Stewart Avenue. We have a hub for  
6 that. Is there a way for us to connect in and  
7 assist in being able to have students enroll  
8 with the trajectory of being placed at the  
9 site locally at the controllers'  
10 headquarters? Things like that I think go a  
11 long way.

12 I don't know where our employers in  
13 terms of reimbursement reimbursement. I'm a  
14 graduate of Nassau Community College through  
15 the tuition reimbursement programing. Having  
16 adjuncted at LIU for the last four or five  
17 years that's going to be one of their  
18 constraints. Trying to get employers who will  
19 identify individuals who can upskill and then  
20 be promoted through the ranks. If we can  
21 start looking at things that would allow us to  
22 engage employers in that fashion I think we  
23 might be able to turn the curve on that, along  
24 with everything else that you talked about  
25 doing. I definitely wish the college well.

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2 And you talked about spending down  
3 that capital money. Spend it down. Get it  
4 all.

5 MS. CONZATTI: We will.

6 LEGISLATOR BYNOE: Thank you very  
7 much.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Are there  
9 any other questions for Dr. Conzatti? Thank  
10 you very much. Faren Siminoff.

11 MS. SIMINOFF: Good afternoon.  
12 My name is Dr. Faren Siminoff. I'm a  
13 professor at Nassau Community College. I'm in  
14 the Department of History, Political Science,  
15 Geography and Latin American studies. I'm  
16 also the president of the Nassau Community  
17 College Federation of Teachers. We are the  
18 union of the full-time faculty.

19 I'm here to speak to you a little  
20 bit about the budget. In some respects my  
21 friend, Dr. Conzatti, has, I don't know,  
22 informed what I'm going to say. I'm not here  
23 to speak against the budget but I am here to  
24 say that the college does need more money.  
25 It's been 15 years since the college has had



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2 an increase in its funding from the county and  
3 that means that those funds are probably worth  
4 about \$20 million less, maybe more, right, as  
5 inflation keeps growing.

6 So, the notion that we don't need  
7 more money at this point just doesn't seem  
8 realistic to me. Everybody needs an  
9 increase. Suffolk Community College gets a  
10 two to three percent increase every single  
11 year.

12 We spoke a little bit about the  
13 theater department and we have a wonderful  
14 theater and dance department. A number of you  
15 came and spoke to the chair of the theater  
16 department and saw our wonderful students.  
17 And I invite all of you in the fall who  
18 weren't able to tour. We're going to be  
19 offering more tours. Please come. We want to  
20 know you. We want you to know us. We want  
21 you to see our faculty, our chairs, our  
22 students.

23 But we only have two full-time  
24 faculty in the theater department. Neither of  
25 whom are teaching faculty. How can we run and

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2 grow a theater department with no full-time  
3 teaching faculty?

4 What's been happening at the  
5 college over the last I'd say decade or so has  
6 been a process of cutting. As our faculty has  
7 gotten older, has retired, we haven't been  
8 replacing them. And yes, the staff, whether  
9 it's CSEA, who you know do the secretarial or  
10 public safety, the AFA who are our adjuncts,  
11 or the NCCFT who are our full-time faculty, of  
12 course most of the operational budget will go  
13 into that because what do we provide? We're  
14 providing education. And who provides it?  
15 Educators. Obviously that's going to take up  
16 a lot of the operating budget.

17 But we need to -- if you want to  
18 grow the college you need to invest in the  
19 college. We have to invest in full-time  
20 faculty.

21 Can I speak longer? Yes?

22 Faculty who will be there to grow,  
23 to create the curriculum, to supervise the  
24 implementation, to mentor our students. If we  
25 keep cutting the college the college can't

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2 grow. And the faculty has a lot of  
3 initiatives but we don't have either the  
4 budget or the faculty to implement them.

5 We have cyber security. We have in  
6 the art department, and I think Legislator  
7 Rhoads was speaking to one of the faculty  
8 members who wants to do this, we have gaming.  
9 We have lots of really innovative 21st century  
10 programs and initiatives that we could  
11 implement but we don't have the money and we  
12 don't have the faculty to do it.

13 While I'm not asking you to vote  
14 down the budget, because I am practical and  
15 obviously we need money to function, I am  
16 asking you to ask the college to reconsider  
17 what we need. What we need to grow and to  
18 move forward.

19 Remember that our students stay in  
20 the county. When kids go away to a four-year  
21 college or a residential college they often  
22 times don't return. But our students stay and  
23 they become your police and they become  
24 lawyers and they become managers of businesses  
25 and they open up small businesses. They

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2 become your nurses. We have a wonderful  
3 nursing department but we don't have enough  
4 faculty to grow the nursing department and we  
5 have a waiting list.

6 But our students become all of  
7 those things. They establish families. They  
8 become taxpayers. So we are a very good  
9 investment. Because the population of Nassau  
10 County is aging and it has stayed relatively  
11 flat. Our students stay. If we grow our  
12 student population we will also help to grow  
13 the county. There's a lot of reasons to  
14 invest in the college.

15 And I also want to point out that  
16 our students often transfer to four-year  
17 colleges. It's not enough -- it's fine to  
18 offer vocational. I'm not saying we should  
19 not do any of these things. But the vast  
20 majority of our students who want to get a BA  
21 they want opportunities. Just like people who  
22 went to the college 20 years ago or 30 years  
23 ago had an opportunity to figure out what they  
24 wanted to do and to find their dreams as  
25 well.

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2 So, the college, I believe, is a  
3 huge, huge asset to the county. I hope that  
4 you do approve this budget. But, in addition,  
5 I hope you also tell the college and, as I  
6 said, they're a new administration, this  
7 budget was crafted before this administration  
8 came on board, to do an add-on or a  
9 supplemental. We need more faculty. We need  
10 more money for our programs and we really need  
11 the ability to grow. We believe, and we said  
12 this before, that a great county deserves a  
13 great community college. Please help us to  
14 grow. Please invest in this community college  
15 and we will serve you very well. Thank you  
16 very much.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you  
18 Faren. Is there any other public comment?

19 MS. MEREDAY: Meta J. Mereday. I  
20 agree with both speakers actually. I think  
21 that the college should get additional funding  
22 and I think the funding that they have  
23 received for the most part should be utilized  
24 more effectively. And from what I have been  
25 hearing I think that there are those involved

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2 who will make it happen.

3 My concern again, aside from the  
4 fact that I will try to stay within my three  
5 minutes because, you know, other people can go  
6 above and beyond and there is no ramifications  
7 or anything like that. But I know when it  
8 comes down to either me personally or me  
9 historically I'll just leave that out there.

10 But I'm concerned that just to  
11 throw some suggestions out there because we  
12 talk about young people and things of that  
13 nature. Baby boomers are returning to  
14 colleges, particularly community colleges, at  
15 a great rate. And we do have an Asian  
16 population here. So that's an opportunity.

17 Again, veterans. I know that  
18 there's a strong veteran community at the  
19 community college but I think we can utilize  
20 that a little bit more effectively in tying  
21 that into the building trades. Electrical  
22 services, construction. A lot of work the  
23 work that's been done out here in Nassau  
24 County health care is the largest employer  
25 here, I think we can be more aggressive, more

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2 productive and proactive in creating those  
3 opportunities from a training and a workforce  
4 development aspect. Not just talking about it  
5 but being about it.

6 If we drive just along Franklin you  
7 saw retail stores, and unfortunately a former  
8 president didn't see the need to protect as  
9 far as jobs and workforce are being busted out  
10 as we speak for more health-related  
11 facilities. That could be on-the-job training  
12 right there for construction, for electrical,  
13 for students who are getting that application  
14 right at Nassau Community College.

15 So, I think it's one of our  
16 diamonds. Similar to our underutilized Nassau  
17 University Medical Center. Which, again, can  
18 work together. Research and development is  
19 also very key, very high paying if it's done  
20 correctly and adequately. That could be  
21 another relationship tying in the community  
22 college with our public hospital. There's a  
23 lot of space there. There are empty  
24 facilities. The old nursing and doctors  
25 quarters could be rehabbed. Again, building

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2 trade work. That students train at Nassau  
3 Community College veterans per se as an  
4 example could build and revitalize those  
5 facilities. And guess what? They can live in  
6 them. They can stay here. These could be  
7 back on the tax rolls. They can be productive  
8 jobs. Productive citizens.

9 Again, I'm not here just waxing  
10 poetic and wasting my time that gets limited  
11 to me but other people can speak as long they  
12 want for whatever they want. But this is  
13 again rational ideas, practical applications  
14 that we need to implement because our  
15 residents, our young people are leaving and  
16 the ones that are here are struggling to pay  
17 for these homes. Guess what? I'm on the  
18 money. Thank you.

19 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank  
20 you. A motion to close the hearing at this  
21 point. Moved by Legislator Ford. Seconded by  
22 Legislator Walker. All in favor of closing  
23 the hearing signify by saying aye. Those  
24 opposed? The hearing is closed unanimously.

25 Number two, Ordinance 34, an



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2   ordinance to adopt the Nassau County budget  
3   for the Nassau Community College for the  
4   fiscal year commencing September 1, 2022 and  
5   ending August 31, 2023 and to appropriate  
6   revenues and the total amount of monies to be  
7   raised by taxation within the county of Nassau  
8   for the purposes of the Nassau Community  
9   College for such fiscal year.

10                   Motion by Legislator Pilip.  
11   Seconded by Legislator Schaefer. Any debate  
12   or discussion on the college budget? Hearing  
13   none, all in favor signify by saying aye.  
14   Those opposed? Carries unanimously. The  
15   budget passes.

16                   We have one last item. Legislator  
17   Mule this is the one you are recusing on. 13  
18   Resolution 98. A resolution authorizing the  
19   county attorney to compromise and settle the  
20   claims of plaintiff, as set forth in the  
21   action entitled Dover Gourmet Corporation  
22   versus County of Nassau.

23                   Motion by Legislator Kennedy.  
24   Seconded by Legislator Gaylor. Just note for  
25   the record that Legislator Mule has left the

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2 chambers. She's not participating in any  
3 further debate or discussion or vote on this  
4 item.

5 So, the item is now before us. Any  
6 debate or discussion on item 13 amongst the  
7 legislators? Legislator Drucker, did you want  
8 to speak on this item?

9 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you  
10 Presiding Officer. I just have to say that  
11 it's a little troubling to me to see this  
12 settlement brought before the legislature  
13 today after the extensive dialogue we had with  
14 the administration at our last meeting on June  
15 8th. While the stipulation discontinues the  
16 plaintiff's cause of action with prejudice,  
17 this stipulation falls short of relieving our  
18 concerns regarding Dover's prior business  
19 relationship with the county.

20 What is even more disturbing is the  
21 conclusory statement within the settlement  
22 that Dover is a vendor in good standing. It's  
23 important to note also that the contract and  
24 the stipulation were signed on the same day,  
25 on June 1st. So, there were expectations

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2 about Dover being settled and considered a  
3 vendor in good standing from day one.

4 In my opinion and the opinion of  
5 others, failing to pay the county on time or  
6 at all and violating living wage laws  
7 indicates that Dover is in fact not a vendor  
8 in good standing. And yet despite these  
9 documented issues, the county decided that  
10 this vendor should be trusted again with our  
11 county facilities and parks and given a  
12 sweetheart deal for the next ten years.

13 What this settlement does is  
14 normalize questionable behavior by county  
15 vendors and cast doubt on the future of a fair  
16 and transparent procurement process that  
17 should award vendors who are truly in good  
18 standing. Thank you.

19 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: As with  
20 any settlement there is obviously -- each  
21 party gives something. Each party gets  
22 something. In this case the county is getting  
23 the removal of a risk of millions of dollars  
24 of damages. Is this a settlement for the  
25 benefit of the county? Yes, number one.

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2 Number two, my colleague has  
3 accepted as fact every allegation made against  
4 this company. In so doing, he becomes the  
5 judge, jury and executioner of this company.

6 So, I would note for the record  
7 that Dover hardly contests each and every one  
8 of those allegations that have been made over  
9 the course of time and that it has been a  
10 vendor for the county for as long as anyone  
11 can remember at this point.

12 Again, this settlement is something  
13 that's in the interest of the county and I  
14 would encourage all my colleagues to vote --  
15 actually, it's not the settlement. It's  
16 simply filing the stipulation of  
17 discontinuance.

18 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Mr.  
19 Presiding Officer, I just wanted to say one  
20 thing. But the added words vendor in good  
21 standing in my opinion is superfluous  
22 language. The settlement can go forward, the  
23 stipulation go forward. I don't necessarily  
24 understand the logic of adding that language.  
25 Why are they now deemed a vendor in good

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2 standing? They admitted their wrongdoings in  
3 the past. We understand that. It doesn't  
4 still transform them magically into being a  
5 vendor in good standing. That's all I want to  
6 say.

7 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I think we  
8 can disagree on that point. Legislator  
9 DeRiggi-Whitton.

10 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: I  
11 hope you could just let me just mention  
12 something that's not exactly pertinent to the  
13 settlement. I was approached by someone who  
14 was concerned about those that are employed at  
15 places such as Nickerson Beach right now. The  
16 settlement and the contract say that without  
17 any other procurement being involved that when  
18 these contracts are finished they're  
19 automatically going to go to Dover. So,  
20 that's in the contract that was passed  
21 already. So, I know we can't rehash that.

22 I guess my plea or my request would  
23 be that possibly those that are employed in  
24 such things I believe as boating instruction  
25 and very specific surfing jobs descriptions

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2 would possibly be employed by Dover in the  
3 future. If we could somehow try to do some  
4 kind of an agreement with Dover.

5 Again, I know we can't but if Dover  
6 could give us that courtesy of considering  
7 taking those that are already employed at that  
8 beach and reemploying them under their own  
9 contract I think that would be very helpful in  
10 restoring any question of good will that might  
11 exist.

12 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: The only  
13 point, couple of points I would make, is that  
14 my understanding is, at least with respect to  
15 county employees there was going to be an  
16 effort actually not to -- an effort to hire  
17 each and every one of the county employees who  
18 are there. I believe it was my understanding  
19 from part-time to full-time positions, number  
20 one.

21 Number two, I would assume that  
22 Dover, in good business sense, would want to  
23 hire those other employees of the vendors for  
24 the simple reason that it is so difficult now  
25 to obtain employees in general. I would

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2 assume that if you have a pool of skilled  
3 employees that that's something that they  
4 would want to do.

5 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
6 There's a company called Scudin Surf again  
7 they're not county employees.

8 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I talked  
9 about both.

10 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON: If  
11 we could just maybe suggest Dover contact them  
12 and really work with them I think it would be  
13 a good, I don't know, it would be a positive  
14 win-win situation. I would love to see that  
15 happen.

16 LEGISLATOR FORD: Yes, there is a  
17 contract in place between Scudin and Dover in  
18 regard to lifeguards at the pools. As the  
19 contract or whatever that we have with Dover  
20 he only goes up to the dunes. So Scudin  
21 lifeguarding that contract is solely with the  
22 county. Dover does not have any control over  
23 that whatsoever.

24 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Any other  
25 debate or discussion on this item? Hearing

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2 none, all in favor signify by saying aye.

3 Those opposed?

4 LEGISLATOR FORD: I will abstain.

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: We have 12

6 ayes, one abstention and five nays because

7 there's only 18 of us here.

8 That's the last item that we have.

9 I'm going to place the legislature -- yeah,  
10 yeah. I noted before that she recused herself  
11 and she's not being counted in the vote.

12 That's why we have 18.

13 At this point I'm going to recess  
14 the meeting. Thank you.

15 (Meeting recessed at 3:41 p.m.)

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4 CERTIFICATION

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6  
7  
8 I, FRANK GRAY, a Notary  
9 Public in and for the State of New  
10 York, do hereby certify:

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

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have  
15 hereunto set my hand this sixth day of  
16 July 2022

17  
18  
19 -----  
20 FRANK GRAY  
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