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6 NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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8 RICHARD NICOLELLO

9 PRESIDING OFFICER

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11 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

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13 LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

14 CHAIR

15

16

17 Theodore Roosevelt Building

18 1550 Franklin Avenue

19 Mineola, New York

20

21

22 September 7, 2022

23 2:42 P.M.

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2     A P P E A R A N C E S :

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4     LEGISLATOR DENISE FORD

5                     Chair

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7     LEGISLATOR STEVEN RHOADS

8                     Vice Chair

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10    LEGISLATOR MAZI MELESA PILIP

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12    LEGISLATOR JOHN FERRETTI

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14    LEGISLATOR DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

15                     Ranking member

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17    LEGISLATOR SIELA BYNOE

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19    LEGISLATOR DEBRA MULE

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2                   LEGISLATOR FORD:       Good  
3   afternoon.   At this time I will call the  
4   Public Safety Committee to order.   I will ask  
5   the clerk to call the roll.   Thank you.

6                   MR. PULITZER:       Thank you  
7   chairwoman.   Public Safety roll call.  
8   Legislator Debra Mule.

9                   LEGISLATOR MULE:       Here.

10                  MR. PULITZER:       Legislator Siela  
11   Bynoe.

12                  LEGISLATOR BYNOE:       Here.

13                  MR. PULITZER:       Ranking member  
14   Delia DeRiggi-Whitton.

15                  LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
16   Here.

17                  MR. PULITZER:       Legislator John  
18   Ferretti.

19                  LEGISLATOR FERRETTI:       Here.

20                  MR. PULITZER:       Legislator Mazi  
21   Pilip.

22                  LEGISLATOR PILIP:       Here.

23                  MR. PULITZER:       Vice Chairman  
24   Steven Rhoads.

25                  LEGISLATOR RHOADS:       Present.

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2                   MR. PULITZER:       Chairwoman Denise  
3 Ford.

4                   LEGISLATOR FORD:     Here.

5                   MR. PULITZER:       We have a quorum  
6 ma'am.

7                   LEGISLATOR FORD:     Thank you very  
8 much sir. There are four items on the agenda  
9 today which are clerk items numbers, 272-22,  
10 273-22, 274-22 and 279-22.

11                   Clerk item number 272-22 is an  
12 ordinance supplemental to the annual  
13 appropriation ordinance in connection with the  
14 district attorney.

15                   May I have a motion.

16                   Moved by Legislator Rhoads.  
17 Seconded by Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton. The  
18 item is before us. Good afternoon sir.

19                   MR. MCDERMOTT:     Good afternoon  
20 chairwoman, legislators. Dennis McDermott,  
21 assistant district attorney.

22                   This is a supplemental  
23 appropriation. A grant was awarded to the  
24 Nassau County District Attorney's Office for  
25 their victims' assistance program in the

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2       amount of \$1.355 million dollars. It is  
3       mostly used for the salaries of the crime  
4       victims advocates.

5                   LEGISLATOR FORD:     Thank you. Any  
6       questions or debate from the legislators? Any  
7       public comment? I see none. All those in  
8       favor of passing this item please signify by  
9       saying aye. Opposed? The item passes  
10      unanimously.

11                   Clerk Item 273-22 is an ordinance  
12      supplemental to the annual appropriation  
13      ordinance in connection with the crime victim  
14      advocate.

15                   May I have a motion. This is  
16      different. Seconded by Legislator Ferretti.  
17      So far the item is moved by Legislator  
18      Rhoads. Seconded by Legislator Ferretti. And  
19      the item is before us. Is there anyone here  
20      from the administration?

21                   MS. DIEHL:     Jeanine Diehl,  
22      executive director of the Office of Crime  
23      Victim Advocate.

24                   I'm presented item 273-22. We are  
25      respectfully requesting the approval of a

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2   supplemental appropriation in the amount of  
3   \$505,183.68 in funds received from the  
4   New York State Office of Victims Services,  
5   victims of crime at grant.

6           This funding is to enhance the  
7   existing support services provided by the  
8   Office of Crime Victim Advocate that need the  
9   immediate and long term needs of victims and  
10   witnesses of crime in Nassau.

11           LEGISLATOR FORD:     Thank you.   Any  
12   debate or discussion?   Yes, Legislator Mule.

13           LEGISLATOR MULE:     I have a  
14   question.   So, do these two grants work in  
15   tandem with each other or are they different  
16   offices?   Can you help me to understand?

17           MS. DIEHL:     It is the same grant  
18   but they are mutually exclusive to each  
19   respective office.

20           LEGISLATOR FORD:     Anyone else?  
21   Any public comment?

22           MS. MEREDAY:     Meta J. Mereday.  
23   I'm definitely in support of this grant and  
24   it's an unfortunate scenario that we do have  
25   to provide.   But I'm just curious as to what

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2   types of recommendations are presented I guess  
3   at the end of the year with regard to the  
4   efforts to actually reduce the number of crime  
5   victims that we have in terms of any type of  
6   research or statistics that could be  
7   incorporated into possibly police enforcement,  
8   community outreach and support services.

9           I think we need to look start  
10   looking at where we can go with the long term  
11   with this type of situation so that we can  
12   reduced the rate of attacks that are happening  
13   on various constituencies, ethnic groups,  
14   etcetera, with the rise in divisiveness that  
15   we are currently experiencing.

16           Just hopeful that we're looking at  
17   that type of reporting and whoever may be  
18   getting that information and all of you should  
19   be getting access to that information and any  
20   recommendations from that department or agency  
21   that's monitoring that.

22           Because public comment is something  
23   that clearly I don't take lightly but  
24   unfortunately it doesn't seem like the  
25   comments from the public or the impacted

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2       communities seems to be getting across in the  
3       types of legislation and resources that can be  
4       most beneficial for them. Thank you.

5                   LEGISLATOR FORD:       Thank you very  
6       much. And it is something that we should note  
7       and look to see because it's important to  
8       reduce crime. Less victims. Thank you.

9                   All those in favor of passing this  
10      item please signify by saying aye. Any  
11      opposed? The item passes unanimously. Thank  
12      you.

13                   Clerk item 274-22 is an ordinance  
14      supplemental to the annual appropriation  
15      ordinance in connection with the traffic  
16      safety board.

17                   May I have a motion. Moved by  
18      Legislator Bynoe. Seconded by Legislator  
19      Mule. The item is before us. Who is here  
20      from the administration to speak on this  
21      item?

22                   MR. ARNOLD:       Good afternoon. Ken  
23      Arnold, Public Works. So, 274 is a  
24      supplemental appropriation to increase funding  
25      associated with a change in the VTL where they



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2       added a surcharge to parking violations  
3       associated with handicapped parking.

4           LEGISLATOR FORD:       So this would  
5       be that -- so then we're going to increase the  
6       fee by \$30?   Would this be certain types of  
7       parking?

8           MR. ARNOLD:       The VTL, the state  
9       put a \$30 increase on those violations and  
10      it's a pass-through.   That \$30 half goes to  
11      physically challenged, half goes to the  
12      traffic safety board.   And this supplemental  
13      is associated with the traffic safety board  
14      piece, which my department manages.   So we're  
15      just increasing money that we'll receive  
16      associated with that.

17          LEGISLATOR FORD:       But it will be  
18      a pass-through?

19          MR. ARNOLD:       Yes.   And then we go  
20      around and we program it with education,  
21      whatever we end up doing with this.

22          LEGISLATOR FORD:       Thank you.   Any  
23      debate or discussion?   Any public comment?   I  
24      see none.   All those in favor of passing this  
25      item please signify by saying aye.   Any

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2   opposed? The item passes unanimously thank  
3   you.

4           Clerk item 279-22 is an ordinance  
5   supplemental to the annual appropriation  
6   ordinance in connection with the medical  
7   examiner's office.

8           May I have a motion. Moved by  
9   Legislator Rhoads. Seconded by Legislator  
10   Pilip. The item is before us. Good  
11   afternoon.

12           MS. DOOLING: Karen Dooling,  
13   assistant director crime lab.

14           There are two grants before you.  
15   The first is a federal NIJ grant passed  
16   through New York State, no match, in the  
17   amount of \$54,656. Funding is used for  
18   overtime to work cases associated with the  
19   opioid crisis and also general lab funding to  
20   support our laboratory information management  
21   system for upgrades and maintenance.

22           The second grant before you is a  
23   New York State DCJS grant. \$504,885. It's a  
24   no match. And this is for overtime for the  
25   rest of the disciplines, equipment, supplies

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2   and instruments, maintenance contracts and  
3   calibrations to support lab case work and our  
4   quality control program.

5           LEGISLATOR FORD:     Do you want to  
6   tell us about the second one as well?

7           MS. DOOLING:     I went through the  
8   two of them.

9           LEGISLATOR FORD:     I'm sorry.   We  
10   have a question from Legislator  
11   DeRiggi-Whitton.

12           LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:     I  
13   was just wondering what the status of the  
14   lab.   Where are you today?

15           MS. DOOLING:     The status of the  
16   lab is we currently have all of our  
17   disciplines up and running.   We have chemistry  
18   controlled substance, biology, which is DNA,  
19   firearms.   Which we were recently accredited  
20   in this year is up and running.   And also  
21   latent prints.   So, the lab is doing well.  
22   There is basically no more outsourcing to NMS  
23   unless it's a specific type of case that are  
24   few and far between that the lab doesn't do  
25   analysis on because it wouldn't be cost

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2       effective to validate and keep that particular  
3       technique online.

4           LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:       So  
5       that's great.   So basically all of the  
6       different specialties are now being addressed  
7       in-house?

8           MS. DOOLING:       Yes.   Except for  
9       trace analysis.

10          LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:  
11       That's good news.   Thank you very much.   So,  
12       what would you say the caseload would be?   Do  
13       you feel that you're adequately -- like as far  
14       as your employees and budget?

15          MS. DOOLING:       So, I would imagine  
16       like any other department in the county we  
17       certainly could use more staffing.   Budget,  
18       right now we're doing fairly well in managing  
19       our budget and managing to get by.   Staffing,  
20       we could definitely use some staffing.

21          LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:       The  
22       turnaround is also adequate?

23          MS. DOOLING:       Turnaround times  
24       are increasing because we have seen a large  
25       increase in the number of cases coming into

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2     the laboratory. About half way through the  
3     year, this last year we saw as many items  
4     submitted as of all of last year.

5           LEGISLATOR BYNOE:     Wow. Hello.  
6     So, you're saying that the numbers have  
7     increased significantly. In what areas are  
8     you finding the higher rates?

9           MS. DOOLING:     Our drug caseload  
10    has increased significantly. We just took on  
11    firearms. So that has increased our work load  
12    considerably. And we're getting more criminal  
13    possession of weapons cases. CPW cases.  
14    Which also has increased our caseload.

15          LEGISLATOR BYNOE:     So what role  
16    do you play in criminal possession of  
17    firearms? The fingerprints? The latent?

18          MS. DOOLING:     Latent prints and  
19    sometimes DNA analysis.

20          LEGISLATOR BYNOE:     And then the  
21    increase in drugs is Fentanyl?

22          MS. DOOLING:     The increase in  
23    drugs is --

24          LEGISLATOR BYNOE:     Drugs period.

25          MS. DOOLING:     The drug world is

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2       always just increasing. New types of drug  
3       evidence. Opioids, Fentanyl.

4           LEGISLATOR BYNOE:       Okay. That  
5       goes along with the, unfortunately, with the  
6       trend that we've been seeing and hearing  
7       about.

8           MS. DOOLING:       Yes. Thank you.

9           LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:       I  
10       would hope -- we did receive money from the  
11       opioid settlement and I wonder if there's a  
12       way to use some of that for our lab. I would  
13       love to see, I don't know if there's a way to  
14       research that, but it's just something as a  
15       legislator, I'm not even asking you directly,  
16       but I think it's something that the county  
17       should look into. If can fund you directly to  
18       help with you that money I think it would be  
19       money well spent.

20           LEGISLATOR FORD:       Do the  
21       employees that work there like the lab  
22       technicians, I'm sorry that I don't know the  
23       actual title, do they have specialties? Are  
24       ones trained just to do firearms? Ones just  
25       to do drugs? Or is it that any lab technician

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2       can work on any type of discipline?

3                   MS. DOOLING:       You're correct the  
4       way you stated it the first time. It's not  
5       like you see on TV CSI. One person doesn't do  
6       all those specialties. If you're a firearms  
7       examiner that's your specialty. If you're a  
8       biologist then that's your specialty. So  
9       there really is no cross-discipline  
10      interaction. That's because of our  
11      accreditation standards. We spend a lot of  
12      time making sure people are competent in those  
13      disciplines but they also have to take  
14      proficiency tests and there are all sorts of  
15      other requirements to allow them to do work in  
16      those particular disciplines.

17                   LEGISLATOR FORD:     Do you know  
18      offhand do you have an active list that you  
19      can like from a test you can hire the people?  
20      Because I'm wondering what is the age of a lot  
21      of the lab technicians? Are any of them close  
22      to retirement? I know this is a budget  
23      question but I'm curious.

24                   MS. DOOLING:       Our title series  
25      are forensic scientists. We hire people as

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2       trainees and the scientist position goes from  
3       a trainee all the way up to a forensic  
4       scientist four. Who's usually the supervisor  
5       and the technical lead of the discipline.

6           The titles are noncompetitive. And  
7       we get lots of applicants. You know, Nassau  
8       County residents. And they're generally  
9       individuals that have just graduated from  
10      college or have a masters. Have to have a  
11      science degree. And depending on the  
12      discipline the requirements are specific for a  
13      discipline. You need certain courses for  
14      biology. Certain things for chemistry. But  
15      there are a lot of nice programs, nice  
16      forensic programs even within Nassau County  
17      itself. CW Post has a great program and  
18      Hofstra has a great forensics program.

19           LEGISLATOR FORD:     Glad to hear  
20      that. Legislator Mule.

21           LEGISLATOR MULE:     You mentioned I  
22      think it was firearms. Has that just come  
23      online? Is that why there's an increase in  
24      the number of cases? Because you've taken on  
25      this discipline and so that has caused the



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2   number of cases to increase? Did I understand  
3   that correctly?

4           MS. DOOLING:     We did increase our  
5   caseload partially because of firearms. But  
6   all of our other disciplines have seen an  
7   increase in caseload. Especially in the  
8   chemistry section.

9           LEGISLATOR MULE:     Thank you.

10          LEGISLATOR FORD:     Anyone else?  
11   Any public comment? I see none. All those in  
12   favor of passing this item please signify by  
13   saying aye. Any opposed? The item passes  
14   unanimously.

15          Just to let everyone know, it was  
16   passed by Legislator Rhoads because I don't  
17   think I spoke into the mic and it was seconded  
18   by Legislator Pilip. Just in case so that we  
19   have it on record and everybody knows. Thank  
20   you very much.

21          There is no other business in front  
22   of this committee. May I have motion to  
23   adjourn. Moved by Legislator Rhoads.  
24   Seconded by Legislator DeRiggi-Whitton. All  
25   those in favor? This committee is now

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2   adjourned.

3                   (Committee adjourned at 2:57 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

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

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have  
hereunto set my hand this 11th day of  
September 2022

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FRANK GRAY