

NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEES MEETING

HOWARD KOPEL

PRESIDING OFFICER

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

ROSE MARIE WALKER

CHAIRWOMAN

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

County Executive and Legislative Building

1550 Franklin Avenue

Mineola, New York

Monday, March 9, 2026

2:41 p.m.

TAKEN BY: KAREN LORENZO, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER

A P P E A R A N C E S

CHAIRWOMAN ROSE MARIE WALKER

VICE CHAIRMAN MICHAEL GIANGREGORIO

LEGISLATOR SCOTT STRAUSS

LEGISLATOR SAMANTHA GOETZ

LEGISLATOR OLENA NICKS - RANKING

LEGISLATOR ARNOLD DRUCKER

LEGISLATOR VIVIANA RUSSELL

MICHAEL PULITZER

Clerk of the Legislature

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2 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: At this time, I
3 will call the Health and Social Service
4 Committee to order. And I will ask the
5 clerk to take the roll call.

6 CLERK PULITZER: Thank you, madam.

7 Chairman Rose Marie Walker?

8 LEGISLATOR WALKER: Here.

9 CLERK PULITZER: Vice chairman
10 Michael Giangregorio?

11 LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Here.

12 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Scott
13 Strauss?

14 LEGISLATOR STRAUSS: Present.

15 CLERK PULITZER: Samantha Goetz?

16 CLERK PULITZER: Ranking member
17 Olena Nicks?

18 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Here.

19 CLERK PULITZER: Thank you.

20 Legislator Viviana Russell?

21 LEGISLATOR RUSSELL: Here.

22 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Arnold
23 Drucker?

24 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Here.

25 CLERK PULITZER: Thank you. We have a

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2 quorum.

3 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Thank you. There
4 are four items on the agenda today which
5 are Clerk Items 44-26; 50-26; 51-26 and
6 52-26.

7 Clerk Item 44-26 is a local law to
8 prohibit the sale of nitrous oxide
9 whipped cream chargers in Nassau County,
10 except to businesses with appropriate
11 food sale permits or licenses.

12 May I have a motion, please?

13 By Legislator Giangregorio, seconded
14 by Legislator Drucker.

15 Okay. The item is before us.

16 Briefly, I would like to offer a
17 little background on where this
18 initiative originated and what we are
19 looking to accomplish prior to opening
20 the floor to any statements or questions.

21 Several weeks ago, I was asked to a
22 meeting at Central Nassau Guidance
23 Center. Central Nassau Guidance, for
24 those that do not know, is a nonprofit
25 organization that provides treatment,

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2 counseling, housing and support services
3 for those that are suffering with mental
4 health and substance abuse conditions and
5 does truly phenomenal work to help put
6 people on a path to recovery. They have
7 also recently many of the legislators
8 have been there have opened a crisis
9 center that is open 24/7, 365 days a
10 year.

11 At this meeting, I met a mother of a
12 young man that died and is believed to
13 have died from the abuse of nitrous
14 oxide. What I learned at this meeting and
15 in my research afterwards was terrifying.
16 In New York State because it is a
17 dangerous gas and has the potential to be
18 abused, Nitrous oxide is illegal to use
19 for the purposes of intoxication. It is
20 also illegal to sell at retail to the
21 public, and its use is limited to
22 industrial, medical and dental
23 applications. However, a loophole in a
24 state law has allowed nitrous oxide to be
25 sold to the public. This loophole is an

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2 exception that specifically allows the
3 sale of nitrous oxide in the form of
4 whipped cream chargers. These pressurized
5 containers can be sold to anyone over the
6 age of 21, and are being sold in various
7 flavors like cotton candy, strawberry,
8 mango, you name it. Retailers are not
9 required to check ID if the purchaser
10 looks over the age of 25.

11 These containers are also being sold
12 in quantities that far exceed what would
13 reasonably be used to make whipped cream.
14 And the fact is, people are buying this
15 gas and abusing it. The easier it is to
16 get, the more likely it will fall into
17 the hands of someone, including kids,
18 that will abuse it.

19 Abusing nitrous oxide is dangerous.
20 The FDA warns that inhaling nitrous oxide
21 can result in serious health impacts,
22 such as abnormal blood counts, vitamin B
23 12 deficiency, loss of consciousness,
24 palpitations, psychiatric disturbances,
25 including paranoia, hallucinations and

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2 depression. For some, abuse can lead to
3 prolonged neurological effects, including
4 spinal cord or brain damage, even after
5 stopping use, and in some cases, abuse
6 will lead to death.

7 It is my hope that this law will
8 close the loophole. By limiting sales
9 only to those businesses that prepare and
10 sell food, we hope to eliminate sales of
11 nitrous oxide to the general public and
12 thus limit its potential to be abused.
13 This item will be subject to a hearing
14 before the full legislature on March
15 23rd.

16 If any member of this committee
17 would like to place any questions on the
18 record, if we cannot answer that question
19 here today, we will have someone at the
20 full legislature to address this. Does
21 anyone have anyone on the committee have
22 any questions or comments.

23 Legislator Drucker?

24 LEGISLATOR DRUCKER: Thank you.

25 I just want to echo some of your

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2 comments, but, you know, CN Guidance, as
3 we both know, is on the cutting edge of
4 treatment of people of all ages who are
5 suffering from addiction, and their
6 crisis center now is state of the art.
7 And I just think if they recognize this
8 problem, we all should recognize this
9 problem. And it's something that needs to
10 be done. It's a matter of public health
11 like we had today with the with the
12 kratom bill. I mean, it's our job to
13 protect the public and when we can do so,
14 I applaud every effort to do that.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: I am hoping that
17 the woman who we spoke to will be at our
18 hearing. Her son very, very sadly,
19 literally died in the parking lot of one
20 of these stores in my community and
21 Legislator Drucker's community. It just
22 broke my heart, the story she was telling
23 us. And in many of the establishments,
24 other than maybe a large bakery or
25 whatever, you know, they're they're small

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2 little canisters in these shops. They're
3 selling canisters that are, you know,
4 like the big water bottle bottles that
5 people people drink. It's a very, very
6 scary. She blew me away and it literally
7 broke my heart.

8 So is there any anyone else have any
9 questions or any debate or discussion?

10 (Whereupon, no response.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: All in favor,
12 please signify by saying aye.

13 (Whereupon, all members
14 respond in favor.)

15 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Any opposed?

16 (Whereupon, no response.)

17 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Then this item
18 passes unanimously. And it will be by a
19 vote of 7 to 0, and it will move on to
20 the next committee.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Clerk item
3 number 50-26 is an ordinance supplemental
4 to the annual Appropriation ordinance in
5 connection with the Office of Management
6 and Budget.

7 May I have a motion, please? By
8 Legislator Scott Strauss, seconded by
9 Legislator Olena Nicks.

10 The item is before us.

11 MS. ZOHRABIAN: Good afternoon.
12 Alyssa Zohrabian, Nassau County
13 Department of Health.

14 This is a supplemental appropriation
15 of \$850,849 in Jewel settlement funds to
16 support the Department of Health's
17 efforts in preventing vaping through
18 research, surveillance, education, school
19 based support, and community
20 interventions.

21 This funding will support the work
22 of our epidemiology, communications,
23 community health, and environmental
24 health programs including efforts to
25 address vaping, the risk factors

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2 associated with IT, and related health
3 consequences.

4 This appropriation will have no net
5 impact on the county budget.

6 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Okay. Legislator
7 Giangregorio?

8 LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: The school
9 based intervention, how is that going to
10 be handled? Are we planning to do, I
11 don't know, assemblies or something like
12 that to educate the students?

13 MS. ZOHRABIAN: So we're working very
14 closely with BOCES and the school
15 districts so that we can work together
16 with them and not necessarily duplicate
17 efforts. So we are going to work on a
18 cessation piece for them where they're
19 going to mostly focus on prevention. So
20 we're going to work hand in hand with the
21 school districts. And we're working very,
22 very closely with them on developing work
23 plans and stuff like that.

24 LEGISLATOR GIANGREGORIO: Thank you.

25 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Do you have --

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2 the response from the school districts or
3 most of our school districts involved? Or
4 I would hope they're all involved.

5 MS. ZOHRABIAN: From what I
6 understand. Yes. We're working closely
7 with and communicating with BOCES on
8 these efforts.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: I know when I
10 speak to my grandchildren, it's amazing
11 the number of middle schoolers who --
12 these are sixth, seventh, and eighth
13 grade children. To me, they're babies
14 practically. And it's amazing how many
15 kids vape. It's very sad.

16 Any other legislators?

17 Legislator Nicks.

18 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Just to piggyback
19 on a couple of those questions, could
20 you. So is BOCES providing a report back
21 to us or back to you guys to suggest that
22 they what schools they've already been to
23 and what the I guess curriculum looks
24 like.

25 MS. ZOHRABIAN: I don't have that

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2 answer right now, but I know that they do
3 do prevention and education in schools
4 because they're with the children,
5 they're teaching them. And so like the
6 teachers are teaching them and I think
7 they have programs. So what we're going
8 to do is we're going to work with them on
9 some supplemental type of efforts.

10 LEGISLATOR NICKS: So, so does the
11 funding come from us and go directly to
12 BOCES?

13 MS. ZOHRABIAN: So they have their
14 own funding. They've got their own piece
15 of Jewel settlement funding for similar
16 efforts. So schools got money and and we
17 at the county got money.

18 LEGISLATOR NICKS: So then how is
19 this money being used if BOCES has their
20 own.

21 MS. ZOHRABIAN: So they're focusing
22 on prevention within their schools and
23 education within their schools. We're
24 going to supplement that. We're going to
25 provide cessation information and

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2 education. We are also going to bring it
3 to the whole county instead of just in
4 the school. So the whole county, all
5 residents, can benefit from the work that
6 we're going to do with this funding.

7 LEGISLATOR NICKS: What's the
8 dissemination of that look like? So
9 what's the plan for that look like and
10 where is it being disseminated and how?

11 MS. ZOHRABIAN: So we're going to do
12 a cessation program. We're going to do
13 like an electronic cessation program.
14 We're going to do education and outreach
15 through our community health programs. In
16 communications, we're going to do some
17 advertising and of these programs so that
18 it gets out, the word gets out about
19 these programs that it's available for
20 everybody. And then we also are using
21 funding to support our epidemiology
22 division, our data, so that we make sure
23 that we're gathering the right all the
24 data so that we implement the programs
25 based on data driven decisions.

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2 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Okay. And are
3 there specific communities that you are
4 targeting more so than others?

5 MS. ZOHRABIAN: I think the data
6 would show that. So this is part of that.

7 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Okay. Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: And I would hope
9 that you're focusing on every community
10 because it certainly affects every
11 community.

12 Is it possible for you to also bring
13 information, if we reached out to many of
14 our civic groups or other organizations
15 that we can get the word out in that
16 respect also?

17 MS. ZOHRABIAN: Absolutely. And when
18 the program gets up and running and we
19 have something to show everybody. We're
20 happy to share it with with our community
21 based organizations, our partners in
22 government, the legislature anyone who
23 wants to learn about it, we're happy to
24 do that and make sure the word gets out
25 and make sure the services get utilized.

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CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Legislator
Russell?

LEGISLATOR RUSSELL: Can you send us
the data that you have so far on how this
money is being spent or how it will be
spent? Like what the plan is, if you can
send us that information. Just following
up the questions that Legislator Nicks
asked.

MS. ZOHRABIAN: Sure.

LEGISLATOR RUSSELL: The school
districts that have been outreach to
which ones do you plan to already talk
to, ones you plan to talk to?

MS. ZOHRABIAN: Sure.

LEGISLATOR RUSSELL: If we can just
get that information as well.

MS. ZOHRABIAN: Yes. Will do. We also
do have data on vaping. On our website.
We have reports on, on vaping and youth.
And I'm happy to share that with you as
well.

LEGISLATOR RUSSELL: Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: It would be good

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2 for all of us because this way, if any of
3 our school districts aren't involved,
4 then we can make sure we reach out to
5 them and make sure they get involved.

6 MS. ZOHRABIAN: It's my understanding
7 that all the school districts will be
8 involved in this through BOCES.

9 Legislator Nicks.

10 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Sorry, Alyssa, I
11 have one more. So I know you said that
12 you can get a certain information once
13 the program is up and running, but if I'm
14 correct in understanding this is
15 supplemental funding. So this is
16 additional funding that was already
17 received for this type of programmatic
18 intervention; is that correct?

19 MS. ZOHRABIAN: So we're going to be
20 doing a lot more work because of this
21 funding. So like when if we have the
22 cessation program coming up, when that
23 gets developed, when we have that
24 information, share with you, we're more
25 happy to share that with you.

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2 LEGISLATOR NICKS: But what I'm
3 asking is funding for this was already
4 received. This is now just additional
5 funding, right?

6 MS. ZOHRABIAN: No, this is the
7 funding. Oh yeah. It's supplemental to
8 our budget, to the health department's
9 budget.

10 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Okay. So this is
11 like the first tranche of this. Do you
12 expect to receive more funding after
13 this?

14 MS. ZOHRABIAN: This funding is
15 broken up over multiple years. So this is
16 for the first year, 850,000. But there's
17 more funding. We plan to spread out that
18 funding over several years to make the
19 most of it.

20 LEGISLATOR NICKS: Awesome. Thank
21 you.

22 MS. ZOHRABIAN: You're welcome.

23 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Okay. Any other
24 questions or comments?

25 (Whereupon, no response.)

CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Then all those
in favor, please signify by saying aye.

(Whereupon, all members
respond in favor.)

CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no response.)

CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Then this too
will move on. It was unanimous and it
will move on to next committee.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Our next item is
3 Clerk Item 51-26, which is an ordinance
4 supplemental to the annual appropriation
5 ordinance connection with the Health
6 Department.

7 May I have a motion, please? By
8 Legislator Giangregorio and seconded by
9 Legislator Drucker.

10 The item is before us.

11 MS. ZOHRABIAN: Me again. Alyssa
12 Zohrabian for Nassau County Health
13 Department.

14 Item 51-26 contains five
15 supplemental appropriations. The first is
16 in the amount of \$302,000 for the
17 Immunization Action Plan grant.

18 The second is in the amount of
19 \$326,300 for the Adolescent Tobacco Use
20 Prevention Enforcement program.

21 The third is in the amount of
22 \$453,766. That is for Expanded Partner
23 Services Program grant.

24 The fourth is in the amount of
25 \$27,334 for the article six Performance

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2 Incentive Award Program grant.

3 And the fifth and final is in the
4 amount of \$20,360. And that is for the
5 rabies program grant.

6 All appropriations in this item are
7 grant funded through New York State
8 Department of Health, and will have no
9 net impact on the budget.

10 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Okay. Any debate
11 or discussion?

12 (Whereupon, no response.)

13 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Any comments
14 from the other legislators?

15 (Whereupon, no response.)

16 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Okay. All in
17 favor, please signify by saying aye.

18 (Whereupon, all members
19 respond in favor.)

20 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Any opposed?

21 (Whereupon, no response.)

22 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: So this is
23 unanimous. And again, it will move on to
24 Finance.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: And the last
3 item is Item 52-26, which is an ordinance
4 supplemental to the annual appropriation
5 in connection with the Department of
6 Human Services.

7 May I have a motion, please? By
8 Legislator Giangregorio, seconded by
9 Legislator Nicks.

10 And the item is before us.

11 MS. ZAKI: Good afternoon,
12 Legislators. Seema Zaki, fiscal
13 director, Department of Human Services.

14 Under Item 52-26, there are two
15 supplemental appropriations. These are
16 annual recurring grants, 100% state
17 funded from the New York State Office of
18 Children and Family Services. It's for
19 the period of October 1st, 2025 to
20 September 30th, 2026. This is for the
21 purpose of funding the needs of the youth
22 of Nassau County. It's for \$304,000.

23 And the second item is for
24 \$1,675,687. This is again an annual
25 recurring grant. It is 100% state funded

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2 from New York State Office of Children
3 and Family Services. It's again for the
4 period of October 1st, 2025 to September
5 30th, 2026. The purpose of this funding
6 is to support the youth of Nassau County
7 with their sports and education
8 opportunities.

9 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Okay. Any debate
10 or discussion on this item?

11 (Whereupon, no response.)

12 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Okay. Seeing
13 none, all those in favor signify by
14 saying aye.

15 (Whereupon, all members
16 respond in favor.)

17 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Any opposed?

18 (Whereupon, no response.)

19 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: So this passes
20 unanimously and this too will move on to
21 Finance.

22 CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: There's no other
23 business in front of this committee.

24 May I have a motion to adjourn?

25 By Legislator Scott Strauss,

seconded by Legislator Viviana Russell.

All in favor of adjourning, signify
by saying aye.

(Whereupon, all members
respond in favor).

CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: Any opposed?

(Whereupon, no response.)

CHAIRWOMAN WALKER: No.

We are now adjourned and we move on
to Finance.

(Whereupon, meeting
adjourns, 2:59 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)

: SS.:

COUNTY OF NASSAU)

I, KAREN LORENZO, a Notary Public
for and within the State of New York, do
hereby certify:

That the above is a correct
transcription of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
set my hand this 9th day of March, 2026.

Karen Lorenzo

Karen Lorenzo