

**BUDGET & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**  
**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Budget & Finance Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on November 24, 2015.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. Lou D'Amaro, Chairperson  
Leg. Monica Martinez, Vice Chair  
Leg. Thomas Cilmi  
Leg. Steven H. Stern  
Leg. Robert Trotta

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature  
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel/Legislature  
Jason Richberg, Clerk of the Legislature  
Robert Lipp, Director/Budget Review Office  
Connie Corso, Budget Director/County Executive's Office  
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office  
Lisa Santeramo, County Executive's Office  
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro  
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern  
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Trotta  
Maria Barbara, Aide to Leg. Cilmi  
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer  
William Shilling, Aide to Leg. Calarco  
Ben Zwirn, SC Community College  
And all other interested parties

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

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**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:07 AM**

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Budget and Finance Committee. Please rise and join the Committee in the Pledge led by Legislator Monica Martinez.

**SALUTATION**

Next section on the agenda, correspondence. We have not received any today for the record. Public comments. To the Clerk, are there any cards?

**MR. RICHBERG:**

We have no cards, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay, thank you. Is there anyone present who would like to address the Committee this morning during the Public Portion? All right. For the record, there's no response. We have no presentations today.

**TABLED RESOLUTIONS**

So we will go to Table Resolutions. First is **1621 of 2015, appropriating 2015 Funding for a Contract Agency. (Babylon Village Youth). (McCaffrey)**. This is for the Babylon Village Youth. Have you -- do you guys have any word at all?

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Motion to approve.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

All right, there's a motion to approve. Is there a second?

**(SIDE BAR CONVERSATION)**

**LEG. CILMI:**

Can we pass over it? I'll reach out to Legislator McCaffrey.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Sure. All right. So we're going to hold off on 1621-2015 to the end of the agenda.

The next is **1824 of 2015, Adopting Local Law (No. -2015, A Charter Law) to establish a multi-year budget plan. (Cilmi)**

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Motion to approve.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Motion to approve. There's a second. On the motion, anyone? All in favor? I'm sorry, go ahead, Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Yeah, on the motion. I just wanted to call everyone's attention to the Newsday editorial this morning, which says in the end "that's why at least a law to require the County to create a real

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multiyear budget that shows how all this borrowed money will be repaid and how that will affect future budgets is an immediate necessity."

Worked very hard with our Budget Review Office, with Counsel to draft -- to draft this -- this bill. Almost every financial authority in the State certainly, and many throughout the country, agree that even for municipalities where budgeting long-term can be challenging, that it's important to do. So I would just leave the Committee with those -- with those words and ask for your support. Thank you.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Yes, Legislator Stern.

### **LEG. STERN:**

Yeah, I read the legislation. I also reviewed, you know, some notes on it, but -- but, you know, I'd certainly like to hear from the Budget people as to what they think of the plan as proposed and how that would work going forward.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Connie, would you like to come up? Good morning.

### **MS. CORSO:**

Good morning.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So, pending before the Committee is 1824 of 2015. Does your office have a position on the bill? And if so, can you explain it?

### **MS. CORSO:**

Yes, I do. Well, I recognize that there are certain financial entities out there that -- that believe multiyear budgeting is a good idea, the bill as it's laid out is really -- it's unwieldy and I feel that the -- it's onerous and the potential benefits really are questionable at best.

It would really run concurrent to the budget process. We really wouldn't have the time. And a lot of the items that would be in there would be, dare I say speculative and misleading. And I do have some real time examples of that. So, for instance, the budget was adopted just a little over a week-and-a-half ago. And -- or maybe a little longer than that. And about three days after a point seven four percent increase in sales tax was projected, a check came in that was over 15% increase. So that would leave us to then what? Change the sales tax for 20 -- in 2016? I don't know how that would be addressed.

Another issue is certain lines that are in the omnibus resolution were reduced. One of them, heat, light and power. We are in the process of working with DPW. We're going to have to lay a resolution on the table to increase that line. So, again, that line is incorrect. How would that be addressed in the multiyear plan?

You know, the way the sales tax is, we can barely project next year. How would we be expected to project 2018 and 2019? I would bring you back to 2012, which was the disastrous year and the sales tax coming in at over almost 7%. If I put that in the multiyear plan at that year, you -- I don't think that that would have been approved at all. I don't think anybody would have expected that. We didn't expect that.

So I think that there are -- you know, there are just several things in here that -- that are just -- they're just impossible. It would be impossible for us to do. This is the plan. This is the -- this is the timeframe in my hand of the plan. It's near impossible to fit that in and do the Operating Budget, the Capital Budget, the College Budget, the four borrowings a year where

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we -- the office updates the official statements, the 10,000 plus requisitions we process every year, the budget transfers, conference attendance, travel requests. I mean it's -- it just adds this additional layer on top of what this office already does.

We also do something called the volume three that comes in 45 days after the Budget is adopted, which lays out the top 25 budget drivers and compares us to the five counties. I don't think anybody really pays attention to this. I never get a question. And, again, hours and hours of work for what purpose?

So, I just ask you to, you know, please consider, you know, what is the purpose of this; what is the reliability of the estimates that are going to be included? Other than just to -- to just have a continual, you know, 12-month budget process, just constantly running around after these budgets. And by the Charter, we do -- we do have to give you a multiyear budget plan and we do do that in April of every year. We appear before this body during Budget and Finance. And we give you our projections. And we tell you what the issues are. What I would ask from you is what are -- what are some of the solutions to that? I mean we, you know, we lay out the issues constantly.

Also Legislator Krupski has a bill with -- that passed last year that we meet four times a year; that four financial heads meet four times a year. We come before you with a report, again, going over the issues. I mean, at this time I think my time is better focused on the current budget issues than having to project three years from now. So that's really -- I would -- I would really appreciate the support.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Legislator Stern.

### **LEG. STERN:**

If I may, Mr. Chair, and I recall, we all do, you know, Legislator Krupsky's initiative to have the financial heads, you know, meet on an ongoing basis. What would be -- what's the difference in the vision here between what you'd like to see happen as a part of this process as opposed to those that are responsible on a day-to-day basis with not just the daily budgeting but the long-term budgeting as well? What are some of the significant differences that you see there?

### **LEG. CILMI:**

Sure. So the -- you may recall that Legislator Krupski's bill, which was passed by this Legislature, was, in fact, almost an exact duplicate, if not an exact duplicate, of a bill that I had sponsored previously, which didn't pass the Legislature. I'm glad that it did. Ultimately what his bill does, though, is it asks this group of financial leaders in the County to assess the County's financial position those four times a year in terms of the snapshot of what it is then and there.

This plans for the future. This bill would require us to plan for the future and would require us to put those plans on paper. And it would require us to update those plans on a semi-annual basis such that, as our Budget Director indicated, there are changes that occur throughout the course of a year. Sales tax comes in a little less than expected, a little more than expected. Maybe an expense item comes in a little more or less than expected. This allows us to update our projections on a semi-annual basis to flex with those -- with those changes.

And while, you know, we can talk about how difficult that may be, the fact is once it's all in the computer, it becomes very, very simple to do from a technological point of view. Because all the formulas are in the computer and it just requires when you have one or two line items that -- that differ substantially from your original estimates when you do the budget, you just go in and plug those things in there and you spit out a new report. And you have to then adjust accordingly, which is what we should be doing as a county; and to some extent is what we do now as a county.

So this is quite a bit different than Legislator Krupski's bill. His bill kind of allows us to look four

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times a year at a snapshot in time. This looks to the future and says, *okay, we're making these budgetary decisions now. How does that impact us, two, three years down the road?*

And as we've seen with our budget, we could be wrong. You know, we adopt -- we adopt a budget every year. And in many cases our estimates are wrong. And they will continue to be wrong. They'll continue to be wrong in the budget process. They'll be wrong, I'm sure, to some extent with this semiannual adjustment, but at least it allows us to look three years out and get a sense, at least, of what we're facing a couple years down the road.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Legislator Trotta, please go ahead.

### **LEG. TROTТА:**

I think Miss Corso made the argument for it, using her -- the logic, that's the reason you would want it. Because if I'm doing the budget on my house and I have kids that are going to college, I want to know what my costs are going to be down the road. So that two or three years from now I know that I'm going to have these extra bills coming in. You know, every 200 cops that retire, it's \$60 million. So that's going to be happening over the next few years. It would be irresponsible for us not to be looking at that two or three years down the road.

So this is like, you know, sort of a no-brainer. I would assume you were doing something like this already. Because we're going to have hundreds of millions of dollars above and beyond our contractual obligations and retirements that no one seems to care about. And from my point of view sitting here, it's not getting any better. It's actually getting worse. So I think it's irresponsible that we don't do this.

Your argument is for it. I mean, your logic is saying -- you're making the argument for it because we can't predict. We can't predict if we don't predict at all. If we don't know what's coming up two or three years from now, if we don't survey the retirements of the people, and how much is this going to cost us, we're bound to fail.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Trotta. Legislator Stern.

### **LEG. STERN:**

Yeah, question. At this point are you aware of any other -- I mean, what do -- what do other counties do? What do other jurisdictions, what do other states, for that matter, do when it comes not just to an annual budget from year to year but this type of long term planning?

### **MS. CORSO:**

Well, NYSAC is in the process of doing a survey. And so far out of the 21 counties, two counties do a multiyear plan. I thought it was three, but the Ontario County only does a multiyear on -- they do an operating and capital so that capital section of their budget is multiyear.

So the two that do it are Nassau County, which this is Nassau County's (referring). And Erie County, which this is Erie County's (referring), just a few pages. And I think it's very important to know that both of these counties only do it because they're under Financial Control Board.

### **LEG. STERN:**

There are quite a few more counties than the 21 in --

### **MS. CORSO:**

Yeah, they're not done with the survey. Twenty-one out of the 62 so far. So I'll give you the update. I don't know what the other ones are.

**LEG. STERN:**

It's an ongoing survey.

**MS. CORSO:**

It's an ongoing survey, yeah.

**LEG. STERN:**

Do you have --

**MS. CORSO:**

Those were the -- those were the --

**LEG. STERN:**

-- timeline on that?

**MS. CORSO:**

I'm not sure, but I'll let you know. I got a few this morning so they just keep coming in from NYSAC.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Just to -- to Legislator Stern, you may -- you may want to go to the New York State Comptroller's website. He devotes an entire section of his website to multiyear budgeting and provides counties and municipalities with tools and frequently asked questions and answers about some of the issues that our Budget Director brought up. But clearly his office makes the point that it's important to do; the Government Accountability Office makes it clear that it's important to do. And while I don't have the long list in front of me here of other municipalities that do this, there are many throughout the country. And I would argue that the two counties that do it, while Connie may be right and they are two counties that are under the control of fiscal control boards, maybe had they done this prior, they wouldn't be under the control of fiscal control boards.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

I doubt it.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Bottom line, Mr. Chairman, is that while this doesn't change the budgetary realities that we face, it exposes them. And we can only address them if they're exposed.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Well, I --

**LEG. CILMI:**

I for one don't want to be sitting here two years from now, three years from now, whenever, five years from now as a new County Executive potentially takes office; and that County Executive come to us and make this sort of announcement that our current County Executive made to us after he took office, that we are in \$400 million of deficit and, you know, a month or two later it was \$500 million of deficit and a month or two after that it was \$560 million of deficit. I mean at that point if that's going to happen two years from now, I'd like to have the -- have the knowledge now so that we can take steps to prevent that from happening.

And I know the steps, we've talked about different options. And as I've said in the past, we have done things to reduce our -- the financial challenges that face us. But as I've said in the past, some of these challenges we face are the result of mandates that come down to us from particularly the

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State government. And unless we make it clear that today and into the future we cannot afford those things, we're going to continue to face those -- those types of mandates.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Thank you. Question to BRO, Dr. Lipp, does the County have or does your office have any responsibility for projecting past the current year or the current budget cycle?

**MR. LIPP:**

So as Connie was speaking about, that we do a forecast typically in April going through the next budget year, so April, most recent April 2015 well before the Recommended and Adopted Budgets have come out, we did a projection through 20 -- the end of 2016 as to if there's a shortfall, we would have to raise X dollars or -- in terms of additional revenue or cut --

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Right, I mean that -- that presentation is made here in April.

**MR. LIPP:**

So that's basically it right now. In terms of multiyear budgeting beyond that, what I could say is internally, in my office, we go out further than 2016 at April 2015 to get a feel for whether or not things are going to get less or more dicy.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Right.

**MR. LIPP:**

But that isn't formally discussed at all in the deliberations that we have when we present our budget because it's not a requirement, but it's something that I personally take a look at.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So when you're here with the Budget Office in April making that presentation, that is for the current year that we're in, and then the following.

**MR. LIPP:**

Exactly.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Is that right?

**MR. LIPP:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. So you're looking ahead past the end of the current year and you're looking to what's coming in the next budget cycle.

**MR. LIPP:**

Correct.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Thank you for that.

Connie, I wanted to ask you a couple of questions. So in your position on this bill, I think what I hear you saying is that, one, you feel that the three-year projection would simply just be unreliable or is it that you just can't make the projections? What's the reasoning why you can't go out three years?

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**MS. CORSO:**

It would have no utility. It would be speculative. It would be misleading. It would be wrong right out of the box.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Have you found in the past that even in the current budget when we make projections that they're not accurate?

**MS. CORSO:**

Correct.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Do you think it would be more difficult to make those projections three or four years ahead of time?

**MS. CORSO:**

Correct.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Now, you talked about this four times a year. Legislative Cilmi calls that a snapshot. Do you agree that it's a snapshot or is it just looking at the budget and where we're headed?

**MS. CORSO:**

It looks where we're headed. It gives you an idea of where we're headed.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

I want to talk a little bit about the timing in this particular bill. The way I read it is, you have to start the process somewhere. So let's say we pass our budget, as we just did on November 4th. If this procedure were in place right now, then the County Executive's Office would be doing what, adjusting the three-year plan?

**MS. CORSO:**

I would -- I would be adjusting the three-year plan.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Based upon --

**MS. CORSO:**

Based upon the omnibus resolution and whatever's happened in the last six to eight weeks.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Now, what if your office doesn't agree with what the Legislature put in the omnibus, what happens to that three-year plan? How would that be reconciled?

**MS. CORSO:**

I would have to put in the ideas for -- I'd have to identify the gap and then give the gap closing idea.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So that would come back --

**MS. CORSO:**

And then you'd come back and say you liked it or you didn't like it.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

It would be, in effect, a separate budget process for --

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**MS. CORSO:**

Another budget process.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Right. Now -- so the County Executive would adjust the three-year plan. That would then come back to the Legislature. We would have to now look at this three-year budget.

**MS. CORSO:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Figure out whether we agree a hundred percent or not agree and what changes we want to make.

**MS. CORSO:**

Right.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Then we would vote on that.

**MS. CORSO:**

Yep. Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Then it would be -- would it be subject to veto?

**MS. CORSO:**

No.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. So then that would be the final word on the three-year plan.

**MS. CORSO:**

On the three-year plan.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. So that would bring you into what, the next year, I guess?

**MS. CORSO:**

December 31st.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

For the end of the year.

**MS. CORSO:**

End of the year.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Right. And then the next thing that happens is in July, I believe.

**MS. CORSO:**

Right.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

What happens --

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**MS. CORSO:**

Actually the bill is a little confusing. One section says June 30th. The other one says July 31st.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay, well, let's just --

**MS. CORSO:**

So say it's July.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Around there.

**MS. CORSO:**

So in the middle of us really meeting with all the departments, doing the hearings, getting everything together, now I have to give an update of the three-year plan. So I will be working on that --

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

What do you mean? You mean, you would have to formally update the three-year plan and present it back to the Legislature?

**MS. CORSO:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

In June or July.

**MS. CORSO:**

In August. Well, June -- and then you have 60 days to look at it.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

And when do you present the budget to the Legislature?

**MS. CORSO:**

Third week in September.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So this would, in effect, be happening at the same time?

**MS. CORSO:**

Right. So you theoretically -- so if we were doing it right now, you'd have the 2017 budget in August in July. You -- what would be -- you're really kind of mitigating the whole budget process.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Explain that to me. In other words --

**MS. CORSO:**

So you would have -- you would have your three-year plan, right? So you'd have --

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

The three-year plan would cover the current -- the year that's coming up in the budget process.

**MS. CORSO:**

Coming up in the budget process.

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**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So you could have two different documents addressing the same budget process?

**MS. CORSO:**

Yes. And immediately because I wouldn't really have any policy decisions, we really don't do anything until we get that final -- you know, we wait 'til the third quarter adjustment check in August to make a lot of the major policy decisions. So right off the bat, you know, four weeks after this is submitted, it's incorrect.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

I've often found in my experience when you submit in September, by the time we're looking at that in October, it's -- things can radically change as far as the financial revenues, what anticipated expenses mandate -- whatever it is. But yet we would still be doing in June or July the same projections on the three-year plan.

**MS. CORSO:**

That's correct.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Right. Do you think that -- what -- you know, what's the useful purpose of doing that?

**MS. CORSO:**

I don't know. Fodder? I mean, I don't -- if there's -- I already was before you in April.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Would it help -- would it help you in the Budget Office to look at those projections in June or July? I mean, are you looking at them already when you're --

**MS. CORSO:**

Of course. Lou, I look at the projections everyday, every week, every month.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Right.

**MS. CORSO:**

I am constantly looking at the revenues and the expenses, constantly bringing things -- things forward. What I really need is solutions. I really don't need another report to tell us where we are financially. We need solutions is what we really need.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Well, I agree with you there. And I think everyone here agrees that we want to find solutions, but right now we're just talking about, you know --

**MS. CORSO:**

Right.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

-- does it make sense to not only look at the current procedure we have to put a budget in place every year, where our Budget Office looks a year in advance, you look a couple years in advance, but it's not memorialized in a document that we have to debate and review 365 days a year. And I'm just trying to understand how that might be helpful even to the budget -- BRO.

**MS. CORSO:**

Right. I mean, I think another -- I think another thing that may help you is that four times a year we -- the Budget Office is updating the County's official statements. And in those official

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statements you have to disclose everything. You have to -- you have to say where you are in your expenses, your revenues, what's vulnerable, what's not. And we also do that four times a year. If you -- you get a copy of it. If you read that, you'll see that, you know -- you know, where we are.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So the projections looking forward that perhaps might be contemplated by this three-year plan is already being done.

**MS. CORSO:**

It's already being done theoretically. To the extent that it's useful, it's useable --

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

It's your office's position.

**MS. CORSO:**

Right.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

It's not done in the sense that it's debated and the Legislature's reviewing it and agreeing or disagreeing.

**MS. CORSO:**

Correct. How would you -- how would you disagree with me if I put a 3% increase in sales tax in 2019? How are you going to disagree with me? On what basis?

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

I don't know that I would have a sufficient basis to either agree or disagree with that.

**MS. CORSO:**

I mean, we have had -- we have had all of these storms of the century, the snow of January of last year, Superstorm Sandy, all these things have affected the budget in ways that I don't think anyone could have predicted.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

So we, in effect, in your view, have a never-ending budget cycle and debate over numbers that are unreliable anyway.

**MS. CORSO:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

All right. Thank you.

**MS. CORSO:**

Thank you, Lou. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

So, I'm not quite sure I can synthesize what you're trying to communicate here, Connie. On one hand you're saying that you're already doing this; on another hand you're saying that you can't do it; on one hand you're saying that it's going to take too much time; on the other hand you're saying you're already doing it. On one hand you're saying that the current budget, as it stands, is almost worthless because it's inaccurate. And you're saying that a process by which you look three years

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out would be even more inaccurate. We know the deficits that we're facing. We know the potential for future deficits that exist. I don't really understand what -- how you can argue against this.

**MS. CORSO:**

I don't understand what utility you think it will bring.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Well, how can you not understand the value of planning? I don't get how you don't understand the value of planning.

**MS. CORSO:**

How --

**LEG. CILMI:**

And the value of this body being in on that planning.

**MS. CORSO:**

I think I laid out a pretty good argument.

**LEG. CILMI:**

If you -- if you fail to plan, then you obviously plan to fail. And that's what's happening here. You can quote me on that. I just made that up.

Can I ask through the Chair, can I ask Budget Review, Robert, you said you -- you sort of do this internally. You plan out into the future beyond the next year's budget cycle. Why do you do that?

**MR. LIPP:**

So I have an idea or a sense that we're -- whether we're doing better or worse and the magnitude of that.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Right. So you do it because it's basically prudent to do it.

**MR. LIPP:**

Yeah, that's one way you can look at it. Yes, I'll say.

**LEG. CILMI:**

I mean when you're -- when you're -- when you're sitting at your kitchen table trying to decide whether or not to invest in a new kitchen, do you not look at your finances over the next three or four or five or ten years and say, "okay, well, let's see, I have one kid coming out of school. My mortgage is paid at the end 2020", you know, you think about all those things and those enter into your decision --

**MR. LIPP:**

That would be --

**LEG. CILMI:**

-- making.

**MR. LIPP:**

That would be prudent.

**LEG. CILMI:**

That would be prudent. And that's all that I'm suggesting that we do here as a county. This is not going to cement us into a plan that's unworkable. All it's going to do is expose certain realities that

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we should be aware of on an ongoing basis. And to not do that, as Legislator Trotta said, would be totally irresponsible.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Legislator Trotta.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Yeah, to Dr. Lipp. Just explain to me why you do this again.

**MR. LIPP:**

I believe I said that I wanted to get a sense of well -- what -- how we're doing down the road and whether or not, you know, we'll be doing better or worse and the magnitude.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

And what are you seeing?

**MR. LIPP:**

Well, when I did it last, it was in April, okay, several months ago. And I haven't looked at it since. That being said, I believe what I saw was the problems would be mitigated somewhat; in other words, we would still be having an increasing structural deficit, but it would be going up at a declining rate.

That being said, that was based upon well before the recommended or adopted budget now. And I guess a more rosy look, shall I say, than we have now about sales tax. So I'd -- you know, I'd want to update that before I could give you a sense about what the future looks like now.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

So what you're saying is that that was when the sales tax predictions were higher and you still see the structural deficit growing, getting bigger but at a slower rate than what it was.

**MR. LIPP:**

Right. Well, you know, and I would say also that there are a lot of other factors other than sales tax so, you know, it's hard to say that whether or not the projections that I could come up with would be better or worse once we looked at all of those things.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Well, back in April, our projections were higher and we came in a lot lower; correct?

**MR. LIPP:**

You're talking about the sales tax?

**LEG. TROTТА:**

Yes, in sales tax.

**MR. LIPP:**

And the point I'm trying to make is that there are other items in the budget than the sales tax so it's hard to say unless I re-compiled on the forecast whether or not we'd be doing better or worse than this past April.

**LEG. TROTТА:**

The point I'm trying to bring out is that the sales tax revenue back then was rosier. We thought we were going to have more money.

**MR. LIPP:**

Correct.

**LEG. TROTTA:**

Now we have substantially less money.

**MR. LIPP:**

Correct.

**LEG. TROTTA:**

So I'm assuming your projection while it was going to -- our debt was going to increase, it was a slower rate so it might be at the same rate or maybe even higher. But that will give you the ability to see -- now if you looked at next year, now you look at how much contractual obligations we have. I'm not so concerned about the revenue side. I'm talking about the cost side. Because once you know the cost side, you can make decisions about the revenue and what we have to do to either increase it or stabilize it or cut something. But to do that, again, you know, when you -- I'll use the kitchen analogy. If I'm -- before I do anything in my house, I analyze everything two, three years down the road on what I'm going to do. And I just can't see -- it's almost bizarre to me to think that this is not a good idea.

**MR. LIPP:**

That wasn't a question, right?

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Legislator Trotta, are you finished?

**LEG. TROTTA:**

I'm finished.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

All right. Well, I'm not going to support this bill. I don't agree with the characterization that it's totally irresponsible not to support this bill. I think on the other hand, it's not really responsible to have a 365-day-a-year budget cycle that all that -- the end product of which is an unreliable document. So I guess we have a difference of opinion on that.

There is a motion pending, to the Clerk, to approve? Has it received a second?

**MR. RICHBERG:**

Yes, it has.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Legislator Stern, did you want to speak?

**LEG. STERN:**

Yeah, just on the motion.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

And just for the record Monica -- I'm sorry -- Legislator Martinez made a motion to table.

**LEG. MARTINEZ:**

Yes

**LEG. STERN:**

Let me first say that in principle I agree. I think most, if not all, around this horseshoe would agree, that looking into the future in a substantial and meaningful way is critically important to the extent that we can.

I also agree with the point made in the editorial that Legislator Cilmi cites, that critically important

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issues need to be constantly and consistently considered as we make decisions not just once or twice a year but throughout the year on an ongoing way.

When I look at the legislation and I look at all of the time elements and the process that's involved, this might be the best way to do it. But it may not be and I just don't know that at this point. I find it pretty interesting and actually compelling that all of the counties throughout New York State are going through this analysis or self analysis or survey process right now. I would prefer to make an informed decision and at least have a look at what other municipalities and perhaps even what other states are doing and what best practices might be. Ultimately this might be the best practice, but I don't know that yet and I'm willing to take a look at other areas throughout New York State, those that are not necessarily under control boards to see what best practices might work.

I'm willing to take a look at that to make a more informed decision and I'm presuming at this point, Connie, since many of those municipalities have filed their reports, that that's -- that's a process that's going to come to an end sooner rather than later. So my guess here is that we might not have a true deadline, but at least that's something that's going to happen sooner rather than later and give us perhaps more information to take a look at.

Having gone through the budget process now, you know, for a decade, you know, I believe that I know enough to know at this point that it's not just as easy as plugging numbers in. It never is. And whether it is a year where you can predict somewhat what's going to happen from one year to the next or another set of years where you're going to have natural disasters that have a profound impact for years to come on our residents, or whether we are going through a cycle of national recession that has a dramatic impact on our sales tax revenue, these are not necessarily things that could be predicted.

But I think overall, what I would like to see here is not just process, although I agree and with the need for process, but if we're going to be looking out into the future, I would like to see a procedure that we adhere to, that we all participate in, where we're really looking at -- at not just the big picture in terms of numbers, but a vision for what Suffolk County government is going to look like going forward.

I mean big, critically-important decisions have to be made sooner rather than later. Many of those decisions are going to be based on the information that's gleaned from a process such as this one. But we also, I think, have a feel at this point for the fact that we live in a new reality and that -- and that big decisions need to be made in order to help ensure that Suffolk County is set on the right course going forward. So I would hope that any process that we do ultimately come up with is not just one of process, but one that engages all the members of this Legislature as the policymaking arm of this government, to begin in an ongoing way the dialogue that needs to take place in order to make many of those important decisions.

I guess here what I would like to see as a part of any process that is -- or may be adopted going forward, that big policy decisions are made at a time not necessarily when we have to make a decision based on budgetary numbers for the year. That needs to be an ongoing discussion done in a formal way at other times during the year. Because I would suggest that at that point if we are making big policy decisions that are made throughout the year, then we're not in a position to have to make those big critically-important policy decisions because they have to be made by a certain date that is -- that puts us in a position to have to make those kinds of meaningful decisions based on numbers that, you know, might materialize within a snapshot in time.

I think that there is a way to do that. I think that we need to look at best practices and come up with a process that is not only one that we can make happen given who we have to help with that process both on the Executive side as well as the legislative side, but one -- but a process that is going to bring the most value to us going forward. That's what I would like to see in this kind of a procedure as we formulate it going forward.

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So, Legislator Martinez, if you're making a motion to table, I'll second the motion to table with the idea that I agree with many of the points that Legislator Cilmi is making. And, you know, I would like to continue the dialogue on what the best process might be to accomplish those goals taking into account that it's not just about plugging in numbers, but about making big policy decisions along the way; and one that takes into account perhaps the best practices that might be -- that might be out there along the way.

### **CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Stern. Just to respond to that a little bit, you know, I don't really need to know what other counties are doing in order to make a decision on this bill. And I agree with you about making big decisions, but, you know, we face that -- those critical junctures when we do our budget every year. You know, do we make the big decisions? I don't think we make them big enough given the state of the County's fiscal position right now. And I just don't see how overlaying another entire budget cycle onto the current budget cycle is going to solve problems, make us make better decisions, make us make different decisions. We already go through this every year. We already have the fiscal state of the county finances presented to us every year. We know what the problems are. We know where we're headed. We know what big decisions need to be made. You know, I think this is just a kind of like what I like to call a make-work-bill; just do more work, put it on a piece of paper, that tells us nothing that we don't already know. And I just -- I'm not going to support the tabling motion either.

Legislator Martinez.

### **LEG. MARTINEZ:**

Thank you. Hi, Connie. Good morning.

### **MS. CORSO:**

Good morning.

### **LEG. MARTINEZ:**

So just going back to the bill 1507 where the financial leaders meet, Connie, if you could just advise me when was the last time that the committee met if you have that info?

### **MS. CORSO:**

I know that we're meeting next Friday. And we met prior to the budget in September, right? August.

### **MR. LIPP:**

Right. And we issued two reports already. And the next meeting, which will be a week from Friday, I think, what we'll be doing is selecting independent outside auditor. And if time permits there were several action items that I had on my mind that we would also include on the agenda. And then whatever transpired in that meeting, we would write a memo. And, you know, I was the chair of the -- that committee this year. And it was a change so it was a little -- a little difficult to, you know, try to figure out exactly what we need to do. And I will gladly say that next year Connie will be the chair of that committee.

### **MS. CORSO:**

Yes. So if there's anything you'd like to be addressed, you may forward an e-mail to me and I'll put it on the agenda.

### **LEG. MARTINEZ:**

How exciting. Thank you. So at these meetings I'm going to say that the projections are also discussed as to where we will be; yes?

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**MS. CORSO:**

Absolutely.

**LEG. MARTINEZ:**

Okay. I agree with both Legislator Stern and Legislator Cilmi, the principle of this and what we're trying to do. And I would actually like to sit down, too, with you, Connie, just to discuss -- I think I would like a full report on exactly where we are and hopefully find certain solutions to the problems that we are encountering. But as Vice Chair of this Committee, I would like more information, too, of how the process actually, you know, moves forward. So I would appreciate that.

**MS. CORSO:**

I look forward to sitting down with you.

**LEG. MARTINEZ:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay. Thank you, Legislator Martinez. Anyone else on the motion? All right, to the Clerk, there's a motion pending for tabling and for approving; is that correct?

**MR. RICHBERG:**

Yes, and both have seconds.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay, very good. I'll call the tabling motion first. All in favor of tabling? Opposed to table? (Indicating opposed)

**LEG. TROTТА:**

(Indicating opposed)

**LEG. CILMI:**

(Indicating opposed)

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Did you get that? If you're opposed, raise your hand; opposed to tabling, please.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay, three opposed.

Okay, there is a motion to approve. The motion to table is defeated. There is a motion now to approve before the Committee. All in favor?

**LEG. CILMI:**

(Indicating in favor)

**LEG. TROTТА:**

(Indicating in favor)

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Opposed? (Indicating opposed)

**LEG. MARTINEZ:**

(Indicating opposed)

**LEG. STERN:**

(Indicating opposed)

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay, the motion does not pass and the bill is defeated.

**(VOTE: TABLING MOTION: 2-3-0-0 / APPROVAL MOTION: 2-3-0-0)  
BILL IS DEFEATED**

**INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

Next Resolution is **Resolution 1834 of 2015, Amending the 2015 Operating Budget and appropriating funds in connection with bonding for a settlement for a liability case against the County. (Co. Exec.)** This bill appropriates 1.5 million to settle a negligence action against the County and was approved by the Ways and Means Committee in Executive Session. I will offer a motion to approve.

**LEG. STERN:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Second by Legislator Stern. Anyone on the motion? Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Did we -- what did we do in the budget, in the 2016 budget in terms of cash for settlements? Was that fund increased, decreased?

**MR. LIPP:**

I'd have to look at the -- I'd have to look at a few things. I don't have it on me, but I will say, though, for the -- the way we adopt the budget for the self-insurance fund, fund 38, is we don't adopt any dollars for bonding. And those are changed during the year as resolutions such as this come to us. I don't know what else to tell you right now.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Could you, Robert, when you have a moment, would you let me know, and maybe the whole committee wants to know, in two thousand and -- well, I guess, in 2014, let's say, and in 2015 to date, what the total amount of settlements has been and sort of, if you could, try and categorize those by, you know, motor vehicle accidents, settlements or whatever else, Worker's Comp settlements, etcetera.

**MR. LIPP:**

Okay, so I will e-mail the whole Committee.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Okay. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

You're good, Tom?

**LEG. CILMI:**

U-huh.

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**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Let's just remember, we need to go back to that first resolution.

Okay. If there's no more discussion, there is a motion to approve that's received a second?

**MR. RICHBERG:**

Yes, sir.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

I'll call the vote. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Next is Resolution **1908, To readjust, compromise, and grant refunds and charge-backs on real property correction of errors by: County Legislature. (Control Number 1015-2015). (Co. Exec.)** This is control number 1015 of 2015. I'll offer a motion to approve and place on the Consent Calendar; second by Legislator Martinez. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? That motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0/CONSENT CALENDAR)**

And let's go back now to **1621 of 2016**, this is **Approving 2015 Funding for a Contract Agency (Babylon Village Youth). (McCaffrey)**, which is the Babylon Village Youth. Legislator Cilmi?

**LEG. CILMI:**

Yeah, so Legislator Trotta made a motion to approve. I'll second the motion at this point and I'll read the Committee very, very brief text conversation I just had with sponsor, Legislator McCaffrey in which I asked "do you want 1621 approved?" He said "yes." I said "are there issues that were resolved?" He said "yes, they amended their 990 filing with the IRS which brings the administrative cost below 20%. Comptroller agrees with these new calculations."

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Excellent. Thank you for following up on that. So the word is from the sponsor that the Comptroller and the agency have worked together and they've now brought their expenses on the form 1990 below the 20% threshold, which is good news. Is there a motion? Did you make a motion?

**LEG. CILMI:**

Yeah, well, Legislator Trotta made a motion. I second.

**CHAIRPERSON D'AMARO:**

Okay, very good. I'll call the vote. All in favor? Opposed? Abstention? Motion carries. That resolution is approved. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

And there's no further business before the Committee, we are adjourned. Thank you.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 10:58 AM  
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**