BEFORE: SHELDON SHRENKEL, CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SAMUEL LITTMAN, ESQ.
JOEL BERSE
JEAN DUROSEAU
LIVIO TONY ROSARIO
AARON WATKINS-LOPEZ
DAWN FALCO

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CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Would everybody please take their seat? Thank you very much. Welcome, welcome to the first public hearing today for the Nassau County Bus Transit Committee. We have another public hearing tonight scheduled at 6:00. First to remind myself and can you please put your cell phones on vibrate. Thank you.

I'm Sheldon Shrenkel. I'm the chairman of the committee. I would like to introduce our members of the committee. To my far left is Dawn Falco.

MS. FALCO: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Aaron Watkins-Lopez.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Tony Rosario.

MR. ROSARIO: Good afternoon.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Jean Duroseau. Mr. Joel Berse. Counsel for the committee, Mr. Sam Littman. Thank you, Kathleen Anderson, for taking the

minutes of our public record. By a show of hands, for the committee members, I would like an acknowledgment of receipt of the transcript of our meeting of December 8, which was a public hearing?

(All members raise hands.)

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Please record the minutes unanimously?

I would like an acknowledgment of receipt of the Title VI, Service Equity Analysis found in the book here, together with an acknowledgement of receipt of customer comments within the package.

(All members raise hands.)

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. Everybody all set up over there?

MR. LITTMAN: Mr. Chairman, the record should reflect that all the members indicated that they received a copy.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Yes. Thank you.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Try moving the microphone over here a little bit.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: You still can't hear me? Thank you. This is such a small room most of the time I don't even use a microphone and everyone hears me.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Sometimes you have people with hearing disabilities.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We will try to use the microphone and if any committee members need the microphone, it seems like they are all close to one.

This afternoon, our agenda is to first hear a presentation by the CEO of NICE Transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer. After which we will give virtually everyone an opportunity to speak, to hear the public comments concerning Mr. Setzer's presentation and/or your comments otherwise concerning NICE Transportation. We do ask in these public comments that we have rules and the rule is, we have a three minute rule, and we have two public hearings today, so please think about what you have to say, so that you can say it in three minutes and the same rules will apply to any
public officials, who may attend the
hearing, whether it's this afternoon or
this evening. So with that, I would like
to introduce the chairman of NICE
Transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer.

MR. SETZER: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman, and good afternoon, members of
the committee. I would like to welcome
everybody from the public and see some of
our elected officials here and I very
much appreciate your interest and your
participation in this.

I would like -- the agenda, as you
mentioned, includes a budget presentation
but we've got a proposal to change
service. I have a couple of other items
that I would like to cover quickly that
aren't strictly speaking budget items,
but they do bear on the budget a little
bit, tangentially at least. The first is
I would also like to report on the
weather last week, as you recall on
Thursday we had a pretty fair snowstorm
on top of a slight coating of ice and it

really affected bus service. We ended up
beginning to curtail service midday and
had all of the service in off the street
about 6:00 PM that night. Lots of
accidents, 17 of them, none of them
serious, no injuries, that's good, but it
taught us a lesson about how challenging
it is to operate in the snow. The day
before it was like April, and that's what
you see in this picture. That was the
kickoff day for the Everyone Rides NICE
Organization. Everyone Rides NICE is a
not-for-profit corporation. It's
separate from NICE Bus. It's funded with
a million-two from Transdev, and it's
purpose is to distribute free MetroCards
to low income people through several
agencies that are in touch with their
clients. So in this picture you see our
partner, the United Way of Long Island,
who administers this program with us.
And who distributes the free MetroCards
to the six agencies whose logos appear on
the screen right now. Eventually there

actually help our efficiency a little
bit. We'll use them on the Route 6 which
is the busiest route in the system. They
will be full immediately. They provide a
little improvement in efficiency, in that
the most of the cost of operating a bus
is the professional driving that bus,
when he or she has 60 seats behind him
instead of 40 seats, it's just a more
efficient operation, so it also bears
very tangentially on the 2017 budget, so
I wanted to bring them up just as news
items for you. We also have our regular
quarterly review of the key performance
indicators. These are the indicators
that are specified by the contract.
Three of them for fixed route and five of
them for Paratransit. We look at them
each quarter and we've set goals which
you see in the second column and then if
the actual performance is either five
percent more or five percent less than
the established goal, then something
happens, either we earn an incentive or
we owe you, we owe the county liquidated damages in the amount of $5,000. So this is the year end report. I will just go over it real quickly. On-time performance of a fixed route, goal 70 percent, we're hitting right around 70 percent. Next month we're going to do a more detailed presentation on on-time performance because it is actually getting significantly better through some of the technology that we have discussed in the past. The second goal is missed pullouts on fixed routes. The goal is to have none, we are close to none. No -- not enough to reach the five percent threshold, so there is neither a liquidated damage nor an incentive there. And we have the safety goal accidents per hundred thousand miles of 1.20 accidents per hundred thousand miles. We just barely made that goal this year, but we did make the goal, so again, no incentives or no liquidated damages. Paratransit, there are five different goals. The first one is calls answered ratio, 90 percent, we missed that goal, so we owe you a $5,000 liquidated damage payment for missing that goal. And on-time performance, however, we exceeded the goal of 70 percent by more than five percent, so we earn a $5,000 credit which we can use to pay that. Missed pullouts, goal is zero, it was actually a little bit higher because there was some fleet problems this year which are pretty much behind us now because of a new fleet, but it also doesn't rise to the five percent threshold. By the way, missed pullouts and Paratransit do not mean that a passenger was not carried. It means that a bus that was scheduled to go out the gate didn't at the right time, but those trips were then rescheduled on to other vehicles that were already in service, so it doesn't mean an abandoned passenger. Accidents per hundred thousand miles, again, the goal is 1.2, we beat that by a lot. By the end of the year we were under one, which earns us a $5,000 incentive credit. And the last thing, productivity passengers per hour 1.3, passengers per hour, we're right around that, either five percent over or under. So for the year the net was $10,000 credits earned by Transdev, which are just credits, it's not cash, those are credits that we can bank for a while to use, if we ever have to have something to pay liquidated damages. At some future meeting, this is our first full year of using these incentives, so at some future meeting when we don't have as much on the agenda, I would like to go over these in detail and we will consider whether those goals are too high or too low and how you might want to change them. But for now this just is with the fourth quarter year end report.

So now I would like to get into the main subject for today's meeting, that's the annual plan and budget for 2017. And there are some significant service changes associated, which I will ask you to consider later today. Let me update you to begin with. In December we had a meeting anticipating the 2017 budget and at that point you considered what was then a proposed $6.8 million dollar reduction in county funding, the budget hasn't been adopted yet or hasn't been approved. You also heard about some likely increases in our operating costs in 2017. We proposed a program of early service reductions to take place in January, last month, in order to get a head-start on the budget deficits that we had, and you rejected those, and we also reviewed the range of unknowns that we were dealing with at that time. This is the slide that was up on the screen about the unknown factors. The STOA, which is the State Operating Assistance, it's the largest single source of revenue for NICE Bus, was unknown at that time, the governor's budget had not been published. The legislature hadn't begun the budget
process. We also didn’t know what the
MTA was going to do with the MetroCard
charges which does have an effect on our
revenue. We also knew we were facing a
new collective bargaining agreement to
take effect in the spring of this year
and of course, at that time negotiations
hadn’t begun, so we didn’t know what
effect that would have on our costs,
still don’t, and there was not, at that
point, an approved 2017 county budget.
As you recall, probably the county was
going back and forth with NIFA and we
didn’t know for sure what the budget was
going to be.

Let’s update that a little bit. You
added another one. You also added the
potential of new money. You were
persuaded that there might be some new
money coming from some source before too
long, so that was, I think, that was the
primary basis for rejecting the changes.
Let’s update on all those unknowns.

STOA, at the governor’s budget has

been published in late January. There is
no increase of STOA for Nassau County or
any other transit system in the state.
Everyone was kept at the same level
except for the MTA, which actually went
down by a very small increment. Most
state programs were kept at the same
level as 2016. The STOA amount could
still change. It is possible. Because
the legislature hasn’t adopted the
budget, and as you probably know, the
process is the governor publishes the
executive budget, the legislature works
on it for awhile and comes back with
proposed changes and the governor either
accepts those or vetoes it and sends it
back. As of today there is no new money
in the state budget for Nassau County,
NICE Bus or any other bus in the state.

I have been to Albany several times since
then, it is a very difficult year to get
increases in the state budget in
anything. Most other state programs are
also zeroed out as far as increases, so
while that remains a possibility that
could change, it’s my view, at
least, that it’s very unlikely to change
in any significant way. Not enough to
solve our problem. We did get a
resolution on the MTA MetroCard rate,
they -- basically they raised the prices
of the MetroCard, and so there is nothing
that the BTC needs to do. We will garner
about 800,000 more fare box revenue as a
result of increases in the price of the
MetroCard. Don’t be confused, the base
fare stayed the same, but the discount on
the pay per ride cards was reduced, which
is effectively a price increase, and the
price of the seven and thirty day cards
actually went up, so we will get a little
bit of the benefit out of that. The new
collective bargaining agreement is no
where near resolution. Negotiations have
just begun. We had one meeting, so we
got no further information about what to
expect on the operating costs on it.
Since that time the county budget has

been approved by NIFA, and the $6.8
million dollar proposed reduction is
still there, and lastly there has been no
new money, though I visited with many
local and state legislators and I think
there’s a deep understanding and a full
concern for the effects that the current
funding will have on riders, there is no
new money. There is no new money around
which we build the budget. There are
some ideas, some thoughts, but nothing
that we can incorporate into the budget.
This is a slide, we all used to look at
it in the budget discussions in the very
beginning, this is the balanced budget, I
call it the balanced budget, this is
language from the contract which this is
adopted by law and it essentially says
that after all revenues have been
accounted for, it is our obligation at
NICE Bus to adjust the amount of service
hours to whatever revenue is available.
In other words, we have no method to
finance other than through the revenues
available to the county. We can't borrow money, we can't deficit finance, we can't print money, we are obligated to adjust service hours to the available revenue. So when we go to balance the budget, there are basically three ways you can do it, you can increase revenues, you can reduce non service costs and if those two aren't sufficient to maintain the level of service, you can reduce service or you must reduce service too. So I want to go through it in that order, I want to go through what the current situation looks like. And my thing just stopped. Sorry about that. It seized up here.

Here's the revenue outlook next year based on what we know today. Make this full screen. Sorry. Where are the technologies, stumbling.

So here's the revenue outlook based on some of the things we just talked about. Let's just go line by line. First line, STOA, State Operating Assistance, no change. It's the same amount as it was in 2016, which by the way, is the same amount it was in 2015, so three years in a row, $66,657,000. The next line Nassau County required STOA match, so this is the minimum local match in order to earn that in order to get that state money, so that remains at $2,539,000, again no change there.

Nassau County discretionary share, I would call it, goes from $6,751,000 to zero. This is the $6.8 million dollar reduction that I was talking about a minute ago. The MTA amounts are essentially formula, there is no opportunity to dramatically increase revenue from there. Passenger revenue, this is the one that may surprise you. Passenger revenue is going down. This is the net effect of the increase in the MetroCard rates and the loss of revenue that is associated with the service changes that I'm going to talk to you about in just a minute. One of the ironies or tragedies of using service levels to balance the budget, is that as you get rid of service expense, you also get rid of fare box revenue. After five years of trying to economize every place we could on service, the kinds of service that we have to eliminate now involves significant amounts of fare box revenue also. So to overly generalize, in order to get a million dollars savings, you have to get rid of $2,000,000 worth of service because you're also throwing away a million dollars worth of fare box revenue. We're in to that kind of service now and that's the real tragedy of doing this, and something that all of us at NICE Bus absolutely hate doing. We should be and could be and would be putting more service on the street to serve our customers if we could, but we're stuck with the available -- revenues available to the county. So the bottom line here is that the budget for last year of $130.5 million dollars goes down to $121.6 million dollars for 2017.
nine million dollars through 2010, and then in 2011 the battle starts and the MTA cancels service, and the county goes looking for a new operator. You can see how it suddenly begins to drop off. The orange columns represent county discretionary funding during the NICE Bus, the five years of NICE Bus, so you can see a little bit of it in 2012, that's the first orange column. None in 2013. A little bit comes back in '14, a little more in '15, quite a bit more in '16 and then in '17 right back down to 0. This looks a little bit like a roller coaster, and it is, I'm pointing this out just to be factual, this is not meant to be blaming or indicting or anything, but this is the worst possible way to run a business, I would say. You can't produce predictable, dependable services with this funding pattern, so eventually my plea to everybody, to every elected official, and everyone that I can get to listen, you got to disconnect us from the Nassau County general fund in the budget. We can't deliver what the county needs with that kind of funding cycle, and so some other funding method must be found in the future or we will be looking at this roller coaster again and again in future years.

So after you look at revenue, remember that chart, after you look at revenue, the next thing you look at are non service costs. So I'm very pleased to tell you that we have been able to find $5,000,000 in non service costs. The biggest chunk is in fuel. Now that fuel reduction consists of a number of things. Partly, it's playing the fuel market well. Right now the fuel market, I'm talking about natural gas, the natural gas market is fairly volatile, we have had some very good luck at locking in prices that are lower than last years. That's one component of this. The second component is that we propose in the service reduction, to also close one of our facilities, the Rockville Centre garage, the smaller fixed garage. There are some fairly expensive service contracts there that are associated with maintaining the compressed natural gas system and those show up in the fuel lines. So if we can close down one compressed natural gas facility and just use this one, we can save some money there. This one, a third element is that this one is, we currently have a grant to replace it with a newer, more efficient compressed natural gas facility and in doing that, we have the ability to operate it using some federal grant money for the first part of the year, so that also reduces the costs here and then we found a tax rebate program for using alternative fuels, compressed natural gas in our case and we are applying the tax rebates to this also, so we are able to drive down the fuel cost by $2.2 million dollars and that should be a fairly reliable reduction because we've been able to lock in some of those prices. The second part of this, I already mentioned, if we reduce service by at least 40 buses, then we can close the Rockville Centre garage and we can reduce personnel costs, and utility costs, and security costs that compressed natural gas service contract and some other things, we can save a million and a half in the remaining eight months of this year by closing that facility. That converts to about $2,000,000 next year if we remain a single garage, fixed route operation next year. And lastly we found some other miscellaneous savings equal to about 1.3. These involve, by the way, I don't want to go into a lot of detail because these involve some head count reductions which are pretty sensitive and pretty painful, but we believe that before we take anything out of service, we have to be able to say we've taken everything out of non service that we can. So here's $5,000,000 that
essentially offsets completely the natural inflation in operating costs that will take place next year, I'm sorry, this year. The natural inflation costs that will take place this year. Like any business where the primary costs are personnel costs, they go up year after year. We have a labor contract coming, I'm not prepared to tell you how that's going to come out, but it's probably not going to reduce our costs. So we've looked at revenues, we looked at non service costs, now we look at Able-Ride is, my recommendation is that we do nothing with Able-Ride. While the service cuts in fixed routes that I'm about to show you would make it legal for us to also reduce the Able-Ride service, I propose not to do that. And from a financial point of view, it might seem like we should, it's a very expensive service, ten percent of our customers -- one percent of our customers use ten percent of our budget, but those customers also are, in many cases, quite vulnerable and Able-Ride is the difference between being isolated from opportunity, from job opportunity and educational opportunity and being able to access those opportunities, so I believe we ought to save Able-Ride from any further -- from any reductions at all even though we could. I also believe that we should keep the Able-Ride fare the same for the reasons I was just talking about as well as the fact that Able-Ride fares contribute -- the financial effects of raising Able-Ride fares is de minimis, it wouldn't help with the $6.8 million dollar problem. It doesn't affect the budget immediately, but we are going to experiment this year with the use of taxis as a way to offset some of the Able-Ride costs. We don't know if that's going to work or that it's going to save us any money, but we entered into an agreement to begin experimenting with that, so during the year we will try this out and see if we can make Able-Ride more efficient by using taxis for non wheelchair trips, and we'll do it in a way that's at the discretion of the rider, would you just assume have a taxi, and if they would, then we will dispatch a taxi and using a taxi voucher, they will have vouchers, they will be able to underwrite the cost of the taxi ride. We will see if that works. So now we get into the really tough part here. In order to close this six million dollar, $6.8 million dollar gap, we must reduce the fixed route service. We've proposed here, as you will see, to completely eliminate ten routes. Some of these routes like the ones at the top of the list are very high subsidy routes, they carry very few people and therefore they're a very high subsidy. The first one carries about 35 trips a day, and for the $2.75 or whatever the amount is that the passenger pays, the taxpayer contributes over $36.00. For those 35 people, this is great service, but for the taxpayers, it's a very inefficient use of their tax dollars. At the bottom of the list, it's quite a different story, when we get down to the n57, we are talking about a service that's quite productive, it's fairly productive where the riders are paying 25 to 30 percent of the cost. So the taxpayers are getting a better deal, but still as we put routes in rank order, depending on their ridership and their -- the amount of tax subsidy they require and we go down until we get to 6.8 million, we end up with the n57. This is where it begins to get very painful to remove this service. This is valuable service that serves -- I think that carries about 600 trips a day. It's a small route, but it serves about 600 people a day. The subsidiaries are not bad. But the only alternatives to it are even less attractive or even worse. There are four routes where we propose to
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MR. SETZER: Thank you, 78, 79, excuse me. We also propose to reduce service on four routes, greater than 25 percent, 25 percent plus reduction, requires BTC approval.

UNKNOWN VOICE: What routes are those? It's hard for me to see because I'm visually impaired.

MR. SETZER: I will read them. So the routes that we propose to eliminate entirely are the Freeport shuttle; the Hicksville-Wantagh shuttle; the Rockville Centre shuttle; the n19, Freeport-Sunrise Mall; the n36, Lynbrook-Freeport; the n45, Bellmore-Roosevelt Field; the n47, Hempstead-Bellmore; n51, Roosevelt Field-Merrick; n57, Great Neck loop; and the n78, n79 Hicksville-Plainview. The routes where we propose 25 percent or more reductions are the Elmont shuttle; the n27, Roslyn-Glen Cove; the n77, 71, 72 and the n80, 81. These changes would go into effect April 9 of this year which is Sunday. That's -- and one comment I need to make is that there's a significant lead time to adding or removing services, we can't do it overnight. There are both public notice and labor contract provisions that require a pretty significant lead time, so the changes can't be implemented immediately which is one of the reasons I will be asking you to approve this so we can begin the work to make these reductions. If we postpone making the reductions until later in the year, then they have to be deeper. Then there's less time to garner those savings.

Here's what the reductions look like on a map. The blue lines are lines that are most -- I left one thing out. There are also adjustments in service that fall below the 25 percent threshold that do not require your approval, mostly on weekends, and so they're part of the route reduction program also, but don't require BTC approval. On the map here the lines in blue are mostly unchanged. They're lines that would get either no change or change below the 25 percent threshold. The ones in green are the ones that would remain, but would be changed by an amount greater than 25 percent, and the ones in red are the ones that would disappear altogether based on this proposal. So if we do all of those things, the revenue increases that we've been talking about, the non service reductions we talked about, and the service reductions, here's how the 2017 budget would compare with the 2016 budget. I like to go down these lines one by one. So operator wages go down because we are running a lot fewer hours of service, about ten percent fewer hours of service. Maintenance wages go down a little bit, and that's because we are still playing a bit of catch up with the maintenance and we are beginning to get some good results there, but we don't think we can really thin out the maintenance work force very much at all. There will be a little reduction, a natural one through attrition. Other ways a little bit of a reduction there, not very much there to be reduced. Some of those are associated with the Rockville Centre closing, if we close Rockville Centre, we don't need the same supervisory force there. Fringe benefits go down because of the reduction in head count. Services go down and fuel and lubricants go way down. This is all those four factors that I described before plus a reduction in mileage, gets us over a $3,000,000 reduction in the fuel and lubricant line. Parts and repairs, this is the one thing I really enjoy on this, we are beginning to significantly reduce our cost for miles for parts as our maintenance function gets better and better, so that's the main reason that's going down. Other
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materials and supplies stays about the same. Marketing and legal and other fees
go down. Utilities goes down and that's because the Rockville Centre
closing. Casualty and Liability stays pretty flat. Casualty and Liability, by
the way, is actually not this year's costs, so much as it is the cost of claims incurred in previous years. As you probably know it takes a long time for a claim to mature and be paid out, so every year we have to evaluate claim costs. The fact that it's staying flat doesn't mean we plan to have more accidents per hundred thousand miles, it means that claims that were incurred in previous years are -- generally go up over time as they work their way through the legal system. Leases and Rentals, nothing significant there or depreciation. Corporate Overhead goes down. Corporate Overhead is a figure that's a percentage of the total budget and Margin at Risk which is

profits before taxes, goes down a little bit, and also this figure has a -- as a percentage of the total budget, and additionally within the extension from the county of our contract, they post slightly lower levels on profit in amounts above $23,000,000, so I guess it doesn't really have much effect this year but it's there. So the total of those totals are the same ones you were looking at before, 130 million last clear, 121.6 million this year. This is the budget, that same data arranged as a pie chart, and I will go through this. This is driver's wages, this is maintenance wages, this is all the other wages and salaries and this is fringe benefits for all three of those groups, so as always two-thirds of the pie are people costs, that's the way the transit business is. The rest of these are various miscellaneous amounts, here's profit, here's overhead. And then these get converted into rates, into monthly and hourly rates, so because of the changes that we've recommended, assuming that we proceed with those, our monthly fixed fee goes down. Largely because of closing of Rockville Centre. The fixed fee covers those costs that don't vary with miles of hours of service. Our fixed rate, fixed route variable rate however, also goes down. This is something that hasn't happened before. This is the result of the $5,000,000 in savings that we can squeeze out of the operating budget before touching service levels. So the hourly rate for fixed route service is virtually unchanged, actually it's a few cents cheaper in 2017. Paratransit, we didn't find a lot of economies there, so the Paratransit rate goes up, but not by very much, 88 cents. So these are monthly and hourly rates that go with the $121 million dollar budget that we just described for you. Here's what actually happens to service hours, in fixed route it's about a ten percent reduction in service hours this year versus last year. That's a significant amount as you saw when you looked at the routes. In Paratransit, we're budgeting for essentially the same level of services that we provided this year. Paratransit demand actually went up in 2016, we are carrying more trips than we did in 2015, so we are assuming that that trend will continue in 2017. I would like to end with this, in spite of all these things that we just talked about which are hardly pleasant, not at all what we would like to be talking about, I think it's important to keep in mind that the NICE Bus project that the county and Transdev undertook together is still continuing to deliver significant benefits for the county and for riders. Our costs of delivering service is a lot lower than your previous provider. You see the numbers, an hour of fixed route service using MTA's current published rates for bus operation would be about $216.00 to
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our $141.00. Even another private operator like the Bee-Line in Westchester County which is a private company, it's been there for quite awhile, is about $40.00 an hour higher than our operating cost, so the net result of that over five years is $209 million dollars in savings. That's Nassau County L and B's numbers, not our numbers. $209 million dollars that you saved compared to the cost of operating under the MTA, and that really is a better way to think of that is $209 million dollars worth of service that's then preserved for the last five years that would have been gone otherwise.

So that's the end of my presentation. I would be happy to respond to questions or comments from the committee.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer, one of the things I was just contemplating about, I notice some of these routes, for example, go to Roosevelt Field, and the vendors of Roosevelt Field and the mall

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are not allocated, evidently they're not coming through for NICE Bus transportation and obviously there's some other interests who are looking to get some of those monies or those monies are reserved for other things, I won't go into that, but we all know that that's what it's about. Certainly I would like your approach of a dedicated budget, NICE transportation, particularly with the fact of percent increases that come up with your service contracts year after year, and try to avoid these kinds of crisis sessions and keeping the bus system going and perhaps increasing service. So back to my question on the corporate sector, what's your thoughts on this, and has anybody thought of it, would anybody want to do it?

MR. SETZER: Yes, there are some, I don't know about Simon Properties, but there are.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I just picked them.

Mr. Setzer, one of the things I was just contemplating about, I notice some of these routes, for example, go to Roosevelt Field, and the vendors of Roosevelt Field and the mall.

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itself, stand to lose revenue by virtual -- people not getting there.

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Has anybody thought of asking for grant money from corporations within Nassau County and I would particularly say, I guess, the Simon Company that owns Roosevelt Field?

UNKNOWN VOICE: Simon Properties is the name in Indiana.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Yeah, that's what I said. So has that ever been thought of, considered, is it out of the ordinary, is it something that you don't think you would want to do, you don't know if the county would ask for it, if the newspaper would publish it, because the corporate sector has a lot to lose?

MR. SETZER: That's right.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: And you can't raise fares, we are reducing service, we can't find money within the county, certain funds within the county, whether they're allocated or not, even if they
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say you should help us with this. I
don't think they would be -- just knowing
most retailers, I doubt that they would
be very interested in doing that, but it
certainly doesn't hurt to ask.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I would ask a

particular, like Simon, that's losing
revenues in people not coming.

MR. SETZER: Sure. And Simon also
depends on a lot of entry level workers,
or Simon's tenants, need lots and lots of
people at entry level pay rates to serve
their stores, to operate the stores and
provide all the services that a shopping
mall needs, so they may have even more of
an interest as an employer or as a
landlord to employers than they do as a
retailer. And if I could, you made a
comment at the end also about the
dedicated source of funding. I always
like to make the point, one of the
differences between NICE and most other
transit systems, cite the MTA, is that
they have a dedicated source, they have a

pretty good idea what next year's revenue
is going to be and they have some growth
built in it. For instance, they have the
payroll commuter tax, so even though
that's not certain, you can get a pretty
good idea what it's going to produce next
year, unlike our situation, we don't know
what the state is going to do and what
the county is going to do from year to
year and we are seven weeks into the
year and we still don't know. So there
is a real built-in challenge for NICE Bus
that most other systems don't have.

Every really successful transit system
around the country has a dedicated
source, it's a sales tax, it's an
employment tax, it's a -- something
that's built into legislation so that
they have a pretty good sense that there
will be money there next year, it will
grow a little bit and it is predictable.

We don't have any of this.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Small question,
this pilot taxi voucher?

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MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: What are you
allocating money for that, if any?

MR. SETZER: Not much. Jack, do
you?

MR. KHZOUZ: Can I hear the
question?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: The pilot taxi
voucher, did you allocate anything in the
budget for this?

MR. KHZOUZ: No, we are, at this
point, based upon our modeling, it is a
wash, in other words, the cost of
providing current Able-Ride service
versus the taxi service, we've zeroed out
each. We think, though, that as we look
at the model and understand the model,
that we will actually gain some savings,
but it's very difficult to model, because
it depends on the dead heads. It depends
on how many people are on a bus at one
time, how we can schedule those, so
that's why Mike referred to it or Mr.
Setzer referred to it as a pilot, we will
give it a two month window and see how
that performs.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: It could
surprise you, a lot of people could start
using that, it would cost money.

MR. KHZOUZ: We'll have to see how
we can mix and use the most efficient
routes and filter those rides directly.

MR. SETZER: If it's not at least
neutral, then we -- it probably won't go
on very long.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Committee
members?

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Just two
questions for you, Mr. Setzer. One, what
taxi company are you looking to start
this program with? Is there a specific
vendor you're looking to start the
contract with, have you got an RPF out or
have you already picked and chose?

MR. SETZER: We have been in
discussion with All Island Taxi.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Okay. And then
-- I want this very bluntly said, right
now, you filled the natural deficit that we had at the end of 2016, at this point what we are lacking is the $6.8 million dollars that the county has taken away from NICE Bus, I want that to be as clear as day for everyone.

MR. SETZER: That's correct. You're absolutely right.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: At this point it is not a structural issue with NICE Bus, but the fact that the county is not providing adequate funding for the bus service and that's why we cannot grow the service, yes?

MR. SETZER: It is a funding issue, a hundred percent, yes.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Just a little counter to that comment is, of course, you have grown the system over five years too and increased ridership which creates additional cost, but yes, comparing it from last year to this year in absolute dollars and it just turns out that the --

the same number that it was raised and quite frankly it was raised, that money came through after this committee, well, we had to have a balanced budget, to cut the service, and then the money was found.

MR. SETZER: That's right. If I could -- that's a very good point, if I can follow up on that. That is the worst way to do this, in that when you cut the service and then put it back, the riders don't all come back so they were cut originally because they were less productive, when they were put back, they were even less productive.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Rosario?

MR. ROSARIO: With the Rockville Centre closing, so is that a definite goal or should the money again show up, is it still a possibility that you would reopen it again as more ridership comes back even though you say you lose ridership, so you're saying that that Rockville Centre closing is almost a definite, right?

MR. SETZER: That's a good question and a complicated one. If a lot of money came back, so that we were maintaining the level of service, then it would stay open, we would need it. If the amount of -- if we reduce our peak hour bus requirement by about 40 buses, then we can squeeze everything into this facility. Whether it would be available in the future, if there were an expansion in the -- down the road, which is something we would all like to see, depends, if the county owns it, it depends on what the county does with it.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: What part of the budget or the pie graph that we were given accounts for the money that was spent to reinstate the routes, because I know that it was about a million dollars that we spent, so was that also counted in the deficit, is that part of a specific point in this budget, where was that money in 2016, where can we see it?

MR. SETZER: Do you mean the three million that was appropriated by the county after the year began that we used to put service back?

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: No. I remember in the budget we were given at end of last year, there was a million dollar cost to reinstate the routes, whether that was making the new schedules, because I know you said you need time in order to cut routes and restore routes, so there was money spent to make new schedules, there was money spent to hire the new drivers back, to reroute.

MR. SETZER: Train.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: What was the cost of that and where is that in the budget?

MR. SETZER: I don't know what the exact cost of it was, but each of those
costs that were associated with that, like training and driver wages and printing are all within the existing line items, it’s not set out separately.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Okay.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Any other questions for Mr. Setzer?

MR. LITTMAN: May I ask a question?

MR. SETZER: Certainly.

MR. LITTMAN: Mr. Setzer, what is plan B if this committee decides to vote against the service reductions, do you have a plan B to talk about?

MR. SETZER: That’s a great question, Mr. Littman. I wouldn’t call it a plan B, but I can describe what the alternatives are. Plan B, let’s say that new money doesn’t materialize because it doesn’t seem likely at the moment, then plan B might be that you would be asked to come back to a meeting in say April, and the list of route cuts would be twenty instead of ten because more of the year would have gone by, we couldn’t put them in place until mid year, so there would have to be more. If you would like me to go on, plan C would be to eliminate 40 or 24 percent which wouldn’t require BTC approval, 24 percent of most routes, which would be grotesque is the only word I can think of, that would mean cutting vital services to many, many people and throwing away millions of more dollars in fare box revenue, but we are still under the mandate to reduce the number of hours to whatever the county can afford, so this isn’t a plan or a proposal at this point, but I am just sort of answering your hypothetical question. And plan D would be to do nothing until the money runs out, about early November, and then lock the gates. And say, see you all in January. Even more absurd and grotesque, but those are the kinds -- I don’t think there’s an acceptable plan B. I can’t think of one. There’s no nice plan or easy plan B that’s available to us.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: In furtherance of Mr. Littman’s question and your answer, in short, NICE has to operate within a balanced budget, that budget is not balanced as of April, Mr. Setzer gave some permutations, so that NICE would hang around for awhile.

Are there any other questions?

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Last one, just the last one, I’m clarifying a point. The proposed drop in fare box revenue accounts for the reduction in services, so this is our projection if we were to reduce those ten -- reduce and eliminate those ten routes?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: That’s $2,000,000 for the whole year; correct?

MR. SETZER: For the eight months.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: For the eight months that are left.

MR. SETZER: Yes.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: I’m just, I guess I’m confused on how we can give up $2,000,000 if we still have this deficit, if we didn’t give up those ten routes, then that would be two million less in deficit, no? Or am I just not thinking about that in the correct way?

MR. SETZER: Well, yes, but the two million lost revenue is associated with the seven million dollars reduced expense. The two million, you can’t get rid of the service and still keep the fare box revenue. So we’ve assumed that of those ten routes eliminated completely, all of the fare box revenue that they collect would also be lost.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Do you have even preliminary projections of what the deficit would look like next year?

Because even in the event we cut these ten routes, because when we did come together in December there were talks about having to cut routes a second a time come June, which we’ve seen before, where we either had to raise fares at the start of the year and then raise fares in June to make up the deficit, cut routes
and then raise fares, so we have seen all
different types of combinations. What
would be the projected deficit for 2018,
because it just seems to me that we are
not actually solving anything, that we
are just plugging it for this year, very
band-aid kind of approach to it. Do we
have any projections for that, would we
expect double this deficit? What could
we expect?

MR. SETZER: Well, this is funding
driven -- that's a good question, and
that's part of the frustration for all of
us at NICE Bus is that because we have no
predictability about a couple of the
major funding sources including the
state, we don't know -- we really can't
give a good answer to that answer, so
hypothetically, if the state kept STOA
the same in 2018 and Nassau County
provided only the minimum, two and a half
million, yes, we would be back here with
a worse discussion than we just had.

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Can we go back
to our last meeting? What would we have
accomplished, of course we kept the buses
running, how much would we have saved to
cut into that hole had we discontinued
the fewer routes proposed back in
December?

MR. SETZER: We had proposed those
routes as sort of an early start on this,
hoping that the funding picture would get
better, but that it wouldn't get a
hundred percent better. We would have
saved about $2,000,000 by having almost
12 months of those cuts. They would have
been some of the ones at the top of the
list, so we would be talking about a $4.8
million dollar hole to fill today.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: So we would've
had two pretty busy lines going?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: At least?

MR. SETZER: Probably, yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are there any
other questions from committee members

MR. SETZER: Thank you.
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Tunpike making a right going south on Newbridge Road. I see a lot of buses not in service heading east, that's a waste. And if you really want to cut out the waste, get rid of the call center. They just refer you to the website anyway. So just eliminate that, and everybody go to the website. Is there -- and also with your marketing person, Erica, proposed for me to do was to get to Sunrise Mall and then have to take three buses. That would increase my commute time from two to four hours. I don't want to do that. And that's each way. So is there any help for me?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Well, you asked a lot of questions, but we can't answer many of those, so I want to thank you for your comments and with that, is there anyone else who would like to address the committee?

MR. JOHN TARANTINO: Please keep that n72.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. Let me remind you, we are under three minute rule.

MR. JOHN MICHNO: Can I stand over there?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Absolutely. If anyone wants to go to the podium, we prefer it. Do you have a mike there?

MR. JOHN MICHNO: Yeah, exactly. My name is John Michno, M I C H N O. I live in Westbury and I depend on the n35 and I will say that first of all, I appreciate very much this proposal minimizes cuts to the bus routes I take, but thousands of other bus riders will be impacted. Many left with no alternative. Now I have come out with some other ideas for service reductions if you want to look at them, some of them may be implemented already, but I figured I can share them with you if you're interested, because some of these routes, particularly the n79 is miles away from any other public transportation system, is used quite heavily in the Plainview area, unfortunately the people that created this mess, I will start with my speech, but unfortunately, the people that created this mess, namely the Nassau County Executive, Ed Mangano, and the Nassau County legislature, most of them, they're not in this room, they may have talked about saving bus service, but their actions or lack thereof speak louder than words. While I understand the financial predicament of the county and appreciate the attempts to reach out to the state for additional transit assistance, time is just about to run out. The state doesn't approve their budget for months. That won't save bus service. I've spoken at the Nassau legislature a number of times, they are the whole reason the MTA left Nassau County to begin with, and now they are selfishly throwing the lives of bus riders to the taxi wolves and they wouldn't even let us hold this hearing in the legislature building. That's shameful. There's plenty of folks that drive and think nothing of cutting bus service, but people will lose their jobs, people will have to drop out of college and people will be left prisoners in their own home. The arrogance and ignorance of so many, however, will not make them immune to the effects of these cuts. Rise in crime will affect everybody and so will businesses having to close because they are unable to get help and taxes will surely rise due to the economic hit. Not everyone can afford a car or is able to drive, and taxis, you've got to be kidding me. These crooks rip off stranded riders everyday, they profit a great deal off of suffering riders. I wonder how many of you have connections with them? I have been trying to convince many of the importance of the bus system for many years, though it seems that only rich people are welcome in this county. How else are we supposed to feel when our
buses are cut and there's more luxury
cars on the road than ever? How can you
understand when only one of you depends
on the buses, Aaron, he's the only one
that depends on the buses. I've pretty
much done everything I can do about this,
all I can say, in conclusion, as you
drive around in your personal vehicles as
thousands of people lose their ride, you
need to think long and hard about what
you're doing when you sleep at night. We
are human beings, we are supposed to look
out for one another and do right by God
and ask yourself, are you being a good
human being. This goes to the
legislature as well as you, obviously
there aren't many members of the
legislature here, but I figured -- I do
have one question though, what if you
vote to approve these cuts and they do
find the money?
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: John, thank you.
Ten seconds. Okay?
UNKNOWN VOICE: Can I ask that we --

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer,
first of all, I don't know how many
people are standing there. Is it
possible to get a few more chairs in?
How many people do we have standing
there?
(People enter the room.)
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Is that seat
empty?
UNKNOWN VOICES: There's two seats
here and here.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thanks, Mike.
The lady in the back over there,
yes, ma'am, would you like to come up?
MS. DOROTHY SMITH: No, I will stand
here.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Your name?

MS. DOROTHY SMITH: My name is
Dorothy Smith. My name is Dorothy Smith
and I live --
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Talk in the
mike.
MS. DOROTHY SMITH: My name is
Dorothy Smith and I live in Garden City.
I take the 24 or the 22 to Hicksville and
pick up the 78 or 79 to Plainview where I
work. Now, if you're going to take off
78 and 79 off the route, what must I do
to reach work on the route 78, 79,
especially 79 to Huntington? A lot of
people travel on that bus. You have Shop
Rite, you have Sears, you have the
restaurant, you have the hospital, you
have the nursing home where we all work.
Now, my question is this, if you are
going to take off 78 or 79, take off 78.
78 doesn't take a lot of people, use 79.
79 picks up 78 people, goes straight to
Newtown, drop off 78 people, come around
g and go up Manetto Hill Road to
Huntington, but you cannot take off 78 or

MR. GEORGE KAPLAN: My name is
George Kaplan. I actually live in
Manhattan, but I take the n79 to get to work from the Hicksville railroad station. The n79 bus is the only bus servicing the northeastern corner of Nassau County as is apparent from the bus map that was shown, and it serves several important establishments such as the hospital in Plainview, GEICO, several shopping centers including Fairway and additionally, several passengers who work in the Crossways Corporate Park complex take the n79 and walk, n79, and walk from the bus stop, especially since the n94 bus to Crossways was eliminated several years ago. Now, the n79 bus leaving Hicksville at 8:45 in the morning each weekday is almost always full and usually standing room only. Accordingly, eliminating this n79 bus will create extreme hardship on many commuters who have no other way to get to work, in addition to causing, as you mentioned, hardship on many businesses which employ these commuters and depend on these commuters for patronage and shopping.

Now, if bus service must absolutely be reduced, then one possibility might be cutting the n79 back on weekend service and/or midday service and/or late evening service. Now, another possibility, which the previous speaker mentioned, would be eliminating the n78 bus, which operates only infrequently and only runs a few blocks past the intersection of Old Country and Manetto Hill Road where the n79 bus turns. In fact, several passengers take the 8:45 AM n79 bus from Hicksville to the intersection of Old Country and Manetto Hill Road and then exit and walk east on Old Country Road the rest of the way, just a few blocks, because the schedule of the n78 bus is not at all that convenient. Now, right now, just to sum up, it's really counterintuitive to eliminate bus service when great effort is presently being made to enhance public transportation. For example, the Long Island Railroad is installing a third track on -- along the main line in Hicksville. Now, concerning budgetary concerns, eliminating the n79 bus will clearly hurt businesses along the route and thereby damage the local economy and ultimately adversely impact government revenue, so to sum up, I urgently implore that the n79 bus be maintained because it's an indispensable route for commuters in this part of Nassau. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you, sir.

In the front?

MR. ALLEN ASHERMAN: Thank you. My name is Allen Asherman. My wife and I live in Plainview. This is also about the 78 and the 79 buses. Whenever we are on the buses in rush hour, we see it completely filled with people who are going to work. They are not rich people, we are not rich people. It is just unthinkable that the buses will be cut completely and all of these people will not be able to get to work. In addition, there seems to be something going on here that is very strange. We got a booklet from Ed Mangano, outlining all of the services that are offered to senior citizens and to various other groups who live in Plainview, Hicksville and the town of Oyster Bay, who use the 78 and 79 buses. How can they get there to take advantage of those programs? How can my wife and I go to our library, which we use very often. We cannot walk from where we are. We'd have to take a taxi. We'd have to take a taxi every time we went to the railroad to go to New York City for business, for medical examinations, for anything. I see the faces of the people on the 78 and the 79 buses, most of them don't have much hope in their faces. Please don't take the hope they have away from them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Legislator Curran? Three minutes, please.

MS. LAURA CURRAN: Thank you for the
opportunities to save bus routes from being cut. These are local solutions to a local problem and I think it needs to be addressed immediately. Yesterday, the county executive announced an $80 million dollar surplus and $10.7 million more than budgeted in fines, such as red light camera revenue, so that is 10.7 more in that kind of revenue. More than what was expected. So I propose using part of that revenue, which is recurring, to fund service. Another option, the county just implemented a public safety fee, which you may have read about, which is set to reap $29 million dollars this year, 2017, going forward, let's commit a portion of that public safety fee, which went into effect January 1, for our buses. I find it unconscionable to cut services when the county fund balance is many millions of dollars above the county's own limits. Again, a million dollars above what the county policy is for fund balance. I understand Michael may not approve of that, but it's still a policy decision that the administration can make. Furthermore, we have areas of opportunity in the equipment, general expenses, contractual expenses and utility expenses when comparing the 2016 year end results to the 2017 budget. I think if this administration would make buses a priority, we have plenty of funds to save our service. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. MS. TONYA WALKER: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak. My name is Tonya Walker and I live in Freeport, New York. And I'm concerned about the n19 as being eliminated because that's the bus that I use to go to doctor's appointments. I use that bus for recreational use, going to Westfield Mall, and I've seen people ride that bus going to work and I can't see that bus being eliminated because then if people wanted to go to Westfield Mall, they have to take -- they have to go to Hempstead Terminal and transfer and get the 54, 55 and that bus takes long to go to the mall or people have to find other alternatives to go to Westfield Mall. They either have to take the LIRR or drive or take taxis or find alternatives. Some buses I can see being eliminated like the 51, I think that one is a low ridership. I've ridden on the bus once, but not too many people ride on that bus. Some of them I can see eliminating, but don't eliminate the 19, people really need that bus. And also I saw they were eliminating the 36, and that's in Freeport also. I feel that the buses that have low ridership, they should eliminate. I can see that, but don't eliminate the 19 and 36, when people need that bus either to go to work, go to school, recreational use, even going to doctor's appointments. I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

MR. TED PRUETT: Good afternoon, my name is Ted Pruett and I live in South Merrick, Nassau County. I'm a disabled American veteran, and eliminating the n19, I go out to Sunrise Mall, I have a doctor out there. I have a doctor out in Babylon. Sometimes I take the 71 or the 72 on Hempstead Turnpike out to Babylon or Sunrise Mall. Those are on the chopping block. Also, it's about four miles from where I live in South Merrick, I've been living there since the '60s, since I was a small child and there's always been bus service. I mean once my parents passed away and I didn't have a car, you know, you're really stuck, either you have to walk to the train station or you have to walk up to the bus
stop. I live just down the block from
the bus stop on Babylon Turnpike and
Merrick Road, but still it's about a two
to three mile walk to the Merrick train
station or approximately a four mile walk
to the Freeport train station. I have
arthritis, I have a partially herniated
disc in my back, when it's not hurting, I
can walk a couple of miles, but when it
is hurting, that walk would be
impossible. I work by the DMV in East
Garden City, so I have to have a way to
get to work in the morning. It's just a
part-time job and I'm allowed to work a
part-time job there. I believe that
there's other bus routes that have very
low ridership that can be cut, like the
51 or the 45 or the 46 or the 47.
There's also the 48 and 49 that goes to
Hicksville, one of those could be cut.
There's things that can be done. There's
also, I mean I'm not sure who decides,
but whether it's the County Legislature
or the State, who exactly appropriates
the funding for the bus and how much
money goes to Nassau County. I just
think that there's other areas that can
be cut, because everybody who lives in
Nassau County pays a lot of taxes, and so
I believe that those extra high taxes,
which are among the highest in the
country, should pay for all the services
that everybody needs, from the Department
of Social Services, to the trains, to the
bus, and to everything else that people
need. This is a crowded urban area and
now people need the services and to put
myself in a position where I have to walk
between eight and nine miles a day,
because I can't afford the $10.00 each
way in a taxi. That's what it costs to
go from Freeport to Merrick or Merrick to
Freeport. I don't have a hundred dollars
a week. I'm only bringing home about
150. It doesn't make sense to spend more
money on taxis than I'm actually making
at the part-time job that I'm working.
So if you guys can reconsider some of
these changes, the ones that are low
ridership, go ahead, cut those. I mean
really, I named a few bus routes, but the
n19 that affects the entire south shore
of Long Island from Massapequa Park,
Massapequa, Wantagh, Seaford, Bellmore,
Merrick, parts of Freeport, you can't
screw over all those people, you have to
have it. There's also up over Hempstead
Turnpike, those buses run just once an
hour and those buses are always crowded,
so please keep those. Thank you very
much. I have to go catch a bus now.
Thank you.

MR. CORNELL MARTIN: Good afternoon,
gentlemen, my name is Mr. Cornell Martin
and I'm from Long Beach, New York. When
you slash the 70, 71, and 70, it's going
to cost me more money than my paycheck
where I have to travel from Long Beach
all the way to Freeport, and then wait
for the train. And then, after I get off
the train, I got to wait for the S1 to
get all the way to Brush Hollow Road, so
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great community is its public transportation system. People of Plainview and surrounding towns can be whisked into Manhattan safely, comfortably and quickly using the Long Island Railroad, but to avail ourselves to the railroad, we have to be able to get to the railroad station. For many the method of transport is an automobile, but for many others, public transportation, the Nassau Inter-County Express Buses provide the means to get to the railroad station. Public buses here are clean, efficient and come frequently along established bus routes. There are numerous bus stops located along Old Country Road and other major roads which lead to the Long Island Railroad station in Hicksville, which concerns me personally, and other popular destinations on major roads. To eliminate these essential bus services would be a sin. To deny riders the opportunity to get to important destinations like railroad stations, hospitals, restaurants, community centers because there's no money to keep the bus routes going, would be a grave disservice to the community. What about students who ride the buses, students don't own a car or their families work during school hours, they have no transportation to get to and from school. Put kids on the streets, you're leaving them more open to gun violence. What about the elderly that don't drive cars any more, what about the elderly who don't have cars, they rely on public buses to get to and from work, to go to and from homes, to senior centers, to hospitals, to supermarkets. These buses have served the community for many years and many, many people rely on them day after day to get to important destinations. To eliminate the bus routes without providing for alternative means of transportation is shortsighted and effective in no way to serve the good citizens of this community. I say tweak but don't destroy. If you have no other choice, increase the bus fare, combine routes, reduce the frequency of buses traveling along routes. For people who clean houses and offices for a living, bus routes provide an essential means to enable them to maintain their livelihood. You say there are no monies forthcoming from the state legislature, very unlikely. Governor of our state is up for re-election more sooner than later and reportedly has aspirations for higher office and arguably he has an incentive to help supplement the NICE budgets. In conclusion, I am here today to add my voice to the voices of my fellow commuters and I ask you to please, please find funds to keep these vital bus routes going. The future of this community depends on a vital and essential public transportation system. Without the buses targeted for elimination, the system, to say the least, would be woefully
inadequate and the lives of many decent hardworking people would be unfairly disrupted and with dire consequences.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Sir?

MR. LARRY PENNER: Thank you. My name is Larry Penner, Great Neck resident, transportation advocate, historian, former U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration employee, retired two years ago. The Rockville Centre bus garage, formerly Bee-Line, was rebuilt in the late '80s for close to 10 million, 8 million federal share, 1 million matched from the county and the state. Subsequently, millions of dollars in improvements have been put into that facility. The county, based on the annual certification of insurances and master grant agreement has a legal obligation that all federally funded transit assets reach their full use for life. The county has to engage in a formal dialogue and conclude that dialogue with the funding agencies for disposition of the facility, whether it's mothballed or permanently shut down. There is a requirement where 20 percent spare ratio for any bus operator who receives federal funding, if NICE Bus reduces the fleet by 40 buses, again, the county, the legal owner of the system, has to have a dialogue, and conclude that dialogue with the funding agencies, federal and state, for permission to reduce the size of fleet. The Mitchell Field bus garage was rebuilt in the late '80s to accommodate a fleet for heavy maintenance of 325 buses, but only to operate 225 buses. To consolidate buses from two facilities into one facility leaves a longer line outside the apron to fuel those buses, clean those buses, and store those buses. This facility was not designed to store buses from two facilities indoors. Subsequently, if more buses are stored outside, they will depreciate at a greater rate and will be exposed to inclement weather, hardly a good investment for the county.

Reference was made to a $5 million dollar grant, well in reality, the county received 10.8 million in federal funds, plus match. It's the county's decision in their Program of Projects to decide how much money they want to spend on preventative maintenance. The problem is that the county programs more funds for preventative maintenance, it's robbing Peter to pay Paul, there's less money for replacement buses and improvements for the capital facility structure, so it's a horrible choice. So in the end the county can end up owing the funding agencies more money than the 1.5 million that NICE Bus would save by closing the Rockville Centre bus garage. I really question the amount of savings in day-to-day operation of buses that were assigned to Rockville Centre to this facility, given the amount of distance they have to travel to the south shore back and forth, I really don't know where that savings is going to come from. You want to find money? Governor Cuomo says he is going to find $2 billion dollar for the mainline third track, we are looking for chump change here. Six million more in STOA money, where is it? Every member of the county legislature and majority party, assembly and state senate has access to what is known as member item pork barrel projects. On the state level it is hundreds of millions. I challenge our elected officials, program some of the money for some of the routes that might be closed down. That will keep the bus in service. I guarantee that NICE will put a free placard on the side of the bus, that this route service preserved by assemblyman, state senator, or member of the county legislature through their grant. Thank you very much for your time. And again, I offer my services to you for more background in
your relationship to the federal and state government. I hope this committee is familiar with the federal documents of certs and insurances, master grant agreements and the whole grant process in general for federal and state funding.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you for waiting. I just wanted to make a note. Three minutes, please.

MS. ELLEN BIRNBAUM: Hi. I'm County Legislator Ellen Birnbaum and of course it's a pleasure being here and just hearing the presentations, and listening to everybody, and I understand that NICE Bus needs a dedicated source of funds from Nassau County to operate within a balanced budget, but unfortunately I believe our County Executive, Ed Mangano, has not prioritized the bus as being an important need for Nassau County citizens. We are trying to help the public. The public relies on transportation, and the bus system, as it is, is a public-private enterprise, but we are forgetting the public, and I really believe that any bus route that's eliminated impacts so many people. And I come here to speak specifically about route n57 which is in the district where I reside. That's the Great Neck loop.

By Mr. Setzer's own admission it is fairly productive, riders pay 25 to 30 percent of the cost and around 600 people a day use that bus. Those who can least afford to lose the bus will find such difficulty traveling to work if this route is cut, and I have before me a letter from a mayor, many of the mayors in Great Neck, which is comprised of nine villages, are very upset about this. There is the Great Neck Village Officials Association and the vice president of that group is Mayor Susan Lopatkin, she is from the Village of Kensington, she wanted me to read to you that as the vice president of the Great Neck Village Officials Association, she speaks for almost 45,000 residents of the community and many of these people would be significantly inconvenienced by the elimination of route n57. There are actually many people who use this routinely to go to the train station and to their homes. This proposal will add more pressure to the commuter parking lots, impact workers, home health aides, nannies, housekeepers, and the families that depend on them and of course, would impact the residents, who prefer to ride the bus rather than drive. I urge you to abandon this ill conceived proposal. It is extremely detrimental to the community. I do believe eliminating any of the ten routes would be detrimental to every community that would be impacted by it, but I implore you to go over the routes again and particularly the n57 which is utilized all day long, but mostly morning and evening, so perhaps there could be cuts to routes during the day when less riders use those specific routes. I believe there's a lot that can be fixed in the system. The closing of the Rockville Centre yard would be the bulk of the cost and I think a lot of these routes don't really account for a majority of savings. So I too ask for you to reconsider the elimination of these ten routes and specifically the n57. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Yes, ma'am?

MS. MICHELE DARCY: Good evening. My name is Michele Darcy. I'm the Minority Director of Finance for the Nassau County Legislature and I know several of the constituents mentioned that of the legislature is not represented here today. So I wanted to just put on the record that obviously Legislator Curran is here from Legislative District 5. Legislator Birnbaum, thank you, from our Legislative District 10. Also Legislator DeRiggi from Legislative District 11 has a representative here including myself and
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so does Legislator Carrie Solages from the Legislative District 3 has a representative here including myself. This evening at 6:00 PM, Legislator Siela Bynoe from Legislative District 2 will be here. Legislator Kevan Abraham, our Minority Leader from Legislative District 1 will also be here. And Legislator Arnie Drucker from Legislative District 15 will also be here. I've been taking notes, several have made complaints about the reductions for cuts to n78 and 79, that's Legislator Drucker's area. I will make sure he gets those, and if you need to contact him and you don't know how, I will give you my business card at the end of this meeting and also n29 is Legislator DeRiggi's area, in LD 11, we will also make sure she gets those comments. Like I said, we're taking notes and we are recording and all of our legislators are being represented, all seven of them, the minority and the legislature. We will be working with Mr. Setzer to address your concerns as we have been, you have been very willing to work with us and I thank you, board, for for letting me speak today.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

MR. JAMES LAMBOS: Good afternoon, folks. How are you doing? My name is James Lambos. I live in Far Rockaway by the foot of the Atlantic Beach Bridge and I use the 36 bus too. The 36 bus I go to see plenty of friends. 36 bus should not be cut. It's no good to have the 36 bus, that would hurt me and I agree with all the people, there are a hundred percent right, no buses should be cut. Everybody is right, there's tons of reasons people need the buses. Tons and tons, tons. The 36 bus should be running all the time. I know it doesn't run Sundays, but it would be nice if it runs on Sunday, the n36. And the 62, we use to go to Nautical Mile during the week, they run during the summertime. I get off by Atlantic Avenue and make the walk down to the bay. All right. I would like an effort for the walk. It would be good to bring the 62 bus, to restore that. That's no good cutting the buses and that's very evil to get rid of the buses, that's very, very evil. When they shouldn't be thinking about cutting buses, that's punishment for us. It punishes me and it punishes the rest of them. And those people are a hundred percent right, I really agree with them. I thank some of them for a long time ago. And the 72, sometimes I use the 72 to see some friends too. Because we need the 72, and they should run more often, the 72. So we have to get the 62 bus back, the n62, which goes Freeport, Nautical Mile. We got to get the 62 bus back. I know people that ride, you shouldn't cut the 19 bus. I see plenty of people on the 19, I see tons and tons of people on the 19. That's ridiculous to cut the 19. 19, I would never cut it, if it was my decision I would extend the 19.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Just finish up, please.

MR. JAMES LAMBOS: Okay. I have a few minutes. We used to run the Babylon which was good, run by the Sunrise mall, I hope they build the 19 bus good and sturdy.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay, sir. Thank you.

MS. ROSEMARY MASCALI: Hi, my name is Rosemary Mascali. I'm manager of Transit Solutions, which is a federally funded program of the MTA. Its mission is to improve Long Island's air quality by increasing transit ridership. I also chair the Sustainable Transportation Committee for the U.S./Greenville Council, Long Island Chapter and I co-chair the Car-Free Day Long Island event. As manager of Transit Solutions, I help build awareness of the available transit options by conducting transportation days and many of Nassau County's major employers and colleges as
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well as companies that have major employment centers in Suffolk county including Route 110 corridor. At these transportation days I help employees and students to find transit alternatives to get to work and school. I can tell you from this experience and frankly, from listening to everyone in this room, and hearing the same thing, the NICE Bus service is in many cases the only option employees and students have to get to work or to school and for seniors to get to their medical appointments. Oftentimes, workers and students take multiple buses to get to their destination, so you start to cut some routes and they can't get to where they're going even using the other routes, so I think your revenues are going to fall in your other routes as well. Oftentimes NICE Bus routes are also used by Nassau County residents and workers as a feeder routes to the Long Island Railroad station, those comments came out several times here. The proposed cuts will affect access to and from many communities and their Long Island Railroad stations, including Rockville Centre, Freeport, Wantagh, Hicksville, Lynbrook, Bellmore, Merrick, Great Neck, Elmont, Glen Cove, and Farmingdale. That's access to Long Island Railroad or get into the city, that's vehicle miles traveled that's impacting our air quality. Elimination of these feeder routes will exacerbate also the parking problems at these Long Island Railroad stations because more people will have to take their cars to get to the railroad stations. In addition to the negative economic consequences, the reduced transit actions will have negative environmental consequences. Nassau County does not meet EPA air quality standards and cars are a major contributor to our poor air quality. Reducing bus options will make this problem worse. So -- I would love to see what the cost per ride subsidy is for Nassau County. I was trying to calculate it, and I think it is somewhere between ten and twenty cents a ride. Suffolk County is something like $5.00. There is something -- and as a resident of Manhasset, Nassau County, I'm ashamed to say that I can only give ten or twenty cents per ride to the bus riders. If we are not using the buses or trains and we are driving our cars, we're contributing to the air quality. These people here are helping that. What are we doing? Really, what are we doing?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you very much. Sir?

MR. REIN NAGRONI: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Rein Nagroni. I'm part of a Long Island bus union, bus union here, I'm here from Baldwin, New York, hear everybody about the complaints of the proposed cut for the n19, going from Freeport all the way to Sunrise Mall in Babylon and n36 to Freeport all the way to -- the destination go to is Lynbrook and that's a really big problem for everybody in the county here, and then really bad for persons who has low ridership, and it's not really good. And we cut that one, we cut those and it's going to be jeopardizing the ridership, and people going to work and stuff, it's not good and it's going to be like containing of insubordination, if you do that, now I don't know if you can do -- if you have contingency plans or something, I'm not sure, but made this up, where I'm from, the other part of town, but here's another one, if I'm not going to make a statement, which I forgot, which is the other one that I know of, I used to go from Queens and there's the n22L, n22L, actually starts from Hicksville station to the Jamaica, Queens and then you have to go from all these destinations point view going to the major streets on the n22L, which is going to like, going -- stop service on
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Broadway, Hicksville, Northern Boulevard, Grand Avenue, Bryant Avenue going on Northern Boulevard and then going to -- I made a mistake here, I'm sorry. That's not on the n22, I'm sorry, from the Prospect Avenue, West Charles Street, Westbury Avenue, to Hillside Avenue, that's on the n22L and then you have to introduce the different service back from January of 2012. And they're the same group from the n22 and n28, the corridor, like come from the express, to Jamaica to Williston Park and then we have, it does not serve from the Willis Avenue, Roosevelt Field and rush hour service. What I would like to say, maybe if I could, if you want to restore that service, you may, I'm not sure if you want to do so, but we need one of these contingency plans if you want to get the n22L back. Because n22L is from Jamaica to Hicksville, if I'm not mistaken, because it has the signs, it should be to be pointing to that one. If I'm not mistaken, if you want to put that route back, that would definitely eliminate congestion and traffic and that's it. So I just want to say thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. Yes?

MS. TAMMIE WILLIAMS: Hi, I'm here from Senator John Brook's office.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Three minutes, please.

MS. TAMMIE WILLIAMS: Good afternoon. Senator Brooks and Mayor Kennedy of Freeport are both opposed to these cuts. I have heard -- and this is from his quote, I have heard from many members of the community and caregivers about our crucial need for NICE Bus in our community. It would be devastating to see this service eliminated or reduced in many areas across Long Island. NICE is currently the only means of transportation going north and south in the county. If the service is eliminated, many people in the community including many seniors, people with disabilities and working families will not have the means to get around. I humbly request that you reconsider making these cuts before moving forward. I hope we can talk, please call my office and anyone can take down this number, (516) 882-0630. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Senator John E. Brooks. Please do not eliminate any of the following routes, Freeport Community shuttle; Hicksville-Wantagh Community shuttle, n19 Freeport-Sunrise Mall, n36 Lynbrook, Freeport, n45 Bellmore, Roosevelt Field, n47 Hempstead, Bellmore, and n51 Roosevelt Field, Merrick. Any questions?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Well, you can tell him to get the money.

MS. TAMMIE WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. I guess that ends our public comments and I would just like to bring back Mr. Setzer for a minute. And there would be no...
and enhancing the service that's there. But we collectively, the committee and your operating partner are stuck with the very unpleasant responsibility of balancing the budget and that is, I think we all hope, every member of the committee as well as everybody who works at NICE Bus wishes and hopes that there were some other way to do this. I assure you that everybody that works here is appalled at the need to make these kinds of cuts. However, to say it one more time, we have very few choices, as time goes by, and the revenue is not available, we can't build a budget based on might be available, on promises, on that sort of thing. We are obligated, I think, as people interested and committed to this, to do what we have to do. It's unfortunate, I hope something happens that it's not, but as I say, we are really out of time to continue to hope for improvements.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: Mr. Setzer,

based on some of these public comments that you heard today and unfortunately I'm not that familiar with knowing the traffic on all these routes, is there anything that convinced you to make any changes, not in the absolute dollars, in which this committee may have to look, have to vote on in our second -- at the end of our second public hearing, but to sort of make any switches within your recommendations, you know, I hear save the 78, not the 79 or vice versa, because I believe once you're granted these cuts, these will be the precise routes of your recommendations that will be cut.

MR. SETZER: They would if, because we couldn't cut a route without the BTC approval. This is not -- the plan that we have on the screen is not something that we arrived at quickly or easily.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: I'm sure.

MR. SETZER: It is not without a lot of analysis. Our service planning staff is here listening to all this, I will check with them in-between sessions here to make sure we didn't hear anything that we missed before in combing through the service over and over again looking for the least harmful cuts. It's always possible that we missed something. We will double check that again, but I will be surprised.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: The other question is the Rockville Centre facility, okay.

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: You're moving out of it, you moved out of it already, where are we?

MR. SETZER: If the service cut plan like we described or something like it goes forward that reduces our bus fleet then we would vacate it probably in May. We would run the current service, which requires two garages, through the April 9 would be the implementation of the reduced service, so it would take a little bit of time to get everything out of there.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: Who owns the facility?

MR. SETZER: Nassau County.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: What is that facility worth?

MR. SETZER: I don't know, but it is probably a fairly valuable piece of real estate in Rockville Centre.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: What's the size of it, do you know?

MR. SETZER: I don't know offhand. Anybody? It holds about a hundred buses, it's a good size facility.

CHAIRMAN SHREKEL: Okay. After you move out, I don't know if you discussed this with the county, what's going to happen to that facility, can they sell it for money and can the money go into the operating budget?

MR. SETZER: We have alerted the county that we may be vacating it and no longer needed for transit operations. The decisions about how to dispose of it
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or whether to dispose of it are the county's. I think as Mr. Penner pointed out, there are some other obligations that impinge on the county.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: Is it the county's obligation in the event this facility is unwound?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: With some potential liability.

MR. SETZER: There may be, I'm not sure about that. There has been some discussions at the county. The savings that I described coming from vacating the Rockville Centre garage are just operating costs savings, they have nothing to do with monetizing the property or using it in any other way or selling it. They're basically, they basically come from reduced utility costs, reduced staffing costs and reduced security and other kinds of services.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: You're saving how much by moving out again?

MR. SETZER: About a million and a half this year and two million on an annualized basis.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: They are well aware of this already, everyone at the county?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: Are you sure about this?

MR. SETZER: Yes, the people that we reported to are aware of it.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: Counselor, will you note your records accordingly to make sure whoever at the county is in charge of disposition of the real estate, the fact that this facility may be vacant or potentially sold, if it can be sold, because there are a couple of things I think go beyond the scope of the committee and our knowledge.

MR. LITTMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure that the people who need to be aware at the county, are aware and have considered everything that Mr. Setzer is telling us.

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today. I don't think it's new news.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: I thought I was onto something to get you some money.

Mr. Rosario?

MR. ROSARIO: How are you doing, Mr. Setzer?

MR. SETZER: Very fine, thank you.

MR. ROSARIO: There was a valid point brought about that if you close the Rockville Centre, these buses are going to have to come over here, because of the closed facility, do you see any more costs incurred because drivers are going to be pulling into these lines, these lines are -- which is a valid point, these lines are going to be crazy long, that's going to compensate, bus drivers get paid by the minute, I know that for a fact, so isn't that cost going to be incurred with the overtime and the ridership of buses coming in and which are going to pull out for the evening of the lines that are still going to be available, you know I'm taking, I know you probably looked at all of this, but just for the people to know this.

MR. SETZER: Mr. Rosario, that's right. You know transit operations very well. There will be higher dead head costs because of the southern routes will have to come up here when they pull -- or leave from here, in the morning when they pull out or when they come back in, we've taken those dead head costs into account, there are also some costs with modifying the parking arrangements. It's a one time cost to modify the parking arrangements, so that we can squeeze everything in. It is certainly not an ideal situation, it is far from ideal, but again, we are in this tradeoff situation, if we don't take that million and a half available savings, then it's got to come out of something else and the something else would be service.

MR. ROSARIO: Okay, thank you.

CHARMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer, I have nothing further for you. If the
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committee members don’t -- do you have a question?

MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: I will be quick.

This is less of a question for you, Mike, and more of just a statement for everyone. All of the public that came out today, we appreciate that, and I want you to know that there are three people that you really need to be hounding on their doors, and that is Ed Mangano, that is your local senator and that is Senator Flanagan. At the end of the day, this committee right here, we are appointed, we have no control over the budget, over operating costs, we have none of that, but I can point you in the right direction and those three people can. They have to listen, they should listen, they are your representative and those are the people that you need to get to, because those are the people with the power and those are the people with the money, but I appreciate everybody coming out and talking about the issues on their routes because we can’t hear what’s happening on the road, I mean as one speaker did say, I’m the only bus rider here, we don’t know, but we appreciate that, but those three people, Ed Mangano, your local senator and Senator Flanagan, who is the majority speaker, those are the three people that you need to be hounding, because they have the money, they have the power.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Maybe NIFA will help understand this is open.

I would like to make a motion to adjourn our meeting. We have a public hearing scheduled at 6:00, same location. Would anybody like to make a motion?

MR. ROSARIO: Motion.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Rosario.

MR. BERSE: Second.


(Time noted: 5:00 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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

THAT the foregoing record was taken by me on the 16th day of February, 2017 at the aforesaid time and place, and it is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 2nd day of March, 2017.

KATHLEEN ANDERSON