NASSAU COUNTY

TRANSIT Committee

JULY 09, 2014

2:00 P.M.

BEFORE: SHELDON SHRENNEL, CHAIRMAN
APPEARANCES:

CHAIRMAN SHELDON SHRENKEL
VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE BLESSINGER
BOARD MEMBER KATHY ANN COMERFORD
BOARD MEMBER JEAN DUROSEAU
BOARD MEMBER LIVIO TONY ROSARIO
SAMUEL LITTMAN - EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COUNTY
ATTORNEY AND COUNSEL FOR TRANSIT Committee
MICHAEL SETZER - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VEOLIA TRANSPORTATION

MARTY LILLY
JOHN MICCHNO
NANCY DWYER
VICTORIA DAZA
KATHLEEN HANNON
ANITA HALASZ
REIN NEGRONI
BRETT LANDAU
YUKI ENDO
EILEEN LILLY
MATT DELOVICH
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Good afternoon, everyone.

Welcome to Nassau County Bus Transit Committee. I am Sheldon Shrenkel, I am the Chairman of the Committee.

By virtue of a rollcall, I will introduce some of our members. To my far right, Jean Duroseau. To my immediate right, Mr. Tony Rosario. To my left, Mr. Larry Blessinger, to my far left is Ms. Kathy Comerford; and to my very far right, I would like to thank our General Counsel of the Committee, Mr. Samuel Littman.

And thank you Donna, for taking our notes.

This afternoon, our agenda -- well, before we get to that, I would like an acknowledgment of receipt of the transcript from the meeting held on May 14, 2014, that you received it and read it; please raise your hand if you have.

(At this time, all Committee Members unanimously raised their hands)

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Please note the record accordingly, that we have acknowledged consent of everyone receiving the transcript.

To get on with our agenda, we will first hear a presentation by the NICE CEO, Mr. Michael
Setzer, thank you.

MR. SETZER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. I have got a few slides here that I would like to use to set the stage for the public discussion as well as your deliberation.

If you recall, we have had several meetings on the 2014 budget, this was a slide we used earlier, if you wanted to reduce the budget deliberations to a single though as this, that we have to have some additional funding this year in order to maintain service levels, because our operating costs are rising and the demand for Able-Ride service is rising.

Do you remember we -- I won't go over it in detail, but remember we discussed the three percent wage increase that is in our labor contract, that took effect April 1st, we discussed the rise in the cost of the natural gas, which we use both as a utility, energy source here in our facility, and also as a motor vehicle fuel.

Thirdly, we discussed the increase and the cost of healthcare provided to NICE employees.
And fourthly, all though it is not a price increase, it does affect our costs, the demand for Able-Ride trips is rising and I think that you are probably aware of that.

Per Federal Law, we have no discretion but to serve every eligible trip request from every eligible person on Able-Ride. But it all comes out of the same funding source, so when the demand for Able-Ride goes up, it has an impact on the total budget.

We also talked about or had those kinds of increases destroyed the economies that we have managed to achieve, and we use this slide, you saw this at our last meeting.

The first column represents the cost per hour for fixed route service, during the last year of Long Island Bus' operation, the year of 2011, it is $151.37.

NICE Bus' first year, the cost per hour on the same basis -- by the way, that comes from numbers that the MTA reported to the Federal Government. NICE's costs, the first year, it went down to $123.11, it actually went down a few pennies more per hour the next year, because we added some service, but our overhead cost did not
go up. And then this year has gone up by about three percent to $126.64.

Today service is still being provided on a unit basis, on an hour of service basis, for about seventy-five to eighty percent of the cost that it would have been -- that you would have incurred if Long Island bus was still operating, because of our lower cost structure. We are still enjoying some significant economies, but nonetheless, there is a need for some additional revenue.

Quick history, especially for the audience, in March the Committee met, and you gave conditional approval to 122 million dollar budget for the period of time of April 1st of this year, to the end of March of 2015. It was conditional, if you remember, because the biggest single source of revenue is the State transit operating assistance program. At the March meeting, they had not finished the budget and so we did not know what that final amount would be. We had hopes that it would be sufficient that there would be no change in service level and no change in fares; well, that did not happen. So on May 14th you convened again and you amended
that budget.

One important change that is really completely separate from the rest of the discussion, is that the County asked that the transit budget move to a calendar-year basis, so that it was consistent with all the other County budgets. So the result of that was that this years is only nine months long for budget purposes, it is April 1st through the end of December of this year. So now the total budget amount changed to $91,782,000 for the nine-month period that ended December 31st, and that left us with a 2.67 million dollar funding gap.

At that time we asked you to consider an adjustment to the cash fare, which is a process that we will continue today, as part of a three-part plan to balance the budget to close that gap. We also ask that you begin to receive public input prior to making a decision on the fares, and that process is finishing up today and we will finish up in a few moments, as you take testimony from individuals.

You also have in front of you, a list of eighteen comments that we received by phone or e-mail here at the office, between that date and
this morning, it's possible that there would be another one are or two, but that is all that we have received so far.

The three-step plan to close the budget gap included these things: The first step was for the County to provide an additional 1.87 million dollars and the County government has agreed to do that. The third step was for Veolia, the private partner in NICE Bus, to agree to provide another $400,000 and they have agreed to do that.

So the remaining piece, the second piece, in order to bring that deficit down to zero, was to raise the cash fare, to raise $400,000 by raising the cash fare of $2.25 up to $2.50.

Now you probably remember that in March of last year, when MetroCard rates were raised by the MTA to $2.50, you elected to follow suit on MetroCard fares. The Nassau County MetroCard fare went up to $2.50, just as the MTA did, but to keep cash fares at $2.25. So in effect, you provided, since March of last year, a $0.25 discount to cash fare payers; what we are proposing today is that discount cannot be
VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Veolia was not required by contract to put in $400,000; is that correct?

MR. SETZER: That is correct. So, the question before you today is whether or not to end that discount on cash fares.

The entire -- this would be the new fare table and I think it's worth taking a minute on this; the proposal, if you approve it, will leave the MetroCard rate unchanged from today's fares, it would leave the Go Mobile, the smart phone payment fare at $2.50, just as it is today, that would remain unchanged, the cash fare would go from $2.25 to $2.50.

There are a couple of other fares that we really do not need to spend too much time on, but they are related to the cash fare. There is a student fare for elementary and secondary school students, used very, very infrequently, it is $2.10 just for the sake of consistency, we think that should go up to $2.25. And then per Federal law, we provide half-fare programs for people who are eligible by virtue of disability or by virtue of age being sixty-five or more.
And presentation of documentation, their fare today is $1.10, we are proposing for consistencies sake that both of those fares go to $1.25, still within the Federal requirement. Able Ride fares are not proposed to change, they remain at $3.75 as they are today.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Mr. Setzer, have we launched the Go Mobile now; is it working?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: We have people using it?

MR. SETZER: We do. Jack, do you want to respond?

MR. KHZOUZ: Briefly, we launched Go Mobile the week of June 7th, to date we have 4,000 downloads, and that is picking up speed. So it is still in its infancy, but it is gaining popularity as school gets back in session in September. With NCC and colleges, we will expect to grow dynamically for the next few weeks.

MS. COMERFORD: Well, I think 4,000 out of the box is --

MR. SETZER: Yes, we are very pleased with it.
BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: -- very substantial.

MR. SETZER: We expect that to continue for a while.

So one last bit of information that might be interesting to you, we looked at what other MetroCard acceptors in this region are charging, the MTA, of course, is charging $2.50, there is no separate cash fare. Westchester County, which is probably the most analogous to Nassau county, went up when MetroCard went to $2.50 -- pardon, MTA went to $2.50, they followed suit, raising them both, their MetroCard and their cash fare to $2.50 last March.

New Jersey Transit, they have an entirely different fare system, they have distance based fares, meaning, the number of zones you go through determines your fare. A very, very short ride inside the New Jersey, not crossing the river into New York, start at $1.50 for a Zone 1, which is a very short ride. It goes to $2.35 for Zone 2, still a very, very short ride. Then beginning with Zone 3, all the way up to Zone 38, it is $2.90 and above. So most NJ transit riders are already paying
considerably more than NICE Bus riders are. We are under no obligation to match anybody else's fare policy, but it might be worthwhile just to take note of what similarly situated agencies are doing.

That is the end of my presentation, and I think the public input is next, but I would be happy to answer any questions, if you have any.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I just want to make one acknowledgment, I always seem to have the acknowledgement, but I do not know if anybody -- you know that Nice Bus has donated time for the game for the physically challenged and other events, it was just -- I just read that they have now donated a vehicle for the all the senior veterans activities throughout the Nassau County and they will be transporting them for free; I just want to say thank you again for partnering and going above and beyond, because that is not necessary, and I know the veterans and the seniors, it would be a very big help to getting them to all these different activities that the County is having.

MR. SETZER: Thank you.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Thank you.
MR. LITTMAN: Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Certainly.

MR. LITTMAN: Actually two items. One, I ask you to comment on the Title 6 Analysis, the fare equity analysis that was done. And secondly, if this Committee decides not to vote for this $0.25 cash fare increase, are there alternatives being prepared by the Nice Bus.

MR. SETZER: Two very good questions. First, you received, I think a couple of weeks ago, the Title 6 fare equity analysis. It is several pages long, but the bottom line is that, while the group effected -- the group that we used as the cash fare payment method include many of the groups identified in Title 6.

Title 6 is the part of the civil rights act that makes sure that federal assisted programs are provided in a non-discriminatory way. It requires that we a do an analysis and that you consider that prior to fare changes or prior to major service changes. So what it says is, that some of the target groups will in fact be impacted by the cash fare adjustment, but that they are also the groups who would be most...
impacted by the alternative, which is
Mr. Littman's second question.

The alternative would be to reduce
service beginning in probably the fourth quarter
of this year, to balance the budget. At this
stage, we have been trying to make services as
efficient as possible, by reallocating it to
places where it is used sparingly, to places
where there is more demand. We have been doing
that for about three years now, so there are no
painless service adjustments left, the very group
that Title 6, pays attention to also may be the
group most likely effected by service reductions
we used to balance the budget; does that respond
to your question.

MR. LITTMAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are there any other
questions for Mr. Setzer from any Committee
members?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I am sorry, I
have one. When would the route changes go into
effect?

MR. SETZER: If we had to redo service?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Yes.

MR. SETZER: Well, it takes a while to
do that, so September 1st would be the very
earliest and even that would be --

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: When colleges
are going back.

MR. SETZER: The problem with this is
because of timing, the later in the year it is
done, the deeper it has to go to meet the cost.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Okay. Thank
you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: At this time we are
going to give the public an opportunity to make
comments, suggestions, criticisms, what may be to
Mr. Setzer.

What I would like you to do is raise
your hand, come up to the podium, identify
yourself, tell us the town you live in. If you
are representing a group, for example, Nassau
Community College or some institution, please let
us know that. Thank you.

With that, sir, you may be first.

Please understand that anyone who speaks at the
podium, we request a three minute time limit.

MR. LILLY: I don't have really any
comments. I had a question about the Go Mobile
service -- by the way, I'm Marty Lilly from Long
Beach, New York. So I'm not really familiar with it.

MS. COMERFORD: You just need somebody to explain the Go Mobile.

MR. SETZER: Okay. Jack, maybe you could meet with this gentleman?

MR. KHOUZ: Right afterwards.

MR. SETZER: Okay. He will provide all the information you want.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: In a nutshell, it is on your iPhone, on your smart phone, and you put it on, and it is a scanning capability instead of having to carry a MetroCard, or pay cash, or things like that.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Carry change.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Yes.

MR. LILLY: Very good, thank you.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: You are welcome. But they can give you all the details.

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: Sir, you can go.

MR. MICHNO: Hello, my name is John Michno, I live in Westbury; I'm going to keep an eye on my watch here. The reliability issues, I am very concerned about. There has been a lot of breakdowns lately going on, especially the older
buses -- the summer, you know, the heat and all. I just hope that, and I am going to urge NICE to try to do -- maybe do a better job at maintenance as you can to maintain these buses, especially in the summer, because there have been a lot of breakdowns and it impacts the reliability of the service.

The other thing that I want to talk about is what they did with the N87, it now goes to Freeport. And I understand that was done as a cost-saving measure, but I think that sending the N73 or 74 to Jones Beach would have made much more sense then having the route go all the way to Freeport, because now it is always late all the time, like a half an hour late or more. It gets stuck -- Sunrise Highway, particularly on weekdays, it is bumper to bumper traffic, so it's really, really bad, and that is a real situation.

There are other measures that I think NICE buses should take with the -- in regards to the N22, when they got rid of the N22L from Hicksville, they cut a lot of the service from Hicksville in the rush hours, and now the buses are very crowded. A lot of people in New Castle, it's a very poor area, New Castle, Westbury, that
use the bus, and they need more frequent service, they rely on that route a lot.

And the other thing is the N27, six o'clock -- between 6:00 and 7:00, there used to be a bus every half an hour, and they got rid of the bus at 6:25 and now there is a lot of crowding going on. And that is a real concern of mine too, because it's sometimes quicker for me to take the train because of what they did.

I cannot completely rely on the train, I need NICE bus, because the train stations aren't always close by, especially in the summer, I can't walk the same distance because it's too hot.

The last thing that I want to talk about is the strike of the Long Island Railroad, I want to know, this is more of a question, what NICE plans to do, because there are going to be additional riders that are going to be going onto the buses, and how they are going to be able to handle that; perhaps maybe enhance service on those routes that go to Queens, make some temporary changes.

I just want to lastly thank NICE, I do depend on the N35 at night, keep that running at
night, because Westbury has issues with safety, and I do depend on that route, it drops me off much closer to my house.

Thank you very much for your time, I really urge you to vote for this cash fare, it makes sense from a standpoint. As Mr. Setzer said, we don't need anymore service reductions, we need better service, not less of it. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: John, thank you. I know before, you have always offered the Committee some insightful ideas. Thank you, again.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Mr. Setzer, is there a contingency plan if the railroad goes on strike?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: That is an excellent question.

MR. SETZER: That is a very good question. The answer is not much of a contingency plan. We expect, if the railroad goes on strike, that two things are going to happen to us, traffic is going to get much worse going east, west, obviously, and 300,000 people no longer using the train on the weekday. So
that is going to slow our operation down. We
will have more people trying to board NICE buses,
especially on the east, west routes, which will
also slow it down. We expect it to have a very
negative affect on service.

As many additional buses as we can
muster, we will use to enhance regular service,
we will put them on those heavy routes, but it
will not be sufficient to keep them on time, I do
not think, nor to provide everybody enough room.

So if there is a strike, I am very sure
it would be very difficult for us. We have not
responded to the railroad -- we discussed it with
them, the railroad's requested to put in some
supplemental service to shuttle people into
Queens, we told them that we just do not have the
resources to do that.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Do you plan
on putting anymore vehicles on the road if this
occurs?

MR. SETZER: At best, it would be a few
more vehicles.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Is that because
we do not have enough, or maintenance, or
drivers?
MR. SETZER: It is because we do not have enough. We are, as Mr. Michno has pointed out, we struggled, especially with the older part of the fleet, to get enough buses to make service on a normal -- especially a hot summer day. Heat does affect the reliability of the buses, so I do not want to create the impression that we will be able to do much in the face of the strike.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. Thank you.

Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

MS. DWYER: Good afternoon. My name is Nancy Dwyer, I live in Valley Stream. Anyone who has driven around on Long Island over the past several decades, can see that the traffic builds day to day, extremes now on the highways and the parkways. Damaged road services have surely increased, and now carbon footprint has worsened. To build additional roads would be incredibly costly, so do we just live with the situation as it is, or do we just sit and watch it get worse.

In business, when they want to make more money, they do not say, oh, let's jump the price, rather they say, let's attract more business, let's sell more product. The product you're selling is bus seats, the more seats you sell on
a bus, the more money you make on that bus. I suggest you reach out to attract people who are not riding the bus, but could.

One category, a population you should certainly talk to, would be senior citizens. As the traffic congestions have worsened person and volumes in age, driving is a lot less fun than it used to be. Yes, unless we are going to sit in the corner and quietly deteriorate, I say we -- because I'm eighty years old, another means of transportation must be made available.

There is a lot of senior citizens in Nassau, and lots and lots more coming along in the decades just ahead. Add a good percentage of us to the pool of bus riders and you have got a nice business. Instead of riding on the bus, by us, by workers, by teenagers, by household, with civil adults and two new cars -- there's a lot more of those today than there used to be, and you have another increased category of household using the bus.

Offer coupons, we love coupons; you buy four rides and you get the fifth bus ride for free. Get elected officials to ride the bus, or film stars. By the way, you folks don't ride the
bus, right?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I have.

MS. DWYER: Okay. You have promotional things, make it interesting, be active, sell your product, don't price it out of reach for working families. Money spent to incentivize bus riding will be money well spent, resulting in savings and road maintenance, traffic congestions, and problems caused by pollution. It will make Nassau a more attractive place to live, so I ask you to please consider it.

BOARD MEMBERS: Thank you.

MS. DAZA: Hi, my name is Victoria and I live in Freeport. The closest bus routes to me are the N36 and the N4 --

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I am sorry, can you please state your last name for the record.

MS. DAZA: Daza, D-A-Z-A. I live in Freeport. The closest buses to me are the N36 and the N4. The N4 is more than a half a mile away. As a basis for discussion, I just want to promote the fact that I believe in things like healthy food, access to healthcare, and access to education and employment are basic necessities for all people, and I hope we're all on the same
page on that.

The closest grocery store to me is a mile away, and the closest store to organic food is more than two and a half miles away. These distances are not accessible roundtrip walking distances for someone whose pregnant, or accessible for seniors, especially not when hauling grocery bags.

A proposed fare hike with have an impact on my accessibility to these things, because it will impact how many trips to the grocery store someone like me can make. It will impact peoples mobility on doctors appointments, to work, to school, a lot of students depend on the bus system to go to school. Personally, I work in Suffolk County and I live in Nassau, and it is a forty-five minute commute to my job with a car and it is two and a half hours of a commute via bus, so that is five hours roundtrip per day. No worker should have to be subject to more than a five hour commute per day in order to make a living.

So I'm of the opinion that the fare hike will not be helpful to the people that -- allegedly it's supposed to be helping people with
disabilities, people with senior citizens. It will only help to stratify the access that communities like Roosevelt, like Freeport, and Hempstead have to healthy food, employment, and things that are often far away from our communities; that is all I have.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

At the end of the comments, please incorporate in the minutes that the Committee received, and you have listed these E-mail comments received between June 10th and July.

Okay. Ma'am in the back of the room.

MS. HANNON: Good afternoon. My name is Kathleen Hannon, H-A-N-N-O-N. I am sure your customer service is probably well familiar with my name, as well as other people who I've seen at meetings in the past.

This a meeting where they are going to discuss the fare hikes and --

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Excuse me, sorry to interrupt you. This is for everyone here, we have a second meeting after this meeting and there will be additional public comments at that second meeting. So within the context of this meeting, there will be no motion brought up,
okay.

MS. HANNON: I know, okay. I'm fine with that, I'm just making my comments.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I just want everyone to know that, because some people may think that is going to happen, but I just want to make everyone aware that there is a second meeting.

MS. HANNON: Yeah, I know.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I am sorry to interrupt you, we will not take that away from your time.

MS. HANNON: I'm talking for the general public who have to take off time from work to get here. I work in Manhasset on Community Drive, I got out of work at 12:30, I just barely made it here at 2:00. That's two buses and a walk from Roosevelt Field, because there is no bus that gets here at this time.

You have people who are trying get to work, the young lady -- your five hour commute roundtrip, I will stop complaining, mine is only three. I live in Elmont, if somebody drives me to work, I'm at work in twenty minutes. If I take the bus in the morning and then I take the bus home at night, it's anywhere between an hour
and a half to two hours, depending on whether or not I can make that connection. Most of that time I cannot make that connection, because my bus is stuck at a light and my other bus is sitting there at the other traffic light, and he can't get across the street -- I'm over on Hempstead Turnpike and Franklin Avenue, where they had the accident last week because somebody was trying to catch the bus... why, because she needs to get to work on time and the N6 is packed; and if you don't get on that N6 that stops in front of you, you may not get on for another two or three buses.

You have the expresss and you have the locals, which means that if you're not getting on at New Hyde Park Road or Meacham Avenue, then basically you are out of luck, because those buses are too crowded to pick up all the people in the middle. On taking the N25, I'm trying to make a connection to that, it's almost impossible. It's almost impossible at that time at night to make those connections because we're stuck at those traffic lights, because those drivers don't wait for us when they see us.

Someone else here made a comment, not
all of you people up there take the bus. I would
really like to see -- if you could all raise your
hands please; how many of you people take the bus
to work on a regular basis?

(At this time Board Member Comerford
raised her hand.)

MS. HANNON: Just you?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I take the Long
Island Railroad.

MS. HANNON: Well, I am not interested
in -- why can't you take a bus?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Well, I cannot
take a bus, so I take the Long Island Railroad.

MS. HANNON: Why can't you take a bus?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Because I take
the Long Island Railroad.

MS. HANNON: Is there no bus near your
area?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I do not know.

I am in Bethpage, and I take it to the mall, I
take it to other places. I still commute an hour
and a half each way on the Long Island Railroad,
so I understand what you are saying about the
commute, but it is not just on the bus, it is on
the trains and everything else. We are
overcrowded, I stand a lot of times on the Long Island Railroad and I pay three hundred dollars a month to do it.

MS. HANNON: And now their talking about raising the fare, and talking about getting this new Go Mobile thing. We don't need the Go Mobile thing, what they're trying to do is get people to buy tickets, they're trying to get people to take the bus. If you want people -- if you want to make it easy for people to take the bus, and you want to make it easier for people to not have to carry around a sock full of change, let us get the MetroCard, let us be able to buy the MetroCard someplace other than a subway, other than in Hempstead, because right now, that's the only place you can get it. There is no legal stores that carry them anymore, most of the stores that did carry them stopped when you guys took over.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: That is the MTA.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Mr. Setzer, is that not because of the MTA? And the MTA would have to provide the machines to sell them?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: That has
nothing to do with us.

MR. SETZER: That is correct.

MS. HANNON: If the MTA was still in charge, then we would still have MetroCards and we wouldn't be having issues with the MetroCards. Keep the MetroCards it works, make a deal with the MTA. You had the little --

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: We have the MetroCard.

MS. HANNON: Yeah, I know.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: We are keeping it.

MS. HANNON: You can't buy one anywhere, you can only get it in Hempstead. I have to go to Hempstead once a month to get a thirty-day unlimited, I can't get a thirty-day unlimited anywhere else.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I understand what you are saying, but what we are trying to explain is that we cannot change that. We have gone down that road, Mr. Setzer's gone down that road, we tried to get other terminals. They are going to change the MetroCard, they are not investing in new equipment for the MetroCard, because they are going to change the way you do
that. It is probably going to be on your iPhone, or swipe, or something, so they are not investing, they are not building those new machines. As soon as they changeover to whatever they are going to do, then --

MS. HANNON: Then changeover to what they're doing.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: We will have to change --

MS. HANNON: Well --

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Could you let me finish now, I let you finish. I said that we will changeover, we will have to changeover. And then, at that time, when their new equipment is available, then we can petition even harder to have them put in other places. But right now, there is no equipment to do it, so no matter what we say, it is an antiquated system which is going to be phased out.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I am just trying to explain.

MS. HANNON: I really do not think you people understand what it's like to have to get up at 5:00 in the morning and leave your house at
6:30, so that you can be on time for a twenty
minute ride in a car -- to be on time at work for
8:30. I start at 8:30, if I leave my house any
later than 6:30, I may not get to work on time.
Between the N6 with the locals and the expresses
and the crowds, and I can't get on the bus and I
wind up having to walk Meacham; I am lucky, I can
walk to Meacham, it's not that much further. But
there are a lot of people, like I said, they're
stuck in the middle, they're in the middle of
those stops and nothing stops for them because
it's two crowded.

I have to plan on leaving my house at
least three buses earlier than I would normally
take if the buses ran longer.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Take another ten
seconds.

MS. HANNON: Okay. Whoever it is -- you
are in charge, sir? You're destroying our --
you're destroying -- you're destroying Nassau
County, you're destroying the economy, and you're
destroying our mass transit. And I just pray
that I win the lottery, so that I can just buy
out your contract and takeover myself.

If you people don't take the buses, you
have absolutely no right to sit up there and make
comments; take the bus and then we'll talk.

CHAIRMAN SHREINDEL: Good afternoon,

Ma'am.

MS. HALASZ: Good afternoon. My name is
Anita Halasz. I am the director of Long Island
Jobs of Justice, I have spoken before many of you
before. I also work very closely with the Long
Island Bus Riders Union, which I am sure many of
you are also familiar with. Thank you for the
opportunity for allowing us to speak today.

I do have some serious concerns that I
come here with today, I think that many of the
folks who had spoken before me have touched upon
them, especially the individual prior to me. I
too, share the concern that these meetings are
made completely inaccessible to the folks who are
going to be deeply impacted by whatever decision
is made. I find it very hard to believe that
2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. are the only times that
can be offered in public hearings. Many people
work at 2:00 P.M. and many people get off of work
at 5:00 P.M., they will not be able to get to
this meeting by 5:00 P.M.

The location is also of concern, it is
not accessible. This room is meant to hold --
I'm not sure what the capacity is -- what, fifty,
sixty. I think that in a county that has a
ridership of one hundred and ten thousand, to
offer a space like this as a public hearing is
not particularly public, nor is it very
democratic, and I do not think it is particularly
respectful to riders. So making this more
accessible is something I would really urge you
to do in the future. This is something that we
have been calling for, for years at this point,
of making public hearings more accessible.

We only found out at Jobs of Justice
about this public hearing last week, on Monday,
and we had that through just happening to go onto
the NICE Bus website and seeing that there was
something new on there.

Two weeks notice is not enough notice
for a public hearing and we have also been saying
that for many years. I am actually not surprised
that there were only eighteen comments that were
submitted online, and that is because that was
not advertised anywhere. How are people supposed
to know that there is a venue to make public
comments when there is not anyone out there
letting people know that this exists.

I am not shocked that it's eighteen and quite frankly, it's quite atrocious. Again, ridership of one hundred and ten thousand, I highly doubt that only eighteen people and those who have attended these meetings are the only ones who want to make a public comment about this, so that's my one particular concern.

This space needs to be created for bus riders, not for employees of companies and, you know, this is for bus riders and for bus riders to voice what they are feeling.

The other concern here is also a fare increase, it is particularly concerning --

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Take another fifteen seconds.

MS. HALASZ: I might take a little bit more. I do apologize, it's very important.

It is very concerning that there is a fare increase, partly because the underlying message here is that bus riders have to pick up the slack of a corporate deficit, that is not what fare increases are meant for, fare increases are meant to increase service and to create better transit, this is not doing that. So those
two options of a fare increase or bus cuts,
that's absolutely atrocious.

I think that at this point in our bus
service and in this contract, to say that those
are our only two options indicates that this is
failing, something that is not happening, this is
not good. So to say that bus riders have to pay
this deficit, I think is extremely disrespectful
to riders and the efforts that they have to go
through just so they can get to work, just so
they can go to the doctors and say, now you have
to pay more, but you're still going to get the
same service that you had before, I think is
atrocious.

We've been calling on Nassau County to
find better avenues of funding the service. We
were saying that in 2011, that this is not going
to work with the amount of money that the County
is putting into the buses; and here we are today,
showing you that this not working. To have a 3.3
million dollar deficit, which is now bleeding
into 2015, is not working, this is not working.
We can't see another fare increase, we saw one in
2013, we're going to see one in 2014, we're most
likely going to see another one in 2015, and yet
the funding is not there, the service is not
there, and bus riders will continue to have to
pay for it.

It is not appropriate to ask the poorest
of the poor to fill this deficit. We need to
think of better long term planning, this is bad
long-term planning, and we know that we're going
to see this happen again. We can't continue to
come back year after year asking bus riders to
fill the deficit.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I am going to have
to ask you to cut it in ten seconds.

MS. HALASZ: I'm done. Thank you very
much. I hope that at the end of the day you will
really think about what this will do to bus
riders, and really think about encouraging the
County to think about long-term planning as
opposed to constantly filling gaps by bus riders
money. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

Is there anyone else who would like to
address the Committee?

This gentleman here, please state your
name.

MR. NEGRONI: Hi, My name is Rein

NORTH SHORE COURT REPORTERS - 1-800-794-5342
Negroni.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I am sorry, I did not get that.

MR. NEGRONI: First name R-E-I-N. Last name N-E-G-R-O-N-I. I came from Baldwin, New York. I just want to -- just want to ask this question, just a one-part question. For the Long Island Railroad -- just want to ask you a question, if in event of a strike -- I don't know what's the date set for, but should be it possible that it could be like a destination spot for all bus riders to take one, buy one, transportation as needed in effect of a strike? Just want to ask that question.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer, would you please address him.

MR. SETZER: The MTA has published some advertising, I saw some today that describes some shuttle bus service from both Suffolk and Nassau County there. They will contract to have operated -- I do not have that information with me, but it is available from the MTA, I am sure it is on their website.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I also think they are still in the process of revising this
contingency plan even though it is pretty close to the deadline, I am not saying that is good or bad.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I think July 20th is the day.

MR. NEGRONI: Oh, July 20th.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Yes.

MR. NEGRONI: Just, you know, let me state the fact, you know, for the Long Island Railroad riders, including me, because I used to take it. Even if I'm on -- the weekday, I go to Port Washington to Bayside, it's like roundtrip or something, and coming back here is going to be a little, you know, it's going to be a hard thing to do if it's effective on the 20th. It should be like alternative ways for NICE passengers, for Long Island Railroad passengers to cross on the -- from Long Island Railroad to NICE buses. I'm not sure if they had tickets or something, but I just wanted to find out about that.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I think they will have to pay. If you are at the Long Island Railroad, you cannot use their pass, they will have to buy a MetroCard or cash just like everybody else. It is not like they are going to
ride free because they have their monthly ticket, they are going to have to purchase a ticket just like anyone else who uses the NICE Bus.

MR. NEGRONI: Okay. Thank you very much, I appreciate your question (sic) -- I will accept for the cash fare increase, but I just want to say that NICE is a very good company. I know these riders for a long time and you've been doing a great job for a long time. Just want to say, keep it up and see what happens from there.

BOARD MEMBERS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Sir, with the blue shirt.

MR. LANDAU: My name is Brett Landau (phonetic), I am from Queens. I used to commute on the bus, on the N20. But since then, it stopped showing up on time and sometimes it just doesn't show up, so I just started driving to work.

I really believe that Veolia has done more with the money that they have than the MTA did, and they can make more out of less. But I think that some of the changes that they made don't make sense, and now you're just losing ridership.
The first year NICE took service, I noticed that ridership dropped from one hundred thousand down to ninety-three thousand; and the second year, I think it dropped even more. I think mostly this is because of the N6, because you guys took away the Limited, and the Express just took over the Limited service and it just isn't working. The buses are full, people just don't want to take the N6 because the bus is full. They're either going to walk or find another motor transportation; I think the N6 Limited needs to be brought back.

I've studied the bus system since before NICE was even thought about or before the MTA even decided to leave. So I have my own website, it's "BretNYC.com," I have listed a list of proposals that I have come up with, studying ridership data, opinions of riders, I participate in many forums on the internet. I know John talked about the N87, you guys could be saving a lot of money just by extending the N73, N74 to Jones Beach; the N87 runs empty and so does the N73, 74, you merge those two routes and you have more ridership on less buses.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Do you have a
copy of what you have, for us?

MR. LANDAU: I have one copy of it.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: At the end, can we have that, or Mr. Setzer can have that?

MR. LANDAU: I'll write my name and information on it.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Great.

MR. LANDAU: I tried contacting NICE on several occasions, and I will give props to them for having a Facebook page and a Twitter, something the MTA never did. They reach out to riders a lot more than the MTA did. But I come to know NICE’s route designers or whoever designs the proposals, and I have reached out to them on several occasions and I've gotten no response.

A lot of people -- I've posted these online to forums, and suggestions where riders give their opinions, and many of them have gotten positive feedback on these, they make a lot of sense, at least in any opinion. Another one I've had, I don't think getting rid of the N22 Limited was a good idea either. That brought more ridership for the N22 and you guys designed the route at the beginning of 2012, when you guys first came into service and then you got rid of
it. That was one of the better changes that NICE made and then you guys dropped it.

I am not going to go through every change on this list, but I think that NICE could be doing a lot better with the money they have, and if you have more money from ridership that makes sense, then I think you have more money for maintenance -- more money for maintenance, meaning, that more buses are showing up, and honestly, I think drivers will be happier as well; I think that this a win/win if NICE just looks at these and takes them into consideration.

I timed myself, that's the three minutes.

BOARD MEMBERS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: Can we get a copy of that? I think Mr. Setzer needs it more than we do.

Please, understand that there is two issues here. There is the issue of cutting service, there is the issue of raising fares, and one is pulling against the other; and certainly we are hearing a lot, that cutting the service would be pretty dreadful.

Are there anymore comments for the
Committee?

Mr. Endo is here.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: I also think it needs to be stated that the County is contributing to the situation.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: For the people who came in late, that was in Mr. Setzer's presentation. Nassau County is putting up 1.8 million dollars, and NICE has contributed $400,000 for this shortfall and, of course, the proposal of the differential would come from a fare hike.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: And Veolia is not required to do that.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Right. Neither is Nassau County.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Is it one page Mr. Endo?

MR. ENDO: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Endo, would you like to introduce this and have Ms. Comerford read it like we have done in the past.

MR. ENDO: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. How about you read the first paragraph.
MR. ENDO: My name is Yuki Endo, of Jackson Heights, Queens, and a member of the Bus Riders Union. I have both opinions on fare increase. I support cash fare increase on September 1st if NICE Bus takes passenger's complaints seriously. If not, I do not support their increase of NICE Bus cash fare because I had a horrible day on the following days:

June 8, 2014, at Jamaica Center, around 8:55, 9:00, the N34 Freeport Number 1845 refused to open the bus door for me when I was trying to get on until regular passenger got on bus.

He is also being really rude to a sleeping teen passenger who was listening to music loud. I know it is against the law to listen to loud music on any public transportation, but he harassed the passenger by touching him to wake him up twice; a few bus stops before Freeport station.

Also, on days I boarded the 1001 N88 Jones Beach, number 1870, and my thirty-day MetroCard wouldn't read.

Also, Jones Beach West Bathhouse around 11:00 A.M., the N88, Freeport, refused to return and I was forced to wait for the 10:30 N88, Jones
Beach; 11 N88, Freeport, number 1870, because of
the new bus operator's mistake, and my MetroCard
wouldn't read it again even though eighteen
minutes expired.

I had no proof from the M60 SBS receipt
that the MetroCard I used was collected. When I
used my MetroCard on the 12:20 N for Jamaica;
1760, it worked.

On June 8th on 12:20, the N for Jamaica
1760, new male bus driver almost gave wrong
information to passenger, and almost ended up
waiting for the N8 Green Acres Loop, which does
not run on Sunday.

July 1st, when I was on Flushing Main
Street at 10:55 or 11:15, N20 Hicksville, the
1744 bus, was sixteen minutes behind schedule.
While most N20 Roslyn and N21 Glen Cove are
mostly on time.

Most people would not buy mobile phone
to use NICE Go Mobile, because they cannot afford
it. Nobody on the N20 or N21 are not using the
NICE Go Mobile because the majority of the bus
riders are Asian, mostly Chinese, who don't speak
English well.

BOARD MEMBER BLESSINGER: Mr. Endo,
would you like Ms. Comerford to read the rest of it?

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Why don't you let her finish it, so we can give you your time better.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I am going to read the second part.

If you want to increase fare on cash fare, you need to improve the following service:

N21 bus needs to return on weekends. There are many Glen Cove passengers and communities of Glen Cove and Sea Cliff that are complaining about connections between the N20 and the N27 buses.

Most of the N20 and N21 riders were unaware that it changed to NICE Bus from the Long Island Bus, since some riders had old MTA Long Island Bus schedules on the N20 and N21 bus.

Change policy on the summer bus route N87, 88, Jones Beach bus, because most bus drivers go directly from the East Boathouse to the Freeport station and it should change to a big bus, so that the bus drivers wouldn't have to serve Jones Beach three bus stops in an orderly fashion twice.

Similar to LaGuardia Airport, where the
M60, Q48 and the Q72 buses loop around LaGuardia
Airport before going on their regular route.
Most drivers change destination signs as they
enter LaGuardia Airport.

For the N87, 88 Jones Beach drivers,
they could change destinations signs to Freeport
or Hicksville stations at West Bathhouse, drop
off/pick up at the same time. Then same at
Central Mall at East Bathhouse and return to
Freeport station, then N87 following its regular
route to Hicksville.

For this year, lots of N87, 88 Jones
Beach riders are not satisfied because you didn't
make printed schedules of the N87, 88 bus, so I
made organized schedules to help make sure that
Jones Beach riders wouldn't miss their buses back
to Freeport station.

Central Mall doesn't have N87, 88 daily
schedules. On Sunday, July 6th, 2014, when I
went to the park information office at Central
Mall, one of the Jones Beach goers were
complaining that they have no MetroCard vending
machines.

NICE Bus should also send out Go Mobile
team from Flushing, Main Street, Far Rockaway
station, on Beach 21st Street, Mott Avenue, 33
bus stop, 31, and 32 bus stops and Long Beach
station. Thank you for your cooperation.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Endo, thank you
very much. Ms. Comerford, thank you for helping
reading this.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Thank you very
much, Mr. Endo.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Ma'am, did you have
a comment?

MS. LILLY: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We did not forget
you.

MS. LILLY: My name is Eileen Lilly and
I am from Long Beach. At the beginning of the
meeting, this gentleman gave us reasons why the
fares have to be raised, and one of those
reasons, if I recall correctly, was that there is
an increase in the Able-Ridership and that costs
more money; and while I appreciate that the
Able-Ridership is a very necessary part of your
public transportation, I don't think that it
should be funded by the working people who ride
the regular buses.

If extra money has got to be put
forward, it shouldn't come from the people that
are just trying to get to work and get home at
night, it should come from the County. There
should be other sources for these people to use
the Able buses, but it should not come off the
backs of the working people. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Let me just clarify
a couple of things that you said; and I know you
were not at the last meeting, but that is not the
only cause for cost increases. Cost increases
have occurred due to salaries and wages, health
benefits and fuel. So those are the considerable
and higher expenses than I believe Able-Ride is,
and that has to go into the equation.

As far as the funding again, there has
been contributory funding here in this proposal.
Nassau County has contributed 1.8 million, after
the state and the federal government have put in
what they are going to put in, and NICE
contributed $400,000.

In any of these situations, what we sit
here for is, there has to be a fiscally balanced
budget. If you know what the expenses are going
to be here, the revenue has to meet those
expenses. You cannot go ahead and run this thing
without the balanced budget. Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Mr. Setzer, do you know what the increase percentage was in Able-Ride; how much it has gone up since you have taken over?

MR. SETZER: I do not have that number off the top of my head, but I think on a peak day, we have over thirteen hundred reservations for Able-Ride; Wednesday is typically the heaviest day. Probably, that is another three hundred rides since years ago, since 2012, I am guessing, but it is something in that order of magnitude.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: A low estimate would be at least a $0.25 increase?

MR. SETZER: I think so, yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are there any other comments for the Committee to hear?

Sir, I cannot see you, but please come forward.

MR. DELOVICH: Hi, my name is Matt Delovich. I'm a social worker, I work in a -- for the past four years I have worked in a group home with people with disabilities. My brother is also a person with disabilities and lives in a
TRANSPORT MEETING 07/09/14

1 group home; and he's a patron of Able-Ride. He
2 is, you know, he is able to take fixed routes,
3 but he chooses not to, because they're not --
4 because the service is really not up to par, he
5 prefers to spend about twenty dollars on a cab
6 instead.

7 I just want echo some of the comments
8 from before. I think that the times that this
9 public hearing were set for do not make the
10 hearing very public. From what I understand, the
11 meetings with other committees are open to the
12 public, so I'm not sure what makes this different
13 from a committee meeting.

14 Also, the fare increases have -- has
15 been a trend that exists for a while. When MTA
16 took over, the ridership began to decreased, but
17 the fare increase continued as well. So I just
18 wanted to ask you, what plan do you have in place
19 to stop fare increases in the future? Who NICE
20 has working on this problem? When, if you do
21 have these plans, when are the progress and
22 results reported for this?

23 CHAIRMAN SHRENOKE: Are you asking
24 questions?

25 MR. DELOVICH: Yes.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I am not too sure I understood the question, when MTA took over; do you mean when NICE took over for the MTA?

MR. DELOVICH: No, I was just commenting on fare increases. This is a problem that you guys have known -- the County has known about for a long time. It existed under MTA and it continues to exist under NICE's stewardship, and there doesn't seem to be an end in sight, fares are continuing to rise.

When MTA took over, ridership rose, you know, after -- before they took over, it took a big dip and rose back up again, yet fares continue to rise. So this is an old problem, it's a big problem, and I am wondering how you are addressing it.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Well, I know one thing, in my lifetime, I do not recall fares ever going down anywhere, whether it be the MTA, the old subway, service transportation, or what have you, we live in an inflationary world where costs go up, health benefits go up, and fuel is an major expense for any transportation industry.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: And it is very unpredictable.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I do not think there is a panacea to this problem, you know, the way commodities are, the way salaries are, and the way health benefits are.

Now, Mr. Setzer, would you like to add anything to what I said?

MR. SETZER: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

I think the basic economics of this transit system and the MTA, and every other one in the United States at least, that the riders pay some portion of the cost of the service and the taxpayers pay the rest. The limitation typically is how much tax dollars can be allocated to operating transportation service, that is besides the service level. In our case, we have a system that is very heavily used.

I think some comments that were meant as criticism, they are also recognition that service like the N6 is very heavily used, it is one of the most heavily used bus routes anywhere in the country; the riders are covering a good portion of the cost of that route. But the only way to have more service, is for there to be more tax dollars available, and that is a decision that elected officials make.
Reducing fares reduces the amount of
service available, just as reducing the tax part.
So that would be nice for all of us to have
everything we like at a lower price, I think that
is a very unlikely prospect for the future.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I have one
question.

When is the next time you will get a new
influx of buses? I know they have to rotate
miles, years.

MR. SETZER: Yes, that is right. There
is a bid going out in a few days for the next
forty three or forty-five buses, so we would
receive those probably about twelve months later.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Then we will
cycle out the older --

MR. SETZER: Yes, we will be able to
take some of the older -- and I think several of
the speakers, they recognized that the condition
on the oldest part of the fleet is not very good,
but that is the way we inherited it. It is also
an expense, driving, we have to put a lot of
money into those buses to keep them working.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: That was my
next point. If we have newer buses, we will have
lower maintenance.

MR. SETZER: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Do you know about how many of the really old buses we have in the fleet?

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: How many are left from the MTA?

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: From the MTA, right.

MR. SETZER: The only buses we bought were the forty-three that we got last year, all the rest were inherited from the MTA.

By older bus, you probably mean the standard ones, the ones that have not been repainted --

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Right.

MR. SETZER: That is still about half the fleet. I do not know the exact number, but it is about half of the fleet, yes.

So they will be around for years to come. They have been purchased in groups over the years, the federal government participates in the cost, so we are required to keep them for no less than twelve years and half a million miles.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Okay. I knew
it was a formula. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SETZER: Is there anyone else who would like to address the Committee?

Didn't you have three minutes?

MR. LILLY: No, I didn't have three minutes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: No, but he just asked a question.

MR. LILLY: I just asked a question.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: He just asked about the Go Mobile.

MR. LILLY: I would just like to say a couple of things.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Three minutes.

MR. LILLY: Starting now. Marty Lilly, Long Beach. I ride the bus infrequently, when I do, it is because I have no choice, and I've always had a good experience. I take the N15 -- and some of the things I heard here -- by the way, I have to say that the folks who spoke here today are unbelievable; really, I mean, this your customer -- these are your customers, and I'm a customer occasionally.

I did ride the N15 once, and the woman driving the bus was just wonderful. She was
interacting with some of her regulars, safely, and one young fella got on and he was very disabled, he could barely walk, and he paid -- I can't remember if he paid the full fair that time, because he didn't have a card with him -- a disabled card. And she said to him -- she said to him, why did you put so much money in, you are disabled, aren't you, and he said, I didn't bring my card. He did that because on a previous run, apparently, the driver made him get off because he didn't have his card with him and he didn't have enough to make up the full fare, so the driver made him get off at the next stop and didn't give him back his money. So the woman gave him some ideas on how to handle that next time, and I thought that was very nice of her.

But the other thing I would say is, when you folks hear about this N6, I hope some of you and you, and I'm sure you have the driver -- the people who ride the bus just for quality assurance, experience those runs. I would also suggest that you take at heart, maybe you have already, the person who made the recommendation of a coupon to give the riders a break, even though they are going to be paying more; well,
gee wiz, if I get a free ride once a month or something, it makes them feel better about the money they spent.

The other thing is that the train, I believe, coming into Long Beach gives a special rate. If you're coming into Long Beach, you get a ticket to the beach at a reduced rate; I don't know if that would fit into your system or not, but that's something else to consider.

There has got to be ways to make up money from the ridership that doesn't cost the riders that much more. And I do appreciate the fact that's it's a no win situation, there is always got to be cost increases, I understand that. I really appreciate the bus system, because when I use it, it's really good, from my experience; anyway that's just a few ideas.

BOARD MEMBERS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: Is there anyone else who would like to address the Committee?

(At this time there was no response)

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: Any questions from Committee members for Mr. Setzer?

(At this time there was no response)

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: Any other questions
or comments from Committee members to any of the
comments that they heard, that they would just
like to make a statement?

(At this time there was no response)

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: With that, I would
like to request that someone make a motion to
adjourn our meeting.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Motion to
adjourn our meeting.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Anyone want to
second that motion?

BOARD MEMBER JEAN DUROSEAU: I second
it.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Counselor?

MR. LITTMAN: No, no, Tony was asking
what time the next meeting is.

So five o'clock will be the next
meeting. And at that meeting, we will take a
vote on this proposed $0.25 cash fare increase.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: And review the
Title 6 as well.

MR. LITTMAN: Yes, as well as the Title
6 review, and as well as taking additional public
comments.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Okay. We were in
the middle of our motions here. We had a motion
to adjourn our meeting, and we had someone second
it --

BOARD MEMBER JEAN DUROSEAU: I second
it.

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: With that, I would
like to thank you for coming. The meeting is
adjourned.

(Whereupon, the Nassau County Bus Transit
Committee was concluded. Time noted: 3:15 P.M.)
**Fare Increase:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.19.2014</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>I am a bit confused on the fare pricing. The site says $2.25 for cash but then it says it follows the MetroCard fare pricing. Which is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.23.2014</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td>If you insist on raising the fares that you need to provide better service, you lowballed your bid and now you're complaining that you can't run the service on that amount. Whose fault is that, certainly not the riders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30.14</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td>I think it completely unfair that we riders may have to deal with a fare hike because NICE and the County cannot find sufficient funds for the NICE system, especially when the MTA will be implementing a fare hike in 2015. Instead of constantly depending on riders to fill their deficit maybe NICE and Nassau County should sit down and find a better, more concrete funding stream for the buses because this is getting ridiculous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30.14</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td>It is important that public transportation remain affordable for all users. Taxes are the most equitable way to fund public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
transportation after waste has been eliminated
and economies achieved.

6.30.14 E-mail: It's unfair to place the cost of
public transportation on the backs of those most
in need of that service and who have the
greatest difficulty meeting those increased
costs. Public transportation benefits us all by
reducing pollution, decreasing road traffic and
ultimately getting us all a better transport
grid accustoming us to use p.t. instead of
private autos Keep the fares as they are Seek
additional funds from other public sources.

6.30.14 E-mail: I am opposed to an increase in
bus fares for Nassau County riders. They are
our most vulnerable citizens who can least
afford such an increase.

6.30.14 E-mail: Many of our staff at the Long
Island Council of Churches, as well as most of
the people whom Nassau County asks us to assist,
depend on the bus. I am concerned about both
potential service cuts and also huge fare
increases. And I am deeply troubled that
hearing on this proposal have been scheduled for
a location not accessible by NICE. If you
really wanted to help NICE, you'd try to get

NORTH SHORE COURT REPORTERS - 1-800-794-5342
more people to ride it, everyone they get...

7.1.14 E-mail: I had really hoped to be able to attend the July 9th meeting but I've been called to jury duty. Federal Court in Brooklyn. Instead of having this little box I really need an email address where I can attach my thoughts as well as some photos I've taken of issues that are ongoing. As far as the fare increase-gee what a surprise you can't run the company on what you told us you could. And now you're asking for more money for unnecessary route extensions (NCC) and smart phone apps. Is it any wonder you're not to budget.

7.2.14 E-mail: It saddens me that again and again Management finds itself in a pinch and all they can do is to fall back on abusive practices of raising riders fees primarily to people who that already are going with less. NICE need/must make better efforts to schedule this meeting at a better time and at a convenient location for folks that are potentially impacted by this request.

7.8.14 E-mail: I use the M33, N15, and the N49 religiously and I appreciate the service provided by NICE. But pleas do not add another
fare hike. I see the community that rely on the
buses to take them to work and school and it
already is a financial stretch for many of them.
Thank you.

7.8.14 E-Mail: What budget cuts is NICE making
to save money?

7.8.14 E-mail: The bus riders should have been
notified at least 30 days before hearing and
hearing should be in a central location at a
reasonably convenient time, before or after work
hours.

7.8.14 E-mail: No fair hike this year! This is
a game with privatization. Low ball the
contract and ask them for fare hikes when the
contract is won!

7.8.14 E-mail: There can be no justification for
attempting to fill budget gaps at the expenses
of financially vulnerable population. This
group relies on public transportation to get to
work, to secure health care and a myriad of
other services.

7.8.14 E-mail: Inexpensive travel costs are very
important to the economy and family stability.
Not being able to get a job is terrible.
I, DONNA T. JOHANSMEYER a Professional Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby certify that the foregoing testimony taken in the matter of the JULY 09, 2014 Nassau County Bus Transit Committee consisting of pages 1 through 66 inclusive is an accurate transcription of my cryptic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I SET MY HAND THIS DAY.

[Signature]

DONNA T. JOHANSMEYER
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
NORTH SHORE COURT REPORTERS
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF NEW YORK
NASSAU COUNTY

TRANSIT COMMITTEE

JULY 09, 2014

5:00 P.M.

BEFORE: SHELDON SHRENKEL, CHAIRMAN
APPEARANCES:

CHAIRMAN SHELDON SHRENFEL
VICE CHAIRMAN LAWRENCE BRENSINGER
BOARD MEMBER KATHY ANN COMERFORD
BOARD MEMBER JEAN DUFROEAU
BOARD MEMBER LIVIO TONY ROSARIO
SAMUEL LITTMAN - EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COUNTY ATTORNEY AND COUNSEL FOR TRANSIT COMMITTEE

MICHAEL SETZER - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VEOLIA TRANSPORTATION

YUKI ENDO
RICHARD CURRY
ANITA HALASZ
CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: Good evening.

Welcome to the second public hearing of the Nassau County Bus Transit Committee.

I am the Chairman, Sheldon Shrenkel. I will do a roll call. I would like to introduce our membership.

To my far left, we have Ms. Kathy Comerford. To my immediate left, we have Mr. Larry Blessinger. To my right we have Mr. Tony Rosario and Mr. Jean Duroseau. To my extreme far right, we have our General Counsel, Samuel Littman.

MR. LITTMAN: Good afternoon, everyone.

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: Donna, we would like to thank you again, for taking the minutes two times today.

Our agenda is as follows. We are going hear a presentation by the CEO of NICE Transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer. After that time, we will have the opportunity again, to hear public comments.

With those public comments, we will be a looking to review resolutions regarding the equity analysis and, of course, possibly a resolution regarding a fare structure or a
decrease in service. In any case, why don't we
start our meeting with Mr. Michael Setzer, CEO of
NICE Transportation.

MR. SETZER: Thank you very much,
Mr. Chairman and the members of the Committee.
Good evening.
I have a little bit of information for
us to go over before we get started. I call this
a Balanced Budget Proposal for 2014. I want to
go over a little bit of the background.

When we first presented the budget back
in March we summarized it, as it shows on the
screen, that in order to stabilize the current
level of service, we did discuss why there was a
value in keeping service levels stable and
predictable, but some additional funding was
required.

The reason for the additional funding is
that our costs have gone up, particularly in
three areas, and we went over those in some
details, but just as a refresher, we had a wage
rate increase built into our labor contract of
three percent and that was in effect as of April
1st of this year.

Secondly, we saw an increase in natural
gas costs, which for us is very significant
because we use it both as a utility energy source
and we also use it as a motor vehicle fuel.

Thirdly, like almost every other
employer, we experienced increases in health
insurance costs for our employees. On top of
that, we also are experiencing a steady increase
for the demand of Able-Ride trips. As you know,
under the Americans with Disability Act, we must
serve all eligible man with Able-Ride trips. Any
eligible person, who eligible by way of a
disability, who asks for a trip within the
eligible area, must be served; we cannot say that
we have no more capacity. So as that has been
said, Able-Ride will be placing a bigger demand
on our overall budget.

We then looked at what effects are we
still enjoying in the economy and the cost of
service. This is what you saw in May, I think,
last time we met. The first column represents
the cost per hour, the Fixed Ride service, which
is ninety percent of our budget under Long Island
Bus during their last year of service here, which
is $151.37 an hour. That is all costs including
variable costs like fuel, tires, and all of the
overhead costs to go with this.

On the same basis, back in 2012, the first year of NICE Bus, that cost per hour had dropped to $122.11; it actually went down a few more cents in 2013 because this is per hour and we added some more service in 2013, so the cost per hour went down a little.

This year its gone up a little because of the reasons that I just discussed. It has gone up about three percent which is consistent with the labor costs. The way I look at it is, even though we are experiencing some cost increases, we are still seeing a twenty to twenty-five percent difference in the unit cost in an hour of service, compared to the last year of Long Island Bus. Another way of saying that is, for the same amount of money, the bus riders, NICE customers, have twenty to twenty-five percent more service available to them then they would if the old cost structure was still in place.

Just to review the history very quickly, for the audience particularly. On March 27th, the Committee reviewed the budget and gave conditional approval for twelve months, beginning
April 1st through the end of March of 2015, it was for a total of almost $122 million. At that time, we all shared the hope that we could have no change in fares and no reduction in service. The reason that it was still a hope at that time, and the reason your approval was conditional, was that the biggest part of our revenue budget comes from the State of New York, and the Legislator had not adopted a 2014 budget at that point. Our hope was that when they did, there would be a sufficient increase to completely fill that gap, but unfortunately, that is not what happened; we got a smaller increase from the Legislator. All of the downstate systems, other than the MTA, got a small increase and it was insufficient to completely close the gap.

Then in May, the Committee met again. We did a couple of things -- on a completely independent track, having nothing to do with the budget issue, the County asked that we change the transit budget to correspond to the calendar year; all of the other County budgets were on a calendar year, basically.

You agree with that, and we made a
budget presentation based on a nine-month-year, since the last fiscal year ended in March, so now we want to extend it to December, so it was a nine-month-year from April 1st to December 31st in the amount of money that changed to $91,782,042 for that nine-month-period. That meant that there was a $2,670,000 gap that was closed at that point.

We proposed a budget balancing scenario that included three elements to it. One of which is the fare adjustment that we are going to consider this evening, and we also suggest that we begin this public input process that is culminating this evening.

Before you begin, you have a list of eighteen comments that were received by phone or e-mail prior to tonight. Earlier today you heard some more comments from the public and you will hear more in just a few minutes, I think.

The proposal that included the fare adjustments is the one that you see on the screen here, this is the same slide that you looked at in May. The first part of the solution of the $2,670,000 gap was an additional $1,870,000 from the County, to which Nassau County has agreed.
The third element was a $400,000 contribution from Veolia, to which Veolia has agreed. The remaining fee is, the second bullet point there, raising another $400,000 by increasing the cash fare to catch it up to the MetroCard fare to $2.25 to $2.50 that is, effective on September 1st.

The important thing to point out here is that the majority of our riders are using a MetroCard today. If you proceed with this fare change, it has no affect on two-thirds of the riders. It only affects the smaller number who currently pay their fare by cash.

The actual proposal would be, as described on this table, MetroCard fares would remain unchanged, so that the majority of riders would experience no change; the Go Mobile fare, which is the fare that you could pay using your smart phone app that started in June, also remains unchanged, we set that the same as the MetroCard; $2.50.

The cash fare would rise from $2.25 to $2.50; if you approve that. There are a couple of smaller affairs that go along with the cash fare, there is a $2.10 student fare that is
available to elementary and secondary schools. It is very rarely used, but we would suggest it go up just to maintain the internal consistency of $2.25. It is still a little bit of a discount for the younger students, but it does not affect college students.

We also have, for the federal law, $0.50 fares for people who are eligible either because of disability or because of age. Those fares are set today at a $1.10. The federal rule is that it can be no more than fifty percent of the base fare. We are recommending that it go from a $1.10 today, to a $1.25; the same as the senior citizen fare from $1.10 to $1.25.

The other category of fares are Able-Ride fares, which are $3.75, we are not recommending any change in those fares today. It might be worth-while for you to be aware of other similar affairs in this area. I have shown on the screen here some other transit agencies in the metro area that are also accepters of MetroCards. The MTA raised their fares across the board to $2.50 in March of last year; this is no cash discount for MTA riders.

In Westchester County, which is very
similar to Nassau County in some respects, similar in size, and that accepts MetroCards also, followed suit when the MTA raised their fares in March, they raised all there fare to $2.50 also; they had no cash discount. The third largest agency in the area, of course, is NJ Transit. They have a completely different fare system that is based on distances, but almost all of their fares, except for Zone 1 and Zone 2, which are very short fares, there are thirty-eight different fares in their interstate table; and thirty-six of those are already at $2.90 or more, so they are already beyond what we are proposing to do.

That is our proposal and that is the one in which we will be hearing comments from the public; and I would be happy to respond to any questions that you have.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: The filled gap, if we vote for a fare increase, we will also have to vote for the $0.15 for the students, the disabled and the senior citizens?

MR. SETZER: That is all included in our proposal. Of course, you could change that, if you wish.
CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: It would take that
amount of money plus the twenty-five percent cash
fare to fill in the $400,000 gap; is that
correct?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: So therefore, then
we have a balanced budget?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Can I ask a
question on the Go Mobile? Do we have any idea
where those 4,000 people, in the demographics,
were they already MetroCard users, were they cash
users that have converted to the --

MR. JACK KHZOUZ: Unfortunately, it does
not capture where that conversion comes from. We
will know that through the very unscientific
study at the end of the year, assuming a small
growth rate service, and seeing where those
people migrated from, based on our total. It is
very unscientific and unfortunately that is
really where we are going to probably see it.

Our gut instinct right now, is that it
is coming mostly from MetroCards; the conversion.
But again, it is a little early to tell and that
is all we have.
BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Okay. Thank you.

MR. SETZER: One comment that you have raised out of the Go Mobile. If you remember, the origin of the Go Mobile project started with some issues that were brought to you about the unavailability of MetroCards.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Correct.

MR. SETZER: MetroCard machines are not readily available in Nassau County and number of vendors seems to be less. And if you remember, in that discussion, we told you that we have met with the MTA and talked about the possibility of wider availability of MetroCard machines, but they have no more, they do not intend to buy anymore, they are in the process of migrating away from the MetroCard, so they do not want to make any further investments in that.

I do not think that our riders understand that we have no MetroCard machines. The MetroCard system is an MTA system and we have no ability to make those more available; we did pursue that issue, at least, with the MTA.

MR. LITTMAN: My same question from this afternoon. Fare equity analysis, please comment
on that; and what the alternative is to a fare
increase.

MR. SETZER: Thank you for that. A
couple of weeks ago you received a fare equity
analysis, that is a federally required process.
Under Title 6 of the Federal Rights Act, any
federally assisted programs has to do this sort
of analysis whenever a fare increase or a
significant service change is being considered;
increase or decrease.

We performed the analysis and provided
it to you. The bottom line of the analysis is
that the same group of people who would be
affected by this fare increase, if you approve
it, would be severally affected by the
alternative; that is your second question.

The alternative is to reduce service.

In order to close that gap without the additional
fare revenue, then we have to find it someplace
else, and the only someplace else to find it --
we showed you -- we think that we found most of
the efficiencies that we can. We think that we
have taken out service that is not really being
used. A further budget process that involves
reducing service, would have a significant impact
on many of the same people.

So our recommendation is based on the
Title 6 analysis. The fare adjustment is the
better alternative, when compared to the service
reduction. We would have to accomplish these
savings in the later part of the year. And the
service cut would have to be deeper than if we
did it at the beginning of the year.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: If the fare
increase was not approved, would the County and
Veolia still intend to contribute that money?

MR. SETZER: I believe so.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: But you still would
not have a balanced budget?

MR. SETZER: Correct.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

MR. SETZER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: At this time, during
this public hearing, we welcome any comments from
anyone here.

When you come up to the podium, please
state your name, whether you represent an
organization, or state your name and the town
that you live in. All comments, we just ask are
kept to a limit of three minutes. What we will
ask you to do is frame, design, and think about
your thoughts before you come up to the podium.

    Mr. Endo, we know you spoke earlier and
I think what we are going to ask you to introduce
yourself, and then what we will ask you to do --
and you said you have no objections, is that
Ms. Comerford would read those comments.

    MR. ENDO: Yes.

    CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: And at the same
time, those comments, all of your written and
specific comments, will be properly and duly
recorded in the minutes of this hearing.

    MR. ENDO: My name is Yuki Endo, of
Jackson Heights, Queens, and a member of the Bus
Riders Union.

    BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: I am going to
read Mr. Endo's exact words.

    I have both opinions on fare increase.
I support cash fare increase on September 1st if
NICE Bus takes passenger's complaints seriously.
If not, I do not support their increase of NICE
Bus cash fare because I had a horrible day on the
following days:

    June 8, 2014, at Jamaica Center, around
8:55, 9:00, the N34 Freeport Number 1845 refused
to open the bus door for me when I was trying to
get on until regular passenger got on bus.

He is also being really rude to a
sleeping teen passenger who was listening to
music loud. I know it is against the law to
listen to loud music on any public
transportation, but he harassed the passenger by
touching him to wake him up twice; a few bus
stops before Freeport station.

Also, on days I boarded the 1001 N88
Jones Beach, number 1870, and my thirty-day
MetroCard wouldn't read.

Also, Jones Beach West Bathhouse around
11:00 A.M., the N88, Freeport, refused to return
and I was forced to wait for the 10:30 N88, Jones
Beach; 11 N88, Freeport, number 1870, because of
the new bus operator's mistake, and my MetroCard
wouldn't read it again even though eighteen
minutes expired.

I had no proof from the M60 SBS receipt
that the MetroCard I used was collected. When I
used my MetroCard on the 12:20 N for Jamaica;
1760, it worked.

On June 8th on 12:20, the N4 for Jamaica
1760, new male bus driver almost gave wrong
information to passenger, and almost ended up
waiting for the N8 Green Acres Loop, which does
not run on Sunday.

July 1st, when I was on Flushing Main
Street at 10:55 or 11:15, N20 Hicksville, the
1744 bus, was sixteen minutes behind schedule.
While most N20 Roslyn and N21 Glen Cove are
mostly on time.

Most people would not buy mobile phone
to use NICE Go Mobile, because they cannot afford
it. Nobody on the N20 or N21 are not using the
NICE Go Mobile because the majority of the bus
riders are Asian, mostly Chinese, who don't speak
English well.

If you want to increase fare on cash
fare, you need to improve the following service:
N21 bus needs to return on weekends. There are
many Glen Cove passengers and communities of Glen
Cove and Sea Cliff that are complaining about
connections between the N20 and the N27 buses.

Most of the N20 and N21 riders were
unaware that it changed to NICE Bus from the Long
Island Bus, since some riders had old MTA Long
Island Bus schedules on the N20 and N21 bus.

Change policy on the summer bus route
N87, 88, Jones Beach bus, because most bus
drivers go directly from the East Boathouse to
the Freeport station and it should change to a
big bus, so that the bus drivers wouldn't have to
serve Jones Beach three bus stops in an orderly
fashion twice.

Similar to LaGuardia Airport, where the
M60, Q48 and the Q72 buses loop around LaGuardia
Airport before going on their regular route.

Most drivers change destination signs as they
enter LaGuardia Airport.

For the N87, 88 Jones Beach drivers,
they could change destinations signs to Freeport
or Hicksville stations at West Bathhouse, drop
off/pick up at the same time. Then same at
Central Mall at East Bathhouse and return to
Freeport station, then N87 following its regular
route to Hicksville.

For this year, lots of N87, 88 Jones
Beach riders are not satisfied because you didn't
make printed schedules of the N87, 88 bus, so I
made organized schedules to help make sure that
Jones Beach riders wouldn't miss their buses back
to Freeport station.

Central Mall doesn't have N87, 88 daily
schedules. On Sunday, July 6th, 2014, when I went to the park information office at Central Mall, one of the Jones Beach goers were complaining that they have no MetroCard vending machines.

NICE Bus should also send out Go Mobile team from Flushing, Main Street, Far Rockaway station, on Beach 21st Street, Mott Avenue, 33 bus stop, 31, and 32 bus stops and Long Beach station. Thank you for your cooperation.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Endo, thank you for those comments, and Ms. Comerford, thank you for reading those.

I do want to mention and note that in our prior meeting, we did receive some e-mail comments to NICE transportation, which was passed on to the Committee. In the prior meeting, we incorporated those e-mail comments into the minutes.

Counsel, do you recommended that we put them into this hearing's minutes as well, so in case someone just peeks into these minutes, they are there?

MR. LITTMAN: Yes, I do.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Would you mind also...
repeating those within your minutes, thank you.

**Public Comments Regarding Sept 1st Proposed Cash Fare Increase:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>COMMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.19.2014</td>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>I am a bit confused on the fare pricing. The site says $2.25 for cash but then it says it follows the MetroCard fare pricing. Which is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.23.2014</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td>If you insist on raising the fares that you need to provide better service, you lowballed your bid and now you're complaining that you can't run the service on that amount. Whose fault is that, certainly not the riders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30.14</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td>I think it completely unfair that we riders may have to deal with a fare hike because NICE and the County cannot find sufficient funds for the NICE system, especially when the MTA will be implementing a fare hike in 2015. Instead of constantly depending on riders to fill their deficit maybe NICE and Nassau County should sit down and find a better, more concrete funding stream for the buses because this is getting ridiculous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.30.14</td>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td>It is important that public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NORTH SHORE COURT REPORTERS - 1-800-794-5342
transportation remain affordable for all users. Taxes are the most equitable way to fund public transportation after waste has been eliminated and economies achieved.

6.30.14 E-mail: It's unfair to place the cost of public transportation on the backs of those most in need of that service and who have the greatest difficulty meeting those increased costs. Public transportation benefits us all by reducing pollution, decreasing road traffic and ultimately getting us all a better transport grid accustoming us to use p.t. instead of private autos Keep the fares as they are Seek additional funds from other public sources.

6.30.14 E-mail: I am opposed to an increase in bus fares for Nassau County riders. They are our most vulnerable citizens who can least afford such an increase.

6.30.14 E-mail: Many of our staff at the Long Island Council of Churches, as well as most of the people whom Nassau County asks us to assist, depend on the bus. I am concerned about both potential service cuts and also huge fare increases. And I am deeply troubled that hearing on this proposal have been scheduled for
a location not accessible by NICE. If you
really wanted to help NICE, you'd try to get
more people to ride it, everyone they get.....

7.1.14 E-mail: I had really hoped to be able to
attend the July 9th meeting but I've been called
to jury duty. Federal Court in Brooklyn.
Instead of having this little box I really need
an email address where I can attach my thoughts
as well as some photos I've taken of issues that
are ongoing. As far as the fare increase-gee
what a surprise you can't run the company on
what you told us you could. And now you're
asking for more money for unnecessary route
extensions (NCC) and smart phone apps. Is it
any wonder you're not to budget.

7.2.14 E-mail: It saddens me that again and
again Management finds itself in a pinch and all
they can do is to fall back on abusive practices
of raising riders fees primarily to people who
that already are going with less. NICE
need/must make better efforts to schedule this
meeting at a better time and at a convenient
location for folks that are potentially impacted
by this request.

7.8.14 E-mail: I use the N33, N15, and the N49
religiously and I appreciate the service
provided by NICE. But pleas do not add another
fare hike. I see the community that rely on the
buses to take them to work and school and it
already is a financial stretch for many of them.
Thank you.

7.8.14 E-Mail: What budget cuts is NICE making
to save money?

7.8.14 E-mail: The bus riders should have been
notified at least 30 days before hearing and
hearing should be in a central location at a
reasonably convenient time, before or after work
hours.

7.8.14 E-mail: No fair hike this year! This is
a game with privatization. Low ball the
contract and ask them for fare hikes when the
contract is won!

7.8.14 E-mail: There can be no justification for
attempting to fill budget gaps at the expenses
of financially vulnerable population. This
group relies on public transportation to get to
work, to secure health care and a myriad of
other services.

7.8.14 E-mail: Inexpensive travel costs are very
important to the economy and family stability.
Not being able to get a job is terrible.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Sir, in white shirt, thank you. Please state your name and try to keep it to three minutes, please.

MR. CURRY: I will. Hi, my name is Richard Curry. I am one of the members of the Long Island Bus Riders Union. I oppose to the fare increase. My reason is reliability of busses; or should I say, lack thereof.

For example, up until June of this year, I could always count on the 5:38, N38 bus, to pick me up at the bus stop at South Service Road and Newtown Road. Then in June, it was like that pick-up time never existed; what's up with that?

Another example is this, at the bus that goes to South Service bus stop, one of the reasons that I leave early is so that I can get onto the bus earlier, which means that I can catch the N78 bus, which meant that instead of me leaving 5:08, I'm leaving at 4:20 to catch a 4:58 bus.

Do you know what? It worked. However, next week, or I should say, last week, I had to catch an early bus to go to my job, which meant that I had to catch, rather -- 8:10, N78 bus, I
had to catch a 7:10. But that week -- and you
know what, the 7:10 never showed. When I asked
the bus driver that showed up later, he told me
that the N78 should have left Hicksville Station
at 7:10, and that I would have to wait for the
next one at 8:10.

   Explain to me how this is fair? Now, if
NICE is raising the fare for repairs, then maybe
we could talk.

   Personally I think that things can
personally be a hell of a lot better. This is
why I don't support the fare increase.

   Thank you, you have been a great
audience.

   CHARIMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. If you
had a choice, would you vote for a fare increase,
or would you vote for a cut in service?

   MR. CURRY: Like I said, if this was to
improve some service, then yes, I would certainly
vote for it. But the way things are right now, I
wouldn't.

   Let me ask you this, let me ask you a
question. If you were me and you suddenly have
to -- you see, lately I have been noticing that
it is problem, either buses show up late or not
at all, which means that I have to wait for the
next one, which can risk me being late or really
cutting it close.

You know what? This isn't just not fair
for me, it isn't fair for other people who have
to deal with this problem almost on a regular
basis; explain that to me.

I mean, I would vote for the increase,
definitely, if they could improve bus service,
reliability or whatever.

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: All right. Thank
you.

MR. CURRY: Your welcome. Good day.

CHAIRMAN SHRENNEL: Is there anyone else
who would like to make a comment?

MS. SAGET: Hello. My name is Kimberly
Saget. I live in Valley Stream and I take the
N4, N16, N15, N72, I take a whole bunch of buses;
I take them to school, I take it to my two jobs,
I take it everywhere; I depend on NICE Bus a
whole lot.

I oppose of this fare increase because
if it was increasing the bus service, no problem.
I would give the extra $0.50 if I can get to work
on time, with no headaches, no stress, and no
I really oppose it because I'm filling for your gap. I'm filling something that was supposed to be handled by you, and I don't think that it is fair for us who take the bus. I feel like there should be better research on the ending times of the grants or the money that you receive from the County; you match it up and you know, move on from there.

Either way, if you guys don't do that, we're going to continue to have this problem and we'll have another $0.25, and another $0.25 for the same service; I'm still going to be late for work, I'm still going to be on an over crowded bus.

Think about it, you guys work long hours, would you want to wait for a bus, wait thirty minutes because it's late and then you come to the bus and it's packed and full. Who wants to stay on the bus like that? Nobody wants to. And you want me to pay $0.25 more to sit on a crowded bus? I don't think so. That's not fair at all.

I feel that if you guys do more
research, if you ask the County for funding
instead of the people who are giving $2.50 or
$2.25 for the cash --

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: The County is
already taking in another $1,800,000, Veolia is
kicking in another $400,000, which they do not
have to do.

MS. SAGET: I understand that. If you
are always targeting the people who are already
paying the $2.25 and $2.50, what more do you want
from us? Do you want us to pay $5.00? It's
going to keep on increasing, and increasing, and
increasing if you guys do not do the research and
don't ask the County for more money for funding.

I understand that you guys have
$1,800,000 from the County, but if you can say
that you need more money for added service to
make them dependable.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Can I just
clarify something, the County already puts in two
million.

MR. SETZER: $2,600,000.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: And now another
$1,800,000?

MR. SETZER: Yes.
BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Okay. I have another question about the fare if it goes up. Everybody knows that gas prices have jumped, drastically.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Just in the last two months.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Yes. Do you know what percentage of the cost of your fuel has gone up? Is it over twenty percent of your total usage?

MR. SETZER: It is very volatile right now, and has gone up and down. It had gone up as much as forty percent in the first quarter because of the winter weather. It has come down some, but, I'm sorry, I don't know what the percentage on average is.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: That impact -- never mind the salary increase and the benefits, but the cost of fuel is definitely driving the cost up.

MR. SETZER: Yes.

MS. SAGET: I understand that. But nothing ever goes down. But it all goes with planning and asking the town, because, you know what, the gas prices have risen, I think you
should at least ask for an additional $500,000.

I understand that they already gave money, but if you ask for more and plan wisely, and match up all of the numbers together, you wouldn't have to keep asking us for another $0.25 or another $0.50 for my fare.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: If the County did not kick in $1,800,000, we could be looking at a bigger fare increase or a bigger reduction in service. The County has stepped up to the plate on more than one occasion this year.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Ms. Saget, I know you ride a lot of our buses, but my only question to you is, do you pay a cash fare or do you have a MetroCard?

MS. SAGET: I do both. I also take Suffolk County buses.

CHAIRMAN SHRENSKEL: Do you use a MetroCard?

MS. SAGET: Sometimes, I use the MetroCard and also I use cash. It all depends on what I have in my wallet.

MR. KHOUZ: The app is $2.75 for a single ride, just a like a MetroCard single ride is $2.75. Just like if you buy a MetroCard, the
price drops just like app does. It drops as you buy more.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Mr. Setzer, do you know the numbers since you took over, on an on-time basis; where you were when you first took over, to where you are now?

MR. SETZER: We do not actually have that information, directly. What we do have are the reports from the mystery riders who ride the bus and record a lot of things. Their scores on on-time performance had steadily improved. We will soon be able to tell you what the numbers are, but not yet.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: With GPS?

MR. SETZER: Yes. But we think it is around eighty percent, which arrives within a five-minute window.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: That is currently right now?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: Where do you think it was when you first took over?

MR. SETZER: It was certainly something less than that. Particularly just before we took
over, there was a very high frequency of trips
that were not operating at all. The Long Island
Bus had too few of employees and too few of
serviceable buses, so they would miss as many as
ten percent of scheduled trips.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: A day?

MR. SETZER: A weekday. Not a weekend.

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: Did you say that
there was an interest in getting an app for the
ridership to get at that location as to when the
busses were coming?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: Is that in
conjunction with the GPS? Is that system up and
running with the GPS?

MR. SETZER: It is not currently
available. By the end of this year the basic GPS
system will be in place and about that time,
people should also be able to get the actual
location of their bus regardless of what the
schedule said.

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: I am assuming
that the GPS would also help the bus drivers
themselves as to moving up when there is a bus
missing in the route, and then GPS control could
call them and tell them: Okay. You need to move
up in ten minutes because there is a bus missing,
and that would help with the ridership of knowing
when the buses were coming for that location; am
I right?

MR. SETZER: Well, it would work
through the command center, which is here. When
there is a gap, because the bus has fallen behind
or there was an accident, we will be able to see
that on the screen immediately, and we will also
see where the other buses are on that route so
that we can move somebody up or hold somebody
back, so that we can deal with that.

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: Is that going
to be impacted by the money that you are going to
be receiving for the GPS?

MR. SETZER: That is already funded
with a federal grant.

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: Then that
would definitely help the service that is going
to be determined?

MR. SETZER: We expect that we will
be able to answer the question about how on-time
we are, and we will also be able to improve the
performance when we can see everything in
realtime.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: To confirm, that does not come out of the ridership, because that is a federal grant?

MR. SETZER: Correct, yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Kimberly, can I ask you a question?

MS. SAGET: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: You have used the Go Mobile app?

MS. SAGET: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: So you have chose to do a single ride instead of pay cash?

MS. SAGET: Yes, because sometimes, I will admit, that the mobile app is convenient because there is not that many stores that dispense MetroCards, or because I don't have time to get one, or don't have enough money on my card.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: But it works effectively?

MS. SAGET: Yes. You don't scan anything, you just blink it. You guys are losing money with that, too. If I want to ride five thousand busses in two and a half hours, I can.
BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: So it does not allow you one or two transfers, it is just unlimited?

MS. SAGET: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER DUROSEAU: I did not know that. Good to know.

MS. SAGET: It is good to know because this is why you are losing money, because it is not being monitored.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: NICE is trying to accommodate the riding public. Because they cannot get any more MetroCard machines from the MTA, so it looks like they are doing an alternative; am I correct?

MR. SETZER: Yes.

BOARD MEMBER COMERFORD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: In reference to some of the comments going back and forth. I would like to say a member of the committee, Tony Rosario, who has asked and raised some insightful points, Mr. Rosario has been driving a bus for fifteen years and continues to do so. So he sees the day-to-day action and I thought it was important to mention that.

Are there anymore comments for the
public before we move on?

MS. HALASZ: Yes. Hello, my name is Anita Halasz from the Long Island Jobs for Justice, I also advocate on behalf of the bus riders union. I just want to clarify a couple of things. I'm not going to say the same things that I said before, I do commend the County and Veolia to putting in the additional money to fill in this gap, I really do. I think it is something that needs to happen and I think it was really great that they did that. But again, I can't help but feel that the point is being missed today, in that the bus riders are being forced to fill this gap. This is money that should have been put in a long time ago.

Years ago, the County was paying over twenty million dollars to subsidize the buses. I think it is great that we are still continuing to subsidize it, and I know that they got the $2,500,000, well, let's compare that to over twenty million.

This is why this is happening now, because we are not funding the buses enough, and when we're not funding the buses, the riders have to pay for it.
I don't think it is appropriate to pose the question to riders of, "Would you rather pay an extra $0.25 or see a cut in service?" I don't see that as choice at all. Either one of those selections puts riders in a terrible position. They are either paying more for the same service without seeing an increase, or they are seeing cuts in their services. I don't think that it is appropriate to ask riders that question; it puts them in a bind.

So again, I think the point here is that there isn't enough funding for the buses. And I don't think that riders should be the ones subsidizing the buses when they are already subsidizing enough for service that they are not getting. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: Thank you. Are there any other comments from anyone who has not spoken yet?

(Whereupon, at this time there was no response.)

CHAIRMAN SHRENGEL: Are there any comments from the committee members in reference to some of these comments or to Mr. Setzer, that they have not asked him before.
(Whereupon, at this time there was no response.)

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Would like to ask any committee member to please make a motion regarding the resolution regarding the fare equity analysis.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: I make that resolution.

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: I second it.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you. We will now take a vote that the Committee has been made aware, and a motion now to adopt a resolution regarding NICE fare equity analysis.

We now come to an important issue of hearing various information to public hearings, a meeting before this, where we had time to think and research. We have before us now a resolution to maintain service level of NICE transportation.

However, would anyone want to bring a motion for a resolution regarding NICE fare structure of a fare increase for a $0.25 increase for passengers that use cash, and then a $0.15 for students, disabled, and senior citizens.

With that, that would fill a $400,000
gap required to balance this budget for this period; does anyone want to bring a motion.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: I will bring that motion.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Do I hear anyone else that wants to second that motion?

BOARD MEMBER ROSARIO: I do.

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We now have before us the resolution of NICE fare structure in effective as of September 1st of 2014, regarding a fare increase. With a show of hands and a say of "aye" for those members who would agree to a fare increase, please raise your hand and say "aye."

BOARD MEMBERS: "Aye."

CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We have a unanimous vote. Please note and reflect the minutes accordingly, that the committee has taken up and approved the motion for a resolution regarding NICE fare structure increase on September 1st of 2014, for $0.25 only for cash customers and, of course, the $0.15 for students, disabled, and senior citizens.

I think this public hearing and the Committee has fulfilled the business for today.
We want to thank you for coming. We also want to thank you for your opinions and your thoughts. I want to thank you for the ideas that you have given Mr. Setzer and NICE transportation.

With that, I make a motion to adjourn this meeting. Would someone please make a motion to second that.

VICE CHAIRMAN BLESSINGER: I second that motion.

CHAIRMAN SHRENDKEL: The meeting is adjourned. Thank you very much for coming.

(Whereupon, the Nassau County Bus Transit Committee was concluded. Time noted: 5:45 P.M.)
CERTIFICATE BY COURT REPORTER

I, DONNA T. JOHANSMeyer a Professional Court
Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State
of New York, do hereby certify that the
foregoing testimony taken in the matter of the
Nassau County Bus Transit Committee consisting
of pages 3 through 42 inclusive is an accurate
transcription of my cryptic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I SET MY HAND THIS DAY.

[Signature]

DONNA T. JOHANSMeyer
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
NORTH SHORE COURT REPORTERS
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF NEW YORK.