

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

2023 BUDGET HEARING

TRANSCRIPT OF

PROCEEDINGS

Monday, January 30, 2023  
Commencing at 4:10 p.m.

M E M B E R S      P R E S E N T:

THYSHAMMIE L. COOPER  
BRENDAN W GILL  
ROMAINE GRAHAM  
RUFUS I. JOHNSON  
LEONARD M. LUCIANO  
ROBERT MERCADO  
PATRICIA SEBOLD  
CARLOS M. POMARES, Vice President  
WAYNE L. RICHARDSON, President

M E M B E R S      A B S E N T:

A L S O      P R E S E N T:

MICHAEL J. PARLAVECCHIO, ESQ., County  
Commissioner Counsel  
ROBERT D. JACKSON, County Administrator  
DEBORAH DAVIS FORD, Clerk of the Board  
FRANK McENERNEY, Budget Consultant

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1       A L S O       P R E S E N T: Continued...

2       JULIUS N. COLTRE, Deputy County Administrator  
3       KYALO MULUMBA, Public Information Officer, Board  
4       of County Commissioners  
5       HOSSAM MOHAMED, Director, Department of  
6       Administration & Finance  
7       PHILIP ALAGIA, County Executive's Office, Chief  
8       of Staff

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1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I have before me  
2           certification from the clerk that this meeting is  
3           in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

4           Roll call, Madam Clerk.

5           MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Cooper,  
6           absent.

7           Commissioner Gill, absent.

8           Commissioner Graham.

9           COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Here.

10          MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Johnson.

11          COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Here.

12          MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Luciano.

13          COMMISSIONER LUCIANO: Here.

14          MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Mercado.

15          COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Here.

16          MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Sebold.

17          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Here.

18          MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Vice  
19          President Pomares, absent.

20          Commissioner President Richardson.

21          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Here.

22                   \*       \*       \*       \*

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25

**BOARD OF TAXATION:**

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Let's get started. First up, we have the Board of Taxation.

MR. JACKSON: Good evening.

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Jackson.

MR. JACKSON: Chris Durkin is here to answer your questions and present her budget for 2023.

MS. DURKIN: Basically, let me just tell you the impacts in front of you, you probably should study them at another time and then you could always call us and find out --

MR. JACKSON: Mr. President, for everybody, it's Tab 7, it's about the eighth page in.

MS. DURKIN: As Mr. McEnerney says, I've got the smallest budget in the county, so we'll skip over that just to tell you what's been happening with the real estate market and the appeals in Essex County. Let me just say that the real estate market is very strong, still, even though the interest rates have risen, we have multiple bids in every municipality and in every -- whether it be a city or other

1 municipalities further out. Basically what's  
2 happened this year --

3 (Commissioner Gill arrived.)

4 MS. DURKIN: -- is Daniel's Law. We  
5 have one person in the office that's a redactor.  
6 And what the state has done is formulated a law,  
7 which has taken two years to put into practice,  
8 which went active on January 12th. And Daniel's  
9 Law redacts the name of law enforcement, judges,  
10 anybody who would like to do that from -- in cases  
11 of our office, what's called the Mod 4, which is  
12 the name of the person who owns the property. So  
13 if they'd like it redacted, they have to apply to  
14 DCA, DCA does all the investigations. And then  
15 basically our assessor's office is informed that  
16 it's been approved and they redact the name, so  
17 that going forward, they're not in our system.  
18 Actually, they are behind the scenes, but for the  
19 public viewing, they're not able to see who owns  
20 the property.

21 So basically other than that, I just  
22 want to make you all aware that we pay for our Mod  
23 4 vendor over -- I think it's a little bit over  
24 \$100,000 for the year. And basically we pay that  
25 out of the trust fund. Our trust fund is getting

1 lower and lower because there's less appeals  
2 because the prices of the housing is going up.  
3 And when somebody files an appeal, they won't --  
4 well, they don't file the appeal. So, therefore,  
5 we are getting less and less money.

6 To begin with, we usually have 250,000,  
7 150,000. Last year, in the spring, we got 90,000.  
8 So basically we have to be aware, you know, less  
9 money is coming in to that. And so in the state,  
10 there are a lot of counts that pay for the vendor,  
11 as opposed to coming out of the trust fund. So  
12 we'll keep an eye on it this spring to see how  
13 much we will get. But right now, we're under  
14 100,000 in the trust.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you. That  
16 completes your presentation?

17 MS. DURKIN: Yes.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Okay.  
19 Recognizing Commissioner Gill joined us.

20 Commissioners, any questions or  
21 comments? Mr. McEnerney.

22 MR. McENERNEY: The payroll that you  
23 have has three part timers -- on the payroll  
24 register, there's three part time people. There  
25 appears to be three part time. One salary is

1     about \$30,000, the other ones are about \$6,000.  
2     Are they being paid out of trust?

3             MS. DURKIN: Trust.

4             MR. McENERNEY: Okay. So given what you  
5     said about trust, is there any reason to believe  
6     you may not have the money to pay that out of  
7     trust?

8             MS. DURKIN: Right now, we probably  
9     only -- we have one that graduated from Boston  
10    College and is looking for a job, a real job, as I  
11    said to them. I got his resume, I keep saying you  
12    need a job. But the other one did get a job. So  
13    we don't have that, it's the other -- I have  
14    Evelyn Lesetello who used to be the assessor in  
15    Newark, and she's a godsend with her expert  
16    advice on abatements and exemptions. And she  
17    comes in and helps us out, so that's probably what  
18    we have left.

19            MR. McENERNEY: Okay. So you should  
20    have enough left?

21            MS. DURKIN: Yeah.

22            MR. McENERNEY: And as far as the  
23    revenues go, even though what you said was that  
24    you you're experiencing a reduction, at least  
25    what's going into the trust account, I would



1       assume that means overall revenues as well?

2               MS. DURKIN:   Um-hum.

3               MR. McENERNEY:   Because this year your  
4       revenue anticipation is up about 45,000 over what  
5       is collected last year.   So is that suspect or do  
6       you think -- it's 469,000, where last year you  
7       collected 410,000.   So it's an increase that --

8               MS. DURKIN:   Probably a lot less than  
9       it's been the previous years' income.

10              MR. McENERNEY:   Is there any backlog?

11              MS. DURKIN:   Backlog?

12              MR. McENERNEY:   With regard to the  
13       processing?

14              MS. DURKIN:   No.   Our system now is  
15       January 10th is when people could start filing, we  
16       have a board meeting on Thursday, so we will give  
17       them an update of who had filed so far.   Basically  
18       we --

19                       (Vice President Pomares arrived.)

20              MS. DURKIN:   -- run normally, April 1st  
21       is the deadline, May 1st is the deadline for a  
22       reval town.   And we only have hearings until June,  
23       unless I ask the state for an extension, which  
24       every year I've had to do because of how many  
25       appeals we had, but not in the last two years.   We

1 finished on time --

2 MR. McENERNEY: Okay.

3 MS. DURKIN: -- which is very unusual.  
4 But it also -- when you have a reval, the  
5 assessments go up in value.

6 MR. McENERNEY: Right.

7 MS. DURKIN: And one million dollars is  
8 the threshold for tax court. Now, so they go to  
9 tax court, they don't come to us and that's \$150  
10 filing fee. But a lot of the times, they will  
11 come to us because they know they will get heard.  
12 And there could be an outcome and a stipulation  
13 from them, you know, reaching a compromise in that  
14 appeal.

15 MR. McENERNEY: At your level.

16 MS. DURKIN: But if you go to tax court,  
17 you could be two years, three years. That's not  
18 good for the town either because the people are  
19 paying the regular tax and then you have to pay  
20 them back.

21 MR. McENERNEY: If they're successful,  
22 yes. Just for my edification on the status of  
23 reevaluations, these dates -- reevaluations, in  
24 some cases, there's two dates here, some cases  
25 there's three. Are those the dates of the most

1 recent reevaluations that the towns have had?

2 MS. DURKIN: Yes. We kept since 2001, I  
3 think Maplewood may have been 2001. So we've kept  
4 an ongoing tally of how many times they've had it,  
5 whether we ordered it, whether the town wanted it  
6 or what have you.

7 MR. McENERNEY: Right.

8 MS. DURKIN: I'm having a problem, so  
9 might as well put it on the record. I'm having a  
10 problem with people not doing their -- I guess  
11 what they're supposed to be doing, such as the tax  
12 maps, the contracts, advertising an RFP and  
13 awarding the contract in a timely fashion.

14 MR. McENERNEY: On the reevaluations.

15 MS. DURKIN: So if you can see,  
16 Irvington, not a good picture. Newark, not a good  
17 picture.

18 MR. McENERNEY: Maplewood?

19 MS. DURKIN: Maplewood and South Orange  
20 asked -- we ordered them because basically they  
21 asked. But behind the scenes, if we order, they  
22 can bond the reval costs for five years. So we  
23 wanted to do the thing. We study -- I mean I  
24 write up a whole proposal of why they need a reval  
25 and what the whole story is and it has to be

1 approved by the State, so it's a double check.

2 MR. McENERNEY: Is that why they have  
3 reevaluation dates projected out to 2024?

4 MS. DURKIN: Yes.

5 MR. McENERNEY: Are those mandated?

6 MS. DURKIN: We ordered them, but we  
7 ordered them only six months ago and they are --  
8 they want it -- I mean let's put it -- maybe the  
9 municipality, government doesn't want it, but the  
10 assessor's offices know that they need it. They  
11 have gone and if you can -- the second page on  
12 this tells you what the ratios are. I can tell  
13 you I normally try to keep the ratios for every  
14 municipality between 90 and 100, okay. You can  
15 see where they're falling.

16 MR. McENERNEY: Yes.

17 MS. DURKIN: Irvington is a disgrace, I  
18 mean it's 62. And they appealed it and they  
19 raised it from 61 to 62 and it just means that the  
20 good thing is is that the prices are up in  
21 Irvington.

22 MR. McENERNEY: The equalization table  
23 catches up with them?

24 MS. DURKIN: Yeah, they multiply it out  
25 and get another number. But the big thing is you

1 pay -- the lower you are, you know, you're paying  
2 more in taxes. You're doing different things and  
3 works against the municipality. So the big thing  
4 is that we ordered Newark 2003, 2013 on purpose  
5 because of municipalities and elections and things  
6 like that. I ordered them for 2023, every  
7 ten years in effect, and they need it to be done,  
8 you know. But they asked for an extension. So we  
9 moved it out to 2025. They put valid reasons why,  
10 things weren't done. But as I said they weren't  
11 not done on purpose, but they weren't done. And  
12 now I'm seeing you can't do 50,000 line items in  
13 two years, it's never going to be for 2025.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I want to  
15 recognize Vice President Pomares.

16 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: I have a  
17 question.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
19 Mercado.

20 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: So what happens  
21 to the ones -- to the municipalities that do not  
22 comply? What's the recourse?

23 MS. DURKIN: I can go to the Attorney  
24 General.

25 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: And then what?

1 MS. DURKIN: And then we can sue them.

2 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: So it would go  
3 into litigation with the municipality?

4 MS. DURKIN: Let me tell you I never was  
5 put in that position until we ordered West Orange  
6 to be revalued, again, trying to keep it to  
7 ten years. And basically they have 45 days to  
8 reply to the orders, which they did -- I never had  
9 that happen before in 20 years -- and they did.  
10 And so I went with the attorney general's --  
11 Deputy Attorney General and we met in West Orange.  
12 I figured instead of going to court, let's  
13 negotiate which we did.

14 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: That's good.

15 MS. DURKIN: And they ended up saying  
16 2025 and I said yes right away. But they're the  
17 losers. They should have been done before this  
18 and they -- you know, I wasn't going to fight with  
19 them, that's ridiculous kind of thing. So I  
20 ordered them, I think, for -- to begin with West  
21 Orange -- no, it wasn't 2025. It says 2022. I  
22 was trying to keep it --

23 MR. McENERNEY: It says '25.

24 MS. DURKIN: And they now, if you can  
25 see, their ratio is 78. And basically you can

1 order a reval -- there are a couple criteria. It  
2 shouldn't fall below 85. But you know there are  
3 some that are below 85 and some that are not. My  
4 biggest problem is ones that have had revals, such  
5 as Caldwell, Montclair, Glen Ridge, it's an  
6 embarrassment of riches because their ratios are  
7 falling because they're doing so well in their  
8 sales, the prices are rising. We're very  
9 convenient, Essex County, close to everything.

10 MR. McENERNEY: Mr. President?

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Go ahead.

12 MR. McENERNEY: So that would mean they  
13 have to go out for reval in a shorter period of  
14 time?

15 MS. DURKIN: Yeah, some do. If they  
16 find that the numbers are going up or going down,  
17 too, because you want to attend to that, if the  
18 sales are -- you know, we had since 2008, which  
19 was the bust, it took a long time to come back  
20 with them. So you want to attend to making the  
21 numbers, the assessments not as high. But we just  
22 had in a very nice municipality a two-family house  
23 but the assessments say it was 500 or less. A  
24 two-family went for a million two. You know, we  
25 need to get it fair.

1           MR. McENERNEY: It also depends on the  
2 ratio. Commercial properties going up versus  
3 residential?

4           MS. DURKIN: Yes, commercial properties  
5 are really doing well, Fairfield is doing very  
6 well.

7           MR. McENERNEY: If you're not doing that  
8 revaluation --

9           MS. DURKIN: But Fairfield, I'm looking  
10 at because they did a reval not too long ago,  
11 2020, and they're already below 85 because they're  
12 doing well. But we're going to -- again, we study  
13 the whole thing. When they put all these numbers  
14 down, if we think they're too high, I have the  
15 town and the reval company look at them so that we  
16 can attend -- maybe we have to take 10 percent off  
17 on everything or whatever. I don't know how long  
18 this "recession" -- should I say the word? -- is  
19 going to take place, but we pay attention.

20           MR. McENERNEY: Right.

21           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
22 Sebold.

23           COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I have a question.  
24 How did the pandemic affect you?

25           MS. DURKIN: Are you talking about in



1       hearings?

2               COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:   The last  
3       three years, how did it affect --

4               MS. DURKIN:   Actually they increased the  
5       prices because everybody was getting out of the  
6       city.

7               COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:   Right.

8               MS. DURKIN:   I mean people were knocking  
9       on doors and still are knocking on doors to say  
10      are you selling or what have you.   Because as I  
11      said, Essex County is in a great ideal location.  
12      You're near transportation, you're near the  
13      airport, you've got all these facilities, golf  
14      courses, entertainment, restaurants, and  
15      everything like that.   So people coming out of the  
16      city --

17              COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:   It didn't affect  
18      you in any way?

19              MS. DURKIN:   Not for -- we still had  
20      hearings, it didn't affect the prices by any  
21      means.

22              COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:   They went up on  
23      the houses.

24              MS. DURKIN:   Actually, in Millburn, just  
25      to bring a point.   We were going to do a

1 compliance plan, the assessor thought assessments  
2 between one million and two million were just not  
3 getting the one million to two million dollar  
4 prices that were their assessment. And it ended  
5 up we didn't have to do a thing when COVID  
6 happened because people came out from New York,  
7 that was their price range. And they paid the  
8 prices.

9 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Thanks.

10 MS. DURKIN: Are you going to give me  
11 more money?

12 MR. McENERNEY: I think you got plenty  
13 there.

14 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: We should give  
15 more.

16 MR. McENERNEY: I don't have any other  
17 questions.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you so  
19 much.

20 (Commissioner Cooper arrived.)

21 MS. DURKIN: Thank you. Notice, I sat  
22 on the end, so I could escape.

23 \* \* \* \*

24

25

1       **SHERIFF:**

2

3               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Come on, Sheriff,  
4 get in the hot seat.

5               Sheriff, you bring enough guys with you.

6               MR. JACKSON: The Sheriff, Mr.

7 President, is Tab 9, about 18 pages in.

8               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Recognize  
9 Commissioner Cooper.

10              Floor is yours, sir.

11              SHERIFF FONTOURA: All mine? Thank you  
12 very much.

13              Good afternoon, everyone. First and  
14 foremost, let me just thank each and every one of  
15 you on this Board for your great support, your  
16 encouragement, your visibility along with all of  
17 us in the difficult couple years that we've all  
18 been through. We worked many events together, we  
19 all showed up, participated, and encouraged our  
20 officers to do the same. But your presence did  
21 much more than your encouragement. So we thank  
22 you very much for your support and all the good  
23 work you do on behalf of the people of Essex  
24 County.

25              Each year I come before this Board of

1 Commissioners to accept and endorse the budget  
2 that the County Executive has submitted to the  
3 Board for approval. My annual presentation to the  
4 Board, I normally speak as to how the County of  
5 Essex has been transformed during the County  
6 Executive's tenure into a destination for families  
7 to visit, our first class parks, recreational  
8 facilities, one of the best zoos in the nation. I  
9 always applaud the men and women of the Sheriff's  
10 office for keeping those destinations pristine and  
11 as safe as they could possibly be for all to  
12 enjoy. 2022 saw us finally put the pandemic  
13 behind us, not totally, but mostly, behind us.  
14 And begin the transition back from the gargantuan  
15 task that we all were successful in becoming  
16 organizers, distributors and protectors of what  
17 was the world's most sought after commodity, the  
18 vaccine. What we accomplished as a County could  
19 not have been done without the great work of our  
20 county employees and I applaud them all. I would  
21 like to give special recognition to the men and  
22 women of the Essex County Sheriff's Office for  
23 taking on this nontraditional law enforcement  
24 function without missing a step.

25 During that difficult time, the public,

1 folks in Essex County, expected their law  
2 enforcement officers to show up. When they were  
3 hiding behind their doors and the windows closed,  
4 they would look out and they expected to see us.  
5 And I'm proud to say that our officers responded.  
6 They responded in great numbers. In fact, we had  
7 less sick time and vacation requests during the  
8 pandemic than we normally do. So I think that  
9 morale was good and I think the officers showed up  
10 and the public appreciated us very, very much.  
11 Because after all, when they called for us, they  
12 expect us to show up quickly and be responsive to  
13 their needs.

14 As we emerge from the pandemic, 2022 saw  
15 the Essex County Sheriff's office return to watch  
16 additional function and serving all municipalities  
17 in Essex County, which all of us serve daily. Our  
18 courts and transportation divisions saw  
19 proceedings slowly return, saw an increase of  
20 50 percent in cases and visitors into our complex.  
21 Our duty of narcotics resumed operations which  
22 resulted in 37 guns taken off the streets and  
23 hundreds of thousands of illegal drugs being  
24 seized, a 1,400 percent increase from 2021.

25 Our fugitive squad working in

1 conjunction with the bureau of criminal  
2 identification received 2,197 fugitive warrants  
3 and closed 1,864 warrants. That's a remarkable  
4 close-out rate of nearly 85 percent. The average  
5 throughout the State of New Jersey is about  
6 58 percent.

7 Our patrol division continued to assist  
8 all municipalities in traffic enforcement, making  
9 over one hundred arrests and issuing over 4,000  
10 summonses within our towns. The patrol division  
11 also seized 14 guns, bringing our total guns  
12 seized for 2022 to 53. Incredible.

13 Our canine bomb unit responded to 423  
14 calls for service in 2022. When not actively  
15 engaged in a call for service, our officers  
16 assigned to canine bomb assist our patrol  
17 division. We have the busiest bomb squad canine  
18 unit in the State of New Jersey by far. One of  
19 the bomb in the country, outside of New York City,  
20 we are the busiest on the east coast, as you might  
21 expect, we have, of course, the Port of Newark,  
22 the airport, the federal courts, Penn station and  
23 of course our own court complex and all of the  
24 businesses in the area, we're responsible for the  
25 response and whenever they have concerns.

1 Theatres, the busy Prudential Center, all those  
2 things.

3 Our TRT team assisted municipalities  
4 like 67 times in 2022 in high risk situations.  
5 Our TRT team, tactical response team, also did  
6 some training to become equipped with less than  
7 lethal resolutions.

8 Our office of emergency management  
9 continued assisted in vaccines and testing. And  
10 for the duration of the pandemic, transported  
11 1.2 million vaccines and issued over nine million  
12 PPEs, personal protective equipment items.  
13 Emergency management also continued its  
14 traditional functions and distributed bleeding  
15 control kits, participated in weather events, two  
16 major water main breaks, in addition to future  
17 planning.

18 It should be noted that throughout our  
19 emergency management assisting the municipalities  
20 and the emergency operation plans, Essex County is  
21 the only county that continues to be one of the  
22 only ones that have a state of minimal 100 percent  
23 compliance in municipal EOP certifications. Our  
24 OEM also continues to assist all county  
25 municipalities by sharing our equipment with each

1 town. We assist the towns with resources over 200  
2 times in 2022, including barricades, cameras, et  
3 cetera, message boards, and other equipment that  
4 we have as needed. We respond and we deliver it  
5 day and night, 24/7, available for all  
6 municipalities when they call.

7 2022 also provided a gradual return to  
8 our revenue, our process division revenue resumed  
9 to pre-pandemic numbers. Our revenue totalled 4.2  
10 million in 2022, a 50 percent increase from 2021.  
11 We expect this revenue to remain at this level for  
12 2023.

13 We are proud to assist every  
14 municipality in Essex County and will continue to  
15 do so. For example, our volunteer deputy sheriffs  
16 division, that's 85 police who are trained and  
17 they work for free. Every municipality will call  
18 at least once a week and ask for their services to  
19 augment their own patrol, whether it be for  
20 traffic control while they patrol, whether it be  
21 to assist a patrol division.

22 For example, in Fairfield last week, you  
23 talk about Fairfield. They have training they do  
24 every year for four and a half hours, all of their  
25 officers participate in it. And we provide



1 service for them, we answer their calls. We  
2 assign six officers there so they could do their  
3 training until they can return to their thing. So  
4 this is the kind of -- they provide us with an  
5 average of 800 volunteer hours a month, that's  
6 like 10,000 hours a year provided for service to  
7 our municipalities without cost, without cost to  
8 anybody, to them or to us. Just the cars we give  
9 them to patrol and the gas for the cars and  
10 basically that's it. Nothing else.

11 That presents my presentation. And with  
12 me is Chief James Spango. Thank you, Chief, and  
13 also Undersheriff Amir Jones from our patrol  
14 division, bureau of narcotics, and the TRT team is  
15 under Sheriff Jones. Undersheriff Fitz, you all  
16 know Fitz of course, emergency management guru,  
17 the best, the best. We have the best emergency  
18 management. What we did in the pandemic, what we  
19 did with that -- and Joe and Joe D. and all you  
20 acknowledge that before because it was just  
21 incredible. The people had to be there by 4:00 in  
22 the morning, Phil would be on the phone with them,  
23 they will tell we need here, there, right. And  
24 they would provide -- okay, we need a thousand of  
25 this one, a thousand of that one, and whatever we

1     needed, they would bring it out, deliver it and  
2     have it ready when the Department of Health showed  
3     up. Great undertaking. And then of course at the  
4     end of the day, whatever is left over, bring it  
5     back. And stay there to make sure people were  
6     safe and secure and felt comfortable. So very  
7     proud of that. I mean it was a tremendous  
8     accomplishment.

9             What Joe D. and all of you did in this  
10    county was a role model for the rest of the state.  
11    Nobody, nobody did what we did, as quickly as we  
12    did, and as well as we did. They still don't do  
13    it today. I talk with people, they're amazed what  
14    we did here.

15            Joe set the tone, led the way. You know  
16    how he is -- a little demanding at times, but  
17    that's fine, for all the right reasons. He said  
18    jump and we said how high. And we did it and  
19    we're very, very proud of that. All of us should  
20    proud of that, that was a wonderful moment -- very  
21    difficult time for our folks and for everyone.  
22    But for the County of Essex and the Sheriff's  
23    Department in particular, it was a great, great  
24    moment. I thank you for your support.

25            I missed Undersheriff Gonzalez, heads

1     our court division. He does the yeoman's job. As  
2     you know, we've got the busiest court system in  
3     the state, by far. About 30 percent -- at least  
4     30 percent of all the activity takes place in  
5     Essex County. We screen about 3 million people a  
6     year in all of our buildings, in and out, between  
7     employees and visitors. They do a great job.

8             We have an EMT -- you may have read in  
9     the paper recently, two of our EMTs saved an  
10    individual in room 111 downstairs in the  
11    courthouse, out, he was done, heart attack. But  
12    they started CPR. The officer that happened to be  
13    in the door was an EMT trained and a military guy.  
14    He started, Officer Russo came over with the  
15    defibrillator, and we brought him back, he's alive  
16    and well, doing well.

17            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Excellent.

18            SHERIFF FONTOURA: We did it four times,  
19    three times in '21 and -- '22 rather. And so far  
20    this year. Narcan, we deploy Narcan on a regular  
21    basis unfortunately. Overdoses are just going  
22    through the roof. Everybody in patrol, they all  
23    have Narcan. I just put it in my -- in our car as  
24    well because we run into people, the  
25    defibrillator. And Narcan was deployed hundreds

1 of times, brought people back. Unfortunately,  
2 some of them we did more than once. Then on the  
3 third time, you don't usually save them. It just  
4 goes to show you how training and supervision and  
5 how well our officers work. Very proud of their  
6 work. Other than that, I'm about done.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: On that note, and  
8 you guys do excellent work. So in light of Tyre  
9 Nichols and his death just recently and that  
10 horrific video that was sent out, I just have a  
11 couple questions. So does the Sheriff's  
12 Department have in place a policy to intervene  
13 when, and if, any officers use excessive force?

14 SHERIFF FONTOURA: That video was very  
15 difficult to watch and very sickening to watch for  
16 those of us in this business. We work so hard --  
17 first, we had to watch the George Floyd video,  
18 which of course was horrendous and set us back  
19 10 years. We're making a recovery from that, and  
20 all of a sudden, this comes along, we're back  
21 another 10 years setting back. It's something  
22 that's very difficult to overcome.

23 That unit, the difference between our --  
24 from what I saw, there was a lack of supervision  
25 there. The chief, with good intentions, created a

1 unit that sort of goes off on its own, kind of you  
2 choose people a little more aggressive and they go  
3 out. But it seems to me that there was an element  
4 missing and that is a boss, a boss to show up on  
5 the scene. You look at the video and you see the  
6 video and you see some of the officers turning  
7 away and walking away, which tells you it wasn't  
8 the first time that happened in that town or that  
9 thing. That's what it tells me.

10 In our department, our tactical response  
11 team, there's always a lieutenant, a high rank or  
12 captain that goes with them. If you remember on  
13 Gerard Place in Newark a couple years ago, our TRT  
14 team was there, I was there, the prosector's  
15 office was there. There's always supervision, but  
16 when it came here, we responded also. We were  
17 there for 32 hours, if you remember that. We just  
18 took our time. That's what you're supposed to do.

19 But this particular case, these young  
20 men, they weren't the only ones, there were other  
21 people there. Today, they fired more folks.  
22 There was a lot of people involved.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Let me --

24 SHERIFF FONTOURA: If you don't  
25 supervise, you don't require your policy to have a

1 high ranking boss there with them at all times,  
2 it's -- they sort of kind of become rogue, they go  
3 rogue, do whatever they want. The chief had a  
4 good idea, but the planning was not proper.

5 We don't do it that way. Everybody goes  
6 out on the street. Specialized units, yes, but  
7 there's always a boss. And the boss will get  
8 there as quickly as possible to make sure they're  
9 controlling the situation and take charge and  
10 don't let this kind of thing happen.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Understood.  
12 We're back to my original question because I asked  
13 a specific question that you didn't answer.

14 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Can I add to it?

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
16 Johnson.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Because I think  
18 what the president is saying, for instance, if our  
19 Sheriff's Officers came into a situation where the  
20 city was already there, the city or municipality  
21 police already there, and if they saw something  
22 that's not quote/unquote legal that they were  
23 doing, would our officers intervene and tell them  
24 no, that's not the right thing to do and stop it.  
25 Is that what you were looking for?

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Exactly. Is  
2     there a policy in place to compel the Sheriff's  
3     Officers in a similar situation, whether it's the  
4     Sheriff's Officers directly involved or not, is  
5     there something in place that compels a Sheriff's  
6     Officer to intervene?

7           SHERIFF FONTOURA: Well, we have a  
8     policy on intervening, which we promulgated in  
9     2021, which lays out exactly what -- and I would  
10    expect that our rules and regulations and that  
11    policy, our officers would indeed. Can I  
12    guarantee that? No, because you're dealing with  
13    human beings --

14          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: You do have a  
15    policy in place?

16          SHERIFF FONTOURA: Yes, we do,  
17    absolutely.

18          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I'd like to get a  
19    copy.

20          SHERIFF FONTOURA: It was in 2021. I  
21    can get you a copy of it.

22          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I appreciate it.  
23    That's my question, do we have something in  
24    place --

25          SHERIFF FONTOURA: Yes.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  -- that will  
2   compel our officers, if they run into that type of  
3   situation, to intervene?

4           SHERIFF FONTOURA:  I would hope that  
5   would be the case.  And we have --

6           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  Thank you.

7           COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:  Can we say it for  
8   the record, if we -- this is being recorded.  The  
9   policy, whatever the policy is?

10          SHERIFF FONTOURA:  The policy in 2008,  
11   we reissued in 2021.

12          COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:  Can you address  
13   that policy?

14          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  On the record.

15          COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:  On the record?

16          SHERIFF FONTOURA:  I can address -- I  
17   can send you a copy of our policy, but again it  
18   doesn't guarantee --

19          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  Just --

20          SHERIFF FONTOURA:  -- rely on our  
21   policy.  The prosecutor's office has the same  
22   policy.  They would respond professional  
23   standards --

24          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  I'm going to ask  
25   them the same question.



1           SHERIFF FONTOURA: I can't give you a  
2     guarantee.

3           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: No, no, I didn't  
4     ask for a guarantee. I asked if there's a policy.

5           SHERIFF FONTOURA: We have a policy.

6           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: That's excellent.  
7     So if you send me that policy, I want to read it  
8     on the record come the next meeting. I'll read it  
9     and say this from the Sheriff's Department, so  
10    everybody knows. We're all on the same page, we  
11    want to be safe. We want the Sheriff's Officers  
12    to be safe, we want pedestrians and folks to be  
13    safe. So I just want to know what we have in  
14    place, the Sheriff's Department.

15          SHERIFF FONTOURA: We have that in  
16    place. And usually the first on the scene is  
17    there -- if they call us, call our TRT team, we  
18    take precedent. Because if they want us to come,  
19    then okay, fine, then we take charge of the  
20    situation. The lieutenant or captain that shows  
21    up will take charge. By then, there's no  
22    guarantee they haven't done anything stupid.

23          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: If the Sheriff's  
24    Officers are on the scene and they witness  
25    something like that taking place, will they

1     intervene? You said you have a policy in place.  
2     So let me ask you this, let me ask a hypothetical.  
3     So if the fact that you have a policy in place  
4     that speaks to this, so if they were on the scene  
5     and they didn't intervene, what are the penalties?

6             SHERIFF FONTOURA: Well, again --

7             PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: If any.

8             SHERIFF FONTOURA: Let me clarify again.  
9     The policy is for our department and our officers.

10            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: That's what I'm  
11     talking about.

12            SHERIFF FONTOURA: If somebody asked for  
13     help from our TRT team or a bomb squad and we get  
14     there, that's it, it's our scene. You asked for  
15     us our expertise, we're in charge. But by then,  
16     who knows what may have transpired. But our  
17     policy is clear, if we show up, the prosecutor's  
18     office shows up, we're in charge.

19            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Sheriff, we're  
20     only talking about if your Sheriff's Officers  
21     witness. What happens before they get there,  
22     there's nothing they can do about that. I'm only  
23     talking about if they witness such an action,  
24     that's it.

25            COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Mr. President?

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
2 Johnson.

3           COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: This is being  
4 said so that we cover ourselves, Sheriff, because  
5 as you saw on that video, there was Sheriff  
6 vehicles there.

7           SHERIFF FONTOURA: Yes.

8           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: And they did  
9 nothing.

10          COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: No Sheriff  
11 intervened or anything. They should not have even  
12 been there if they weren't going to do anything or  
13 just came in, saw what was going on and left. We  
14 just want to prevent something like that from  
15 happening with us and we're on national TV being  
16 spotlighted on something of that nature.

17          SHERIFF FONTOURA: I understand. We're  
18 on the same page.

19          COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: I'm here to  
20 protect you.

21          SHERIFF FONTOURA: We want to prevent  
22 that also, that's why we have a policy, we'll send  
23 it.

24          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you.

25          SHERIFF FONTOURA: Let me just say I --

1     okay, go ahead. I forgot one of the things. Our  
2     Crimestoppers program. We have an excellent  
3     Crimestoppers program. We offered a \$10,000  
4     reward for yesterday at the -- the day before at  
5     Bloomfield, we offered a \$10,000 reward for that.  
6     That's usually very helpful, so hopefully there  
7     will be some Jewish organizations that are going  
8     to add to that, you might want to take a look at  
9     that. They usually put some money out in the  
10    street and it has a tendency to help a little bit.  
11    So our Crimestoppers program, we offer rewards on  
12    a regular basis with the prosecutor's office, they  
13    want 5,000, a thousand, 2,000, whatever they need  
14    because it's very helpful, comes in very handy  
15    because people -- sometimes people don't come for  
16    the money, they see the original story or, no, you  
17    know.

18            You know, one of the things that bothers  
19    me about that video, if I can get back to the  
20    video for a second -- is that -- I can't see that  
21    happening here. No one -- no one -- I mean there  
22    was a lot of noise out there, a lot of noise, the  
23    young man was screaming like crazy and nobody,  
24    nobody, came to the door, nobody turned a camera  
25    on, nobody's phone. I don't see that happening in

1     our neighborhoods anyway. Thank God. We have a  
2     community that's involved, very much involved, and  
3     they participate. But for some reason, I suspect  
4     that there was a fear, there was a fear of people  
5     that live in the neighborhood of coming out.  
6     That's horrible, that's a horrible thing. Because  
7     somebody heard that young man and somebody should  
8     have come to the porch, to the window --

9             PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: What was he, 60  
10     yards or 80 yards from his mother's house --

11            SHERIFF FONTOURA: Nobody bothered, I  
12     can't believe that. I don't see that happening  
13     here, thank God, at all, not in our neighborhoods.  
14     Anyway, thank you, that's it.

15            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: VP.

16            VICE PRESIDENT POMARES: Good evening,  
17     Sheriff, and thank you. I think it's very  
18     important to reflect as well what you said  
19     earlier, that it was, for me personally and I'm  
20     sure for others, you and your team were extremely  
21     visible during the pandemic, got to know most of  
22     your officers in this room here because of the  
23     many things we did together, from food drives,  
24     setting up the test centers and all that kind of  
25     stuff.

1           Is there anything as a result of the  
2 pandemic that you see necessary to build up or in  
3 the future? For example, I remember everybody was  
4 short of PPEs and all that stuff. Is there  
5 anything we should consider moving forward in our  
6 budget that we should consider stockpiling  
7 whatever in case of -- I'm not sure if it's  
8 another pandemic -- but any kind of emergency that  
9 would be dragged out for an extended period of  
10 time?

11           SHERIFF FONTOURA: I think we learned a  
12 lot from it. I mean we were prepared -- that's  
13 what emergency management does, we prepare,  
14 prepare, prepare. But this was very difficult to  
15 prepare for. We prepare and then adjust as we go  
16 along. I think we did a good job adjusting to it.  
17 I think it was under Joe D's command, it was -- I  
18 think it worked perfectly, quite frankly.

19           COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: You did a great  
20 job.

21           SHERIFF FONTOURA: We learned a lot from  
22 it, I don't see -- Undersheriff Fitz, do you see  
23 any reason for -- anywhere we can go to make it  
24 better?

25           UNDERSHERIFF FIGLIUOLO: So based on

1 PPE, it has a shelf life. So if you stockpile it  
2 and we still have lots of it, at some point,  
3 that's going to have to get disposed of. So  
4 stockpiling -- to spend money on a budget on  
5 stockpiling PPE is really not, you know everything  
6 is either rubber or some kind of cloth that, with  
7 time, it will --

8 VICE PRESIDENT POMARES: So limited  
9 shelf life, obviously. We're in a great position,  
10 because I do remember the daily meetings that we  
11 had on the phone during, you know, the worst of  
12 the pandemic, your ability to share with the  
13 municipalities, I thought that was very important  
14 and that's something that shouldn't go unnoticed.  
15 Because you are a great line to all the  
16 departments throughout Essex County and that's  
17 very important to highlight. It may not be  
18 immediately visible by the public, so we should  
19 mention it. Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
21 Mercado, then Commissioner Sebold, then  
22 Commissioner Johnson.

23 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: I just want to  
24 put on the record that I know Joe D and the county  
25 leadership team did a phenomenal job, but I got

1 to, you know, call you and your leadership team,  
2 you know, and the men and women that were out  
3 there. While everyone was inside, your guys were  
4 outside and all over, you know, from -- and while  
5 during the pandemic, still maintaining parks,  
6 roads, and doing all the day-to-day work. So I  
7 really want to commend you, Sheriff, Chief Spango  
8 and your whole leadership team on the efforts that  
9 were made.

10 I'm real big on training, you know,  
11 training our officers, giving them the tools that  
12 they need to handle prospective situations. What  
13 training is required for our officers on an annual  
14 basis?

15 SHERIFF FONTOURA: Well, we have a  
16 training unit that puts -- ongoing training is a  
17 big part of what we do. We have to continue to  
18 adjust, you know, and I'm an old horse, you know,  
19 the way things were done when I came on in '67,  
20 things have changed tremendously now with --  
21 today, the cameras everywhere, the phones, and the  
22 iPhones and stuff I haven't caught up with yet.

23 The training is very important. You  
24 know, the training unit is under chief -- I'm  
25 going let him address that, see what we do. We



1     spent quite a bit of money on training on an  
2     annual basis, we have a whole unit based for  
3     training. And, you know, range, we have to go  
4     twice a year, qualify twice a year. Chief?

5             CHIEF SPANGO: Twice a year, use of  
6     force training, which speaks to what the  
7     Commissioner President was speaking of earlier.  
8     Firearms, they give a whole block at the academy  
9     of eight hours. There's also other mandated  
10    training from the prosecutor and the Attorney  
11    General, that changes year to year, it's called  
12    clear training. But there is mandatory training  
13    that takes place every year.

14            SHERIFF FONTOURA: We have -- when the  
15    courts are down, for example, if they close for  
16    whatever reason, we use that as an opportunity for  
17    training all the people here so we don't have to  
18    take them off duty. So we'll go into the building  
19    Leroy Smith building and use that building for  
20    training along with the training room. So  
21    training is ongoing and constant, we're constantly  
22    going over everything because it never stops,  
23    never ends.

24            COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Mental health  
25    obviously is a key factor in a lot of things, the

1 crimes. And you look at the prison system, most  
2 of the guys inside have some kind of mental health  
3 situation. I know there was training from, I  
4 think, the attorney general's office?

5 CHIEF SPANGO: The clear training this  
6 year was mental health. That's what we focused on  
7 this year.

8 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Okay. I think  
9 that's a real good idea.

10 SHERIFF FONTOURA: And if we get some  
11 kind of signal from one of our officers that  
12 someone may be in some kind of distress, we work  
13 with the county department of -- and we make sure  
14 we follow-up with that and have the officer, if  
15 necessary, after counseling, examined, and you  
16 know it's something we have to take for their own  
17 safety and the safety of all the other officers,  
18 and the public. We make sure everybody is -- you  
19 know, if there's a problem, we want to make sure  
20 we deal with it and deal with it officially and  
21 effectively as quickly as possible.

22 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Thank you,  
23 Sheriff.

24 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
25 Sebold.

1           COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Car thefts are at  
2 an astronomical high because people are leaving  
3 the fobs in the car, and people are coming along  
4 and stealing them. Is the Sheriff's Department in  
5 any way involved in trying to stop the surge of  
6 car thieves?

7           SHERIFF FONTOURA: Yeah, we're working  
8 with the -- particularly, the west Essex chiefs  
9 have a car theft that we're very involved with,  
10 Undersheriff Jones is very involved with that, you  
11 know. It's -- we used to lament the fact we  
12 couldn't get -- Detroit couldn't -- when I was a  
13 young cop in Newark, why can't Detroit build a car  
14 that a 15 year old can't steal in a minute or two,  
15 you know? Guess what, they did that, you know.  
16 But now they have a car that -- with a fob, people  
17 leave the key fob, they go by, they go to the  
18 suburbs, you know. They come around my house a  
19 couple times, I've seen them. They come around  
20 and take a shot. People just we're trying to get  
21 them educated, don't leave the fob.

22           But now, some of the kids get very  
23 brazen, they'll go in -- Roseland, as an example  
24 of that. They spotted a car, came back, they came  
25 back and actually checked the window. The window

1     wasn't open, not locked, but they climbed through  
2     the window, low level window in the house there,  
3     climbed, went inside, right, looked, found the key  
4     fob. Then the key to the garage, so they could  
5     open it up. The owner heard them and he comes  
6     out, says "what the F are you doing here", you  
7     know, and he fired a shot. Fortunately he missed,  
8     you know, but the shot went into the garage,  
9     Steve, or --

10           CHIEF SPANGO: The garage.

11           SHERIFF FONTOURA: He missed, thank God,  
12     because the kid was like 14, 15 years old. Under  
13     these circumstances, you don't want to shoot  
14     anybody, but especially a 14 or 15 year old. He  
15     went through the window and ran back out the door  
16     and took off. There's another guy waiting  
17     outside, they're right by 280. So they got on 280  
18     and took off. This is how brazen they are.

19           COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I know, what can  
20     the Sheriff do about it?

21           SHERIFF FONTOURA: These kids are 14,  
22     15 years old, they're out there all hours of the  
23     night, you know. The problem is there's very  
24     little consequence. Some of you folks don't want  
25     to hear it, I want tell you that I'm a little bit

1 conservative when it comes to this. There are no  
2 consequences, there are no consequences. They get  
3 arrested, ha ha ha, okay. Go to the youth house  
4 for a couple days, then back out, they're gone.  
5 They do it again.

6 There's no supervision, usually at the  
7 house, so they -- it's all a big joke. You know,  
8 we have to address it from that perspective, too,  
9 there has to be consequences. Some of these kids  
10 are responsible for ten and twelve cars a month,  
11 two or three kids, you know, so... anyway, the  
12 answer is yes --

13 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: How do we --

14 SHERIFF FONTOURA: We're working with  
15 the rest of the chiefs, particularly in west Essex  
16 because that's where most of the cars are being  
17 stolen and being brought down to here, some wind  
18 up in Port Newark, some of them don't, they get  
19 crashed and commit other crimes. That's what cars  
20 do. There's not just that crime, it leads to two  
21 or three other crimes when they have that car,  
22 robberies, you know, run over people, you know,  
23 that kind of stuff. So it's just not the car  
24 theft itself, it mushrooms into four, five other  
25 crimes --

1 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: How do we stop it?

2 SHERIFF FONTOURA: We're working with  
3 the ATE and the attorney general and the state and  
4 the prosecutors, we're going to try to address --  
5 the governor has, you know, he weighed in on it,  
6 how much we're going to do.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
8 Sebold, unfortunately, you're never going to stop  
9 theft.

10 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I know.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: You're never  
12 going to stop people from shooting other people.  
13 As long as you have access to guns and weapons and  
14 ammunition --

15 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: That's another  
16 story.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: -- those things  
18 are never going to stop. You know, you put a lock  
19 on a car or a lock on your house, it will stop a  
20 halfway honest person. But a thief, if that's who  
21 they are and that's what they do, they'll find a  
22 way to get in. If somebody is going to shoot  
23 somebody and commit mass murder, if they're hell  
24 bent on shooting, they're going to shoot.

25 So you have to understand law

1 enforcement are to enforce laws. They don't  
2 necessarily prevent laws from being broken,  
3 they're law enforcement.

4 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I know.

5 SHERIFF FONTOURA: To give an example,  
6 three young men stole a big SUV, went to -- right  
7 over the border in Montville, into a gun shop,  
8 stole ten guns, real quick -- they have only have  
9 three, four minutes to work with, they get in real  
10 fast, they took ten guns. From there, they came  
11 down to West Orange, broke into a liquor store in  
12 West Orange, same guys. Hit the liquor store,  
13 then they jump back in the truck and went to  
14 Passaic, broke into a jewelry store, grabbed real  
15 quick. These are the same three people. They did  
16 all that in about 48 minutes, they did all that  
17 stuff, real quick.

18 A couple -- we know who they are, two  
19 from Essex and one from Passaic.

20 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
21 Johnson.

22 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes. I'd like to  
23 take this opportunity to thank the two  
24 undersheriffs for the job that they have been  
25 doing because the Sheriff and the undersheriff

1 usually garners and the County Exec all the  
2 accolades from something like the pandemic that we  
3 had. But if it wasn't for Amir Jones and Fitz who  
4 organized both of those things and kept them going  
5 and organized to help the people of this county, I  
6 don't know how we would have made out.

7 So I want to personally, personally  
8 thank the two of you for the job well done.

9 SHERIFF FONTOURA: Don't forget John  
10 Gonzalez in our court division.

11 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And John. But  
12 those are the two I dealt with mostly.

13 SHERIFF FONTOURA: I think I made it  
14 clear that they do all the work. I was an  
15 undersheriff once, so I know. So I know what they  
16 have to do and I make sure I hold their feet to  
17 the fire and make sure they do it. That's my job.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: But you get the  
19 credit all the time.

20 SHERIFF FONTOURA: Their job is to get  
21 it done and they do a great job. I'm very  
22 fortunate to have folks like this, along with my  
23 chief, I'm very fortunate.

24 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: They do all the  
25 work.



1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. McEnerney.

2           MR. McENERNEY: Real quick. Looking at  
3 the salaries and wages, I know you're down 14  
4 positions from the prior year, you're not the  
5 amount that was budgeted. Just by looking at it,  
6 there's a 3 percent increase in your  
7 appropriations but you're minus the grant for a  
8 million four. If you pull that out and add that  
9 back to your 2022 salaries and wages, that brings  
10 you up to 46 million four and you're at 46 million  
11 three, so you're flat in terms of salaries and  
12 wages.

13           Looking at the first payroll period,  
14 overtime is pretty significant. So how -- I mean  
15 are you going to be able to -- how are you going  
16 to bridge that gap? You have 3 percent, is it --  
17 I don't know if it's 3 or 2 percent contractual  
18 obligation in your Sheriff's Department, so that  
19 has to be funded as well, whatever it is.

20           So this is a really tight -- very tight  
21 budget.

22           SHERIFF FONTOURA: Well, right now, as  
23 you know, we have a hiring freeze until further  
24 notice from the County Exec and the  
25 administration. And as, you know, Frank, slippage

1 always helps us with the budget. Slippage, while  
2 we're down folks, we don't have to pay them, so it  
3 helps us catch up budget wise. As far as the  
4 overtime, I know we're a lot higher for the last  
5 year and all of that was basically due to the  
6 pandemic.

7 But we have -- there's still some money  
8 out there that's owed to us. For example, we got  
9 the next payment from pandemic money, from COVID  
10 money, 346,000 is earmarked for Sheriff's use. We  
11 have another additional 200,000, we just got  
12 notice that's coming. So that's half a million  
13 that's coming from COVID. With most of that in  
14 the overtime was due to COVID. We did a lot of  
15 work and the guys were working, like I said, 3:30,  
16 4:00 in the morning, they're working four,  
17 five hours of overtime a day, you got to pay.

18 MR. MCENERNEY: I'm saying you already  
19 have a million and a half slippage already  
20 recognized in your 2023 budget number. So I'm  
21 just acknowledging the fact that it's a flat  
22 budget, you have to absorb the collective  
23 bargaining increases, you recognized the slippage,  
24 it's a challenge to say the least. Are your  
25 revenues the same? Because it's all lumped in the

1 budget here.

2 CHIEF SPANGO: Our revenue for last year  
3 was I believe 4.2 million, the revenue's going to  
4 be the same.

5 MR. McENERNEY: About the same?

6 CHIEF SPANGO: Yes, but that's back to  
7 present pandemic numbers, we anticipate --

8 SHERIFF FONTOURA: Most likely the  
9 revenue will probably be a little higher -- don't  
10 hold me to that -- but I anticipate at least  
11 probably higher next year.

12 MR. McENERNEY: All right, thank you  
13 very much.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you, guys,  
15 appreciate you.

16 SHERIFF FONTOURA: Thank you. Thank you  
17 very much, folks. Appreciate all your support.  
18 Stay safe, everyone.

19 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Thank you,  
20 Sheriff.

21 \* \* \* \*

22

23

24

25

**COUNTY CLERK/CLERK OF THE ELECTIONS:**

MR. JACKSON: Mr. President.

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Clerk.

MR. JACKSON: Mr. Durkin is Tab 7,  
page 6.

MR. DURKIN: Through you, Mr. President,  
I would first of all like to thank the men and  
women of the Essex County Clerks office who go  
above and beyond the call of duty serving the  
public. I want to thank you, the Commissioners,  
for your leadership and for all you've done for  
the public, especially over these last  
three years, during some trying times. I want to  
thank the administration, County Executive Joe  
DiVincenzo, Business Administrator Robert Jackson,  
Chief of Staff Elijah, for all their leadership  
and everything they've done throughout this  
pandemic and beyond and preparing for the future.  
I want to thank Hossam Mohamed, treasurer, and  
assistant he had, budget analyst Annette DiBlasio,  
for their guidance through this process.

MR. JACKSON: Excuse me, if I may? It's  
page 19, I may have said the wrong page, page 19  
and 20.

1                   MR. DURKIN: If seven is a bigger  
2 budget, I'll take that.

3                   MR. JACKSON: Sorry about that.

4                   MR. DURKIN: It's all right. Our budget  
5 is straightforward. Our staffing level has  
6 decreased by one, we made two part time positions  
7 into one full time position. Election budget is  
8 flat from 2022 to 2023. Essex County funds the  
9 general election each year, the school board  
10 elections, the nonpartisan May elections, the  
11 special elections and primary elections are funded  
12 by the municipalities. We seek to retrieve  
13 reimbursement for any cost to the County and we do  
14 that every year to the penny.

15                   We are a revenue generating office  
16 through fees generated through passport  
17 applications, notary swearing in, County  
18 identification cards, business registrations. We  
19 were projected to generate 130,000 in 2022 and we  
20 generated 225,000. So we increased that  
21 projection for 2023.

22                   We provide outreach services where we  
23 process U.S. passports and notary public out in  
24 the field, out in the communities, in Fairfield  
25 and Verona and South Orange and Livingston and

1 Millburn, Montclair, West Caldwell, and expanding.

2 COVID changed a lot of things, one being  
3 the length of time for a passport to come back,  
4 which, you know, when the pandemic hit, it was the  
5 first time -- in 2020, it was the first time that  
6 I experienced people not receiving their passports  
7 in time to travel, which was tragic to them, but  
8 also to me. Because I was 100 percent in making  
9 sure that the passport got back through our  
10 contacts with the federal passport agency, but it  
11 flipped. Through COVID now, it's representatives  
12 of the federal government now that we have to go  
13 through. We go to Mikie Sherrill, Darryl Payne,  
14 Junior, now Robert Menendez, Junior, Corey Booker  
15 and U.S. Senator Menendez, they have direct access  
16 now to the federal passport, which we had previous  
17 to COVID.

18 Now, all appointments are done by  
19 appointment. If you want a same day passport, it  
20 used to be you could just walk in. And that no  
21 longer is the case. So it's a strict policy of  
22 having an appointment. So it's become much more  
23 difficult, but our federal representatives are so  
24 responsive. And I utilize them in a pinch -- and  
25 in the last year and a half, we've come through

1 with every -- every request we've gotten where  
2 they're worried about getting the passports, it's  
3 come through. So we're very happy about that.

4 I'm not sure if you know passport cards  
5 is new. A lot of people like to get it as a  
6 novelty, but it only can be used if you're driving  
7 over the Canadian border or the Mexican border can  
8 use a passport cards. You can't use it to fly or  
9 go on a cruise. But it comes as a little card and  
10 you could also -- when REAL ID comes into place,  
11 so REAL ID is a driver's license that needs more  
12 identification to get. Instead of six points of  
13 ID, it's nine points of ID. They say it's a more  
14 secure form of ID, it's not coming into play until  
15 May of 2025 now. It keeps getting pushed, it was  
16 supposed to be effective in 2022 -- 2021 and COVID  
17 extended it. So we still have more than two  
18 years. And with REAL ID -- you can't fly  
19 domestically without a REAL ID or passport. You  
20 can't utilize your standard driver's license.  
21 Also most countries, more and more countries want  
22 six months left on your passport to travel. So  
23 really passports are now nine and a half years as  
24 opposed to ten years.

25 Notaries, when you -- now, newly sworn

1 in notaries have to take an exam in New Jersey.  
2 The legislature passed a law where you have to  
3 take 75 questions online, \$15 fee. If you're a  
4 previous notary and just renewing, you don't have  
5 to take that test. So it's important not to let  
6 your notary lapse if you're a current notary.

7 We have a dedicated trust fund, we have  
8 just about \$90,000, and that's generated through  
9 fees. The 2023 election cycle is pretty active as  
10 far as the number of candidates, but it's an off,  
11 off year because it begins with state senate  
12 elections. And what's interesting about this map  
13 is it's an eight year map, as opposed to every  
14 decade, it's a ten year map based on the census.  
15 But this census came in late and we had a  
16 Constitutional amendment that extended the  
17 previous map for two years.

18 So normally, you know, if this was  
19 ten years ago, the senate and assembly would be  
20 running and would have already been in their new  
21 districts for a two-year term. But the first time  
22 they're running this year for a four year term, so  
23 it's two four year terms in a row for the senate.

24 And the map has changed, as you know.  
25 We were used to pretty -- maps that didn't change



1 a whole lot over the last three decades, this map  
2 changed quite a bit. Also the congressional map  
3 changed quite a bit. We have surrogate, county  
4 surrogate, which is up for election for a five  
5 year term. We have all the Commissioners, all  
6 nine Commissioners up for election, four at large,  
7 five district Commissioners. Locally, we have  
8 municipalities either running council members or  
9 mayoral elections. We have the school board  
10 election in April for Newark and Irvington. We  
11 have three nonpartisan elections in May and they  
12 are South Orange, Cedar Grove, and Verona, so  
13 three small towns, not -- you know, those  
14 nonpartisans when we have Newark and Irvington and  
15 Belleville and Orange, those are -- Montclair,  
16 those are big ones, big. So this doesn't have as  
17 much.

18 County committee ran in 2021, as you  
19 know, for a three year term and that's up again  
20 next June primary for a two year term, back to the  
21 regular cycle. As you are aware --

22 COMMISSIONER GILL: I'm sorry, you said  
23 2020 --

24 MR. DURKIN: 2024.

25 COMMISSIONER GILL: You said 2023, they

1 would have been up in June.

2 MR. DURKIN: Right, 2021 for a three  
3 year term. 2024, back on fours.

4 COMMISSIONER GILL: Just making sure  
5 it's not up until 2024.

6 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: A year from this  
7 June.

8 MR. DURKIN: Correct and we talked about  
9 that, right.

10 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Yes.

11 MR. DURKIN: Also we have prepaid  
12 postage through the Board of Commissioners and  
13 through the administration for voters so there's  
14 no poll tax to the voters and a good bill, which I  
15 hope Assemblywoman Eliana Pintor Marin will track  
16 through the senate, that is going to reimburse the  
17 County for prepaid postage on return ballots and  
18 also prepaid postage on the applications, which is  
19 a big chunk of change for the County to get  
20 reimbursed for that.

21 And I'll just close before questions by  
22 saying that, you know, I heard the Sheriff talk  
23 about the pandemic and everyone who stepped up,  
24 well, the men and women of the County Clerk's  
25 office stepped up because we didn't shut down a

1 day. Right through, elections have deadlines and  
2 elections kept going, all vote by mail elections  
3 in 2020, online petitions in 2020, and through the  
4 2021 elections. I can't say enough about my  
5 respect and my admiration for the men and women of  
6 the County Clerk's office, who did it all, seemed  
7 like we were the only ones in the Hall of Records  
8 most days. It was really -- it was challenging,  
9 but it was inspiring.

10 So thank you for your time and  
11 consideration. I'm here for you, I'm here for any  
12 questions or concerns. Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
14 Cooper.

15 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
16 President.

17 Chris, your office, you guys did a  
18 fantastic, fantastic job. Everything was really  
19 seamless. And whenever we got complaints from  
20 constituents about missing the ballots, your  
21 office responded very quickly. So I want to  
22 commend you and your staff for just keeping the  
23 job going.

24 Quick question, I have been asked, are  
25 you required to make an appointment in advance for

1 a passport with your office or can people just  
2 show up?

3 MR. DURKIN: Good question. So we have  
4 an appointment system now also. If someone shows  
5 up, we do our best to handle their needs, but  
6 yeah, we do have an appointment system. Did you  
7 have a concern?

8 COMMISSIONER COOPER: No, no. A  
9 constituent asked me the question and I didn't  
10 know it, so I told them to call you directly. So  
11 I wanted to know the answer for myself for the  
12 future. So they can call you or is it done on  
13 line?

14 MR. DURKIN: It's online.

15 COMMISSIONER COOPER: It's online.

16 MR. DURKIN: Essexclerk.com, it can be  
17 done online. And we have a wide range of  
18 appointments set up, inputted for people to easily  
19 access an appointment.

20 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you for the  
21 information. You highlighted my need to get my  
22 own passport redone. So I'm going to go online  
23 and make my own appointment, me and my family.

24 MR. DURKIN: And, Commissioner Cooper,  
25 you can give my cell phone to anyone who needs to

1 make an appointment through me.

2 COMMISSIONER COOPER: I will, so go to  
3 the website.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
5 Sebold.

6 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I just want to add  
7 that, Chris, you've done such a wonderful job.  
8 You must be tired of my reaching out to you with  
9 questions and looking for answers. But every  
10 single time, you follow through. And it's really  
11 wonderful that we got someone as terrific as you  
12 to help us right here in Essex County. You do a  
13 great job.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. McEnerney.

15 MR. MCENERNEY: Chris, I'm looking at  
16 the first payroll of 2023 and there's 21 positions  
17 that were paid and 21 positions are listed in your  
18 budget. When I add in the merit raises and the  
19 additional adjustment you have for 42,000, as well  
20 as the overtime and temporary help, I come real  
21 close to what you already have budgeted. So I'm  
22 assuming you're not going to go above 21 employees  
23 and not below it. So your budget is adequate for  
24 that concern.

25 The other thing is on the revenue side,

1     where do you stand with that?  There's a little  
2     more anticipated so --

3             MR. DURKIN:  So we went from 130  
4     anticipated to 200,000 anticipated.  And I think  
5     we will exceed, comfortably, that number.

6             MR. McENERNEY:  As far as your other  
7     expenses go, they're the same as last year.  So  
8     your salaries and wages are adequate given the  
9     payroll that I've seen in the first payroll.  And  
10    your other expenses are the same as the prior  
11    year, so I don't have any other questions.

12            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  Commissioner  
13    Johnson.

14            COMMISSIONER JOHNSON:  I love seeing you  
15    on Bloomfield Avenue at some of the restaurants  
16    because I run into you a hell of a lot on  
17    Bloomfield.

18            MR. DURKIN:  Frequent the businesses,  
19    it's important.  Good food.

20            VICE PRESIDENT POMARES:  Thank you.  
21    Just to reiterate, the passport process is very  
22    simple.  I took my family.  The online process is  
23    very simple, you get text notifications.  So it  
24    really is not the headache it may have been once  
25    many -- long time ago when I got mine almost

1     ten years ago. It was very simple. So I want to  
2     commend you on that. The new offices work out  
3     well and the facility has been well thought out,  
4     so it's been great.

5             With respect to the REAL ID, is that  
6     something that's happening now, where as the  
7     people renew their license, is that already like a  
8     transition in the midst?

9             MR. DURKIN: Yes, it's been going on for  
10    a couple years now. What's important about that  
11    is you're able to renew your standard license  
12    simply a couple times online without having to go  
13    in. The third time, you have to go in. And you  
14    can make an appointment to get a standard license,  
15    which you shouldn't, you should get the REAL ID,  
16    you just need more proof of ID to get that REAL  
17    ID. But they still allow to you get the standard  
18    license, which obviously will not help you fly  
19    domestically if you keep your standard driver's  
20    license. But it's also an online appointment  
21    system to set up an appointment for REAL ID.

22             VICE PRESIDENT POMARES: Great job,  
23    Chris, thank you.

24             MR. DURKIN: Thank you.

25             PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner

1 Cooper.

2 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
3 President. Can we take the passport photo at your  
4 office, too?

5 MR. DURKIN: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Okay, great. Also  
7 wanted to comment that that was a wonderful how-to  
8 video you did during the election last year,  
9 showing people how to fill out the forms, the  
10 early voting. So I hope to see that again this  
11 year, it was a real nice segment that you did.

12 MR. DURKIN: Thank you. Early voting,  
13 there's going to be three days of early voting for  
14 the primary, nine days of early voting for the  
15 general election. Nonpartisan towns have the  
16 ability to opt into early voting, but they have to  
17 pay the cost of early voting. So Verona, one of  
18 the three towns, Verona, Cedar Grove and South  
19 Orange, Verona is already inquiring about having  
20 early voting for three days for their nonpartisan  
21 mayoral election, but that remains to be seen.

22 COMMISSIONER COOPER: If you got a vote  
23 by mail ballot last year, unless you checked the  
24 box to automatically receive them all the time,  
25 you have to reapply again for this year, right?



1           MR. DURKIN: Correct. Yeah, there's a  
2 box that you could check off for all future  
3 elections. If you don't check it off, there's a  
4 box for that specific election. If you did that,  
5 you then have to do it again or check off all  
6 future elections, so it allows you both options,  
7 to check off a box for that specific election or  
8 for all future elections.

9           COMMISSIONER COOPER: Did I hear  
10 correctly, can you register to vote online now?

11          MR. DURKIN: Correct. You can register  
12 to vote online, yes. Update your registration,  
13 new registration.

14          COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
15 President.

16          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Mr. President.

17          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
18 Sebold.

19          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I have a question,  
20 Chris. How is the ID driver's license different  
21 from the regular one? What does it have that  
22 shows it?

23          MR. DURKIN: So there's a hologram on it  
24 that shows it. But to qualify for that, you need  
25 more points of ID. So you just need to show

1 really more proof, that you say --

2 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I understand that.  
3 But how do I tell whether it's an ID one or not?

4 MR. DURKIN: So I have a REAL ID, it's  
5 got a picture, it's got two pictures. It's got a  
6 picture here and --

7 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Both you --

8 MR. DURKIN: And this one is faded.  
9 This picture, I don't know who has a standard --

10 COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Doesn't it have a  
11 gold star on it, too?

12 MR. DURKIN: Yes, a gold star is another  
13 and a hologram.

14 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I have one picture  
15 on mine, that's a standard.

16 MR. DURKIN: And no star, there's a few  
17 things on there.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: You got to  
19 contact his office, he'll give you all the  
20 information you need.

21 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Okay. Mine has  
22 two pictures.

23 MR. DURKIN: You have the gold star?  
24 You were right.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: You got a budget

1 question?

2 Thank you, sir -- oh, I'm sorry.

3 MR. McENERNEY: I'm done.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: We're good, thank  
5 you.

6 MR. DURKIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Appreciate you.

8 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Thanks, Chris.

9 MR. JACKSON: The surrogate is Tab 7,  
10 page 5.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: But the surrogate  
12 isn't here, you going to do his part?

13 MR. JACKSON: Sure. He's all good.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Anybody here?  
15 The surrogate is not here? Put them on tomorrow.

16 MR. JACKSON: He may be in the hallway.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Let's go to  
18 lunch, have the surrogate come tomorrow.

19 We're going take a break for dinner.

20

21 (Whereupon a short recess was taken.)

22

23

24

25

1 (Whereupon, the Board resumed the  
2 hearing.)

3  
4 **ROLL CALL:**

5 MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Cooper.

6 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Here.

7 MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Gill.

8 COMMISSIONER GILL: Here.

9 MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Graham.

10 COMMISSIONER GRAHAM: Here.

11 COMMISSIONER LUCIANO: Commissioner  
12 Luciano, absent.

13 Commissioner Mercado.

14 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Here.

15 MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Sebold.

16 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Here.

17 MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner Vice  
18 President Pomares.

19 VICE PRESIDENT POMARES: Here.

20 MS. DAVIS FORD: Commissioner President  
21 Richardson.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Here.

23 \* \* \* \*

24

25

1       **ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE:**

2

3               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Okay. We're  
4 going to day two.

5               MR. JACKSON: Yes, sir.

6               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: We're at  
7 administration and finance. Mr. Hossam.

8               MR. MOHAMED: Good evening. Hossam  
9 Mohamed, County Treasurer, presenting the  
10 administration finance.

11              The administration and finance  
12 department has eight divisions, office of  
13 director, accounts and control, management and  
14 budget, information technology, human resources,  
15 public information, purchasing office, and the  
16 treasurer's office.

17              We have minor increases in the salaries  
18 and wages due to contractual increases and  
19 promotions. And we have currently 47 active  
20 employees and two vacancies. Our other expenses  
21 is almost flat, didn't change much since last  
22 year. You'd like me to keep going?

23              PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: That's it, that's  
24 your presentation? I mean I'm good with it.

25              MR. MOHAMED: I have the rest of the

1 items, you'd like me to address it now or for  
2 tomorrow?

3 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: No, no, no, your  
4 presentation is now.

5 MR. MOHAMED: Okay.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Not tomorrow.  
7 You come back tomorrow, we're not going to hear  
8 you.

9 (Commissioner Luciano arrives.)

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I'd like to  
11 recognize Commissioner Luciano.

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**CENTRAL EXPENSES & INSURANCES:**

MR. JACKSON: Mr. President, if I may? What Mr. Mohamed was saying, he's got other items down here that he covers as well, debt services.

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Cover all, let's get all your stuff out of the way, so we don't have to worry about it.

MR. MOHAMED: The next item is central expense and insurance. This line in the budget to present indirect costs for the whole county --

MR. JACKSON: Tab 6 and 8.

MR. MOHAMED: Such as postage, copy machines.

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Hossam, hold on a second.

Mr. Jackson, are you responsible for putting this book together?

MR. JACKSON: I'm just jumping --

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Administration will go last next year.

Mr. Hossam, go ahead.

MR. MOHAMED: So central expense and insurance. This line item represents the cost, indirect cost to the County of like postage, copy

1 machine leases, maintenance contracts, rent  
2 payments for building and parking, senior  
3 transportation, and the county match of the JOT  
4 program.

5           We have -- the purchasing has found cost  
6 savings this year, so that's why the '23 budget is  
7 less. And this saving is to the equipment  
8 maintenance and nonprofessional service line.  
9 Plus, we have the expense line for central  
10 kitchen. And it has multiples divisions. This is  
11 the cost of the food for the youth house and  
12 corrections and the hospital center. This is all  
13 the meals to the inmates.

14           We have an increase in this year in the  
15 transportation contract and plus the county share  
16 of JOT went up.

17           Plus we build an inflation line to hedge  
18 against the current inflation in the market. And  
19 we put in that line to have full control of it, so  
20 this is not an invitation to the department to  
21 spend more. So we have it in one line and we can  
22 control it. If any department need any help, we  
23 can actually transfer from that line to their  
24 budget as needed. So you don't see it on their  
25 budget and it would be an invitation to spend more



1 money.

2 And after that, the line for the  
3 insurance, worker's comp insurance last year, it  
4 was more -- we expended more than usual because  
5 this is the residual cases from COVID, we had to  
6 settle last year in 2022. And we have the group  
7 health insurance, we are part of state health  
8 benefit plan. And for regular employees, the cost  
9 went up 24 percent and for retirees, it was  
10 13 percent.

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**DEBT SERVICE:**

MR. MOHAMED: The next item is debt service. In 2023, our County debt is 134 million and the debt service will be going down next year. In 2024, it will drop by 38 million, assuming we will not issue anymore debt for this year.

The next item would be unclassified and utilities. This item include the professional service. And this is for the central office fees and the website fees. And the line for the membership for NICO and NJAC, we have the IBEW development fund, and didn't change since like for multiple years. And for the prior year bill, any bills outstanding before 2021.

And our utility line item went up slightly because of the rising cost of utilities.

\* \* \* \*

1       **REVENUES:**

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3               MR. MOHAMED: The next item I have is  
4 revenues.

5               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Recognize  
6 Commissioner Johnson.

7               MR. MOHAMED: The next item is the  
8 revenues, which is Tab 19, all the way in the end  
9 of the book. This includes all the revenues  
10 anticipated in 2022 and the collections and what's  
11 anticipated in 2023. By law, we can anticipate up  
12 to the level of what we collected in the prior  
13 year. But some of the revenues, we do not  
14 anticipate up to that level because we have  
15 special circumstances.

16               Like the register of deeds last year,  
17 they had an exceptionally good year because of  
18 housing market and we could not collect this in  
19 the following year, so we lowered it a little bit.  
20 We didn't anticipate the full amount to be  
21 collected in '22 and '23. This also includes the  
22 increase in the parks fee, this was passed by the  
23 Commissioners as the new ordinance. So we have a  
24 line item for the fee increase for the parks. And  
25 we are using \$15 million from the ARP revenue loss

1 item. Last year, we use 36 million, this year,  
2 we're only using 15 million.

3 And I'm here for any questions.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Anybody got any  
5 budget questions? Commissioner Cooper.

6 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
7 President. Basic question for me, please. What  
8 was the budget last year versus the numerical  
9 number this year?

10 MR. MOHAMED: It's supposed to be the  
11 last page. 879 and this year is 885.

12 MR. McENERNEY: Excuse me. Can I  
13 interrupt? Is that with all the grants?

14 MR. MOHAMED: Actually it was -- at that  
15 time, when we produced the book, we didn't  
16 actually insert any grants, so we use the same  
17 grant amount from last year.

18 MR. McENERNEY: Just to make it  
19 comparable?

20 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

21 MR. McENERNEY: Okay, I'm sorry.

22 COMMISSIONER COOPER: So it's gone up  
23 some, but not terribly. It's not a huge, huge  
24 jump?

25 MR. JACKSON: Less than 1 percent.

1           COMMISSIONER COOPER: That was going to  
2 be my next question. So going back a minute ago,  
3 when the Sheriff, his budget area did not have  
4 that hiring grant in it. We can absorb those  
5 costs with no problem? It's fine. Do we  
6 anticipate getting that grant or no?

7           MR. MOHAMED: This is the cops hiring  
8 grant, we're not sure if they will apply for it.  
9 We have the grant from last year, I'm not sure if  
10 they'll apply for the new grant or not.

11          COMMISSIONER COOPER: So that grant  
12 ended and he would have to reapply?

13          MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

14          COMMISSIONER COOPER: But we're not  
15 going to experience any challenges, like we don't  
16 have to lay anybody off or cut anybody out since  
17 that \$1.4 million wasn't in there?

18          MR. MOHAMED: No. What happened for the  
19 Sheriff's office, they cut some of the vacancies.  
20 They had multiple vacancies and I believe they cut  
21 vacancies from the budget.

22          COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you.

23          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Good question.

24          COMMISSIONER COOPER: I had one more  
25 though. The union, don't we have some unions that

1 are out -- are those in the budget, Mr. McEnerney?

2 MR. McENERNEY: Those would be -- those  
3 contractual increases had passed. It was my  
4 assumption, are all the in the budget, all the  
5 collective bargaining agreements have required  
6 increases computed into their salaries and wages.

7 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Do we have any  
8 units that are not in contract right now that  
9 we're negotiating?

10 MR. McENERNEY: I'm sure we are.

11 MR. MOHAMED: We have five. We have all  
12 law enforcement, we have two in the Sheriff  
13 department, two in the correction, and one in the  
14 prosecutors, the superiors.

15 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Did we  
16 anticipate -- let's say you settle them magically  
17 a week from now, did we anticipate those numbers,  
18 too?

19 MR. MOHAMED: Yes. And we have reserve  
20 for the prior retros from day one because if it's  
21 settled, we're liable for the retro from the last  
22 time we had increase. So we have this in the  
23 reserve, yes.

24 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you.

25 MR. McENERNEY: The County has been very

1 proactive about maintaining reserves where they  
2 understand that potentially there's a need for  
3 them that may not be in that budget year. So if  
4 you have retroactive increases that are due, they  
5 would be charged against the reserve that's in our  
6 balance sheet, as opposed to our budget, correct?

7 MR. MOHAMED: Yes, that's correct.

8 COMMISSIONER COOPER: So to make sure  
9 I'm understanding, we book the reserve for those  
10 numbers in anticipation of the settlement, so we  
11 have it?

12 MR. McENERNEY: Correct. I'm assuming  
13 they did, but the reserves are there. Whether  
14 they're sufficient, I can't really speak to. But  
15 according to the administration in discussions  
16 I've had they are. But they're there. It's not  
17 like we're not budgeting for them or we don't have  
18 reserves.

19 With regard to admin and finance, I  
20 really don't have a lot of questions on the  
21 various departments. I've looked at the first  
22 payroll and, you know, basically have seen very  
23 close to what's in the first payroll in terms of  
24 the number of employees and compared that to your  
25 table of organization. And each one of those

1 departments, accounts and control, information  
2 technology, management and budget, which only has  
3 two people in it right now. But in the office of  
4 director, there's a charge to small business for  
5 72,000, what is that?

6 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

7 MR. McENERNEY: That's the first year.

8 MR. MOHAMED: That's specifically for  
9 Mr. Tim Walker, he's actually overseeing the small  
10 business, so we split his salary between the  
11 office of director and between small business.

12 MR. McENERNEY: Okay. That wasn't done  
13 that way last year?

14 MR. MOHAMED: No, he was not appointed  
15 to oversee the small business last year.

16 MR. McENERNEY: Again, accounts control,  
17 you have 12 employees, I found 12 on the payroll  
18 and really so on and so forth with regard to admin  
19 and finance.

20 So let's go back a second and just since  
21 we're changing this around a bit, let's just  
22 talk -- let's talk about central expenses and  
23 insurances. Those are areas of postage and  
24 telephones that don't apply to individual  
25 departments or communications. Just list a couple



1 more of those to be a little more definitive about  
2 what's in there?

3 MR. MOHAMED: This include the postage,  
4 like you mention, and include the equipment  
5 maintenance for office machines and plus leases  
6 for copy machines. And plus we have the rent for  
7 building and parking, and plus a senior  
8 transportation contract, and plus the JOT county  
9 match of JOT, it's already in that line.

10 MR. McENERNEY: And those numbers are  
11 fairly similar, those numbers are up quite a bit.

12 MR. MOHAMED: Yes. We built an  
13 inflation line and this is to hedge the inflation.  
14 All the departments are complaining about rising  
15 costs, so we did not want to build that line in  
16 the individual departments. So this would be like  
17 an invitation for people to spend more. So we  
18 have it in our control, if needed, it will be  
19 transferred to various departments, as needed. If  
20 not, it's to be cancelled.

21 MR. McENERNEY: It's basically a reserve  
22 set up, you're appropriating for reserves. If you  
23 don't use it, then you can cancel it or let it  
24 lapse in the following year or stick it in  
25 reserve?

1 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

2 MR. McENERNEY: Under debt service, I  
3 think one of the most important points to speak  
4 about with debt service is number one, the fact  
5 that over -- since 2002, under this  
6 administration, we have limited our debt service  
7 to \$20 million in authorizations every year and  
8 that is a goal well achieved. But speak to us,  
9 too, about 2024 and the reduction there that's  
10 going to take place?

11 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

12 MR. McENERNEY: In the annual debt  
13 service.

14 MR. MOHAMED: The annual debt service  
15 right now in 2023 is 134 million. In 2024, it  
16 will drop by 38 million and this is the first  
17 drop. We have another drop, it's supposed to go  
18 down to 66 million in 2026. We have two drops,  
19 one in '24, one in '26. And this is assuming  
20 we're not issuing any major debt in the future.  
21 This is based on our debt, what we have right now.

22 MR. McENERNEY: Okay. And those are  
23 pretty significant. I know we're talking about  
24 the future, but those are very significant numbers  
25 in terms of reduction. And gives the County the

1 opportunity, maybe, if it sees its way to, of  
2 actually appropriating for capital improvements in  
3 the capital budget, rather than let it lapse into  
4 capital or reduce -- even reduce taxes. I think  
5 that even reducing debt more by paying as you go  
6 is something that I've talked to the  
7 administration about. I think that's the way to  
8 go with that. That said, let's take a look at  
9 revenues.

10 MR. MOHAMED: Sure.

11 MR. McENERNEY: So let's -- on the  
12 statutory expenditures, let's go through those.  
13 Those are up 6.9 percent and the majority is  
14 coming from PRS and PFRS, which is the biggest  
15 challenges, when we met with the administration a  
16 couple months ago if not less than that. There  
17 was, you know, referral to a large deficit that  
18 was going to have to be made up because not only  
19 of the health insurance increase but the pension  
20 law. So can you just speak to those a second?

21 So what can we inspect for '24, too,  
22 given that -- is there any indication those costs  
23 will remain as high?

24 MR. MOHAMED: The state usually sends us  
25 the pension contribution, our pension

1 contribution. It went up 11 percent in 2023 and  
2 it's due in end of April. And this came to  
3 \$6 million extra of appropriation, we charge part  
4 of the PERS bill to our welfare department, it's  
5 built in their budget because this is welfare of  
6 employees. But, unfortunately, the bill is  
7 11 percent higher than the year before. And,  
8 unfortunately, I don't see this going down any  
9 time soon. This has been consistent, the state  
10 almost every year increased the pension  
11 contribution for everyone.

12 MR. MCENERNEY: But we did do a tax  
13 increase this year, which helps offset some of  
14 those costs, if not all. And obviously as we've  
15 seen, the Sheriff's department and other  
16 departments, there's a freeze on hiring and other  
17 cost savings initiatives done in order to take  
18 care of that.

19 MR. JACKSON: If I may, Mr. President?  
20 Frank, I agree. I think health benefits we're  
21 going to see somewhere between another 10 and  
22 20 percent increase, probably closer to the higher  
23 end I think next year.

24 MR. MCENERNEY: Above and beyond what  
25 we're looking at now?

1                   MR. JACKSON: Yeah.

2                   MR. McENERNEY: Is that strictly on the  
3 experience of our employees?

4                   MR. JACKSON: Well, one of the good  
5 things for us is that we're in the pool, right?  
6 So we get the benefit -- our history, our claims  
7 record is not good at all. So we actually benefit  
8 from being in the bigger pool, but what's  
9 happening is you saw Newark left, Camden left,  
10 Trenton left. So some of the bigger -- some of  
11 the better claims records people who are in state  
12 benefits are leaving. So that means that those  
13 who are left behind are going to have even more to  
14 pay to cover the fact that we're sort of like in  
15 the bad drivers pool, you know, the analogy.

16                   So I think next year, we're going have  
17 less members, but also the remaining people who  
18 are in the pool are going to not have great claims  
19 experience. So they're going have to jack up the  
20 fee again.

21                   MR. McENERNEY: That prohibits us from  
22 going out to private as well because our loss  
23 ratios are so high.

24                   MR. JACKSON: We actually had our broker  
25 do an analysis and their estimation was this year

1 we're going up, say, 20 percent. If we were to go  
2 out, they thought our number would go up  
3 31 percent prior.

4 MR. McENERNEY: Wow. All right. So as  
5 far as revenues go, we did do an increase in the  
6 parks fee, parks and recreation fees, so we're  
7 seeing a \$2.5 million increase there, which is  
8 new, in addition to the normal operations of the  
9 parks and recreation.

10 Also the Delaney Hall treatment went  
11 from 20 million adopted in '22 to collected, 23 to  
12 33. Isn't that still a function though of what's  
13 in the appropriations?

14 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

15 MR. McENERNEY: Some offsets.

16 MR. MOHAMED: Yes, that's offset with  
17 expenses. And it was actually 20 million, the  
18 state grant us 23 million. And prior years, we  
19 had \$10 million was reserved for that purpose, so  
20 we used it for this year. That's why it went up  
21 to 33.

22 MR. McENERNEY: Say that again?

23 MR. MOHAMED: Okay. The anticipated '22  
24 was 20 million, the state put in their budget in  
25 the '23 budget was 23 million, so it went up. And

1 then we anticipated in 2023, 33 million, the  
2 difference is 10 million. This was deferred  
3 revenue was being carried over for multiple years.  
4 The state gave us a whole 20 million in  
5 six months, they actually give us one year to give  
6 us 10 million extra and we did not use in the  
7 prior years.

8 MR. McENERNEY: That issue went back --  
9 I know what that issue is. That was an issue of  
10 over estimation or something along those lines?

11 MR. MOHAMED: Actually, it was the state  
12 granted us the funds for like in the last  
13 six months of the year and that's why we didn't  
14 use the whole 20 million, we used only 10 million  
15 for that year, and we kept 10 million as deferred  
16 revenue. And we keep carrying over from one year  
17 to another and this year we'll be using to offset,  
18 you know, the additional cost.

19 MR. McENERNEY: This year, we're going  
20 to take that?

21 MR. MOHAMED: We actually will take it  
22 from the deferred revenue and anticipated  
23 basically.

24 MR. McENERNEY: Is there still something  
25 in welfare that we're carrying year over year? 10

1 or 15 million?

2 MR. MOHAMED: 15 million, yes, advance.

3 MR. McENERNEY: That's still there?

4 It's been there for 20 years at least.

5 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

6 MR. McENERNEY: All right. And the only  
7 other one is federal inmate housing is still 42  
8 million, it was 42 million last year. For the  
9 most part, that's the federal marshal's program?

10 MR. MOHAMED: Yes. We don't have ICE  
11 detainees, we have only federal marshals, that's  
12 it. And we have the Union County inmates and the  
13 State of New Jersey actually starts sending us  
14 new -- they send us state inmates. So we have a  
15 new line item, it's not in the budget here because  
16 we're not sure how many inmates they will send us.

17 MR. McENERNEY: Are we still getting the  
18 appropriation out of the state corrections budget?  
19 The appropriation for Delaney Hall?

20 MR. MOHAMED: It's actually part of the  
21 correction budget, yes.

22 MR. McENERNEY: How much is that this  
23 year?

24 MR. MOHAMED: I believe it's around 13  
25 million.



1 MR. McENERNEY: How much?

2 MR. MOHAMED: Around 13 million.

3 MR. McENERNEY: That's not based on  
4 anything we're looking at here with federal  
5 inmates, is it?

6 MR. MOHAMED: No, no. This is the  
7 inmates who are eligible for that program and they  
8 have special criteria and we have a contract with  
9 the facility to move these inmates for these  
10 services.

11 MR. McENERNEY: And why is welfare up  
12 from 23 million to 30 million? Is that a state  
13 number they gave us? Welfare miscellaneous, what  
14 is that?

15 MR. COLTRE: The very last one.

16 MR. McENERNEY: Is that the 15 million I  
17 was speaking about?

18 MR. MOHAMED: Yes. This is an advance  
19 for the food stamp program, the state granted us  
20 that advance.

21 MR. McENERNEY: Is that another advance?  
22 Is that actually borrowing against future revenue  
23 streams from welfare?

24 MR. MOHAMED: They didn't give us the  
25 nature of that, if it's actually borrowing from

1 the future or not, but they granted us that money.

2 MR. McENERNEY: But it's an advance, the  
3 whole 33 million? It was 15, now it's --

4 MR. MOHAMED: Actually it's 30 million.

5 MR. McENERNEY: But it was 15, that was  
6 the 15 million I just questioned you on?

7 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

8 MR. McENERNEY: That's been in the  
9 budget for, like I said, close to 20 years now, I  
10 believe. That number is now going to rise to 30  
11 million?

12 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

13 MR. McENERNEY: And that is an advance?

14 MR. MOHAMED: I'm not too sure about the  
15 nature --

16 MR. McENERNEY: You can tell me later,  
17 I'll call you about it tomorrow.

18 MR. JACKSON: Remember two times, one  
19 time, Frank, that number was like 45 or 50  
20 million.

21 MR. McENERNEY: I'm confused. I know  
22 the 15 million was something that was advanced.  
23 We used to have to get a letter every year from  
24 Mr. Dillon -- I remember his name -- used to have  
25 to write us a letter saying, yes, you can keep it.

1 I don't know if it's the same one, but I'll talk  
2 to Hossam tomorrow and we'll clear that up.

3 I don't have any other questions, Mr.  
4 President.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioners,  
6 any other budget questions? Commissioner Sebold  
7 and then Commissioner Cooper.

8 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: You mentioned the  
9 state was going to send us inmates?

10 MR. MOHAMED: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Do you have any  
12 idea how many, what the number is and will they  
13 pay us?

14 MR. MOHAMED: The state, they have a  
15 rate, I believe it's \$146 per day. How many it  
16 depends about the activities on the state level.  
17 They did not guarantee a number of prisoners.

18 MR. JACKSON: Also our capacity, like we  
19 can --

20 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: That's what I was  
21 going to ask, is there a certain number you can  
22 take and you can't go past that number?

23 MR. JACKSON: We have 2,300 and we can't  
24 have more than 2,300, but between Union and the  
25 feds and this group, we need 2,300 and our own

1 Essex County, we cannot have more than 2,300.

2 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I understand that.  
3 We've never had state inmates before, correct?

4 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

5 MR. MOHAMED: We did have some, yes.

6 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Okay. Because I  
7 thought we were talking about this was going to be  
8 new, that we were going to get state inmates.

9 MR. MOHAMED: We have been actually  
10 getting state inmates before. The number is going  
11 up a little bit, but we're not sure how many.  
12 That's why we did not anticipate it as a new  
13 revenue because we're not sure how many state will  
14 send us.

15 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: But it's not  
16 new --

17 MR. MOHAMED: No.

18 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
20 Cooper.

21 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
22 President.

23 Quick question. Frank, would you happen  
24 to remember how much that legal services ICE line  
25 item was? Was it seven --

1 MR. McENERNEY: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER COOPER: That's no longer  
3 in the budget?

4 MR. McENERNEY: It went up --

5 COMMISSIONER GILL: It went --

6 MR. McENERNEY: We went close to --

7 MR. JACKSON: It was 300.

8 MR. MOHAMED: It was 750,000 and it was  
9 increased to 900.

10 MR. McENERNEY: 900.

11 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Then it went to  
12 900, we don't have that in the budget anymore,  
13 correct?

14 MR. McENERNEY: There was no reason for  
15 it.

16 COMMISSIONER COOPER: All right. Well,  
17 I'm just thinking about all of the -- I know we're  
18 conscious about our pension and our healthcare  
19 costs, but we keep hearing more and more from the  
20 corrections staff about the increase in mental  
21 health challenges to some of the inmates that's  
22 there. Is there a possibility for us to do  
23 something with some of that money for the inmates  
24 around mental health programing? It's one of my  
25 questions.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Jackson?

2           MR. JACKSON: We could certainly take a  
3 look at it. We've actually increased it some in  
4 this budget. We've added personnel, Doctor --  
5 dropping the name, we added two people who are  
6 dedicated to that function, but we can certainly  
7 ask Director Charles will be here tomorrow.

8           COMMISSIONER COOPER: Okay.

9           MR. JACKSON: So we can have that  
10 conversation.

11          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: So, Mr. Jackson,  
12 so you're increasing to two. So what's the total  
13 number of employees that are dealing with that now  
14 or is it just those two?

15          MR. JACKSON: I know there's more than  
16 that, but I know we added two. I'd have to get  
17 back to you later or tomorrow, Mr. President.

18          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: All right. Any  
19 other budget questions? Hearing none, Hossam,  
20 it's been a pleasure.

21          MR. MOHAMED: Thank you so much.

22          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I guess most of  
23 us don't know half of what you were talking about.

24          COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Thank you.

25          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Just add that

1       Hossam does a great job when he come before the  
2       Commissioners meeting.   I give him credit.

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1     **BOARD OF ELECTIONS:**

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3             PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Who's next?  
4     Board of elections, let's get everybody sworn in.  
5     Just wanted to make sure you're paying attention.  
6     The floor is yours. Please introduce yourself.

7             MS. AMOS: Okay. Well, good evening,  
8     everyone. My name is Nicole Amos, I'm the clerk  
9     of the board of elections. With me is deputy  
10    clerk Peter Franzie. And also with us is our  
11    assistant Ms. Tynetta Cotton.

12            I'd like to take the time to tell you a  
13    little bit about 2022 and what we have planned for  
14    2023. But for those of you who don't know, we are  
15    new to our position and we've been here all of  
16    five months. So --

17            COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: And doing a good  
18    job.

19            COMMISSIONER MERCADO: We'll take it  
20    easy on you.

21            MS. AMOS: Yes, take it easy. All  
22    right. So we did start last year and came on  
23    board just in time to run the November general  
24    election, pretty much had to hit the ground  
25    running. At the time, we were challenged with



1 rolling out our mailing -- or processing our  
2 mail-in ballots, that came in at about 37,000  
3 ballots that we processed. We were able to  
4 identify our early voting locations and ensure all  
5 25 of our poll workers were dispatched to the 256  
6 polling locations across Essex County. I did  
7 ensure that our poll workers were knowledgeable  
8 about the election and the election equipment. We  
9 also had training classes, 124 of them, totalling  
10 over 248 hours that we ran through the months of  
11 August into October, just before the general  
12 election.

13 As we roll into 2023, we do have two  
14 school elections, three municipal elections, the  
15 primary and the general scheduled for this year.  
16 We are hearing there might be a special election  
17 in December, but no confirmation as of yet. So  
18 we're looking at seven to eight elections that  
19 will begin running in April and run through  
20 probably December of this year. So we're going to  
21 be quite, quite busy this year.

22 With regards to trainings, we also  
23 identified that many of our poll workers needed  
24 additional training. And while we do train them  
25 every year, it seems that, you know what, it's

1 never enough. So we invited back and we're  
2 continuing training. But we also realized that  
3 our staff needs training as well. So we'll be  
4 doing staff training as well as additional poll  
5 worker training.

6 And as we're talking about the staff, we  
7 do have seven staff members, not including Peter  
8 and myself. That's the core staff and they're  
9 with us throughout the year. You might have  
10 noticed on your budget that there might be  
11 additional positions, but those are seasonal staff  
12 members that come in and they only work during the  
13 election cycle. Our salary includes the 3 percent  
14 contractual increases. And that's for only the  
15 staffers that are entitled to that.

16 Also with regards to staffing, it's  
17 important to note that one of the things that we  
18 noted when we came on is that staffers were  
19 spending additional hours with overtime, sometimes  
20 totalling anywhere between 14 to 16 hours a day,  
21 that was really spiking our overtime costs. So  
22 what we implemented is what we called staggered  
23 hours, where we were able to keep our work hours  
24 for the staff anywhere between eight to  
25 nine hours. That helped not only with work

1 fatigue, but also reduced the overtime that would  
2 be hitting your budget. And we thought that was  
3 pretty much a home run with the overtime hours.

4 The next line item that we wanted to  
5 talk about or bring to your attention was  
6 reimbursement of elections. As you well know,  
7 when we run these school elections or municipal  
8 elections, we do recoup the dollars that go back  
9 into the County coffers. So we are looking to  
10 bring back in close to 300,000 from 2022 for  
11 elections held in Essex Fells, Montclair,  
12 Irvington, and Newark.

13 We also go ahead and ask for  
14 reimbursements from the state. And last year, we  
15 were able to ask for reimbursements that totalled  
16 \$888,000 coming from both the primary and the  
17 general elections. We also asked for other  
18 reimbursement grants, early voting grants to be  
19 more specific, and that is totalling anywhere  
20 close to a million dollars that will also be  
21 coming back in reimbursements.

22 And our big highlight for next year  
23 outside of elections, which we're very proud of,  
24 is we're rolling out a youth initiative. We are  
25 hoping to have a pilot program in two local high

1 schools and have conversations with Essex County  
2 College where we'll be teaching elections 101.  
3 And this course is going to cover the basics of  
4 elections, poll worker training. And ideally what  
5 we wanted to there is engage a younger generation  
6 of voters, but also we want to increase our poll  
7 worker pool with a younger generation.

8 In closing, we would like to say we will  
9 continue to work very closely with our finance  
10 partners here at the County. We plan to stay  
11 within the approved budget that's given to us. We  
12 will continue to search for grants and we're  
13 looking to continue our community outreach  
14 partnership to engage all voters.

15 Thank you very much for allowing us this  
16 time with you all this evening.

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you.  
18 Commissioners? Mr. McEnerney.

19 MR. McENERNEY: So just looking at your  
20 salaries and wages, are you still out a board  
21 member? I only have three board members being  
22 paid in the first payroll.

23 MS. AMOS: Right. So there will be  
24 another board member joining us during the  
25 seasonal year.

1           MR. McENERNEY: And then I have,  
2 including the three board members, I guess four  
3 here, that would be 16 employees that I now have  
4 on the first payroll.

5           MS. AMOS: Yes.

6           MR. McENERNEY: So you're budgeting for  
7 13 and the temporary employees, which are listed  
8 at \$80,000 below the line have not been hired yet?

9           MS. AMOS: No, they have not.

10          MR. McENERNEY: So you're 16 and you're  
11 budgeting for 13, what's the story there?

12          MS. AMOS: I feel that with managing the  
13 staff and managing the time, we're realizing that  
14 we don't have to over staff ourselves, we can  
15 actually scale back on the amount of people that  
16 we have getting the job done just as well.

17          MR. McENERNEY: But everybody is already  
18 hired.

19          MS. AMOS: Not the three.

20          MR. McENERNEY: I got 15 on the payroll.

21          MS. AMOS: You have 15 on the payroll.

22          MR. McENERNEY: That's only three board  
23 members.

24          MS. AMOS: Right, there's 15 on the  
25 payroll, but they're --

1           MR. McENERNEY: So, plus the board  
2 member is 16.

3           MS. AMOS: Right.

4           MR. McENERNEY: I have the -- board  
5 members are included in your TO and I've only  
6 got -- what do I have? I've got 13 listed. So  
7 that puts you minus three.

8           MR. JACKSON: He's looking at this.  
9 I'm trying to understand your 16, Frank,  
10 or maybe Hossam, do you have --

11          MR. MOHAMED: Yes, the payroll one is to  
12 present --

13          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Put your name on  
14 the record.

15          MR. MOHAMED: Hossam Mohamed, County  
16 treasurer. The payroll one usually represents the  
17 pay period of December. And this will be -- we  
18 had the seasonals working that time of the year  
19 for election. And during the year, they would not  
20 be actually working unless we have an election,  
21 plus there is the reimbursement for the early  
22 voting grant. Sometimes, they don't send the  
23 money timely, but we have reimbursement from the  
24 state for the early voting for the general  
25 election and for the primary.

1           MR. McENERNEY: Regardless of the  
2 reimbursement, I do have two employees, one at  
3 28,000, one at 30,000, that I couldn't necessarily  
4 identify in this TO. So are those the holdovers  
5 from 2023? Those are the part timers that are no  
6 longer on the 20 --

7           MS. AMOS: No longer with us.

8           MR. McENERNEY: Holdover from '22 and no  
9 longer on --

10          MS. AMOS: Right.

11          MR. McENERNEY: Okay, that explains it.

12          As far as your operating expenses go,  
13 last year, you expended roughly 2.4 on a million  
14 eight and you're budgeted a million eight again  
15 this year. Is there any reason why you wouldn't  
16 spend as much as you spent in 2022? You spent  
17 more.

18          MS. AMOS: So I guess it goes back to  
19 staffing as well. We don't planning on bringing  
20 in as many.

21          MR. McENERNEY: This is in operating  
22 expenses.

23          MS. AMOS: I think we're going to fall  
24 flat year after year, to be quite honest with you.  
25 I don't expect there are any areas we can promise

1 or say confidently that we would be -- that we  
2 would come under budget. I expect that we will  
3 stay within the budget and be flat year after  
4 year.

5 MR. McENERNEY: Thank you.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioners?

7 So a couple things that you said, that  
8 you referenced, new poll workers. And how many  
9 new poll workers are you recruiting?

10 MS. AMOS: When you say -- are you  
11 talking for the office?

12 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: You said you said  
13 you need new poll workers.

14 MS. AMOS: Right. So we're looking --  
15 when I mentioned poll workers, I'm speaking of the  
16 board workers, those are that are out working the  
17 election.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: From the various  
19 communities.

20 MS. AMOS: Correct.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: The older  
22 Americans that tend to be a lot older, a lot  
23 slower, slower to understand the new technology?

24 MS. AMOS: That would be accurate, sir.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: They need help --



1 I'm clear. They need help. So when you reference  
2 recruiting new poll workers, it's essential to  
3 having elections run more smoothly and more  
4 efficiently. So how many are you looking to  
5 recruit? And how are you going to replace those  
6 folks who were there and they're not going  
7 anywhere?

8 MS. AMOS: Right. So I don't know that  
9 we're looking to replace anyone. I think what we  
10 are looking to do, our hope is to engage the  
11 younger audience, the younger voters. So with  
12 Verona high school, for example, last year we were  
13 able to get I think it was six or eight students  
14 that came in. We put them through the training  
15 process of learning all about the poll pads and  
16 the voting machine, but we utilized them as  
17 greeters. So we're not trying to replace anyone,  
18 but we want to introduce them to the environment,  
19 to voting. And then slowly, we would integrate  
20 them into running the elections or working side by  
21 side with a more senior election board worker.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I should have  
23 said more senior.

24 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Yes we're  
25 seasoned.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: So I take it all  
2 back. So which high schools -- you referenced  
3 Verona, what's the other high school? You said  
4 you're working in two high schools?

5           MS. AMOS: Nutley is the other high  
6 school that we are in conversations with  
7 presently. And we are actually working on putting  
8 together the studies for the students, but both of  
9 those high schools are open to us doing either a  
10 class during lunch time or after school. And we  
11 just had a conversation with Essex County College,  
12 they're excited to do something. What, we don't  
13 know yet, but we are looking to work with them.

14          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Any other -- did  
15 you reach out to any other high schools in these  
16 urban areas?

17          MS. AMOS: Yes. I knew that that was  
18 going to be the next question that was going to  
19 come up. So what we decided to do is for the  
20 first half of the year, we wanted to run the pilot  
21 program to see what else we needed to do or how to  
22 enhance the program. And then we'll be rolling it  
23 out to other high schools. As we get interest,  
24 then we'll be able to map out what schools we'll  
25 be going to.

1           Keep in mind, we do have a very small  
2   staff of only five. So it's also, you know,  
3   putting that on the calendar, while running an  
4   election and also while running this outreach  
5   program. But we do plan on reaching into the  
6   urban areas as well. If you have a school that  
7   you would like us to run this pilot program, we're  
8   certainly open to it.

9           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
10   Cooper.

11           COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
12   President, but I think Commissioner Gill had his  
13   hand up first.

14           COMMISSIONER GILL: Thank you. Just two  
15   quick questions. Coming back on the -- to the  
16   clerks of the board, the plan was 134 -- through  
17   you, Mr. President, and now we're budgeting at  
18   120? There's a reduction in the annual salary of  
19   the clerk.

20           MS. AMOS: That is correct.

21           COMMISSIONER GILL: Through you, Mr.  
22   President. Is there a reason that we reduced the  
23   salary of the critical position? I think it's for  
24   the administration.

25           MR. JACKSON: The question --

1           COMMISSIONER GILL: Unless I'm reading  
2 this wrong, the plan was 134, now we're paying the  
3 spot 120. I believe this to be a pretty critical  
4 position, so what's the justification for lowering  
5 the overall salary of this position?

6           MR. JACKSON: Honestly, I can't speak  
7 for Ms. O'Toole and the board, but the reason  
8 was -- the reason was -- if you remember, Ms. Von  
9 Nessi had been here for 40 years or something like  
10 that. So her salary was reflective of that  
11 experience. Then Ms. Amos came in as a new  
12 person, so the board did not give her the same  
13 salary as they gave for somebody who had been here  
14 for 40 years. So there's certainly room for them  
15 to entertain your question, I fully understand  
16 what you're saying, but that's the reason why.

17           COMMISSIONER GILL: Just a follow-up  
18 through you, Mr. President.

19           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Absolutely.

20           COMMISSIONER GILL: I'll make sure -- I  
21 think through our clerk, I think we had also a  
22 proposal from a college student who had a strong  
23 interest in recruitment and how to expand poll  
24 workers.

25           MS. AMOS: Yes.

1           COMMISSIONER GILL: I apologize, it's  
2 not a budget question, Mr. President.

3           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: That's okay, this  
4 is critical.

5           COMMISSIONER GILL: I'm going to say  
6 personal privilege as a former president, I want  
7 to follow the rules there. But there was  
8 definitely some good things I'd love to follow-up  
9 with your office at a later time to talk about  
10 some of those ideas that were suggested.

11          MS. AMOS: We did receive the proposal,  
12 well written. We've already reached out to that  
13 young man. He'll be coming in in the next few  
14 weeks to meet with us. We're updating our  
15 webpage, he may end up being the face on there as  
16 well. So we will absolutely let you know how that  
17 works out. Thank you for sending him.

18          COMMISSIONER GILL: That's great, I  
19 didn't know about that follow-up. So I appreciate  
20 that.

21          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Excellent.  
22 Commissioner Cooper.

23          COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
24 President.

25                 At a minimum, I would suggest can we at

1     least include the county vocational schools  
2     because those kids come from a good cross sector  
3     throughout the county from everywhere, they're not  
4     just based in one town or municipality.

5             My other question is -- and maybe I  
6     missed it, please forgive me, I was reading over  
7     here. You cut your temporary help significantly.  
8     How are you going to make up for that? I know  
9     during election time, it gets crazy, you spent  
10    152,000 last year if I'm reading this correct.  
11    You're only looking at 80,000 and so that's a  
12    reduction of 61,000 is that temporary help, some  
13    of these extra bodies that come in during election  
14    time?

15            MS. AMOS: So yes, the temporary help is  
16    the seasonal. And then we also are able to use  
17    our board worker budget.

18            COMMISSIONER COOPER: So you have  
19    another budget.

20            MS. AMOS: So you'll be seeing maybe  
21    less people in the staff, not -- we won't have as  
22    many bodies. But then we have our board workers,  
23    who work specifically on the election.

24            COMMISSIONER COOPER: Okay.

25            MS. AMOS: Not saying the seasonals

1 don't, they just come in earlier to prepare and  
2 prep. And then we have our board workers who are  
3 working just on the election on election day.

4 COMMISSIONER COOPER: You're going to  
5 get what you need by using the other budget,  
6 you're not necessarily reducing the bodies?

7 MS. AMOS: Exactly, yes.

8 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Any other  
10 questions or comments? Hearing none.

11 MR. JACKSON: Mr. President, if I may?  
12 I just wanted to say how impressed I have been  
13 personally with what Nicole and Peter, with  
14 Tynetta's help, to the transition that they've  
15 made through the post COVID era, transitioning  
16 from somebody that had been there for decades,  
17 what they've done with the office has been  
18 tremendous. And it's been great for the  
19 administration working with them. I just wanted  
20 to say how impressed I am, personally, with  
21 what -- I know I'm speaking for other members of  
22 our team -- with the great job you guys have done.  
23 It's really impressive.

24 MS. AMOS: Thank you.

25 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner

1 Cooper and then Commissioner Sebold.

2 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Jackson. This is not a budget question.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I'm sure.

5 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you for  
6 reminding me. I do want to echo that, that you  
7 and your team, you guys came and hit the ground  
8 running, in the middle -- right on the heels of an  
9 election. You guys have done a fantastic job, a  
10 fantastic job. This is the time to speak up, if  
11 there's something else that's needed, so we can  
12 help you and your team be more successful.

13 MS. AMOS: Thank you, Commissioner.

14 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
15 Sebold.

16 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Well, Robert  
17 Jackson and Tyshammie Cooper said what I was going  
18 to say. You came in and immediately did a  
19 wonderful job for a very, very close election that  
20 you came in right on top of. So thank you so much  
21 for all you've done in making this transition as  
22 easy as possible.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: So in light of  
24 how well you've been doing according to the BA,  
25 Mr. Jackson, and the Commissioners, maybe you



1     should get that increase. Since she's so  
2     wonderful and she's done such a great job, maybe  
3     you should bump that salary up to at least 130.

4             MR. JACKSON: I wouldn't have a problem  
5     recommending that to the board.

6             PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I'm recommending  
7     it now and I got a second. All in favor.

8             (All Commissioners indicate in the  
9     affirmative.)

10            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Let's see if we  
11     can get her bumped up, since she's so magnificent,  
12     she should be rewarded.

13            MR. JACKSON: I just want to put on the  
14     record, again, Mr. President, it's not our call.  
15     They have a board, I'm happy to --

16            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: All I'm saying --

17            MR. JACKSON: I'm happy to relay that  
18     message. I agree with you 100 percent.

19            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Understood.

20            COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Now it has to  
21     happen.

22            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you.

23            MS. AMOS: Thank you. Thank you,  
24     Commissioners, thank you.

25            COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Thank you for

1     your work, the admin and staff. Anything you  
2     need, we're here.

3             MS. AMOS: Thank you.

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1       **COMMISSIONER OF REGISTRATION/SUPERINTENDENT OF**  
2       **ELECTIONS:**

3  
4               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Come up, Ms.  
5 Spango.

6               MS. SPANGO: Good evening, Commissioner  
7 President Wayne Richardson, Commissioner Vice  
8 President Carlos Pomares, and Commissioners. My  
9 name is Patricia Spango, I'm the superintendent of  
10 elections, commissioner of registration for Essex  
11 County.

12               The 2023 budget request for the  
13 superintendent's office is \$2,788,682.00. My  
14 office will work closely with the office of  
15 management and budget to stay on track. Despite  
16 the difficulty in predicting election trends, we  
17 will however make every effort to be prudent with  
18 our budget allocation. Beginning last year, all  
19 of our elections were basically electronic and  
20 very advanced. And this new technology is secure,  
21 efficient and tallies the number of voters that  
22 vote each day. A very special thank you to the  
23 Commissioners and the administration for their  
24 continued support of my office.

25               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: All right.

1 Commissioners, any questions? Any budget  
2 questions? Mr. McEnerney.

3 MR. McENERNEY: So there's -- again, I'm  
4 referring to the first payroll of 2023, which I'm  
5 told pertains to the last payroll of 2022. But  
6 based on that payroll, I'm only counting 20  
7 positions filled in your department as opposed to  
8 22. Has there been an increase in the first  
9 payroll?

10 MS. SPANGO: No. I presently -- I did  
11 have two positions -- you were at that meeting,  
12 Mr. McEnerney -- that were removed from my budget  
13 from 2022. I do now have two openings through  
14 retirement that I am working on filling.

15 MR. McENERNEY: That's what I'm saying,  
16 there's two vacancies.

17 MS. SPANGO: Yes.

18 MR. McENERNEY: But those will be  
19 filled?

20 MS. SPANGO: Yes, they have to be. I  
21 need the people.

22 MR. McENERNEY: Okay. So as far as your  
23 salaries and wages, you're only up a small  
24 percentage over last year. And, again, it's the  
25 22 positions, which every one will be filled. As

1 far as other expenses go, it's the same as last  
2 year, do you see any needs or differences from --

3 MS. SPANGO: No. The only thing that I  
4 do find what's different that my office runs  
5 into -- and we did speak about this at the  
6 emergency budget as well -- with early voting, it  
7 is a lot more overtime than we've normally seen.  
8 Because we have three days for June, we have the  
9 nine, ten days for the general. But thank God  
10 that is reimbursed from the state, but it doesn't  
11 reflect in our budget.

12 MR. McENERNEY: Right.

13 MS. SPANGO: But the County does -- we  
14 do the grant reimbursements, we work with -- who  
15 do you work with?

16 MS. WILLIAMS: Division of elections, we  
17 do the early voting from municipal -- we do for  
18 primary. Early east voting for general -- Linda  
19 Williams -- for primary, for general, and so far  
20 possibly municipal. And that goes back into the  
21 county budget.

22 MR. McENERNEY: There seems to be a  
23 shift from temporary help -- I'm sorry from  
24 overtime to temporary help.

25 MS. SPANGO: Combination of both. And

1 now there's legislation that hasn't passed, but  
2 Trenton is talking about possibly doing early  
3 voting for municipal and extending -- right now,  
4 we have three days for primary early voting,  
5 they're talking of extending it to nine days.

6 MR. McENERNEY: Which would cost more?

7 MS. SPANGO: Of course, I have to have  
8 people in position.

9 MR. McENERNEY: That's not in the budget  
10 at this point?

11 MS. SPANGO: No.

12 MR. McENERNEY: So if that happens,  
13 you'd obviously need additional funding?

14 MS. WILLIAMS: Linda Williams, yes.

15 MS. SPANGO: Yes.

16 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
17 Sebold.

18 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Thank you.

19 Under the circumstances, with the change  
20 in the voting machines and the whole process,  
21 early voting, et cetera, I really think you're  
22 doing a terrific job. And I'm reading about  
23 certain counties, there's one in particular right  
24 now, where they don't have the results, there have  
25 been problems. There have been problems all over

1 the state, but I think we're very fortunate that  
2 you've done such a great job. We haven't had  
3 those problems here in Essex County. There's no  
4 recount that has to be done, nothing. So you're  
5 doing a great job.

6 MS. SPANGO: I just want to take off a  
7 little bit on what we just said about the new  
8 clerk that came. Nickie came in following someone  
9 that was here for 42 years, that we all know, who  
10 did a phenomenal job. And what I tried to do was,  
11 I tried to help as much as I could -- like just  
12 today, I called an emergency election update  
13 meeting, where all three of our offices because  
14 the superintendent, county clerk, and the board of  
15 elections make the elections happen.

16 So what we did was I critiqued with our  
17 electronic poll pad person, picked his brain, tell  
18 us what we can do to make Essex County better. He  
19 did commend us, he said that we did a very good  
20 job. But he did tell us a few things where --  
21 because there's always room for improvement -- and  
22 then we had our own internal meeting with the  
23 three departments and just helping each other and  
24 this is what we need, this is what we're going to  
25 do, and how can we make this better.

1           So I'm very, very aggressive on trying  
2   to do the best job that I can for Essex County.  
3   And incorporating, like I said, with the board of  
4   electrics, they're new, tried to help them as much  
5   as we could. And so far it's worked out.

6           COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: It certainly has,  
7   thank you.

8           MS. SPANGO: Thank you.

9           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: And Commissioner  
10   Cooper with a budget question.

11          COMMISSIONER COOPER: Do you have a  
12   deputy?

13          MS. SPANGO: I do not.

14          COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you.

15          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you for  
16   your question.

17          MS. SPANGO: I'm a one woman show.

18          COMMISSIONER COOPER: You're doing a  
19   good job as a one woman show.

20          COMMISSIONER MERCADO: You anticipated  
21   my --

22          MS. SPANGO: This is my right arm.

23          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: A one woman good  
24   show.

25          COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Is that deputy



1 position going to be --

2 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
3 Mercado.

4 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Is that position  
5 going to be filled?

6 MS. SPANGO: I have no idea, I can't  
7 answer that.

8 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: That's an  
9 administration issue?

10 MR. JACKSON: It's actually filled by  
11 the other chairperson and just waiting.

12 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Okay.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you. So  
14 much, thanks for coming in.

15 MS. SPANGO: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Great job.

17 MS. SPANGO: Thank you for all of your  
18 support always.

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**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:**

MR. JACKSON: Mr. President, Mr. Zarra is here. He would be last, but we're going to --

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Let's do it.

MR. ZARRA: Good evening, everyone.

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Zarra, the floor is yours.

MR. ZARRA: Thank you for the opportunity. We are the county office for Department of Education, by statute each county has to provide and fund an office. Our budget has not really changed in all the years I've been here. We have five county employees and they support six state employees.

Looking over our budget, our stationery our transportation requests --

MR. JACKSON: Tab 14.

MR. ZARRA: -- has not really changed. And the only increase in our budget is due to contractual raises to the county staff. We oversee all the schools in Essex County, 23 districts, 20 charter schools, approximately 117,000 students and approximately 17,000 educators, although I think that's very low. Hard

1 to factor in child study teams, guidance  
2 counselors, classroom aides, but it's close, about  
3 17,000. And basically we represent the state  
4 Department of Education in Essex County. And we  
5 have a great outreach, we're simply not there for  
6 clerical tasks. For example, this week, tomorrow,  
7 I will be on the County Executive's call with all  
8 the mayors in Essex County. And I give them an  
9 update every month on anything of note regarding  
10 the schools.

11 Tuesday, we have a security meeting,  
12 school security meeting in West Essex, convened by  
13 Mayor Spangel from Roseland. Wednesday or  
14 Thursday I believe is the dedication of the  
15 renovated Newark Tech across the street. And  
16 Friday we have our monthly county superintendents  
17 meeting where we meet with all the county  
18 superintendents. And we have a variety of people  
19 come in. In March, for example, Maya Lordo is  
20 scheduled to meet with the group to discuss any  
21 issues or concerns regarding COVID or any other  
22 medical issue that could impact schools and  
23 children.

24 Basically, we approve county budgets, I  
25 approve contracts for superintendents, assistant

1     superintendents and business administrators to  
2     make sure that they comply with code and statute.  
3     We go in and we have three cohorts. We are now in  
4     cohorts one, where we'll be starting to go into  
5     schools and doing a top to bottom evaluation  
6     governance, finance, facilities, instruction and  
7     programs. And just score them and those scores  
8     are sent to the Commissioner of Education who will  
9     review them and either concur with us or change  
10    them, depending on the data that the DOE has.

11           And we field a great many parents calls,  
12    a great many -- we deal a lot with school  
13    administrators. We only really talk to the  
14    superintendents in every school district, but many  
15    times superintendents will ask one of the  
16    principals to contact us on an issue or special  
17    education which is a very complicated area. And  
18    we have a person who's in charge of special  
19    education from the state department of education.  
20    State staff are myself, Mr. Luciano and then we  
21    have two education specialists, one for  
22    traditional schools, one for charter schools, and  
23    then we have our supervisor of child study. And  
24    then we have our county business official who  
25    reviews all the financial areas.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you. Mr.  
2     McEnerney.

3           MR. McENERNEY: Mr. Zarra, you come here  
4     every year and every year I have no questions for  
5     you. I really don't. You have five employees,  
6     you're funded -- the other employees are funded by  
7     the state. Your budget is \$8,000 and other  
8     expenses and there's really no increase in the  
9     personnel you have or the amount that you pay,  
10    other than contractual. So I have no questions.

11          MR. ZARRA: Thank you.

12          MR. McENERNEY: Thank you.

13          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Parlavecchio,  
14    would you like to earn some money tonight?

15          MR. PARLAVECCHIO: My job is not to be  
16    heard.

17          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioners,  
18    any questions, Commissioners? And they don't have  
19    to be budget questions for the education --  
20    Commissioner Cooper.

21          COMMISSIONER COOPER: Keep up the good  
22    work.

23          MR. ZARRA: Thank you. In September, it  
24    will be my 49th year in education. I've been in  
25    this position for ten years since I retired from

1 the school district and this is very rewarding.  
2 The really enjoyable part is dealing with all the  
3 superintendents, they're -- I know I'm getting  
4 older and older and they're getting younger and  
5 younger. So there are, frankly, some lacks in  
6 their experience because they are getting these  
7 jobs very young. And so it's a pleasure to try to  
8 coach them.

9 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
10 Luciano.

11 COMMISSIONER LUCIANO: Thank you, Mr.  
12 President. I know tonight we've been trying to  
13 move this meeting along, so I'll try to keep this  
14 brief. But this to me is very important, one let  
15 me put on record, it's been a pleasure to work  
16 with Joe Zarra. He's a wealth of knowledge like  
17 he just told us about his tenure and everything he  
18 brings to the table.

19 The one thing that he didn't mention is  
20 sometimes the difficult stuff that we deal with in  
21 our office. And that stuff like we see with just  
22 last week, there was a school bus crash out in  
23 West Caldwell. Our office was on-site  
24 immediately, thank God there were no students on  
25 it. But that leads me to bring up something that

1 I know he didn't mention, but I wanted to mention  
2 it here on public record is, you know, our office,  
3 you know, along with some of the superintendents  
4 really need to meet along with some of the other  
5 governing body officials, you know, whether that's  
6 municipal, county and state.

7 We need to do a better job of getting  
8 out there and advertising careers for bus drivers.  
9 We have bussing problems all up and down the  
10 county and it's all over the state. And what's  
11 happening is our school districts -- and I don't  
12 want to single out any of them -- are hiring third  
13 party bussing companies who are then going out and  
14 not screening who they have driving and what is  
15 going on. And to me and I know to Joe because we  
16 were really having a discussion about this last  
17 Friday, at what point, you know, is it going to  
18 take the lives of students? I mean bus drivers to  
19 me are equally as important to the school  
20 administrator, to the school teacher, where you  
21 send your kid to school because they're actually  
22 driving the kids there and back. And we want them  
23 to make it there and back. And if one child  
24 doesn't, that's one child too many.

25 So where we go from here and what we do,

1     you know, Joe and I have put our heads together.  
2     We really need to get out there and somehow fight  
3     to fix this broken system. And I wanted to put  
4     that on record. Because those are some of the  
5     things that we deal with.

6             Just a few years ago, we were overseeing  
7     Bergen County, our Essex office, when there was an  
8     absolute tragic event with a bus from Paramus that  
9     was hit on the highway going on a school field  
10    trip, where students and teachers were severely  
11    maimed and killed. So, you know, not to really  
12    bring up something that's very sensitive, but if  
13    not here and not now, then I ask when? When do we  
14    start to talk about this and how do we do better?

15            So, Joe Zarra, thanks for all you're  
16    doing, all your knowledge. I know you don't have  
17    any silver bullet to fix the situation, but I'm  
18    sure this Board along with our County Exec would  
19    love to hear your ideas and the rest of our team  
20    to see how we can fix this system.

21            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: If I may, just to  
22    piggyback on what you're saying. There are a lot  
23    of -- and not just school districts -- that have  
24    CDL driver problems. Part of the biggest problem  
25    is you don't want to pay. You want to pay



1     somebody \$10, \$12 an hour, but you want to get a  
2     \$50 an hour employee, that's not how it works.  
3     Right? So if you're willing to pay people what  
4     their worth, you said a mouthful that they're just  
5     as important as the school administrators.

6             So why don't you advocate for them  
7     getting paid as such? So that's where you got  
8     to -- that's where the disconnect is. You got to  
9     pay people what their worth is and you'll get a  
10    better crop of drivers. That's my two cents, pay  
11    'em. Thank you, sir.

12            One other thing. So are you grooming  
13    Lenny? I heard you say you're getting older, are  
14    you grooming Lenny?

15            MR. ZARRA: He keeps me young.

16            PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Thank you so  
17    much.

18            MR. ZARRA: Have a good evening.

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1       **REGISTER OF DEEDS AND MORTGAGES:**

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3               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Register, the  
4 floor is yours.

5               MR. RIVERA: Commissioner President  
6 Richardson, Vice President Pomares, and the entire  
7 Board of Commissioners, along with other  
8 distinguished guests, good evening and happy new  
9 year. I want to thank you along with the County  
10 Exec, Joe D, and his administration on the great  
11 work you all continue to do on behalf of the  
12 residents of Essex County. Joining me tonight is  
13 Kimberly Attrax (phonetic), who is my accountant;  
14 Fernanda Camfelo (phonetic), along with June Jones  
15 Rayne (phonetic).

16               I'm happy to announce that we met and  
17 slightly exceeded our revenue goal of 15.3 million  
18 for 2022 with a total of 17.1 million. It was  
19 difficult as we saw a steady decline since July of  
20 2022, increases in interest rates were not our  
21 friend and made our revenue goal that much more  
22 challenging.

23               For the record, 2023 seems to look even  
24 more difficult. We do not foresee any major drops  
25 in interest rates in the future. If January is

1 any indication to what's to come in the future,  
2 we'll have challenges ahead of us to achieve the  
3 16 million in 2023, but we're ready for the  
4 challenge.

5 I must commend our staff, as they work  
6 diligently to assure that we're all caught up and  
7 all documents are filed officially. They have  
8 been resilient in their efforts to meet our  
9 revenue goal and they've done a wonderful job.  
10 Though our revenue is market driven, they're  
11 ability to process work efficiently to have a  
12 clearer picture of our revenue almost on a daily  
13 basis.

14 For example, other counties, such as  
15 Bergen, they're currently working on January 10th,  
16 which is about three weeks behind. And counties  
17 like Hudson are still working on December. We're  
18 currently verifying Friday's work. So what you  
19 see is what you get. We're very current.

20 Currently working on planning to  
21 overhaul and upgrade our servers and computer  
22 software, that's going to be a major project we  
23 take on this year. It's a large undertaking, but  
24 I think being technologically up to speed is  
25 extremely important for us now and in the future.

1 And we're looking for more -- we're looking for a  
2 more cost effective way of digitizing our vault  
3 over the next three to five years as well. So our  
4 goal is to have 60 years of information online  
5 which will allow -- that's pretty much what most  
6 searches need to be compliant. And that's all I  
7 have, Mr. President.

8 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: So you exceeded  
9 your revenue, you were looking for 15 million, you  
10 ended up with 17 million, did I hear that correct?

11 MR. RIVERA: 15.3, we wound up a little  
12 over 17 total.

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: And that revenue  
14 takes care of all the salaries in your office and  
15 covers your salary?

16 MR. RIVERA: The revenue we bring in?

17 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Yeah.

18 MR. RIVERA: That covers it.

19 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: What is the  
20 budget -- what is your salary?

21 MR. RIVERA: Our salaries budget is 1.9.

22 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Oh, man, so  
23 you're doing very well.

24 MR. McENERNEY: Not all of that goes to  
25 the County.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Where does it all  
2 go? You brought that revenue where, does it go --

3           MR. RIVERA: 17 million went to the  
4 County, what you guys do with it --

5           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Okay, all right.

6           MR. RIVERA: All I do is collect the  
7 checks.

8           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: And then collect  
9 the checks.

10          MR. RIVERA: And we send it up.

11          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: All right. Mr.  
12 McEnerney.

13          MR. McENERNEY: Why am I seeing 2.1 for  
14 county --

15          MR. JACKSON: That includes other  
16 expense.

17          MR. McENERNEY: And then I'm looking at  
18 your staffing, it's -- I have the first payroll  
19 that's what I had available to me. And with 29  
20 people, 29 employees in your department, who seem  
21 to -- two were part time. So that brings you down  
22 to 27 at this point in time?

23          MR. RIVERA: Correct.

24          MR. McENERNEY: Is that about right?  
25 You have one vacancy at this time?

1 MR. RIVERA: Deputy, yep.

2 MR. McENERNEY: So that's the only  
3 vacancy that will be filled?

4 MR. RIVERA: That's correct.

5 MR. McENERNEY: There was no overtime in  
6 the first payroll?

7 MR. RIVERA: No.

8 MR. McENERNEY: When do you typically  
9 incur overtime?

10 MR. RIVERA: It's rare, it's rare.

11 MR. McENERNEY: Okay. And then as far  
12 as your other expenses go, they're the same as  
13 last year?

14 MR. RIVERA: Right.

15 MR. McENERNEY: You don't anticipate any  
16 changes in those?

17 MR. RIVERA: No.

18 MR. McENERNEY: So the salaries and  
19 expenses are the same as they were last year, I  
20 think you were up \$80,000, which is mostly  
21 contractual, I assume?

22 MR. RIVERA: Right.

23 MR. McENERNEY: And your other expenses  
24 are the same. Other than that, I don't have any  
25 questions.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
2       Sebold has a budget question.

3           COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Well... it's not  
4       budget question, well, sort of, sort of. When  
5       Juan Rivera took over, the office was in a  
6       terrible, terrible state. And I really want to  
7       commend him for all the work that he has done.  
8       And talking about budget and the revenue he's  
9       brought in, it's just truly unbelievable, you've  
10      done a fantastic job, compared to what it was  
11      before you got there -- truthfully, we can't even  
12      compare it, it was so bad. So you've really done  
13      a phenomenal job.

14          MR. RIVERA: Thank you. That's a  
15      testament to the staff that we have, they've done  
16      a great job.

17          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
18      Mercado.

19          COMMISSIONER MERCADO: I just want to  
20      echo my colleagues statement. I know Commissioner  
21      Sebold talks about how bad it was and they may not  
22      have been privy to that information, but we know  
23      the state that it was in and we know where it's at  
24      now, and you've done a 360, that's a testament to  
25      your leadership and your team and your stats. So

1 I want to thank you and everyone in your office  
2 for the work that you've done. Throughout the  
3 pandemic, their office remained open and they  
4 worked and they still came in. And so I want to  
5 commend all your folks for the work they've done.

6 MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner Vice  
8 President.

9 VICE PRESIDENT POMARES: Thank you. I'm  
10 not surprised about the budget because after all,  
11 he's a St. Peter's Prep guy, strong record, the  
12 bar is set high and he's come through as expected.  
13 But also your leadership during the pandemic and  
14 being out there at the events, you represent --  
15 you personally represented well. You were out  
16 there and that should be noted because those are  
17 the things that don't fall in the budget here.  
18 You represented your department excellent.

19 MR. RIVERA: Thank you, Commissioner.

20 VICE PRESIDENT POMARES: Thank you.

21 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
22 Johnson.

23 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, for all  
24 those that don't know, you know, Mr. Rivera used  
25 onto sit in one of our seats up here with us, so



1 we knew of his capabilities, it was just a matter  
2 of him getting in a position to make it flourish  
3 like he has. So good luck, brother, you're doing  
4 well.

5 MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

6 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Anybody else?  
7 Commissioner Cooper.

8 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Thank you, Mr.  
9 President.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: With a budget  
11 question.

12 COMMISSIONER COOPER: I agree it's not a  
13 budget question or comment, but, Mr. Rivera, your  
14 office has been fantastic. You guys kept  
15 responding to people, helping those transactions  
16 moving along. And I appreciate you personally  
17 responding to some of my constituents that  
18 experienced problems. You guys had a drop box,  
19 you assigned staff, and you made it seamless. And  
20 I really appreciate that. Thank you very much for  
21 that.

22 MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

23 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
24 Luciano.

25 COMMISSIONER LUCIANO: Last person for

1 the record, I was here for several of those  
2 meetings with Mr. Rivera, better known as J.R.,  
3 he's a great right here. We wish you well down  
4 there, we know you're doing well. I miss you up  
5 here, but we have a good replacement from your old  
6 district, who's also a stellar guy, we'll put on  
7 record. But keep doing what you're doing and  
8 thanks for coming before us.

9 MR. RIVERA: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I too just want  
11 to say how wonderful you are, great job you've  
12 been doing. I don't know how we would function  
13 without you.

14 MR. RIVERA: Let's not find out.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Touche, touche.  
16 But in all seriousness, I've come to you with  
17 issues and they were resolved forthwith. So thank  
18 you for all you're doing for this County and for  
19 the constituents. Thank you. You can go now.

20 MR. RIVERA: Great.

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1       **SURROGATE:**

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3               PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. Surrogate,  
4 being that you stayed, please introduce yourself.

5               MR. KENNEY: Good evening, everyone. My  
6 name is Alturrick Kenney, I am currently Essex  
7 County Surrogate here in the great State of New  
8 Jersey. And so I just wanted to give you an  
9 overview of our budget for 2023, as well as talk  
10 about some of the success that we witnessed in the  
11 last year, as well as the previous four.

12               In 2018, we were able to -- prior to our  
13 administration, we were doing 8,700 cases and  
14 brought in a revenue of 748,000. Over the last  
15 four years, we were able to increase the revenue.  
16 In 2019, 991,000; 2020, 910,000; 2021, 1,010,000,  
17 and last year, 947,000. We also, because of  
18 COVID, and obviously also because of our outreach  
19 efforts, getting information out to the  
20 communities where they are and who they are, we  
21 also witnessed a number of cases that increased  
22 from 87 prior to our administration to 10,012  
23 cases.

24               And I want to do a few things. I want  
25 to recognize, since it's public record, Ms. Joanne

1     who retired from our office, she's been with us  
2     for over 27 years. And she retired with  
3     distinction, she's been a class act in court and a  
4     class act in the work she does for the County of  
5     Essex.

6             To our office, as of 2023, we have 14  
7     employees, one vacancy. We also have,  
8     unfortunately, we had a separation with another  
9     employee. We were able to partner with the City  
10    of Newark to fill a staffing need because of a  
11    long separation process by bringing on two  
12    temporary employees. We were fortunate enough  
13    with the partnership and the help of the  
14    administration to bring that person from temporary  
15    status to permanent. And so because of the  
16    caseload and because of the amount we were able to  
17    provide, I want to thank the administration for  
18    forward thinking, allowing us to have the capacity  
19    to bring somebody on, because we saw the number of  
20    case loads go up. And our outreach efforts  
21    increased, we were able to get that person into a  
22    position and also reduce the burden on our current  
23    staffing. So I want to thank the administration  
24    for being a partner.

25            I also want to thank the administration

1 for helping us with a project that's going to take  
2 about two years, which is our microfiche scanning  
3 process, I know Carlos is a big historian, you  
4 know, in our room. To digitize our scanning --  
5 digitize our documents, we're talking about  
6 documents that date back to the 1700s, which  
7 allows us to preserve the documentation in cases  
8 of a flood or fire, but also make it accessible to  
9 people who need to have that information online.

10 And so I want to thank the County  
11 Commissioners for giving us that approval and I  
12 want to thank the administration, again, for  
13 allowing us not only to fund this project, but  
14 also identify some of the issues and make sure  
15 that project comes to fruition. And I wanted to  
16 also, we were able to be fortunate enough,  
17 because of the outreach efforts, we were able to  
18 do webinars, going to in person presentations.

19 But also most importantly, one of the  
20 first times in our County, in the service corps,  
21 we were able to get our information in  
22 publications, nationally recognized publications,  
23 whether it's Essex Magazine, Abreo, Lividity, to  
24 talk to audiences and to members who rarely have a  
25 conversation about estate planning. And that

1 estate planning conversation also allows us to  
2 bring people in to start thinking about probating  
3 their situation as well as talk about adoptions as  
4 well.

5 So with that being said, thank you,  
6 Commissioners, and I open myself for questions.

7 COMMISSIONER MERCADO: I have a comment.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: This is not a  
9 budget question.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
11 Johnson.

12 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Al, I remember  
13 you when you first came in. And I sat back and  
14 I've watched you grow and I've been watching the  
15 things that you've been doing down there. And  
16 especially when you start bringing the Surrogate's  
17 office to the community.

18 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Um-hum.

19 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Because that's so  
20 vital and so important. A lot of people fear  
21 coming here to the County, they see this --  
22 everybody running around in suits with briefcases,  
23 and it gets intimidating. But when you kind of  
24 bring some things to the community to where  
25 they're at, you get more reception. And I'm glad

1     that you're doing that and I knew you would be  
2     doing a good job, I wasn't worried about you.

3             MR. KENNEY: Thank you, Commissioner  
4     Johnson, I appreciate your mentorship. And I  
5     appreciate your support. Thank you.

6             PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
7     Mercado.

8             COMMISSIONER MERCADO: Yes. I just want  
9     to commend you and your office, the public  
10    outreach, the public information that has come out  
11    of your office over the last year is to be  
12    commended. I've seen, you know, whether it's  
13    advertisement on TV, social media, and it's really  
14    brought the Surrogate's office and giving people a  
15    better understanding of that office and the  
16    importance of that office. And again to your  
17    team, you know, your outreach team, continue to do  
18    that community-- especially communities in my  
19    district, you know, bilingual communities that  
20    don't understand the process and the importance of  
21    getting that information that you guys put out  
22    there. So definitely want to commend you and work  
23    with you to continue to do that, especially in our  
24    district.

25            MR. KENNEY: Thank you. Could I? Mr.

1     President, if it's possible, I also want to speak  
2     to the Commission as well. I know death is a  
3     difficult conversation to have, but we want to  
4     make sure that that conversation is ongoing  
5     because we have to be comfortable with whatever  
6     happens in our lives, how it impacts us. So if  
7     there are community groups and organizations that  
8     you would like to have that conversation with, we  
9     want to open ourselves up, continue to open  
10    ourselves up to make sure we have the difficult  
11    conversations wherever people are and however they  
12    need the information. So I just wanted to open it  
13    up.

14                 So, please, if you have anything, let us  
15    know, we would like to go out and continue to do  
16    this work.

17                 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Mr. McEnerney.

18                 MR. MCENERNEY: As far as salaries and  
19    wages go, the only question I have is I did have,  
20    as of the first payroll, 16 employees, two look  
21    like they're part time.

22                 MR. KENNEY: Part time, yes, sir.

23                 MR. MCENERNEY: So that leaves you with  
24    14 employees. Do you have a vacancy?

25                 MR. KENNEY: We do have a vacancy, yes,



1     sir.

2                 MR. McENERNEY:  So inasmuch as your  
3     salaries are up a little more than 2 percent,  
4     which is probably contractual?

5                 MR. KENNEY:  It is, yes.

6                 MR. McENERNEY:  And your other expense  
7     are down by \$10,000, why is that?

8                 MR. KENNEY:  Yes, it is.  We did a few  
9     things.  We had a cleaning crew that we eliminated  
10    and there was some expenses in terms of material  
11    costs and other things that we had stored up over  
12    the years that we didn't spend from the previous  
13    budgetary year.  Because of COVID, we were  
14    responsible for remaining in-house.  So we had to  
15    save on last year for material costs.  But this  
16    year, we're not buying things that we don't need.

17                MR. McENERNEY:  So your salaries and  
18    wages are the same and your operating costs are  
19    down by \$10,000?

20                MR. KENNEY:  Yes, sir.

21                MR. McENERNEY:  Other than that, I don't  
22    have any questions.

23                PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  Commissioner  
24    Sebold, then Commissioner Cooper.

25                COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:  One thing that

1       wasn't mentioned was how many people you reach  
2       because of the bike -- I don't know what you call  
3       it, your bike riding club that you're in?

4               MR. KENNEY:   Yes.

5               COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:  He goes all over,  
6       he travels all over the state, even out of state.  
7       So you don't even know how many people he reaches  
8       doing that all the time.  He does a great, great  
9       job doing all that cycling.

10              MR. KENNEY:  Thank you.  And I have the  
11      perfect biking body, so if you --

12              COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:  Keep yourself in  
13      shape for your job.

14              MR. KENNEY:  I try.

15              COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:  I can't believe  
16      how far you go and how many miles.

17              PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  And Commissioner  
18      Sebold --

19              COMMISSIONER GILL:  I think we're way  
20      off budget at this point.

21              COMMISSIONER SEBOLD:  It was discussed  
22      how many people he reaches out and meets.  So this  
23      shows you how many people he reaches out and  
24      meets.

25              PRESIDENT RICHARDSON:  Only part I was

1 going to comment on was you actually bit into the  
2 fact that he has a perfect cycling body. Have you  
3 seen that guy?

4 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Okay, President.

5 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: But good job  
6 though. Mr. McEnerney? Anybody? You had a  
7 question.

8 COMMISSIONER COOPER: I did, I did. But  
9 how could I ask the question after that?

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER COOPER: Oh, my goodness.

12 Mr. Kenney, please, please, keep up the  
13 good work. You do fantastic program outreach and  
14 my seniors have asked to get you to come back and  
15 follow life cards and talk about the wills. So I  
16 want to reach out for you, I hope you included  
17 community outreach and programming in your budget.

18 MR. KENNEY: Yes. So to speak to that,  
19 we actually -- the first year, we wanted to make  
20 sure that community outreach was a big part of our  
21 administration. So we put that in the budget for  
22 the past two or three years, we have that support  
23 by the County Commissioners and as well as  
24 supported by the administration. So, again, thank  
25 you for forward thinking.

1           PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: You do do a good  
2 job in the community outreach. When I first heard  
3 you were doing that and you were going to all  
4 these different places, I said, wow, this  
5 innovative, this is an important piece. I just  
6 want to see you riding a bike to some of them.

7           MR. KENNEY: I can do it.

8           COMMISSIONER COOPER: Please don't  
9 encourage him.

10          MR. KENNEY: Commissioner, you know I  
11 will do that, if necessary.

12          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: I've seen you  
13 ride, I've seen it.

14          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Does the bike  
15 riding club have a name?

16          MR. KENNEY: It's called Harvey Do  
17 Cycling. And we also do a scholarship bike ride.

18          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I've done a lot of  
19 bike riding.

20          PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Not lately. But  
21 they have those electric bikes.

22          MR. KENNEY: We do. Councilwoman  
23 October Hudley from Irvington.

24          COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: She's always on.  
25 She has an electric bike?

1 MR. KENNEY: She does.

2 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: I didn't know  
3 that.

4 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Commissioner  
5 Johnson.

6 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: For the record,  
7 they ride from here to Washington, D.C., once a  
8 year raising money for the HBCUs.

9 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: That's why I said  
10 they go out of state.

11 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Yeah.

12 MR. KENNEY: If I'm allowed to?

13 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Absolutely.

14 MR. KENNEY: So, because of again  
15 support from people in this room, we went from  
16 raising \$6,500 the first year to \$88,000 last year  
17 and we were able to fund students who were from  
18 this community specifically, City of Newark, but  
19 we also had people from outside the Newark area  
20 and that's not including part of Ringwood's Go  
21 Fund Me who also supported us by raising money for  
22 books, scholarships as well. And so they put  
23 \$20,000 in and we were able to raise a significant  
24 amount of money just for young people to HBCUs and  
25 that money went directly to that. So that was

1 by --

2 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes.

3 MR. KENNEY: -- who was the visionary of  
4 that, so we're just supporting that vision. And  
5 thank you to everybody for supporting what we're  
6 doing.

7 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Absolutely.

8 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: See, I'm glad I  
9 brought it up.

10 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: So now -- so,  
11 Commissioner Sebold, so am I. So now, next year,  
12 when they ride, you can make sure you make a  
13 significant donation.

14 COMMISSIONER SEBOLD: Okay.

15 PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Have a good  
16 evening.

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**ADJOURNMENT :**

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: And a motion to adjourn?

COMMISSIONER COOPER: Motion.

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Second?

All in favor.

(All Commissioners indicate in the affirmative.)

PRESIDENT RICHARDSON: Ayes have it.

(Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony and proceedings as taken stenographically by me at the time, place, and on the date hereinbefore set forth.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Susan Bischoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

SUSAN BISCHOFF, CCR, RPR  
LICENSE NO. 30XI00233700