NASSAU COUNTY

BUS TRANSIT COMMITTEE

MEETING

Theodore Roosevelt Executive
and Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York 11501

March 29, 2018
5:05 P.M.

BEFORE: SHELDON SHRENKEL, CHAIRMAN

PRESENT:

PETER DISILVIO, ESQ.
JOEL BERSE
JEAN DUROSEAU
LIVIO TONY ROSARIO
DAWN FALCO, ESQ.
MICHAEL SETZER, NICE CEO

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2   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Good afternoon,

3   and I'd like to call our meeting to

4   order. I want to thank everyone for

5   coming and welcome to the Nassau County

6   Bus Transit Committee. I'd like to

7   introduce our members first, which of

8   course, will act as a roll call. To my

9   left we have Miss Dawn Falco.

10   MS. FALCO: Good afternoon.

11   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Jean

12   Duroseau.

13   MR. DUROSEAU: Good afternoon.

14   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: To my far right,

15   Mr. Tony Rosario.

16   MR. ROSARIO: Good afternoon.

17   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: And Mr. Joel

18   Berse.

19   MR. BERSE: Berse.

20   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: And I'd like to

21   welcome our new counsel to the board, Mr.

22   Peter DiSilvio.

23   MR. DISILVIO: Good to be here.

24   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you,

25   Peter.

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2   With a show of hands, I'd like

3   everyone to acknowledge receipt of the

4   transcript of our meeting held on

5   September 28, 2017, that everyone has

6   received a copy of that.

7   (All raise hands.)

8   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Please reflect

9   in the record that everyone has a

10   received a copy of the minutes.

11   Today's agenda, we're going to hear

12   a presentation by the CEO of NICE

13   Transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer.

14   After Mr. Setzer's presentation, we

15   welcome public comments. Our procedure

16   with public comments, like most public

17   meetings are, please frame and design

18   what you'd like to say and, of course, we

19   allow three minutes for your comments.

20   Our anticipated agenda which follows --

21   our anticipated -- following the public

22   comments, we anticipate reviewing a

23   resolution, okay, for possible approval

24   of the 2018 Annual Plan and Budget of

25   NICE Transportation. And that's what we

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2   expect our agenda to be today. So I want

3   to move this right along. I would like

4   to welcome the CEO of NICE

5   Transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer.

6   Thank you.

7   MR. SETZER: Good afternoon, Mr.

8   Chairman, committee members, thank you.

9   I have a few slides here to help us move

10   along. The primary, as the Chairman

11   said, the primary action for today, the

12   only action really is we will request

13   your approval of the 2018 Annual Plan and

14   Budget. We also have a couple of

15   informational items that we'll cover

16   after that, that I hope you will find

17   interesting. So with that I will jump

18   right into the annual plan budget

19   presentation. I need to talk a little

20   bit about process here. You have, at

21   your place, a copy of the 2018 Annual

22   Plan and Budget. Ordinarily in previous

23   years, we would have had a meeting in

24   February and a discussion of that and

25   then you would have been asked to approve

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2   it at this meeting, as you probably

3   recall, the timetable that's specified in

4   the contract and the public law, that

5   adopts, requires a submission, a

6   recommendation from us by February 15 and

7   action from the committee by the end of

8   March. So at the time, when February 15

9   rolled around, I think there was no one

10   to convene a meeting of the committee, so

11   we submitted this budget recommendation

12   directly to the county executive and I

13   think this may be the first time you're

14   seeing it. Sorry about that. But I

15   think as we go through the presentation,

16   you'll agree that there's -- that it's a

17   relatively, more straightforward and

18   simple decision this year than several of

19   the last few years. Nothing like last

20   year when we were forced to recommend

21   very significant service cuts, so with

22   that, the slides I'm going to use are not

23   necessarily in the presentation you have

24   in front of you, but they're consistent

25   with it, so with your permission I'll

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2   move ahead here. We will start out with

3   the available funding and you recall that

4   the way the system works here is that the

5   first available -- funding available to

6   the county is determined and then we are

7   to make a budget recommendation that's

8   consistent with that available funding.

9   So let me just touch on a few important

10   aspects of the available funding here.

11   Line number 1, New York State

12   operating assistance, and as you see from

13   the graph, is more than half of the

14   budget and that is the big unknown that

15   we always wrestle with at this time of

16   year. That will be decided as part of

17   the state legislature's budget

18   negotiations with the executive branch

19   which are going on right this minute

20   probably, and are expected to conclude

21   and must conclude, I think, under the

22   state constitution before the end of

23   March. So there are about 48 hours to

24   go. I'm hopeful that we will hear

25   something even sooner than that, perhaps

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2   by the end of the day tomorrow. What we

3   used as a number here is fairly

4   conservative. This is the one percent

5   increase in STOA that appeared in the

6   governor's recommendation in January.

7   We're aware that many members of the

8   legislature wish to -- the state

9   legislature wish to see that number

10   increase, so my expectation is that this

11   is the floor, that any change from that

12   68 million 6 number will be an upward

13   direction. It doesn't have to be,

14   there's nothing in the law that says it

15   must increase, but I think the dynamics

16   in Albany right now say that it will

17   either -- it will be no lower than this

18   and very possibly more than this. If it

19   were to be lower, then we would be back

20   in a very difficult spot, but I think

21   that's unlikely, so I just want you to be

22   aware, it's not a final number yet, but

23   it's a pretty conservative number, so I

24   think you can count on at least this much

25   and I'd be very surprised if we had to

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2   ask you to come back to a special meeting

3   before the regularly scheduled one in

4   June.

5   Second line is the required county

6   match. That's the same every year. It's

7   required by law. There's really no play

8   in that number. That's never been in

9   dispute.

10   The third line, seven-million-seven,

11   that's the discretionary contribution

12   from Nassau County, that's the number

13   that appeared in the budget approved by

14   the legislature last fall, and so I think

15   that also is a pretty reliable number.

16   You have probably also heard from the

17   county executive in the administration,

18   that they're determined that there be no

19   more transit service cuts, so I think

20   that's a number that you can also rely

21   on. That is the budget for now. And

22   while there's still one more step to go,

23   it's very unlikely that would go down.

24   Three, four -- four, five and six

25   are all federal contributions. Those are

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2   the same every year, there's nothing,

3   those are quite secure. There's nothing

4   really there to be concerned about.

5   Number seven does need a little bit

6   of comment though. Passenger revenue has

7   gone down by a couple of million dollars

8   from last year. That's for two reasons.

9   One is that if you remember, we cut

10   service very -- fairly deeply, eight

11   percent actually in April of 2017, so

12   last year we had a higher level of

13   service for the first quarter of the

14   year. This year we have the lower or

15   assuming all of this is built on the

16   current level of service. So we have a

17   reduction in service that affected

18   three-fourths of last year, but all of

19   this year. And secondly, there is a

20   general loss of bus ridership in

21   virtually every urbanized area in the

22   U.S. right now. I think out of the -- I

23   saw the other day, out of the top 41

24   largest cities only two saw an increase

25   in bus ridership, the rest saw a decrease

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2   and that includes New York City Transit,

3   it includes all the cities in the

4   northeast. The two places that had an

5   increase were out west. This is, we

6   believe, the effect of Uber and Lyft and

7   TLC companies like that. Plus probably

8   cheap gas, plus fairly high level of

9   employment and an encouragement,

10   optimistic level that may have caused

11   some people to buy a car or join a

12   carpool or things like that, in any case,

13   there is this slow decline in bus

14   ridership and the two things together,

15   the service cut last year and the overall

16   decline in ridership caused us to reduce

17   fare box revenue to this number of 43

18   million 1. The last line is essentially

19   advertising revenue. So with that

20   revenue picture we are able to maintain

21   all of the service that's operating today

22   that operated through the last

23   three-quarters of last year. All the

24   fixed route service and also all of the

25   Paratransit service, so that's why this

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2   isn't the public hearing about service

3   reductions. We also did not propose any

4   change in fares and so no public hearing

5   is required prior to acting on this

6   budget.

7   I'd like to see that map begin to

8   increase and perhaps it will in the

9   future, but I think after the last couple

10   of years it's a relief that it's not --

11   that we are not having to talk about

12   service reductions at all. So we'll get

13   into the detail on the expenses in just a

14   moment, but from those expenses you can

15   derive these rates. Each month the

16   monthly fixed fee will go up to 3 million

17   3, that's, again that's from the contract

18   that defines which costs are to be

19   included in the monthly rate. They're

20   basically the nonvariable costs that

21   don't vary with the amount of service we

22   operate. In the fixed route variable

23   rate are the things that vary by mile of

24   hour service, so driver's wages, fuel,

25   tires, maintenance, those kind of

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2   expenses are all incorporated in the

3   variable rate, and if you're wondering

4   why that goes up by $4.00, I will show

5   you that in detail in just a moment, if

6   you bear with me. Paratransit rate is

7   barely affected at all, goes from 49.18

8   to 49.91, that's just a little bit of

9   inflation particularly in labor costs due

10   to the labor contracts that we've

11   negotiated since the last time we talked.

12   Service hours, in the other major factor

13   in here, you see Paratransit service

14   hours go up a little bit, and that's just

15   a reflection of demand. I'm sure you

16   remember that under the Americans with

17   Disabilities Act, the county and transit,

18   as its partner, are obligated to serve

19   all eligible trip requests and so there's

20   a little bit of increase going on in the

21   request for Paratransit service, so you

22   see a small increase there.

23   In fixed route you see a little bit

24   of a decrease from last year and that's

25   merely the difference between this year

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2   with twelve months at the lower level and

3   last year with nine months at the lower

4   level, and the first three months of last

5   year, at the slightly higher level.

6   That's not a service reduction, that's

7   just an annualization of the current

8   level of service. So again, as in every

9   year, you observe that in our business

10   about two-thirds of the costs are

11   personnel costs there, wages, salaries

12   and fringe benefits. That relationship

13   is pretty standard in our industry and

14   pretty standard from year to year, 36

15   percent are all other costs, fuel, tires

16   and everything else. The, as I

17   mentioned, we have two separate labor

18   contracts, one with Paratransit employees

19   and one with fixed route employees. We

20   had new labor contracts that were

21   negotiated since last year, late in the

22   year essentially of 2017, we reached an

23   agreement, so those slightly higher wage

24   rates are reflected here and slightly

25   higher fringe benefit costs are reflected

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2   in the following table where we will get

3   into a little more detail on expenses.

4   So let's do a year to year comparison, if

5   you would. I think we will go down and

6   just touch on those that need a little

7   bit of comment. You see operator wages

8   is fairly flat, what you're seeing there

9   is a slightly lower level of service

10   because of that three months of the

11   higher level last year. Offset by wage

12   increases from the new labor contracts.

13   Maintenance wages, you actually see a

14   little bit of a reduction, that's a,

15   essentially, slightly lower head count

16   and that lower head count comes from our

17   ability to consolidate all the fixed

18   route operations into one garage. You

19   may recall that part of the service cut,

20   part of the savings that came from the

21   service cut last year, we were able to

22   close the second garage, the Rockville

23   Centre garage and so doing that reduced

24   the need for maintenance supervisory

25   forces and parts room personnel and

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2   people like that so the actual

3   maintenance wages, even with the higher

4   wages in the labor contract, go down.

5   It's all head count. That's the main

6   difference. Other wages stay virtually

7   the same, fringe benefits stay virtually

8   the same. Again, slightly reduced head

9   count offset slightly higher costs

10   particularly for health care. Services

11   very small amount, no change. Fuel and

12   lubricants is the one that needs some

13   attention here. I need to explain. You

14   see an increase of well over a million

15   dollars there. That is because of a

16   change in the tax laws. It is not an

17   increase in the cost of fuel primarily,

18   and it's not -- and we're not burning

19   more fuel. When we budgeted the 5

20   million 3 last year, that was a net of

21   total fuel costs minus a tax credit that

22   was the same for people who used

23   alternative fuels. There was a credit in

24   the federal tax law to encourage the use

25   of alternative fuels like compressed

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2   natural gas as we do. In the tax reform

3   bill that Congress passed a few months

4   ago, that and many, many other special

5   tax provisions were eliminated and so we

6   no longer have that tax credit, that was

7   -- that more than covers the difference

8   here, that was worth over $2,000,000, so

9   that's why you see the cost, the budget

10   in the amount for fuel going up, it's not

11   an increase in cost, it's a decrease in

12   credit. Materials and supplies fairly

13   similar. Marketing, legal and other

14   fees, that's mostly legal fees. It goes

15   up a little bit, that's a forecast of we

16   expect some fairly expensive arbitrations

17   during this year. Utilities, not much

18   change there. Casualty and liability is

19   the other one that's -- where there's a

20   significant change and it's a big number.

21   This is a little bit complicated, so bear

22   with me. Every year we forecast the

23   number of claims we're going to have and

24   how much they're going to cost. Every

25   year up until now we've been wrong in an

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2   unfavorable way. Actual claims costs

3   have come in higher than we budgeted. It

4   comes out of our bottom line, by the way,

5   but we've learned from that experience

6   that we need to be more realistic about

7   what claims will cost in the year. The

8   actual number of accidents, this is not a

9   reflection on more accidents, in fact our

10   accident count has generally been going

11   down year over year. We've had some good

12   success in the safety area, but the cost

13   of claims has been so much more than we

14   estimated and has been going up year over

15   year. The 11 million that we're

16   forecasting for this year is actually

17   lower than our actual in several

18   preceding years, so I don't like seeing

19   that, I know you don't like seeing that

20   either, but that 11 million is the most

21   accurate estimate that we could come up

22   with for the cost of casualty and

23   liability claims. That includes Workers'

24   Comp claims, by the way. That reflects

25   actual trends, plus actual cost trends.

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2   Leases and rentals, nothing

3   interesting there. Depreciation, that's

4   a very small number. Corporate overhead,

5   this is a -- by contract, not by

6   contract, but by practice we have charged

7   five percent of the total for corporate

8   overhead or the previous year's actual,

9   audited actual, whichever is lower. Both

10   of these is slightly lower than five

11   percent although you see it goes up from

12   last year to this year. And then margin

13   at risk is what we call profit. And we

14   call it margin at risk instead of saying

15   -- just using the word profit because it

16   is truly at risk. Any -- we are not

17   guaranteed that kind of return. That's

18   the profit we can earn if all of our

19   budget numbers are right, and all of the

20   actuals come in on budget, that's what we

21   would earn. Of the six years that we now

22   have in our history, five of them we

23   didn't ever make the budgeted number,

24   only one year did we. So that's why we

25   call it at risk, it's our risk, if

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 2      unpleasant surprises happen during the
 3      year or if we budgeted too
 4      insufficiently, it comes out of that
 5      bottom line.
 6           So that's the -- that brings you to
 7      a total for 2018 of $129,848,906, which
 8      matches up with that first slide where I
 9      showed you the available revenues.  So
10      the shorthand version here is we think
11      we've got enough revenue to maintain the
12      current level of service through the
13      remainder of the year and that level is
14      $129,848,906.  So why don't I stop, we're
15      going to ask you to approve this shortly,
16      but why don't I stop right there and take
17      questions or comments, if there are any,
18      Mr. Chairman.
19           CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL:  Do any of the
20      committee members have any questions of
21      Mr. Setzer at this time?
22           MR. BERSE:  I don't have a question,
23      but a comment.
24           CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL:  Mr. Berse?
25           MR. BERSE:  Mr. Setzer, this looks
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2   like it's the first time in a long time

3   that we're talking out of feast rather

4   than famine and it feels a lot better

5   sitting up here being in that position to

6   discuss this after your presentation.

7   One thing that I had thought about and

8   casually mentioned in the past and

9   especially now that it's a time of, let's

10   say, the feast, can we look at the routes

11   and possibly review them for a

12   consolidation of where the buses go and

13   maybe ultimately next year, come back

14   with more service in the same money and

15   cover more area that's maybe lost some

16   service over the past two years.

17   MR. SETZER: The answer to that is

18   yes. In fact I'm going to touch on that

19   towards the end of this presentation. We

20   started working on a plan for what could

21   be in Nassau County transit service and I

22   was I'm going to touch on it briefly now

23   and then our June meeting go into it in a

24   considerable amount of detail, but you're

25   right. I think, I hope that we're, the

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2   famine is over and we at least have a

3   healthy diet, if not a feast, and can now

4   begin to make some plans to improve

5   things rather than be in the service cut

6   mode. None of us want to be in that

7   service cut mode and I believe there's a

8   good chance that we're out of it. It is

9   even possible that the STOA, remember, we

10   perceive a one percent increase in the

11   STOA amount, I think it is even possible

12   there will be additional funds available

13   this year. I hope that's the challenge

14   we're wrestling with in June, but yes, I

15   completely agree with your remarks.

16   MR. BERSE: Thank you.

17   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Anyone else on

18   the committee have any questions for Mr.

19   Setzer?

20   (No response.)

21   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer, go

22   ahead and proceed.

23   MR. SETZER: The other part of the

24   annual plan is the capital plan. It also

25   includes a five year capital plan and we

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2   tend to just hit on the highlights of the

3   upcoming or the current year. So there's

4   not a lot of capital acquisition activity

5   in 2018, 15 new Paratransit buses. We

6   are continuing to search for just the

7   right mix of vehicles in the Paratransit

8   fleet. So we've got fifteen new

9   Paratransit, five wheelchair capacity

10   buses on order. Those will be put in

11   service shortly. We are completing the

12   CNG, the upgraded CNG station, which is

13   nearly online now completely and it

14   allows us to enjoy lower electricity

15   costs in the compressors that are used to

16   compress the CNG. We're also in the

17   process of a project to install safety

18   barriers on all buses that protect

19   operators. These are clear Plexiglass

20   barriers that partially close off the

21   space between the passenger and the

22   operator. It's a way to protect

23   operators from assault, without impeding

24   their ability to communicate with

25   passengers. This is a design that we

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2   worked out over several years with the

3   union. New buses come in with them

4   installed. This is the install on the

5   rest of the fleet, and it's underway,

6   it's about to start, should be completed

7   by the end of the year. Upgraded

8   Mitchell Field paving. That doesn't

9   sound very exciting, does it? And a new

10   fire suppression system, because we use

11   compressed natural gas, we have to have a

12   fire suppression system in the facility.

13   The old one has reached the end of its

14   useful life, so we are acquiring a new

15   one. All of that is detailed in the next

16   two pages which are particularly

17   challenging to read. Many projects are

18   funded from more than one grant source.

19   Sometimes the funding for a project

20   spreads over several years. That's the

21   detail, but it all relates to those, to

22   the -- to bus procurements and the five

23   projects that I just described. So

24   that's the two pages of that. I'd go

25   into detail here if you really want, but

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2   I think that's probably not a good use of

3   your time.

4   So let me stop there. That's the

5   end of the presentation on budget annual

6   plan, so our recommendation to the

7   committee is that you adopt this. Thank

8   you.

9   MS. FALCO: Thank you.

10   MR. ROSARIO: Thank you.

11   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer, did

12   you say you have further comments in

13   addition to the presentation, do you want

14   to do that at a later time after you get

15   public comments?

16   MR. SETZER: I could do it either

17   way. I've got a couple of information

18   items about service design and things

19   like that as well as planning for the

20   future in response to Mr. Berse.

21   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Why don't you

22   proceed with that and then you can take a

23   little time, if you deem it appropriate,

24   based on some public comments that you

25   hear, we would like to hear you come

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2   back.

3   MR. SETZER: Sure, after we do that.

4   There is one other piece of business

5   that doesn't require any action, but each

6   quarter we give you a report on the

7   performance indicators that are specified

8   in the contract. There are three for

9   fixed route and five for Paratransit.

10   The three for fixed route are on time

11   performance and the goal level is 70

12   percent. We had a very tough fourth

13   quarter of last year, we were doing very

14   well until September came around and then

15   the fourth quarter traffic became much

16   more -- much heavier and our on time

17   performance dropped to 64 percent. I'm

18   happy to tell you that when we do this

19   report again in three months, I can

20   report that in the first quarter of this

21   year we got it back up above 70 percent,

22   but nonetheless, we owe you a $5,000

23   liquidated damages payment for that on

24   time performance shortfall. Missed

25   pullouts, our goal is to never have any.

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2   We were pretty close to never. .14

3   percent, that's within the range, so that

4   does not generate either an incentive

5   payment to us or a liquidated damages

6   payment to the county. Accidents per

7   hundred thousand miles, the fourth

8   quarter was also a poor quarter for us as

9   far as accidents. I would like to point

10   out at this point, when we say accidents

11   per hundred thousand miles, we are

12   talking about preventables and a

13   preventable doesn't mean a collision or

14   an injury or even necessarily any

15   property damage. It means a contact that

16   could have been prevented. So if a

17   driver pulling away from a bus stop

18   brushes the bumper of another vehicle,

19   even though nobody is hurt and nobody is

20   damaged, that's a preventable accident.

21   That's a failure to provide adequate

22   clearance, so we treat every preventable

23   accident as equally serious. Any kind of

24   negligence needs to be, it needs to be

25   paid attention to, so we would treat that

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2   as a preventable accident. We would also

3   treat an accident where it's the other

4   motorist's fault as a preventable, if we

5   could have prevented it, so if the other

6   guys go through a traffic signal, but our

7   employee is not paying attention and

8   isn't scanning all the time, that's a

9   preventable accident. It could have been

10   prevented even if it's somebody else's

11   fault, so we keep track of all those.

12   Our actual performance in the fourth

13   quarter is 1.39 accident, preventables

14   per hundred thousand miles, still better

15   than we're doing two years ago, but not

16   quite to the goal of 1.2, so overall for

17   the year we were very close to the -- we

18   were 1.22, so that means the first

19   three-quarters we beat our goal, but then

20   in the fourth quarter we slipped back and

21   lost it, so that generates another $5,000

22   liquidated damage payment to the county.

23   In Paratransit, we have five goals,

24   calls answered ratio, again, I'm not sure

25   what was wrong with the fourth quarter

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2   last year, but it slipped badly and I'm

3   happy to tell you that by the time we do

4   this report for the first quarter of this

5   year that will be back up, but another

6    $5,000 liquidated damage, the good news

7   here is that on time performance, we

8   significantly exceeded the 70 percent

9   goal with 75.1 percent, so that generates

10   a $5,000 incentive payment to us. Missed

11   pullouts almost 0, very close to 0. But

12   again, accidents per hundred thousand

13   miles, we missed the goal of 1.2 by even

14   more in Paratransit. We had a

15   particularly poor fourth quarter, there's

16   no outstanding reason why the fourth

17   quarter was worse than goal, but it was,

18   so that generates a $5,000 liquidated

19   damage payment. And in the last,

20   productivity, which is passengers per

21   hour, Paratransit operation, we beat the

22   goal of 1.3 by 1.35, so the net of all

23   that is a $15,000 payment from us to

24   Nassau County.

25   Questions on that?

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2   (No response.)

3   MR. SETZER: Okay. There are some

4   service updates that you might be

5   interested in. This is a map of the 40,

6   41 which is a fairly heavy route from

7   Mineola right over here to Freeport.

8   Four to five thousand passenger trips a

9   day. We're beginning to reengineer this

10   route a little bit to try to improve

11   performance in both a faster trip and

12   better on time performance, so phase 1

13   which starts April 22, is what I would

14   call rationalizing the bus stops and I

15   have to give you a little bit of transit

16   inside baseball here. One of the things

17   that happens in every transit system is

18   that bus stops get added over time, you

19   add more, because some individual or some

20   group or some destination need a bus

21   stop, you add them, but you don't take

22   them out and so sort of like your desk

23   drawer, my desk drawer at least, after a

24   while you've just got to clean it out,

25   too much stuff accumulates in there. So

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2   we've got too many bus stops on the 40,

3   41. We have them on all routes. And

4   some of them are too close together. So

5   we're redesign -- we're re-rationalizing

6   the bus stops, so that there's one about

7   every quarter of a mile. Out of the 60

8   bus stops on that route, we're going to

9   remove eleven. We are also going to

10   straighten out, as you can see in that

11   graphic, straighten out the way we go

12   through Hempstead Transit Center, so the

13   expectation here is that we give

14   everybody a little quicker ride and

15   secondly, we're better able to maintain

16   on time performance. This goes in the

17   22nd, we'll be able to tell you soon,

18   because of all the data we can collect

19   with our new technology, we will be able

20   to tell you what the actual results of

21   this are, but I think people will

22   generally be pleased. Today we've heard

23   from about half a dozen people and

24   they're the people whose bus stop is

25   being moved, they don't really know where

1   3-29-18

2   their new bus stop is, they just know

3   they don't want their old one moved and

4   that's typical of the situation, because

5   I think when we're done, everyone will be

6   pleased. No one has any more than a

7   quarter mile walk and no one will walk

8   say 300 yards further than their bus stop

9   now. So I think -- well, we'll see.

10   This is an experiment, we are trying to

11   learn how to improve the performance of

12   all of our routes and we're using the 40,

13   41 as the laboratory, because it's a nice

14   compact route without a complicated

15   transit center like Jamaica at one end of

16   it. It's a good place for us to try out

17   this technique. And later in the year we

18   will do something more radical with it,

19   which is to get rid of the schedule

20   altogether and go to what we call

21   headwind management, and what that means

22   is that instead of publishing a timetable

23   that says there will be a bus at this bus

24   stop at 7:32, it will say during the

25   hours from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM, there will

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2   be a bus every eight minutes and during

3   the hours of 10:00 AM to 3, there will be

4   a bus every ten minutes and then we will

5   use technology to maintain the gap

6   between buses, so that a person can walk

7   to the bus stop knowing I'm not going to

8   wait more than eight minutes or whatever

9   it turns out to be. Very much the way

10   you use the subway, when you're in the

11   city, you don't look for the 7:32 subway,

12   you go to the stop knowing because of the

13   signage that it's so many minutes away.

14   So we're trying to duplicate that kind of

15   thing that as a way to give better, more

16   reliable service to passengers. Again,

17   we haven't done this before. This is an

18   experiment and we will report back to you

19   later, after this is done, on whether --

20   what the public reception is and whether

21   we're able to achieve higher on time

22   performance by getting away from

23   scheduling and going to headway or

24   frequency.

25   The one I most enjoy showing you is

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2   this. We do a quarterly survey. We hire

3   an outside company to do a quarterly

4   survey of our Able-Ride passengers and

5   we've been focused on improving

6   performance in Able-Ride for quite a

7   while. So the first quarter of this

8   year, we got an 89 percent favorable

9   rating from our customers. That's a

10   level that we haven't achieved before.

11   Larry Cuchera (Phonetic) and his

12   Able-Ride management team have been

13   working at this quite awhile, so these

14   are really enjoyable, to me, results to

15   be able to tell you about. Our

16   complaints in Able-Ride are down to

17   almost none, there's a general sense that

18   we've really turned a corner there and we

19   are offering really first rate service,

20   so I'm very happen to show you that

21   graph.

22   And then the last thing I wanted to

23   talk about was, Let's Go. This is --

24   that's a name we use for the visionary

25   plan for what Nassau County service could

1   3-29-18

2   be like if we can get out of the service

3   cut mode and have a chance to develop and

4   improve service in this year and future

5   years, so it's a much larger plan than

6   this, there's just a couple of pages here

7   with this. We start out with the

8   benefits to Nassau County with good

9   transit service, access to jobs and other

10   kinds of amenities that our customers

11   need and the economic benefits for the

12   county, then we redesigned service in a

13   lot of ways. So two ways and there are

14   many ways, but just two ways that are

15   shown in the bottom of this slide on the

16   left, you see Link and this is our idea

17   to substitute a smaller bus in an area

18   where we took big bus service out last

19   year, a smaller bus that's not on the

20   schedule, but then instead is ordered by

21   passengers in real time using a phone

22   app. So sort of Uber like except it's a

23   shared ride, there is more than one

24   passenger on there, this, we think, may

25   turn out to be a less expensive, more

1   3-29-18

2   customer responsive kind of service that

3   will work well in places where demand

4   isn't heavy. This is for places where

5   demand is light, it's not for Hempstead

6   Turnpike during rush hour, but it's for,

7   our zone is that southeast corner of the

8   county will implement this this summer

9   sometime and again report to you, but we

10   wanted to go over the whole plan with you

11   at our next meeting. On the right side

12   you see the effort in more conventional

13   approach, those are the heavy ridership

14   routes and part of our plan is to, if we

15   can find more resources, or when we find

16   more resources to add service to those,

17   to reduce frequency between buses and add

18   services, those are the routes to carry

19   over half of all our passengers, those

20   are the routes where we pass people up

21   today, so a big part of the plan is

22   enhancing the service, adding service on

23   those routes and those are two elements

24   in a much larger plan which we will take

25   some time next, for our next meeting. So

1   3-29-18

2   Mr. Chairman, that's the end of my

3   remarks and comments. I'll be prepared

4   to respond to further comments or

5   questions if you have any.

6   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Miss Falco?

7   MS. FALCO: Good afternoon, Mr.

8   Setzer.

9   MR. SETZER: Good afternoon.

10   MS. FALCO: If we can just go back

11   for a moment, I have a question regarding

12   capital plan highlights that you touched

13   upon, specifically the upgrade of the

14   Mitchell Field paving, I'm just curious,

15   why is the upgrading of the field paving

16   your responsibility?

17   MR. SETZER: Well, we're the

18   county's partner. The actual funding for

19   this will be capital funds that come to

20   the county from federal and state

21   sources. But we implement all of the

22   projects in collaboration, planning these

23   capital projects, we do in cooperation

24   with the county with Sharon who is right

25   here, but we do the implementation. Is

1   3-29-18

2   that responsive to your question?

3   MS. FALCO: Somewhat. Thank you.

4   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are there any

5   other questions or comments for Mr.

6   Setzer?

7   MR. BERSE: Mr. Setzer, are the

8   people at NICE familiar with the

9   Hicksville downtown revitalization

10   initiative that's going on with the

11   governor's office and the grant that was

12   made?

13   MR. SETZER: Yes.

14   MR. BERSE: Okay, I didn't want to

15   ask any unfair questions if you didn't

16   know.

17   MR. SETZER: Well, I don't. I may

18   need some help.

19   MR. BERSE: That's why I said the

20   people at NICE.

21   MR. SETZER: Yes.

22   MR. BERSE: They are proposing

23   restructuring all around the Hicksville

24   train station for its access and things

25   like that, and I have been advocating for

1   3-29-18

2   an inter mobile out of one of the garages

3   that they are talking about adding in

4   Mineola. That original inter mobile was

5   supposed to come to Hicksville in 1998

6   and through certain people's lack of

7   wisdom it wound up with Jack Martin's

8   mayor of Mineola, and it's been very

9   successful there as we all know. What

10   I'm getting at is the recommendations to

11   the governor's office what they're going

12   to implement are being submitted

13   tomorrow. After they come back and the

14   plans are approved for which ones are a

15   go and which ones are a hold, I would

16   recommend that the people from NICE stick

17   their noses in because we still need to

18   get those buses, for safety sake, off

19   Newbridge Road, particularly during the

20   winter heavy snowstorms and it would be

21   in NICE's interest, the county's interest

22   and the public's interest to accomplish

23   that, but unless maybe your department

24   kicks the door in a little bit, they

25   won't realize that you're interested, so

1   3-29-18

2   just looking for a little help on that.

3   MR. SETZER: Yeah, that's good

4   advice, I appreciate that. How about we

5   make contact with you tomorrow and get

6   the details about when we need to kick

7   that door in and where the door is.

8   MR. BERSE: Okay, because I'm sure

9   they're going to announce when the

10   governor approves, what the submissions

11   are that are being made tomorrow. This

12   process has been going on for a number of

13   months and Hicksville in its own right,

14   the current project was going on for

15   eight years before winning of this ten

16   millions dollar seed grant so.

17   MR. SETZER: Okay, interesting. We

18   would, in general, want to work with

19   local communities whenever the

20   transportation infrastructure is being

21   redesigned. I don't mean just the bus

22   routes, when there are changes to the

23   bike paths or sidewalks or things like

24   that. It's very helpful for us to be

25   involved.

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2   MR. BERSE: Thank you.

3   MR. SETZER: Thank you.

4   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Any further

5   comments for Mr. Setzer from the

6   committee members?

7   MS. FALCO: Thank you.

8   MR. SETZER: Thank you.

9   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer,

10   thank for a very detailed presentation.

11   At this time we would like to ask

12   anyone here from the public to address

13   Mr. Setzer or problems you have and just

14   please state your name, the town you are

15   from, if you're representing yourself as

16   a commuter or if you're representing an

17   organization, please let us know. Would

18   anybody like to address? Okay. How many

19   people would like to address the

20   committee? Okay, why don't you go first,

21   sir, first row, thank you.

22   MR. TORCIVIA: Am I being heard?

23   MS. FALCO: Yes, you are.

24   MR. TORCIVIA: I'm not a public

25   speaker so I will read briefly from a

2   prepared statement, that way it will

3   remain more concise.

4   My name is Joe Torcivia, I represent

5   myself, and I live in Levittown. I've

6   lived in Nassau County most of my life,

7   and I'm a registered Republican, but I

8   voted for County Executive Curran because

9   I watched her predecessor dismantle the

10   county bus transportation system piece by

11   piece since 2012. Now, the reason I

12   mention this is that every county

13   executive since Ralph Caso has improved

14   this situation and I hope that it will be

15   improved again. And if Mr. Setzer's

16   remarks are any indication, perhaps we

17   are on that way. My particular issue is

18   that I live in Levittown just off

19   Newbridge Road between Old Country Road

20   to the north and Hempstead Turnpike to

21   the south, but not at all near to either.

22   So my only bus option would be on

23   Newbridge Road. I've recently retired

24   and while I do own and drive a car, it is

25   not something I prefer to do if other

1   3-29-18

2   means are available. At the time I moved

3   to my present home there was weekday

4   service in both directions on Newbridge

5   Road north and south every thirty

6   minutes. Then it became every hour. Now

7   with the last round of cuts, the weekday

8   intervals are one hour and ten minutes.

9   Even worse, weekday rush hour has been

10   particularly decimated with only two n49

11   departures from Hicksville railroad

12   station between 4:20 and 7:00 PM. Of

13   what use is that? Thankfully I no longer

14   commute with the railroad, it would be

15   intolerable if I did. Saturday service

16   was hourly, now it's every 90 minutes.

17   At 90 minute intervals it's hardly even

18   worth using at all. Transfers expire in

19   two hours, making it very difficult to

20   connect with the 90 minute scheduling.

21   And the reason I question this is that I

22   took the n49 to begin my trip to this

23   meeting at 3:19 this afternoon and that

24   bus ran at capacity and had standees, so

25   why would one need to wait an hour and

1   3-29-18

2   ten minute intervals at that time of day

3   when clearly this service is being

4   utilized. And I do understand the cuts

5   are necessary as dictated by funding, but

6   the n49 and formerly the n50, Newbridge

7   Road service has been too severely

8   reduced over the last few years. There

9   are some lines with low ridership that

10   have been eliminated and I can understand

11   why that might be. But n49 connects

12   Hempstead and Hicksville to major

13   transportation hubs and runs on Newbridge

14   Road, Hempstead Turnpike and Front

15   Street. All major thoroughfares and even

16   with the cuts as I saw this very

17   afternoon, carries well. And all I'm

18   asking for is, could we at least reach a

19   level of hourly service in each direction

20   for weekdays and Saturdays, rather than

21   70 to 90 minute intervals. And perhaps a

22   little more in rush hour, two trips,

23   yeah, a little bit, so that's all I have

24   to say. And hopefully my comments will

25   be acted upon some day. Thank you, and

1   3-29-18

2   thank you, Mr. Setzer.

3   MR. SETZER: Thank you.

4   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Sir, you want to

5   address the committee? The last row,

6   come on up. Thank you.

7   MR. MCGREGOR: My name is John

8   McGregor, a commuter. I don't represent

9   any group except for myself. I live in

10   Freeport and I've lived there pretty much

11   all my life. My concern was the n4 route

12   which is, from what I understand, either

13   the busiest one. I've been to a couple

14   of meetings of NICE and they told me the

15   n4 route is either the busiest or the

16   second busiest in the NICE system. But

17   still it seems to get last place in terms

18   of increasing the service and improvement

19   like the n6, they have these new

20   accordion buses which carry a lot more

21   people, they have Wi-Fi, I think outlets,

22   et cetera, I've never taken one, I've

23   heard, but the n4 still hasn't gotten

24   those yet, even though it seems to be

25   just as busy at key times as the n6 and

2   carries a lot of people. And also in

3   terms of the spacing, it seems like the

4   buses in the morning, n4 buses in the

5   morning, they run express like every

6   fifteen minutes or so. And those are the

7   most heavily trafficked or ridden buses,

8   the ones that make every stop, local

9   buses are not as heavy. I mean you can

10   be sitting at the bus stop and say there

11   are ten people there, and if a local bus

12   comes, maybe two people get on, and when

13   the express bus comes, eight will get on,

14   so they're all sort of waiting for the

15   express even though they run a lot less,

16   so maybe if they can increase the amount

17   of express service on the n4 in the

18   morning and decrease the local service in

19   the morning rush hour or afternoon rush

20   hour, that might be more, that would be

21   better in terms of like how it's used and

22   also you mentioned changing the n41

23   stops, I take n41, that's my route. It's

24   right by house. And one of the stops

25   being eliminated is right next to my

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2   house. That's the stop that I catch the

3   bus to Freeport station. Now, the

4   problem eliminating that is, I would wait

5   at that stop and it takes me right to

6   Freeport station in about five, ten

7   minutes. Now, if that bus doesn't come

8   on time, I can walk in about ten minutes,

9   so oftentimes when the bus would not come

10   on time or it would come late, I could

11   just take off and be there in ten minutes

12   and catch my n4 into the city. Now, with

13   that stop gone, the problem is there's no

14   straight line to Freeport station. The

15   closest stop is south which takes me

16   further away from Freeport station which

17   means that if the bus doesn't come on

18   time and I have to walk, I'm further back

19   than where I was before. So there's more

20   time to catch up. And the next stop

21   north going towards Main is also further

22   away from Freeport station, so again, if

23   I caught that stop, I'd also be further

24   away from Freeport station, I couldn't

25   walk, if the bus didn't come on time or

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2   came late which oftentimes it does. So I

3   know everyone is complaining about losing

4   their stop, but that one is particularly

5   ideal because of how centrally located it

6   is to Freeport station if someone has to

7   walk. So that's why it's problematic for

8   me, and I guess others, losing that stop.

9   So that's basically.

10   MS. FALCO: Thank you.

11   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you, Mr.

12   McGregor.

13   Is there any other comments? Yes,

14   ma'am? Ma'am.

15   Okay. We'll get you next. I'm

16   sorry.

17   MR. KAMPER: Good afternoon, members

18   of the committee and good afternoon, Mr.

19   Setzer. I wanted to address a couple of

20   things. First of all, the funding which

21   County Executive Curran is proposing for

22   the bus system, I really am very happy to

23   hear about, and I'm really hoping that

24   some service, especially a couple of

25   routes that I use, used to use which

1   3-29-18

2   includes the n51 and the n47, I

3   understand that a lot of people don't use

4   it, but especially with the n51, a lot of

5   students who live in the Bellmore and

6   Merrick area use it to get to Nassau

7   Community College and with this Link

8   program that you guys are proposing, I

9   really would love to see possibly this

10   come to the -- especially since the

11   Merrick Avenue area is real, where I live

12   in East Meadow is really underserved and

13   I feel that the Link program would maybe

14   really help and get the bus system back

15   to the Merrick Avenue area and get people

16   to Nassau Community College, especially

17   those who can't drive, don't have a

18   license, it's really something I really

19   would love to see and the n47 as well, a

20   lot of people I know, including myself,

21   used it a lot to get to Hempstead where I

22   transfer for a bus to get to work, twice

23   a week. It would really help, maybe the

24   Link service might help, maybe it might

25   be able to bring back some service, I

1   3-29-18

2   would love to see that, that might be

3   something that maybe you guys could look

4   into, and I'm really looking forward to

5   hopefully seeing within maybe the middle,

6   or the end of this year, hopefully see

7   some service come back and hopefully this

8   fiasco hopefully between you guys and

9   county is at least done with and I'm

10   really looking forward to what you guys

11   have coming with hopefully some service

12   that might come back in the future.

13   Thank you so much.

14   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Excuse me, did

15   you state your name for the record?

16   MR. KAMPER: I'm sorry, my name is

17   Matt Kamper, I'm from East Meadow and I'm

18   representing myself.

19   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Yes, ma'am.

20   Thank you.

21   MS. BHEDDAH: My name is Dorothy

22   Bheddah and I'm chair of the Public Bus

23   Committee of the Amsterdam at Harborside,

24   I will explain that in a minute. This

25   committee has been in existence for three

1   3-29-18

2   years, and for the first time we see a

3   glimmer of hope that we might get bus

4   service on West Shore Road in Port

5   Washington. That is our interest. NICE

6   has been very helpful in suggesting a

7   route, but they can't afford it. They

8   couldn't afford it. We also see an

9   existing but route, the n23 which could

10   handle a four mile loop on West Shore

11   Road, I think that I've never seen that

12   bus full of people, so I think there's

13   certainly room for possible passengers on

14   West Shore Road. The Amsterdam at

15   Harborside is 300 seniors who are not

16   eligible for Able-Ride because they're

17   too far from the fixed bus route, I think

18   this is the greatest injustice.

19   Alongside, in addition to the residents

20   there, there are 150 employees and 50

21   private aides who come daily. In

22   addition on West Shore Road are 70

23   industries, there is a church, a golf

24   course and a town park which is not

25   accessible except by car or walking which

1   3-29-18

2   is kind of out of the question for it's a

3   three mile walk from the Port Washington

4   train station. So again, we are here, we

5   want to be on the list of getting this,

6   this would be a new route, but it's not a

7   long route and we think that there will

8   be passengers to fill the buses. Thank

9   you.

10   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: This might fit

11   into your Uber type set up, of course

12   I'll let you and your team discuss it.

13   Before you get up, Mr. Setzer, is

14   there anyone else who has any comments

15   that they would like before Mr. Setzer

16   comes back to answer some of the others?

17   So this way it's more comprehensive and

18   then you can decide. Okay, sir.

19   MR. KORNBLUM: Hi. MY name is

20   Martin Kornblum, and I live at Amsterdam

21   at Harborside, also besides n23, there

22   are two other buses that you probably can

23   add three minutes to that, three or four

24   minutes to that route, same thing n23,

25   that's the n22, and the n21. You could

1   3-29-18

2   do the same thing with them, for the n23.

3   And that will make more passengers also.

4   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Sir, did you

5   state your name for the record?

6   MR. BERSE: He did.

7   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: You did, right?

8   MR. KORNBLUM: Yes.

9   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Since there are

10   no other public comments, Mr. Setzer, do

11   you want to address any of these people

12   or have any other quick comments?

13   MR. SETZER: Thank you, Mr.

14   Chairman. I think maybe just address it

15   in general. What you heard from all of

16   these people is no surprise to you or me

17   and that is that there are unmet needs

18   for transit all over Nassau County. And

19   that for the past few years we were

20   forced by funding to make those

21   situations worse. We are all, I'm sure,

22   hopeful that we sort of bottomed out and

23   we can begin to make some of those

24   situations better. We had some initial

25   discussion with the Nassau County

1   3-29-18

2   administration about beginning to grow.

3   Essentially what the thumbnail version of

4   this is, let's get this budget passed,

5   let's stabilize service, let's see what

6   happens with state funding and then let's

7   begin to prioritize what we would do next

8   and what order we add these improvements

9   in either adding back service that was

10   once taken away or adding new service

11   both of which are important and that

12   conversation has just begun, so rather

13   than respond -- actually I agree with all

14   the speakers on what the needs are, I

15   don't argue with any of those. The

16   question is how soon we can begin to

17   address those and in what order and so

18   maybe we will be able to talk about that

19   in our next meeting also.

20   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

21   At this time both a review of the

22   2018 Annual Plan and Budget and some

23   other comments that Mr. Setzer made, of

24   course with the comments that we've heard

25   from the public, and your own thoughts,

1   3-29-18

2   at this time I would like to ask someone

3   to move to make a resolution whether or

4   not to approve the 2018 Annual Plan and

5   Budget, would anybody like to?

6   MR. ROSARIO: I will.

7   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Rosario,

8   thank you.

9   MR. BERSE: Second.

10   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Second, Mr.

11   Berse, thank you. With that I would like

12   to take a vote, counselor, if you don't

13   mind, would you start with me if you

14   like, would you mind calling the roll as

15   to how people would like to vote on the

16   budget?

17   MR. DISILVIO: Sure. Unfortunately

18   I only know everyone's first names.

19   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: That's fine, I

20   will repeat it after you.

21   MR. DISILVIO: Joel?

22   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Berse.

23   MR. BERSE: I vote aye.

24   MR. DISILVIO: Tony?

25   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Rosario.

1   3-29-18

2   MR. ROSARIO: Yes.

3   MR. DISILVIO: Jean?

4   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Duroseau.

5   MR. DUROSEAU: Yes.

6   MR. DISILVIO: Dawn?

7   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Miss Falco.

8   MS. FALCO: For the first time on

9   this committee, and it's without

10   hesitation, I vote yes.

11   MR. DISILVIO: Chairman?

12   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Shrenkel

13   votes yes.

14   Please duly note that today's

15   resolution has been passed unanimously in

16   order to approve 2018 Annual Plan and

17   Budget for NICE Transportation.

18   Anyone else on the committee would

19   like to bring up any comment or new

20   business?

21   (No response.)

22   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Other than that,

23   would someone like to make a motion to

24   adjourn our meeting?

25   (Mr. Rosario raises hand.)

1   3-29-18

2   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Rosario.

3   (Mr. Berse raises hand.)

4   CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Berse

5   seconds it.

6   With that, this meeting is

7   adjourned. I want to thank everyone for

8   coming and I certainly want everyone to

9   arrive home safely and enjoy the Easter

10   holiday, Passover holiday and whatever

11   you enjoy and thank you for coming.

12   Goodbye now.

13   (Time noted: 6:05 P.M.)

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

3   I, KATHLEEN ANDERSON, a Notary Public in

4   and for the State of New York, do hereby

5   certify:

6   THAT the foregoing record was taken by me

7   on the 29th day of March, 2018 at the aforesaid

8   time and place, and it is a true and accurate

9   transcript of my stenographic notes.

10   IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my

11   hand this 11th day of April, 2018.

12

13

14   KATHLEEN ANDERSON

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