

NASSAU COUNTY
BUS TRANSIT COMMITTEE

June 23, 2016

5:00 P.M.

BEFORE: SHELDON SHRENKEL, CHAIRMAN

1 A P P E A R A N C E S :

2 SHELDON SHRENKEL, CHAIRMAN

3 SAMUEL LITTMAN, ESQ.

4 LIVIO TONY ROSARIO

5 AARON WATKINS-LOPEZ

6 JACLENE D'AGOSTINO

7 JOEL BERSE

8 DAWN FALCO

9 JEAN DUROSEAU

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1 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: The meeting
2 will come to order. Welcome to the
3 Nassau County Bus Transit Meeting
4 today. I'm Sheldon Shrenkel. I'm the
5 chairman of the committee. We have
6 various items on our agendas which I
7 will discuss in a moment.

8 First, I would like to introduce
9 our committee members. My left,
10 Mr. Tony Rosario, Mr. Aaron Watkins,
11 Mr. Aaron Watkins Lopez, and we expect
12 Jaclene D'Agostino who is running a bit
13 late.

14 To my right, Mr. Joel Berse,
15 Ms. Dawn Falco, Jean Duroseau, and our
16 Counsel for the committee, Samuel
17 Littman. That's our member role call.
18 We do have an absentee. Please reflect
19 the minutes according that
20 Ms. Katherine Komferd, K-O-M-F-E-R-D,
21 is absent.

22 By a show of hands, I would like a
23 an acknowledgment of a received
24 transcript from our last meeting held
25 on March 31, 2016, minutes being

1 received on April 21st through e-mail.

2 Did everyone receive that?

3 Please reflect that everyone has
4 seen the minutes who is currently
5 present. Thank you.

6 Our agenda today will have a
7 presentation by the CEO of NICE
8 transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer.
9 After that, or during that, the
10 committee may ask some questions.

11 After that period of time, we
12 would like the public comments,
13 whatever you have to say. Please think
14 about what you have to say and frame
15 and design your thoughts, and then you
16 have three minutes as most public
17 hearings.

18 Please state your name, whether
19 you represent yourself or an
20 organization, and it is important that
21 you speak clearly because what you're
22 saying is being recorded and it's
23 difficult sometimes for the
24 stenographer to get that information.

25 Our objective today as part of

1 Mr. Setzer's presentation is to hear
2 about the resolution regarding the
3 service equity analysis, and at that
4 time, I think after which we'll be
5 concluding our meeting.

6 So with that, I would like to
7 introduce the CEO of NICE
8 transportation, Mr. Michael Setzer.

9 MR. BERSE: Mr. Chairman, I want
10 to interject something as he comes to
11 the podium. Recently in the news
12 there was a NICE para-transit bus driver
13 that rescued a passenger during a bus
14 fire. I don't how to properly
15 pronounce his name, but I think he
16 should be recognized by the community
17 here even though he has gotten
18 accolades from the county, and
19 Mr. Setzer undoubtedly would know the
20 correct pronunciation of his name.

21 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Perhaps we can
22 also discuss the incidents of the fire,
23 the reasons for the fire, any
24 association between the two fires. I
25 don't know if that's part of your

1 presentation.

2 Thank you, Mr. Setzer.

3 MR. SETZER: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 Members of the committee, good
6 afternoon. I've got a number of
7 informational topics to cover with you,
8 some odds and ends and some important
9 updates on things. I would like to get
10 through those and then we'll go to the
11 one action item that you have on your
12 agenda today which is the acceptance of
13 the analysis.

14 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer,
15 the public is having some difficulty
16 hearing you. I don't know if we should
17 turn up the mic or turn it around
18 or should --

19 MR. SETZER: If I get closer to
20 it, does that help?

21 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Can you raise
22 your hand if you do not hear Mr. Setzer
23 now.

24 MR. SETZER: All right. I'll just
25 be mindful of that and if I forget,

1 wave at me and I will get closer the
2 mic.

3 I've got a quick information
4 agenda, a number of things I would like
5 to update you on and just inform you
6 on, so let me just jump right into
7 that.

8 First of all, we call this section
9 innovation. As you recall at the
10 beginning of this year, we -- because
11 of funding issues, we were unable to
12 maintain all the service. There was
13 some cutbacks in service in January,
14 and then the county made a subsequent
15 decision that they would add some
16 funding and that we should begin to
17 either replace or reinstate the service
18 that had been reduced.

19 There were eleven routes in the
20 discussion and the decision making
21 process both here and with the county
22 legislature. Of the eleven routes
23 eliminated, a few were to be reinstated
24 just as they had been before, some were
25 to be replaced with new forms of

1 service and two of those routes were
2 determined to be duplicative of
3 existing service and therefore didn't
4 need to be replaced.

5 So this is the first installment
6 of that program. Beginning Sunday of
7 this coming week, we will begin the new
8 Mercy Medical community shuttle and the
9 Rockville Centre community shuttle.

10 These serve essentially the same
11 areas as the old N14 and N17 did, but
12 they'll do it in a somewhat different
13 way using a small vehicle like the one
14 that's pictured on the screen here.

15 This is a 20-passenger vehicle
16 with two wheelchair positions, and so
17 it can do two things. It can provide
18 regularly scheduled service as the
19 large buses did before, but it can also
20 serve as a substitute for Able-Riders.
21 It's fully accessible and has all the
22 features so that it can also substitute
23 for Able-Riders.

24 We believe -- we're really testing
25 this kind of service. We've never used

1 this kind of bus before in Nassau
2 County, but we think that ultimately it
3 will be a more sustainable service.

4 Remember, these routes were
5 eliminated in the first place because
6 it had very low ridership because this
7 service is less expensive to deliver
8 for a number of reasons. The vehicle,
9 as well as the operating model, as well
10 as the dual service as both Able-Ride
11 and fixed route bus, we believe we can
12 save some money, but that's yet to be
13 determined. We're trying this out for
14 the first time.

15 Also, the old NA81, which was big
16 bus service as you go from Freeport to
17 Hicksville is being reinstated almost
18 exactly as it operated before January.

19 In September the next installment
20 will come which includes the Elmont
21 flexi, which is a whole new kind of
22 service that's not a fixed route, but
23 it will replace the old N2NA, and I
24 think we'll save that briefing until we
25 get there, unless you would like to talk

1 about it some more.

2 Also, put in the Freeport
3 community shuttle, one's a Hicksville
4 community shuttle and reinstate the N51
5 as traditional big bus service in
6 September.

7 All of this requires some new
8 vehicles, so right now we have underway
9 three vehicle procurements. The eight
10 buses that would be used on the
11 community shuttle and the flexi have
12 been received and have been approved by
13 the state DOT, and they're ready to go
14 beginning Sunday. Those are the ones
15 we just talked about.

16 We also have an order of 28 full
17 size 40-foot buses coming in the fourth
18 quarter of this year. They will be
19 used to replace 28 of the oldest buses
20 in our fleet in regular fixed route
21 service.

22 These are identical to the buses
23 that we received late last year.
24 They're new Flyers, they're powered
25 with CNG. They are fully accessible.

1 They have a ramp instead of a hydraulic
2 lift for wheelchair access and we
3 expect to put them into service as
4 rapidly as we can once they come in.

5 By the beginning of 2017 all, or
6 almost all of them, should already be in
7 service and we will have been able to
8 retire then buses that are at least 12
9 years old and have at least a half a
10 million miles of service on them.
11 That's a good thing.

12 Those are the older large white
13 standard 4 bus that you see that have a
14 hydraulic lift for wheelchair access,
15 which is a problematic piece of
16 equipment. It's hard to maintain. The
17 sooner we can replace all those, the
18 better. These buses have been well
19 received by the public and by our
20 operators.

21 Last year, we had an order again
22 for 34 Ford Transits. These are new
23 Able-Ride vehicles and they will
24 replace the very old Able-Ride
25 vehicles, the Internationals, they will

1 replace 34 of those. That's the first
2 installment on replacing those
3 vehicles. They will go into service as
4 soon as possible. We should begin
5 receiving them yet this month through
6 -- now through September, so you'll begin
7 to see them in service very quickly.

8 This, by the way I think this is
9 maybe a good place to talk about the
10 fire that Mr. Berse brought up, and
11 Chairman, you asked that we brief you
12 on that.

13 That fire that resulted in the
14 rescue by one of our operators whose
15 name is Jean Jeune. He's Haitian, so
16 back home he's Jean, but here he's
17 Jean Jeune. You'll understand that.

18 He was heroic. He's been honored
19 by both the county executive and by the
20 legislature, and I think there's a
21 ceremony maybe next week where some
22 state members of the state legislative
23 delegation want to honor him also.

24 He did -- you probably already
25 read all this in the media, but he was

1 very cool, he stopped the bus. The
2 fire apparently originated as an
3 electrical fire in the engine
4 compartment, and because it was an
5 electrical fire in that location, the
6 power was -- the whole electrical
7 system was disabled.

8 The hydraulic lift that I
9 mentioned a while ago that we're
10 getting rid of depends on electricity
11 to operate, and so the lift wouldn't
12 operate. Cindy March, the passenger,
13 uses a motorized wheelchair, something
14 that weighs several hundred pounds.

15 So Jean had the presence of mind
16 to unbuckle her from the wheelchair and
17 physically remove her from the bus
18 leaving the wheelchair behind. That
19 was the best possible decision he could
20 have made. He put himself as some
21 risk.

22 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer,
23 you have given me an opportunity to
24 remind everyone, please put your phone
25 on silent.

1 MR. SETZER: That's why I did it.

2 So Mr. Jeune removed her
3 immediately from the vehicle which
4 prevented a very tragic outcome. I was
5 happy to hear he -- when asked
6 immediately thereafter what went
7 through his mind, he referred to the
8 training he had received about what to
9 do in case of an emergency.

10 So thank goodness he had the
11 training, thank goodness he remembered
12 it. I commended our training
13 department, as did the county executive
14 along with Mr. Jeune. He did a
15 wonderful job. He did put himself at
16 some risk, so as I said, we all wonder
17 what would we do if it was -- we had to
18 risk our own safety for the sake of
19 another. We don't really know until we
20 have to do it, but Mr. Jeune knows what
21 he would do and we can't thank him
22 enough.

23 There was also about two weeks
24 later another small fire that is
25 actually completely unrelated. It was

1 a different kind of bus. It was a fire
2 that started in the battery
3 compartment. It was due to a component
4 that we were in the process of
5 replacing. We finished replacing them
6 all.

7 In that case also, there was no
8 immediate great danger as there was on
9 the paratransit vehicle, but that
10 operator also did exactly as trained.
11 He immediately stopped the bus, parked
12 it in a safe place, evacuated all the
13 passengers and then reached out to our
14 command center and got another bus on
15 the way.

16 No one was injured in that, or even
17 close to injury in that fire, but it's
18 coincidental apparently that they
19 happened so closely together. Different
20 bus, different kind of component, no
21 similarity in the two incidents, but
22 it's concerning obviously, so we've
23 taken some extra steps to check buses,
24 to examine them for any signs of fire
25 risk.

1 The paratransit vehicle, by the
2 way had been -- they all get inspected
3 every 6,000 miles by our own staff, and
4 then every six months they get inspected
5 by the state DOT for safety issues.
6 One of the things we always look for
7 are signs of sparking, you know, any
8 charing of anything or any frayed
9 cables or any loose electrical
10 connections because we understand the
11 risk obviously.

12 That bus passed the state
13 inspection nine days before the fire,
14 so I'm confident there was no neglect,
15 that there wasn't a risk factor that
16 had been missed in the inspection
17 process. Unfortunately in a fire most
18 of the evidence is destroyed, so we'll
19 never know much more that -- the PTSB,
20 the state agency that investigates
21 these, has concluded their investigation
22 of that fire, and they also concluded
23 what I told you, that it was a fire
24 started most likely by an electrical
25 fault somewhere in the engine

1 compartment, but that's as much as
2 we'll ever know about it.

3 I don't think there's any sign
4 that this is a fleet defect or a
5 fleet-wide problem, but obviously
6 we're very concerned about that.

7 We took every other international
8 vehicle through a quick inspection,
9 looking for frayed installation or
10 loose electrical connections or
11 anything like that. Did not find any,
12 but will be -- continue to be diligent
13 about that. They will continue to be
14 subject to the state inspection
15 protocol just as they have been in the
16 past.

17 A couple of other innovation
18 things that are going on I would like
19 to bring to your attention, the last
20 element of the technology project, the
21 last hardware element of the technology
22 project was the installation of
23 realtime signage at Hempstead Transit
24 Center.

25 The physical equipment is all in,

1 the testing is going on. Sometime in
2 the month of July, probably early in
3 the month of July, they'll go live.
4 These are what are called flag signs.
5 Passengers will be able to look at the
6 sign and determine what bus is -- what
7 route is coming in and how far away it
8 is.

9 Additionally, there is an audio
10 signal available. There's a switch
11 down lower that a visually impaired
12 person can use to get the information
13 by audio also. Once customers become
14 used to this, it'll become a very
15 desirable and very pleasing feature of
16 Hempstead Transit Center.

17 There's also a screen at the west
18 end of the Transit Center right across
19 the street from the Hempstead Long
20 Island Railroad Station. So there's
21 realtime information about arriving
22 trains inside our transit center, so
23 people who are transferring from bus to
24 train can also get information about
25 the arriving Long Island Rail Road.

1 I would also like to talk about a
2 couple things of that have happened in
3 what I call the community engagement
4 area. We are in the process of setting
5 up the Everyone Rides NICE Foundation.
6 This is a plan that we discussed with
7 the county executive and it's one of
8 the -- he's made it a part of our
9 contractual obligation that we will
10 create this foundation.

11 Everyone Rides NICE is a separate
12 nonprofit agency. It's a 501(c)(3).
13 It's just about to get the final
14 documentation from the IRS so that
15 people can make a tax deductible
16 contributions to it.

17 What Everyone Rides NICE will do
18 is provide free MetroCards to nonprofit
19 agencies who are in touch with
20 disadvantaged populations, either
21 economically disadvantaged or people
22 with disabilities or any other group
23 that the foundation board finds
24 eligible for this service.

25 So we look for nonprofit

1 foundations who serve disadvantaged
2 groups where transportation, providing
3 transportation is part of meeting their
4 mission.

5 For instance, a food pantry that
6 provides food to economically
7 disadvantaged people, we'll also be able
8 to provide them a couple of MetroCards
9 so they could get home and get back the
10 next time.

11 At \$2.75 -- if you're having trouble
12 paying for groceries, then \$2.75 a ride
13 bus trip is a fairly significant
14 commitment, so this will allow that
15 agency to extent their mission, in
16 fact, by providing transportation as
17 well as nutrition.

18 We'll be open to applications from
19 those kinds of agencies. There's a
20 separate Board. The Board will
21 consider those applications and approve
22 them. We're just about ready to get
23 started.

24 We will make the first grants
25 probably in the next few -- the

1 foundation will make the first grants
2 in the next few months. The initial
3 funding for this is \$1.2 million
4 provided by Transdev.

5 In the future, we will be
6 seeking -- once we get underway and
7 have some momentum, we, the foundation,
8 will be seeking donations from
9 individuals and other foundations who
10 wish to participate in this.

11 We also did, as we have done every
12 year for the last five years,
13 participated in the games for physically
14 challenged at the end of May. We
15 provided transportation for the disabled
16 athletes between the venue mostly at
17 the Mitchel Field Athletic Complex and
18 their housing at Hofstra University.
19 People come in from all over the state
20 to participate in this.

21 So this is something we've been
22 doing for years. Most of the work of
23 boarding -- assisting people on and off
24 the bus and boarding is provided almost
25 always by volunteers from our staff as

1 well as with a few other people. So
2 385 hours of volunteer service was
3 provided this year.

4 We use four buses running from
5 7:00 in the morning until 10:00 at
6 night. Additionally, NICE made a
7 \$5,000 cash contribution to this.
8 We're one of the silver sponsors of
9 this, and this is one of our favorite
10 things to do every year because it's a
11 unique thing that we can do that nobody
12 else can do, but it's absolutely
13 essential to the participation of the
14 games for many of the athletes who come
15 in and need to be able to get back and
16 forth from their housing to the sports
17 venues. It's a wonderful opportunity
18 and a wonderful experience for all of
19 us to participate in.

20 I want to move on to a couple of
21 quick funding issues. First one is all
22 good news. Every three years, by
23 virtue of being a recipient of
24 federal funds, we, the county, and
25 Transdev, together undergo a triennial

1 review. A triennial review is where
2 the federal government sends a
3 contractor in to review compliance with
4 17 different areas, from civil rights to
5 Americans with Disabilities Act, to
6 safety to procurement to mechanical
7 condition of the fleet, financial
8 management and so forth.

9 So I'm happy to say that we got a
10 perfect score again this year. This is
11 the second time we've done it. That's
12 actually fairly rare to get a perfect
13 score on this. The volume of federal
14 requirements that a recipient has to
15 comply with is extensive, and the audit
16 is extensive.

17 They review documents. Then they
18 come in and do a physical inspection of
19 things. They do some sort of surprise
20 things where they pick out a few
21 procurements and say, let me see your
22 files on that to make sure that we
23 comply fully with all federal
24 requirements on the procurement.

25 So we're very pleased to say that

1 NICE put the score twice now and look
2 forward to doing that again three years
3 from now.

4 Also in the funding area, a couple
5 other things I want to talk about. 5310
6 grants are grants that Mr. Watkins
7 Lopez asked about at our last meeting,
8 specifically that Suffolk County had
9 gotten a 5310 grant in order to expand
10 their ADA paratransit service to parts
11 of the county that are not served by
12 regular service, and I think its
13 question was, can Nassau County do the
14 same thing?

15 So we conferred -- First of all,
16 the county is the only one who can be a
17 grant recipient, a private company
18 cannot. We conferred with the county,
19 and at this point we think it is not --
20 it's not something that we will proceed
21 with, and there are a couple -- there
22 are several reasons for that.

23 First of all, it's not free money,
24 it's a 50 percent match. So it, like
25 everything else, is a resource issue.

1 If for instance we wanted to do a
2 \$4 million project to have Able-Ride
3 wall to wall in Nassau County, that
4 would be a desirable thing to do, but
5 it would require the county to make a
6 \$2 million commitment to begin with.
7 You can't apply to the federal
8 government and say we'll find the money
9 later if you give us two million. You
10 have to commit that money in some
11 fairly substantial way.

12 It's also a two-year renewable
13 program, and so if the county committed
14 the money and if the grant were made to
15 Nassau County, it would be subject to
16 renewal in two years, not a guaranteed
17 renewal, so the county would really be
18 making a \$4 million decision and that's
19 a fairly significant decision for the
20 county, as we all know from the budget
21 process, is in a fiscal condition. We
22 can't make -- we have to be careful
23 about making promises that we can't
24 keep.

25 Additionally, there are four

1 social service agencies in Nassau
2 County who currently receive 5310
3 grants. If you look at the design of
4 the program and the narrative, and
5 you can see it on the FTAs website,
6 it's really designed to go to private
7 nonprofits where transportation is part
8 of their mission.

9 Counties, local governments are
10 also eligible. Apparently Suffolk
11 County decided they wanted to do that,
12 but our judgment, our collective
13 judgment was that it didn't suit Nassau
14 County at this particular time. So
15 that's our decision for now. It's
16 certainly subject to further discussion
17 if you want.

18 The last thing I want to just very
19 briefly say is about making any kind of a
20 political comment. As you know, there
21 is a fairly spirited debate going on in
22 the county between the branches about
23 the bonding bill, and I'm not making a
24 political comment, but I think you
25 would want to know what's at stake in

1 the transportation area.

2 Basically, it includes \$6 million
3 of local match for -- I'm sorry, I
4 skipped one thing.

5 On the 5310 grant, we would also
6 need to acquire more buses in order to
7 do that. If we were to expand the
8 Able-Ride service area, some additional
9 number of paratransit vehicles would be
10 required. I should have included that
11 before.

12 So back to the bonding bill issue.
13 Just so you know, there's about
14 \$6 million of local match for federal
15 grants. I spoke to the legislature
16 earlier in the week and made the point
17 that it's very -- two things.

18 It's very important to continue
19 the fleet replacement program for all
20 the reasons we were talking about
21 earlier. We've got an old feet. They
22 need to be replaced. It's very
23 important that they be replaced in
24 terms of service quality and in terms
25 of cost. Vehicles get more and more

1 expensive to maintain the older they
2 get.

3 So the local match for new buses
4 is included in there. There's also
5 about \$6 million of operating funding
6 included in there even though there are
7 capital grants. Preventive maintenance
8 of federally assisted vehicles is
9 considered a capital expense in federal
10 accounting. Not in any other kind of
11 accounting, but in MTA accounting it
12 is. So some of the money that the
13 county has already expended in paying
14 us to do the maintenance, it's to be
15 reimbursed that way.

16 Lastly, I made the point that that
17 local match money is very efficient
18 money. It's ten percent of total cost,
19 so a dollar of local match leverages
20 another dollar of state match in \$8 of
21 federal money.

22 So you can spend a dollar and get
23 \$10 worth, if that's something you want
24 to do. I wanted to make sure that the
25 county knew that. The debate is not

1 about whether we should buy new buses
2 or not. You would want to be aware of
3 what the ramifications are for us.

4 Okay, the next phase -- maybe I
5 should stop. That's all informational
6 stuff. Is there anything you want me
7 to expand on or have questions about?

8 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: If in the
9 event we do not purchase new buses,
10 does that impact the restoration of
11 service throughout the year?

12 MR. SETZER: No. The short answer
13 is no. We haven't done anything to
14 affect the current purchases. If that
15 local match is never available, then
16 the county will have to find it
17 someplace else.

18 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: These are
19 40-foot CMGs, correct?

20 MR. SETZER: There are several
21 different kinds of vehicles. There are
22 actually several different grants in
23 this with several different years worth
24 of federal money.

25 Next is our score card. Now if

1 you recall, our contract requires that
2 these eight items be -- have goals set
3 for them and that the county either
4 reward us with incentives or charge us
5 with liquidated damages for missing the
6 goal by more than five percent. That's
7 what's in the contract.

8 So last fall we proposed what --
9 the contract says these are the areas,
10 it doesn't say what the goals are. So
11 we proposed some goals to you last
12 fall, and that's what you see on the
13 screen here, with the idea that we
14 would try this for a while and see
15 whether these goals were challenging
16 enough, but not too challenging.

17 My suggestion is we just do this
18 for a while and see how it works out
19 and then the committee could consider
20 whether the goals should be changed.

21 So let's just take these one by
22 one. This is the first quarter of
23 2016, it's the January, February,
24 March. There are three goals. The on
25 time performance goal we proposed was

1 70 percent. We actually hit 71.1
2 percent. So there's neither a penalty
3 nor a reward. That's with the five
4 percent up and down range.

5 Percentage of missed pullouts was
6 zero percent, and our actual was .14
7 percent. Very low. Again, well within
8 the five percent margin, so there's no
9 penalty or incentive there. Accidents
10 per 100,000 miles, we proposed 1.2. It
11 was a little higher than that, 1.26,
12 but still no reward or liquidated
13 damage for that.

14 In the paratransit area, we had
15 five goals. Again, these come from the
16 original contract. Calls answered
17 ratio of ninety percent, we had
18 86.2 percent. On time performance,
19 seventy percent. We actually did
20 significantly better, 84.5 percent, so
21 we're entitled to a \$5,000 incentive.

22 Now, I have to remind you that
23 incentives are not cash. The county
24 does not pay us cash for this.
25 Basically, we get credits that we can

1 use to pay liquidated damages if we
2 miss one, which is -- we'll get to
3 missed one in just a minute.

4 Percentage missed pullouts, zero.
5 We didn't miss any pullouts in
6 paratransit during the first quarter,
7 so nothing there. Accidents per
8 100,000 miles, 1.2 accidents per
9 100,000 miles was the goal we proposed.

10 We had a bad month during the
11 first quarter, so overall it was 1.5.
12 So you charge us with liquidated
13 damages of \$5,000 for the miss on that
14 one. We will -- we're pretty sure
15 we'll beat it in the second quarter,
16 but we did miss in that quarter.

17 Then we had 1.3 passengers per
18 hour, we actually had 1.37. So again,
19 within the five percent window. So total,
20 there's one liquidate advantage and one
21 incentive, so they cancel each other
22 out, so there's no exchange here.

23 Again, this is up to -- up to the
24 county. I think we should -- my
25 recommendation is we just try this for

1 a few quarters and see how it works and
2 see if you're satisfied that these are
3 challenging enough goals. You know, we
4 can -- we're always free -- since these
5 are proposed and negotiated, we're
6 always free to change those at some
7 point in the future if right now you
8 don't think they're appropriate, but my
9 recommendation is we try it out for a
10 while and see how it works.

11 That's all I have to report on.

12 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

13 MR. SETZER: Mr. Chairman,
14 anything I can answer questions on?

15 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Yeah. So
16 about flexi-ride, I guess I'll start
17 with that.

18 MR. SETZER: The which?

19 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: The flexi
20 service. Just a little bit more
21 information. So that's going to be --
22 even though it's going to be housed
23 within the Able-Ride call center,
24 it'll be a separate entity.

25 So does that include a separate

1 number? How many hires have you made
2 for this? How big is this section
3 going to be? Because I know we've got
4 a pretty over-zealous, in my opinion,
5 you know, two hour before you -- you
6 know, you want to call, you just call
7 two hours ahead and they'll pick you
8 up.

9 I think for any system, especially
10 a new system like this, is difficult,
11 so I just want to know about what is
12 that setup? What is it going to go
13 look like compared to Able-Ride and how
14 are the two going to work in cohesion
15 especially if the flexi-ride buses are
16 going to also double as Able-Ride
17 vehicles.

18 MR. SETZER: Good question. I had
19 planned a more detailed presentation on
20 this at our next meeting, but for now,
21 I would say that we purposely are using
22 the same call center because that bus
23 may be used for flexi service or it may
24 be used Able-Ride.

25 We've added one person in the call

1 center; is that right?

2 MR. KHOUSZ: Dedicated
3 specifically for flexi -- during flexi
4 operations.

5 MR. SETZER: Training is going on
6 beginning right now. First of all,
7 they're doing training. We're also
8 operating the community shuttles out of
9 the Able-Ride facility, so training is
10 going on there. That's part of what
11 we're testing is what the best way to
12 provide all that back room service is.

13 When we put it on the Elmont
14 flexi, this is an area where we think
15 demand will start fairly low. The
16 reason that the 2 and the 8 were
17 eliminated, they carried like a hundred
18 passengers -- hundred-passenger trips a
19 day. Some of those people have
20 undoubtedly found other service, so I
21 think it will start off with a fairly
22 modest demand.

23 If it seems to be working and it
24 seems like something that we can grow
25 and develop and use in other place,

1 then we'll make sure that it has the
2 resources that it needs to be
3 successful.

4 Our hope is -- all of this is
5 about right-sizing the service to the
6 actual demand. Another part of this is
7 that -- again, we'll talk about this
8 the next -- we're also looking at
9 bigger buses for some of the heavier
10 routes, articulated buses, trying to
11 get lots of seats on those places where
12 demand is heavy and intense and fewer
13 seats at a lower cost where demand
14 is -- well, it's kind of scattered and
15 not very intense.

16 This is the first time anybody has
17 done this anywhere in the U.S. It's
18 not uncommon in Europe. There is a
19 learning curve and this is an
20 experimental project.

21 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Will there be
22 MetroCard machines on the buses? How
23 will people pay for flexi ride?

24 MR. SETZER: Yes. The same way we
25 pay for regular service.

1 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Awesome.

2 MR. SETZER: And at the same fare
3 structure.

4 Mr. Chairman?

5 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Do you want to
6 say anything regarding the service
7 equity analysis, and to the best of
8 your knowledge, are there any changes
9 from, you know, the previous plans that
10 you have presented to the committee as
11 far as improving it now for this
12 resolution that we have to approve?

13 MR. SETZER: Certainly. The
14 service equity analysis that you have
15 in front of you is a federal
16 requirement. It's part of the Title 6,
17 Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act which
18 requires the policy board of the
19 transit agency that gets federal
20 money, that would be you, to
21 consider the impact of service changes
22 both down and up, decreases and
23 increases on populations such as
24 minority populations, low income
25 populations and populations of people

1 with limited English proficiency.

2 So what this is is a statistic
3 amount analysis that goes along with
4 the service additions we're talking
5 about so that you are aware of their
6 impact on those populations. We did
7 one last fall in preparation for the
8 service productions, so this refers to
9 the service increases.

10 Of course, they're -- to the
11 extent they affect people, they affect
12 people positively, so there's not --
13 there are no bombshells in the
14 analysis, but it is required, and so
15 you're asked today to accept it by
16 means of formal action so that the
17 record shows for the next triennial
18 three years from now that you fulfill
19 that requirement and consider the
20 demographic affects of these service
21 changes.

22 Is that a sufficient explanation?

23 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: That's fair.

24 The committee was furnished with two
25 letters concerning some complaints. I

1 believe you're aware of both of them.
2 I don't know if any of these
3 individuals are present today and I'm
4 sure you probably addressed some of
5 them already.

6 You just bring us up to date if
7 anything on -- we have an individual
8 from -- an individual, Sydney Marsh. She
9 talks about a number of things --

10 MR. SETZER: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: -- including
12 drivers using their cell phone.
13 Certainly, I don't know if it's an
14 isolated incident or what have you, and
15 we have a series of e-mails from --
16 give me a second here -- Angela
17 Buletti.

18 Apparently, Brian Nevin suggested
19 that they talk to you and that you
20 bring it to the committee. Are you
21 familiar with that?

22 MR. SETZER: The ones from Angela
23 Buletti, they're not complaints, are
24 they? I thought they were.

25 We work closely with her in that

1 regard, she's the publisher of Able
2 Newspaper.

3 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: All right.

4 MR. SETZER: Maybe while you're
5 looking, how about if I address the
6 first one, Cindy March?

7 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I think she
8 was talking about -- excuse me, I guess
9 you ran through that. She was talking
10 about the match grant of paratransit.

11 MR. SETZER: Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We've talked
13 about that, the county being forced to
14 put up fifty percent.

15 MR. SETZER: Right.

16 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: If you have
17 anything to say concerning this other
18 letter, --

19 MR. SETZER: Well, Cindy March, the
20 first one, ironically is the one that
21 Jean Jeune saved from the burning
22 vehicle. She's a regular Able-Ride
23 user. She has had -- we are in
24 constant contact with her. Jack spends
25 a good deal of time on person to person

1 discussions with her.

2 Because she's dependent on
3 Able-Ride, she is rightfully quick to
4 let us know if it's late or if the
5 driver's performance is inadequate in
6 any way.

7 Drivers using cell phones is a
8 chronic problem in our industry and for
9 us. We discipline operators for using
10 a cell phone and we've done that
11 frequently, but a driver can actually
12 lose his job for a second offense doing
13 that.

14 So we ask people to let us know
15 and to give us date and time and place
16 so that we make sure we're looking at
17 the correct driver. That is -- that's
18 a chronic problem for all motorists,
19 including people who drive buses.

20 We continue to put pressure on
21 that. It's part of our training, it's
22 part of our regular safety, and
23 ultimately it becomes a disciplinary
24 issue if the driver doesn't comply.

25 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Is there a

1 discipline --

2 A. Yes.

3 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: -- rule on it?

4 MR. SETZER: Yes. It's absolutely
5 forbidden. There's no situation where
6 it's appropriate for a driver to use a
7 cell phone while operating a bus. If
8 there's a personal emergency, they are
9 to pull over, stop the bus, secure it,
10 and then make the call.

11 Actually, we encourage drivers not
12 to have it with them at all so you're
13 not tempted to have it when it rings,
14 but that's a difficult thing to
15 enforce. Most people are so tied to
16 their cell phones now, they wouldn't
17 leave it behind, but it's a serious
18 issue and I appreciate --

19 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We have a
20 number of other comments, but I'm sure
21 you and she can handle it.

22 MR. SETZER: We actually
23 appreciate it when someone like Cindy
24 lets us know when she observes a driver
25 using a cell phone. We'll make sure

1 to make sure to do some observations on
2 our own.

3 Our newer buses, the new Flyers
4 that we've got 52 of them now, we're
5 buying 28 more. They're equipped with
6 a full video system, so if we're told
7 about any kind of action on anybody's
8 part, either the driver or the
9 passenger that's either good or bad, we
10 can go back and get video of it and
11 make sure that we know exactly what
12 really happened.

13 So we would encourage people to
14 let us know and we encourage drivers to
15 make sure you're not the subject of
16 such a complaint.

17 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Are there any
18 other questions from committee members
19 for Mr. Setzer?

20 MR. BERSE: There was a letter and
21 also a woman that came to one of our
22 earlier hearings to talk to you about
23 extending our route on Port Washington?

24 MR. SETZER: Yes.

25 MR. BERSE: What was done with

1 that?

2 MR. SETZER: Well, actually, that
3 lady is here. She's going to talk to
4 you in just a minute. But yes, I would
5 like to meet with them and to
6 understand what their needs were.

7 One of the things that we think
8 about this is that the apparent demand
9 there is not sufficient, nor do they
10 want a regular 40-foot bus going
11 through every thirty minutes.

12 The new flexi service, if it seems
13 to pan out well in Elmont, might very
14 well be just the right level of service
15 for what they're talking. Their needs
16 are very specific to certain times of
17 day. They're mostly getting employees
18 from train station to their work
19 location.

20 So a regular bus route going by
21 all day long is over -- is a much
22 heavier service than they actually
23 need. The flexi service would be a
24 better choice, I think, and that's part
25 of our discussion.

1 MR. BERSE: Okay, because I just
2 remember from years ago when it was
3 under the old regime, some of the
4 buses, for instance in Great Neck, like
5 every fourth run or every two hours
6 would do an extra stretch for whatever
7 reason, and I don't know if that was
8 something in the equation.

9 MR. SETZER: Well, we try to
10 avoid -- it's hard to do that while you
11 run a route, and every once in a while
12 you do a little diversion. It's hard
13 for passengers to understand it, it's
14 hard for drivers to do it and it's hard
15 to schedule it.

16 So we try to avoid those special
17 little diversions because they don't
18 work very well. You want -- with
19 regular scheduled bus route service,
20 you want it to be as predictable as
21 possible, or as close as you can.
22 That's why the flexi service, which is
23 demand responsive, is probably a better
24 alternative.

25 MR. BERSE: Just for clarification

1 for myself, this flexi service is
2 strictly for that service, for that --
3 when they call for these people, right?
4 Now, suppose if you have an able rider.
5 You said that they're the same type of
6 buses.

7 Would an Able-Ride person be able
8 to call for that flexi service instead
9 of calling like a regular Able-Ride
10 appointment?

11 MR. SETZER: Some of it is regular
12 fixed route. Actually, there are three
13 different ways it works, so the flexi
14 bus is dispatched out of Able-Ride.
15 It's got a regular route. It makes
16 about six regular stops probably.

17 MR. KHOUSZ: Roughly.

18 MR. SETZER: About six regular
19 stops that it always makes, and then
20 there are another four or five optional
21 stops that it makes only when somebody
22 calls at least two hours in advance.

23 They say, I need to get to the
24 hospital, will you drop me off there?
25 They will do that even though that's

1 not a regular stop.

2 Thirdly, an Able-Ride passenger
3 who's in that area, especially in the
4 off hours -- during the peak hours, we
5 won't be able to do that with some of
6 the Able-Ride vehicles just as we do
7 now.

8 In the off peak hours or the late
9 evening hours, we might use that
10 vehicle that's already in Elmont. If
11 there's an Able-Ride for Elmont, we'll
12 use that vehicle that's already there.
13 That's where the savings come from.

14 So again, we're -- this is
15 something new. We're going to try it
16 out.

17 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: I understand.
18 Thank you.

19 Are there any other questions from
20 any committee members to Mr. Setzer
21 before we move on to the public?

22 Mr. Setzer, thank you very much.

23 MR. SETZER: Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: At this point
25 in our agenda, we welcome anyone here

1 from the public to the floor for their
2 comments. Certainly, I'm sure there's
3 a number of complaints. Overall, our
4 protocol has always been to try to keep
5 our complaints in a positive manner and
6 hopefully things will be improved or
7 changed. We have some problems which
8 can get resolved, others may not.

9 Again, we're requiring you to keep
10 to three minutes, and again, to speak
11 slowly and clearly so that the reporter
12 can get your name down. I welcome any
13 comments.

14 MS. BETA: Hi, my name is Dorothy
15 Beta, little hard to spell, from 300
16 East Overlook in Port Washington, New
17 York, and I represent our group here,
18 plus about ten others are members of
19 the public bus subcommittee, and we
20 live in a senior facility with 300 --
21 300 seniors.

22 I would say the average age is
23 about 80, 85 perhaps, and we are
24 campaigning for public bus service on
25 West Shore Road, Port Washington. West

1 Shore Road goes along Hempstead Harbor.

2 We're requesting what we think is
3 not a huge request. It's a 4-mile loop
4 from Northern Boulevard on Route N23,
5 which would go north on West Shore Road,
6 loop up to the public park, the North
7 Hempstead Beach Park, and back down to
8 Northern Boulevard. So as I said, a
9 total of four miles.

10 Within that four miles are 70
11 industries, some of them sizeable.

12 There's a Hilton Garden Hotel which is
13 being built. Its employees are going
14 to need transportation. There's a golf
15 course, there's the Amsterdam where we
16 live, and there's also a public park
17 there, as I mentioned, which has no
18 public transportation. You've got to
19 have a car to get there.

20 I would like to just briefly tell
21 you a story about two employees. One
22 of them is a porter in our facility who
23 presently walks from the Port
24 Washington Train Station to the
25 Amsterdam where we live. This is a

1 3-mile walk. He's walking six miles a
2 day. I don't know if you'd like to do
3 that. I wouldn't.

4 There's another young man who's a
5 groundskeeper at the Harbor Links Golf
6 Course. He walks from Northern
7 Boulevard and, I would say, the clock
8 tower here in Roslyn. That's only
9 two miles. Not good, right? Would you
10 want to walk two miles, four miles a
11 day and mow lawns all day, no.

12 I think this bus would make life
13 much easier for everyone. We have a
14 very hard time at the Amsterdam getting
15 employees. I was talking to the
16 assistant executive director today. She
17 said that half the people who call
18 inquiring about jobs, she tells them
19 right away, she says this is a hard
20 place to get to and they can't follow
21 up on the jobs because they just can't
22 get there. That's fifty percent of the
23 people who call. They're desperate for
24 service people in our facility.

25 So I'd just like to ask one question

1 about what you showed, Mr. Setzer. Who
2 sets those goals up there, the goals
3 that you showed?

4 MR. SETZER: The performance
5 goals?

6 MS. BETA: Yes.

7 MR. SETZER: We recommended them
8 and this committee tentatively
9 accepted.

10 MS. BETA: So you set your own
11 goals?

12 MR. SETZER: Yes. Let me be
13 specific. The specific subject area
14 of the goals was negotiated in the
15 original contract back in 2011, the
16 levels. So on time performance was set
17 as one of the goal areas, the levels
18 that we set was what we recommended and
19 this committee has currently accepted.

20 May Mr. Levitt speak next? He's
21 part of our group.

22 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: State your
23 name.

24 MR. LEVITT: I'm Lou Levitt. I'm
25 a resident of the Amsterdam. I want to

1 tell you of our frustration. We have
2 two beautiful NICE routes two miles
3 from us, the N23 and the N21. They
4 coincide in Roslyn. We need
5 dishwashers, nurse's aides,
6 housekeeping personnel, cooks. We need
7 people, many of whom can't afford
8 automobiles because of the wages in
9 that category.

10 There is a new hotel coming, a
11 Hilton Garden Inn. They will need the
12 same employees. There are seventy
13 businesses on West Shore Drive, so our
14 frustration is, to see these buses
15 coming close but nowhere near where we
16 are. We need your help.

17 We experience staff shortages from
18 time to time. We employ college
19 students who graduate and move on. We
20 need an employee who will be there and
21 will be there for us full-time. We're
22 not asking for a shuttle bus. We're
23 asking for fourteen more minutes on the
24 N23 route. We think it's a reasonable
25 request.

1 There was once service on West
2 Shore Road. We think the new
3 businesses, we think our presence and
4 the presence of the hotel warrant the
5 extension of service. We think it's
6 reasonable, we think it's possible, we
7 don't think it's going to cost a lot of
8 money and we think whatever money it's
9 going to cost, it'll be made up by the
10 additional ridership. We need your
11 help in making it possible. Thank you
12 very much.

13 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you.

14 MR. ROSARIO: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Richard? Is
16 it Richard? State your full name when
17 you come up to the mic.

18 MR. SETZER: I, Richard Cullary,
19 (phonetic), come before you within the
20 presence of the some questions
21 concerning the flexi-ride service that
22 will be part of the N73, 74 bus service
23 that's coming back in September.

24 Why is there no low fare service
25 even though it's supposed to be part of

1 the contract between NICE and Nassau
2 County?

3 Members of the TAC, even though I
4 am grateful that there will be N73, 74
5 service that will be restored, there is
6 the question of the flexi-ride service
7 that the new N73, 74 will be a part of.

8 From what I can gather from my
9 sources, the BRU, apparently to use the
10 flexi-ride service you have to make a
11 phone call two hours prior to the time
12 you wish to be picked up. The only
13 trouble is that the same department that
14 you wish to call also shares the same
15 services -- same offices as Able-Ride,
16 a service that is having severe
17 staffing issues.

18 My question, is NICE planning to
19 increase staffing for both flexi-ride
20 or Able-Ride or is this going to be
21 another mess? And question two, also I
22 have heard as part of the NICE contract
23 with Nassau County, they are supposed
24 to have low fares for people who are
25 in low income.

1 Explain to me, explain to --
2 members of the TA, why is there not --
3 keep on raising these fares while at
4 while at the same time causing our
5 service to dwindle? That is all for
6 now.

7 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you,
8 Richard.

9 Anyone else?

10 MR. WELLS: Good afternoon. I'm
11 Frederich Wells. I reside in Queens,
12 but I also depend on the NICE bus. Here
13 are a few questions I have. Number one,
14 the flexi service that's replacing the
15 2, since I live in the Queens, Nassau
16 border, that's almost like my area so
17 to speak. I mean, how is that going to
18 benefit those folks?

19 I mean, it's like, are you focusing
20 on the demands for folks going to the
21 Green Acres Mall? Because a lot of
22 folks who can't afford the railroad,
23 they want to commute-- they want to
24 commute into Queens to connect with the
25 subway like in that area where the 2

1 and 8 was lost, and it's like a long
2 walk to the N1 or N25 which provides
3 extra transfers to the buses to
4 Jamaica.

5 Also, the only two routes that run
6 24 hours in the NICE bus system is my
7 line, the N4 and the N6, which runs
8 Jamaica to Hempstead which is not
9 enough. It's not enough. It's not
10 enough if you're planning on looking
11 for a job in Nassau or Suffolk County,
12 but pretty much Nassau County. It's
13 not enough because folks that hire,
14 they want people that can work, say like
15 three to midnight, four to midnight or
16 work overnight shift. They want people
17 that can work odd hour shifts, and if
18 there's no bus service, people can't
19 take those jobs.

20 What happened to trying to like
21 install like 24-hour service on routes
22 that run -- that run pretty well, but
23 still have a curfew? Like example, the
24 N15 or the N31 or the N22, what
25 happened to putting 24-hour service on

1 those routes, you know, and things like
2 that?

3 Because people need -- people need
4 the bus service. If they don't have a
5 car, they need the bus service to be
6 able to go to their job -- actually,
7 take a job on Nassau County. That's
8 all. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Thank you,
10 sir.

11 As I understand it, there will be
12 some restoration of certain routes
13 going on in a staggered schedule.
14 Specifically, I don't know which ones
15 those are.

16 Would you have any comment on
17 that, Mr. Setzer?

18 MR. SETZER: Yes, Mr. Chairman,
19 thank you.

20 Each of the last three speakers
21 was really getting to the issue of
22 limited resources. The resources
23 available to Nassau County Transit
24 Service amount to \$131 million this
25 year.

1 So the recommendations that we
2 make to you are always about the best
3 way to use those dollars. There are
4 still un-met needs. There are desires
5 for service that -- for instance,
6 24-hour service on the 15, as the
7 gentleman just before me, mentioned
8 would be a desirable thing, but it
9 takes -- it's a zero sum situation.

10 In order to have 24-hour service
11 on the 15, those dollars have to come
12 from someplace else. There's never
13 enough money to meet all the needs. So
14 we make these recommendations knowing
15 that everyone's needs are not being
16 met.

17 I would say the same thing about
18 the Port Washington needs. Sure,
19 there are people who would like to get
20 to those jobs there, and sure, we would
21 like to serve them, but again, we have
22 to -- we have to recommend to you, and
23 I think you have to consider, what's the
24 best use of the dollars that are
25 available.

1 If a lot more dollars were
2 available, we would do a lot more, we
3 would be happy to do that, but that's
4 not the -- that's hardly ever the
5 situation in public service where
6 there's an unlimited amount of
7 resources available.

8 So that's kind of the big picture
9 on some of these questions. The last
10 gentleman also asked some questions
11 about how flexi would work. In the
12 Elmont flexi will serve the mall as he
13 asked and will also connect with the 4
14 and the 6, which are the main ways to
15 get into Queens.

16 So those are regular stops. You
17 don't have to make an advanced
18 reservation for any of those. It will
19 operate on a regular schedule and those
20 will be some of the permanent stops.

21 I have one other item to touch on.

22 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: We have some
23 more comments, so maybe you want to
24 hold up, and this way it'll be more
25 comprehensive.

1 MS. COPELAND: I'm not going to
2 use the mic because I can talk pretty
3 loud.

4 My name is Brianna Copeland. I'm
5 from Elmont. I'm just speaking on
6 behalf of myself as well as other riders
7 that are disabled that ride the fixed
8 route. I'm in touch with a lot of
9 paratransits too.

10 One of my main issues that we have
11 been speaking, and I spoke to Mr. Jack
12 as well as others within the customer
13 service, is the ramps to the new fleets
14 and the CNGs, the new ones that just
15 got put, those ramps are not working.

16 So I don't know how they're being
17 checked in the morning or who's writing
18 off on them, but they're not working.
19 I'm not going to be the one -- it can
20 be anybody with a disability that may
21 need that ramp, and I've had problems
22 with drivers just not wanting to use
23 the ramp or not able to use the ramp,
24 and suspending the driver is fine, but
25 knowing that these things are

1 recurring, is there a notice that's
2 going out to everyone because we're
3 just not really -- it's not being met
4 with everyone because it keeps
5 happening on different routes.

6 It can happen again on the 25
7 where a driver just refuses to take
8 me or refuses to take anyone because
9 the ramp is not working. So I guess
10 my thing is, I know we said that we
11 went through the paratransit and
12 inspected those.

13 So are the newer fleets -- I'm
14 sorry, are they being inspected
15 recurrently because I don't see where
16 that's going?

17 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer,
18 I have to ask for the answer to this
19 directly.

20 MR. SETZER: Sure. The ramps on
21 the -- the ramp is the replacement for
22 the hydraulic lift. It is operated
23 mechanically, but it can, even when the
24 mechanical part doesn't work, it can be
25 operated manually. The driver can use

1 a -- with a fairly reasonable amount of
2 effort operate that ramp.

3 So when you're told that a ramp
4 isn't working, you're not being told
5 the truth. Ramps, there's nothing to
6 go wrong with them. It's a solid piece
7 of steel on a hinge. There's virtually
8 nothing to go wrong with it.

9 We've talked before and you've
10 let us know, there may be some
11 operators who need some further
12 instruction. It's part of their
13 training that they must provide that
14 service.

15 One of the things that happens on
16 the 6 to both people in wheelchairs as
17 well as all the other passengers who
18 use the 6, is that they get passed up
19 because there's no room on the bus.
20 That does happen sometimes. We've seen
21 it happen. I've got video where they
22 literally -- there's no room to get
23 another person on the bus. So that may
24 be happening some of the time.

25 It is -- what we were talking

1 about, un-met needs just a minute ago.
2 One of the most significant unmet needs
3 is having enough service on the big
4 routes. The big routes serve so many
5 people and are so crowded, that the 6,
6 the N6 carries almost 15,000 trips a
7 day.

8 During peak hours especially, it's
9 just jam packed. We do pass people up
10 because you can't get anybody else on
11 the bus in a wheelchair or not in a
12 wheelchair. So that may be the case in
13 some situations. When you report to us
14 a driver who has refused service saying
15 a ramp doesn't work, we'll take action
16 in that case.

17 To go to your question about
18 inspecting them, inspecting the
19 operation of the wheelchair access
20 device, whether a hydraulic lift or a
21 ramp, it's part of the regular
22 maintenance, regular preventive
23 maintenance inspection every
24 6,000 miles, but it's also a
25 requirements for the drivers to cycle

1 it every day before they go out.

2 So there's a process that a driver
3 has to go through. including a walk
4 around and an inspection of certain
5 items, and cycling either the lift or
6 the ramp to make sure it works before
7 their bus leaves the garage.

8 So it's possible that a ramp or a
9 lift particularly would work during
10 that pre-trip inspection and then fail
11 in service because they're -- it's just
12 a very difficult design to maintain,
13 but the ramps, that should virtually
14 never happen. Short of being in an
15 accident, there's no reason that a ramp
16 would ever be disabled.

17 They get cycled before they go
18 out, and that's why we want to know
19 anytime you are refused service on the
20 basis that the ramp or the lift doesn't
21 work, and you do a good job of letting
22 us know.

23 MS. COPELAND: Can I ask one more
24 question? The paratransit system, I
25 know you had checked your numbers about

1 the on time arrival and everything.
2 Recently as I ride paratransit, there's
3 been some type of delay within
4 services. A window can be from 9:30 to
5 10, and you don't get picked up until
6 10:45, 11:00 sometimes.

7 Is there something that's going on
8 within the process to where there are
9 not enough vans, you know, to service
10 the people, or what exactly is the
11 issue?

12 MR. SETZER: Actually, you're
13 pretty close to it. There is something
14 going on right now. There are not
15 enough working vans. We're
16 experiencing a lot of problems with the
17 old International vehicles, so we've
18 had a couple of days, especially mid
19 week when demand is high where we're
20 delayed because there aren't enough
21 working vehicles, but you also saw that
22 there are 32 new ones on order.

23 That problem will get
24 significantly better very soon. I
25 apologize for that, and it has caused

1 regular delays, especially Tuesday,
2 Wednesday, Thursday.

3 MS. COPELAND: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Ms. Copeland,
5 just for the record, just so you know,
6 Legislator Solages, S-O-L-A-G-E-S,
7 spoke to me about your concerns and I
8 passed those concerns to the committee
9 members and to Mr. Setzer.

10 MS. COPELAND: Thank you.

11 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: In response to
12 the International portion of the fleet,
13 how many vehicles are in the Able-Ride
14 fleet and how much of that fleet is
15 made up by these older International
16 vehicles? Essentially, how often are
17 we going to expect this until we can
18 get the full roll out of the new
19 vehicles and the switchover?

20 MR. SETZER: Good question. There
21 are a little over a hundred vehicles in
22 the fleet. That includes a few sedans,
23 26 minivans, which are pretty reliable,
24 and what's left of that, 80, just short
25 80 Internationals.

1 So this next order of 32 will
2 replace -- not quite half of those will
3 replace the oldest and the least
4 reliable. But yes, you're right, this
5 problem won't instantly be solved until
6 we've replaced all of them.

7 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Thank you.

8 MR. SETZER: I have one other
9 issue --

10 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: By all means.

11 MR. SETZER: -- unless there are
12 other.

13 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Endo has a
14 comment. Again, maybe you'll sum it
15 up.

16 Mr.Endo, what I'm going to
17 recommend, why don't you stand with me.
18 Come around here. Let everybody see
19 you. I think it would probably be
20 better, okay, let me -- introduce
21 yourself, and what we'll do, Mr.Endo
22 is, we'll have Ms. D'Agostino read the
23 comments for you, is that okay?

24 MR. ENDO: Yeah.

25 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Introduce

1 yourself.

2 MR. ENDO: My name is Yuki Endo,
3 resident of Jackson Heights, Queens and
4 member of the Long Island Bus Riders Union.

5 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Ms.
6 D'Agostino, will you please read
7 Mr. Endo's comments to the committee.

8 You can stand, Mr. Endo.

9 MS. D'AGOSTINO: "My name is Yuki
10 Endo, resident of Jackson Heights,
11 Queens and a member of the Long Island
12 Bus Riders Union.

13 I am grateful for NICE Bus to
14 restore 6-Day N80, 81 and N7 bus, but
15 not really for N14 bus because nobody
16 uses N14. I am speaking in behalf of
17 N19 and N20 bus drivers. N20 bus
18 riders used to have direct bus service
19 between Hicksville and Flushing via
20 Great Neck Station and NICE Bus started
21 splitting route in two segments. N20H
22 and N20G bus will save time; however,
23 it does not at all.

24 N20H Band, N20G bus riders are
25 getting off at Middle Neck Road/North

1 Boulevard to catch their connecting
2 bus. By the time some N20G Great Neck
3 bus gets to Middle Neck Road/Northern
4 Boulevard, N20 Hicksville bus are
5 waiting for left turn signal forcing
6 passengers to play Frogger to cross an
7 extreme dangerous intersection, and
8 some passengers almost got hit by
9 motorists.

10 N20/21 bus riders don't want to
11 risk their connection at Great Neck
12 Train Station because sometimes
13 supervisors send bus to north side of
14 station forcing passengers to scramble
15 across pedestrian bridge.

16 During rush hour, N20G bus line at
17 Great Neck Station are overcrowded due
18 to many passengers from N20H and N21
19 bus getting on same bus. Many N20 bus
20 riders on full restoration of direct
21 N20 bus service because this is not
22 helping bus riders and bus drivers at
23 all.

24 I have YouTube video proof of N20
25 riders risking their lives for

1 connecting bus called N20G playing
2 Frogger for N20H. It's a YouTube link
3 and the quote is N20G playing Frogger
4 for N20H. It can be found on YouTube.

5 On weekday basis, 8:15 P.M., N20H
6 Great Neck bus driver which continues
7 as 9:20 P.M. N20G Flushing bus, former
8 MTA bus driver used to let passengers
9 stay on the bus; however, different
10 driver kicks everyone off the bus at
11 Great Neck Train Station to pay again.

12 For N19 bus, many N19 bus riders
13 want restoration of Carmel Mill Road
14 and Montauk Highway service between
15 Sunrise Mall and Babylon Train Station
16 because N72 doesn't operate to/from
17 Babylon on Sunday and there's no
18 Suffolk County Transit S20 loop bus on
19 that day.

20 Wednesday, May 25th, 8:45 P.M.,
21 N20H Great Neck bus driver who
22 continues as 9:50 P.M. N20G Flushing
23 bus skipped first stop, Hicksville
24 Station because driver took wrong turn.

25 On Thursday, June 16th at 1:48 at

1 Northern Boulevard/Schunk Avenue, 1:32
2 P.M., N25 Lynbrook, number 1727 bus
3 driver skipped two passengers including
4 me. Tuesday, June 21st, 3:20 P.M., N33
5 Long Beach bus never show up at Far
6 Rockaway.

7 Before NICE Bus implement
8 reservation on demand bus, NICE Bus
9 should take trip up to Sussex County,
10 New Jersey to ride Skyland Connector On
11 Demand Bus, which is reservation bus
12 where bus riders has to call in ahead.

13 Nassau County need to take action
14 to increase funding for NICE Bus. As
15 you read on newspapers or saw on news,
16 Able-Ride Paratransit and N25 bus
17 caught on fire. This is exactly what
18 happens when bus and paratransit buses
19 are not maintenance well.

20 Also NICE Bus should get permit
21 from NYC DOT to post detour sign for
22 several NICE bus stop in Queens because
23 Flushing New Year Parade, N20G bus
24 riders are waiting for bus at Roosevelt
25 Ave/Main Street not knowing street were

1 closed.

2 Thank you for your cooperation,
3 Yuki Endo."

4 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer,
5 you may as well as finish if you don't
6 mind.

7 MR. SETZER: I'm sorry. Excuse
8 me.

9 MR. WEXLER: Paul Wexler,
10 Uniondale. I noticed the bus to Jones
11 Beach goes to 9:00 P.M. only, and they
12 have a good summer series of concerts
13 from line dancing, all this
14 entertainment from Monday through
15 Sunday from 8:00 to 10:00 P.M., but the
16 bus stops at 9:00 P.M.

17 So maybe some nights a week you
18 can have an 11 P.M. bus, and earlier in
19 the day, maybe cancel a 2 or 4 P.M. bus
20 to equal it out. Because it would be
21 nice to go to some of these concerts
22 because the taxi service to Freeport is
23 usually 25 or 30 dollars a person just
24 to get there and back. All said, it's
25 kind of cost prohibitive just to attend

1 these free concerts.

2 So I was hoping you would add a
3 couple of nights a week an 11:00 bus.

4 Okay, thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Setzer.

6 MR. SETZER: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Is there
8 someone else? I didn't see your hand.

9 Q. That's all right. I'm Sylvia
10 Silberger. I was just wanting to comment if
11 there's any ideas on public campaigns to increase
12 ridership? Right now it seems like the bus
13 service is dependent completely on economically
14 disabled and disabled individuals where we have
15 a huge congestion problem and a huge green
16 house gas problem on the island, and when we cut
17 service, it makes it more likely that people
18 won't ride the bus.

19 It seems that an outreach, commercial
20 outreach to try and get ridership might be a
21 useful endeavor for NICE to engage in. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: That's a good
23 idea.

24 Mr. Setzer, you can comment as you
25 see fit to address some of these

1 comments, or in general, whatever you
2 choose.

3 MR. SETZER: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 I think I'll go back to my last
6 comment, that we recognize that there
7 are many un-met needs in Nassau County
8 for public transportation service.
9 Always, our job is to use what is
10 available in the best way possible.

11 The lady who just spoke suggested
12 that building ridership would be one
13 way to improve that. Well, we have to
14 keep in mind that currently our fare
15 box covers about 45 percent of the cost
16 of service and taxpayers cover the
17 other, the 55 percent that remains.

18 So adding riders meets many of the
19 goals that she referred to, such as the
20 environmental goals, but it doesn't
21 solve the financial problem. In fact,
22 it makes the financial problem worst,
23 worse.

24 The current problem that we have
25 actually is not -- you might say is too

1 many riders. On the big lines, as we
2 mentioned just a few minutes ago, we're
3 passing people up. Even if we could
4 attract more people, we have no place
5 for them to sit, we have no way to
6 increase our revenue on those big
7 lines.

8 Sure, it's always a goal to
9 distribute the service so we can carry
10 as many riders as possible, but --
11 and carrying more riders meets a lot of
12 other goals, but it doesn't make your
13 bottom line any better. The ultimate
14 requirement is a lot more subsidy
15 revenue, and that's beyond our scope
16 here today as to how many tax dollars
17 will be available.

18 The last thing I wanted to do sort
19 of goes along with this, and that is to
20 direct your attention to the three-ring
21 binder in front of you. It's called
22 Transit Development Plan.

23 What this is, is an analysis of
24 what service is like now, including some
25 of these overcrowding issues that I was

1 talking about. The difference
2 between -- I'll let you read it at your
3 leisure. This is meant to be the
4 beginning of conversation.

5 It also then follows with some
6 ideas about how we could make bus
7 service in Nassau County better. Some
8 of those ideas you're already seeing,
9 the idea of right-sizing the vehicles
10 so that we had the smaller less
11 expensive vehicle where demand was
12 light and the bigger, more expensive
13 vehicle where demand was heavy. It
14 also includes a lot of technology ideas
15 which will be part of the solution.

16 The purpose -- this is not a plan
17 that we're asking you to approve, to
18 accept or reject. It's meant to begin
19 a conversation. We've shown it to the
20 County Executive. We're about to show
21 it to members of the legislature. We
22 will take it out to people in the
23 community, to groups in the community
24 that are interested in it.

25 What we're trying to do is get a

1 conversation going so we can -- about
2 what we really want in the future, not
3 we here in this room, but what the
4 whole community wants so that we can
5 begin to put some -- there are no
6 budgets in there.

7 We're not saying give us another
8 \$10 million and this will happen. We
9 are saying that here are some things
10 that can be done to make NICE Bus,
11 Nassau County Transit Service better
12 and may work better.

13 These are initial ideas to be
14 discussed and considered and added to
15 and subtracted from by the entire
16 community and anyone who's interested
17 in this.

18 So we're going to start shopping
19 this around to interested groups and
20 individuals. We want you to see it, we
21 want to give you some time to take a
22 look at it.

23 We plan to do some presentations
24 in the future on some of the ideas that
25 are in here and we hope it leads to

1 more of a consensus in the future about
2 what we would like to accomplish, we,
3 broadly, the whole community, what we
4 would like to accomplish, what
5 resources can be committed to this so
6 we have some consensus about would
7 where we're going.

8 I don't think this is a quick
9 solution to anything. If you voted to
10 do it all right now, that really
11 wouldn't make any difference. It still
12 comes down to a resource issue, but
13 lacking a consensus on what could be,
14 how we can make NICE Bus more useful to
15 more people. It's pretty mature to talk
16 about resources until we decide what it
17 is, having a better picture of where
18 we're trying to go.

19 So I would appreciate if you would
20 take a look at that. We'll come back
21 with some presentations in the future
22 meetings and also some reports on what
23 we mere out in the community from
24 people about what their desires are.

25 Thank you very much for that.

1 That's all I had to say. I would be
2 happy to respond to anything else if I
3 can.

4 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Any further
5 questions by committee members to Mr.
6 Setzer?

7 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: One last one.
8 I forgot to mention this before.

9 So I know that Transdev was
10 supposed to put forth the initial \$1.25
11 million for the Everybody Rides NICE.

12 MR. SETZER: Right.

13 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Is that just
14 for the initial start up, you know,
15 hiring a location, getting staff, get a
16 location, whatever it might be to set
17 up this nonprofit, or is it \$1.2 million
18 of MetroCards? How much, you know,
19 rides are we giving out to the
20 community? How expansive is this
21 program really going to be, at least
22 when the ball starts to roll, when it
23 does get going?

24 MR. SETZER: Almost all the 1.25
25 million will go for MetroCards. There

1 will be no additional staff unless in
2 the future it gets to be a huge
3 problem. The staffing is all -- it's
4 us.

5 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: So it's not
6 separate from Transdev, it's still --

7 MR. SETZER: It is a separate
8 entity, but all the staff work will be
9 done by NICE staff people. NICE isn't
10 going to charge the foundation for the
11 work that we do. So there may be a few
12 expenses, printing or something like
13 that, but most of it is going to go
14 into actual rides.

15 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Awesome.

16 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Mr. Rosario.

17 MR. ROSARIO: On that, I didn't
18 hear the answer as to the possibility of
19 transportation for those concerts. We
20 know that they do end at night, and I
21 think it would be unfair for people to
22 buy tickets and then have to leave.

23 Is there an answer for that?

24 MR. SETZER: Yes. We're aware of
25 that. Again, this goes back to one of

1 these -- having to make these
2 difficult choices about which service
3 is sustainable and which isn't.

4 What happened with concert service
5 in the past is that was completely
6 unpredictable. We could put a lot of
7 buses out there, and depending on who
8 the act was or what the weather was,
9 nobody takes the bus home from these
10 concerts.

11 So it's an expensive -- it's one
12 of those many nice to-haves, but it's
13 expensive. So that's why we've had to
14 cut a lot of corners like this in order
15 to keep the daily service on the
16 street. It's not what we like to do,
17 but it's what is necessary.

18 MR. ROSARIO: Also with the
19 section about Port Jefferson --

20 MR. WATKINS-LOPEZ: Port
21 Washington.

22 MR. ROSARIO: Port Washington.
23 I'm sorry. Was there anything maybe in
24 the future as to when this hotel opens
25 up? Is there anything that we could

1 foresee should a huge hotel open up
2 there and then you could probably see
3 more ridership in that area?

4 Like you said though, more
5 ridership doesn't answer more
6 transportation, but is there anything
7 that we could see maybe down the way?

8 MR. SETZER: That's a possibility
9 if there was -- you probably understand
10 this better than most, that when you
11 try to serve something by diversion off
12 a regular line, it doesn't work so
13 well, which is essentially -- it may be
14 a few minutes, but you know, building a
15 schedule, fourteen minutes is a big deal
16 when you try to do it on sort of an
17 exception basis. It doesn't sound like
18 a big deal, but it is.

19 That's why I think if this flexi
20 service works out, I think that's a
21 better solution because it's sort of
22 demand responsive, it can be tailored
23 to exactly what the needs are.

24 We would like to try the flexi
25 service in September and see how that

1 works. We hope it grows. It really
2 is a less expensive way to meet
3 specialized needs. It might be a very
4 good solution to a lot of problems.

5 MR. ROSARIO: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN SHRENKEL: Any other
7 questions for Mr. Setzer from committee
8 members? From committee members only.

9 I would like to thank you,
10 everybody who came and contributed from
11 the public in presenting their
12 problems, and, as I said, sometimes some
13 things can be resolved and sometimes
14 they cannot, but if possible, there's
15 always room for improvement and the
16 change begins with communication, so
17 thank you for your comments.

18 At this time I would like someone
19 to make a motion to adopt a resolution
20 to approve the service equity analysis.

21 Mr. Watkins-Lopez, thank you.

22 Will someone second that?

23 Mr. Rosario, thank you.

24 Prior to this vote which was sent
25 out earlier, by a show of hands that

1 everyone has received a copy of the
2 resolution of the equity analysis.

3 Okay, at this time, again,
4 Mr. Watkins, thank you for adopting the
5 resolution. Mr. Rosario, thank you for
6 seconding, and with a show of hands I
7 think we can all say that we want to
8 adopt a resolution regarding this, to
9 approve this service equity analysis.

10 All members agree. Thank you.
11 Resolution to approve the service
12 equity analysis has been accomplished.

13 At this point I would like to
14 make another motion to adjourn our
15 meeting. Mr. Rosario, make a move.

16 Anyone want to second it?

17 Thank you, Ms. D'Agostino.

18 Thank you for coming. The meeting
19 is adjourned.

20 (Whereupon, the Nassau County Bus
21 Transit Committee meeting was concluded
22 at 6:00 P.M.)

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

STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : SS.:
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK)

I, ALEX TURTEL, a Notary Public for and within
the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the minutes of the Nassau County Bus
Transit Committee meeting are a true and accurate
record of the stenographic notes taken by me
therein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
hand this 21st day of July, 2016.

Alex Turtel
ALEX TURTEL

