

Certified Original

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NICE BUS MEETING

Held on Thursday, April 7, 2022

Zoom conference

5:30 p.m.

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S :
2 SHELDON SHRENKEL, CHAIRMAN
3 JACK KHZOUZ, NICE CEO
4 ERIKA RICHARDS
5 CARRIE MILLER
6 TONY ROSARIO
7 JOEL BERSE
8 SHARON PERSAUD
9 JEAN DUROSEAU
10 LATOYA PIPPINS
11 DAWN FALCO
12 REGINALD BENJAMIN
13 PETER DISILVIO, ESQ.

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1 (Time noted: 5:30 p.m.)

2 MR. CHAIRMAN: Will the meeting please
3 come to order?

4 Good evening. Welcome to the Nassau
5 County Bus Transit Committee. I'm Sheldon
6 Shrenkel. I'm chairman of the committee and
7 I'd like to introduce our members. And I'll do
8 that in conjunction with their acceptance of
9 the minutes of the last meeting, which we
10 should've all received by now.

11 With a show of hands and Ms. Valdez or
12 Erica, if you can help me putting the cameras
13 on our members as we introduce them, I would
14 appreciate it.

15 We have Mr. Tony Rosario.

16 MR. ROSARIO: Present.

17 MR. CHAIRMAN: We have Mr. John Duroseau.

18 MR. DUROSEAU: Present.

19 MR. CHAIRMAN: We have Mr. Joel Berse.

20 MR. BERSE: Howdy.

21 MR. CHAIRMAN: We have our counsel to the
22 committee, Mr. DiSilvio.

23 MR. DISILVIO: Good evening, Peter.

24 MR. CHAIRMAN: Ms. Falco and I believe
25 Ms. D'Agostino has told us that most likely

1 would not be available and told us that quite a
2 while ago.

3 In any case, our agenda is an important
4 agenda tonight.

5 We're going to first hear a presentation
6 by NICE's CEO, Mr. Jack Khzouz, and he's going
7 to update us on some important matters,
8 particularly the service. And equally
9 important is we will be voting on the budget
10 for 2022-2023. And we will also be hopefully
11 approving Title 6 report for 2022. We will be
12 taking those votes after the public comments.

13 So, with that, I'd like to introduce the
14 CEO of NICE Transportation, Mr. Jack Khzouz.

15 MR. KHZOUZ: Thank you, Chairman. And I
16 want to at this point thank everyone, all the
17 BTC members. An important job that you've done
18 and committed to for many years and we very
19 much appreciate your service and attention to
20 the important matters that we're going to cover
21 today.

22 We are going to cover the budget. As
23 you'll see, the budget is made up primarily of
24 state-operated assistance funds.

25 Unfortunately, as you all know or may

1 know, the state budget has not been finalized.
2 It is late this year which means this budget
3 that we're going to be voting on will be
4 assumed. From what I understand, and reading,
5 doing a lot of reading, and my contacts in
6 Albany, the budget isn't being hung up because
7 of financial matters, it's because hung up
8 because of policy. So, we don't anticipate any
9 changes to the operating budget.

10 With that, let's jump in but I wanted to
11 make that statement before we start so we
12 understand where we were.

13 We're going to start with our service
14 hours. So, the 2022 operating service hours is
15 as follows: For Paratransit, you can see in
16 2021, we offered 149,000 revenue hours. This
17 year, we're projecting to offer 170.7 revenue
18 hours. Again, Paratransit is based on demand.
19 So, as demand grows, so will the service hours.

20 The 169.7 pretty much represents an
21 80 percent return to normal, pre-pandemic
22 levels. That's our assumptions for the end of
23 the year. As you can see, it's a fairly large
24 increase and we continue to offer Paratransit
25 to all those clients that need that lifeline

1 service.

2 Fixed route very happy to report for 2021,
3 we logged in 807,500 revenue hours -- that
4 should say 2022 actually -- shows that we're
5 going to be logging in 885,850 hours, so about
6 a 10 percent increase over the previous year.
7 So, the first slide gives it away. We are
8 planning for a service increase for this year
9 happily and I'm very happy to report that.

10 So, let's break that down in how this gets
11 done.

12 Here's our operating budget and you've all
13 seen this pie chart in the past. New York
14 State operating assistance, because of the
15 support of our state representatives and our
16 local representatives, we saw a large increase
17 this year in STOA funds. \$103 million for
18 Nassau County makes up a large percentage of
19 our total funding, which is fantastic. It
20 allows us to increase service. It allows us to
21 keep fares stable. Very, very happy to report
22 that. Nassau County required STOA match, the
23 2.5 million, as shown here.

24 FTA CRRSAA funds, those are funds that
25 came through the COVID support. That is used

1 to make up the fare box difference, the
2 passenger revenue. Our normal passenger
3 revenue tends to be about the 40 million, 42
4 million dollar range. CRRSAA makes up the
5 difference in where we are going to
6 presumptuously end the year and will help us
7 throughout the next few years actually
8 stabilize service. That's fantastic news.

9 Passenger revenue is projected currently
10 at 28,600,000, a very large chunk. In most
11 public agencies, passenger revenue makes up a
12 much smaller percentage but that's because
13 support of our passengers and great ridership.

14 And then, non-revenue use or non-user
15 revenues which means advertising and some other
16 lease holds that we hold on behalf of the
17 county.

18 Our total budget tonight we're going to
19 talking about is a budget of just shy of \$149
20 million, the largest operating budget we've
21 ever had in Nassau County. I'm very happy to
22 report.

23 So, again, our budget is broken up and our
24 rates are broken up two different ways. We
25 have the facilities and all the hard costs and

1 then we have a variable rate or rate per hour
2 of service on the street. Our fixed fee last
3 year was 3,846,000,000 a month. This year,
4 it's risen a little bit to 3.9 million, almost
5 \$4 million. We'll talk about how that happened
6 this year in a few minutes.

7 Our rates are as follows: Slight increase
8 in fixed route from \$99 to 101. On the
9 Paratransit side we saw a little bit larger in
10 increase 54 to \$56. Mostly that has to do with
11 two different things. Number 1, we run diesel
12 vehicles on the Paratransit side. Everybody
13 has seen what's happened with diesel fuel.
14 That's the majority of the increase there.
15 There's also an increase in our liability cost.
16 Cost on liability insurance has gone up quite a
17 bit across the board. On our Paratransit it's
18 a little higher, so a slight higher increase
19 there for our hourly rate.

20 Next side, please.

21 The operating budget breaks down as we
22 do -- these are the high-level operating
23 budget. Operator wages takes quite a jump.
24 Again, that basically reflects more service
25 hours, more operators, more overtime to get

1 service out on the street. It's a benefit for
2 our dedicated frontline employees.

3 Maintenance wages increase slightly also.
4 Again, that's all based on miles traveled.

5 Other wages, administration, and odds and
6 ends, you'll see a small increase there.

7 Fringe benefits, again, is a percentage of
8 wages. So, you'll see an increase there.

9 Services, those are odds and ends outside
10 services we contract with. There is quite an
11 increase there and we're trying to look at some
12 different ways to bring that down over the
13 year. Again, it's somewhat of a percentage in
14 some cases. We'll continue to look at that.

15 The big line -- the eye-popping line is
16 fuel and lubricants. 5.9 million to 9 million
17 expected spend this year. We just got a note
18 from our oil contract, our lubricant oil
19 contract. Costs are going up in the next
20 quarter 5 times what we pay now. So, it's a
21 huge hit. CNG is double what we normally pay.
22 Diesel is double what we normally pay. That's
23 a big number. That also takes into account the
24 increase in miles that we'd be traveling this
25 year.

1 Parts and repairs, a small increase there.

2 Other materials and supplies, there is an
3 increase there. That's part of some supply
4 chain and inflationary issues that are
5 happening.

6 We do a decrease in marketing, legal, and
7 other fees. That's good news. That just gets
8 rolled into more service on the streets.

9 Utilities have gone up a little bit.

10 Casualty and liability, again, more miles
11 traveled means potentially higher risk. You
12 see that number expressed there.

13 Depreciation is down slightly. Corporate
14 overhead is down slightly. Margin at risk is
15 what it is. We won't make that number but
16 we'll express it here. You'll see the total
17 come as it does.

18 Before I move on, are there any questions
19 from the team?

20 MR. BERSE: How did that marketing line go
21 down such an amount? What's different?

22 MR. CHAIRMAN: It's marketing, legal, and
23 other fees. Marketing makes up about
24 20 percent of that total. Legal fees makes up
25 the majority. There are some other fees that

1 are rolled in there also. We have been pretty
2 aggressive in the way we take in-house legal
3 issues instead of using outside counsel and
4 it's paid off well.

5 Additionally, it does help to have a union
6 relationship that's very, very positive. We
7 really have worked very, very well with labor
8 and those fees goes down as we need tap into
9 outside legal. We haven't had to do that.

10 MR. BERSE: Is depreciation because the
11 vehicles are newer?

12 MR. KHZOUZ: Yes, correct.

13 MR. BERSE: I'm done.

14 MR. DUROSEAU: I'm sorry, Mr. Khzouz.

15 My problem here -- it's not a problem.
16 Since we're talking about newer vehicle, I like
17 to understand why parts and repair drop that
18 much since our fleet is supposed to be newer?

19 MR. KHZOUZ: The actual jump is only about
20 \$100,000 parts and repairs. Normally, what we
21 would see on a fleet this size, you would see
22 quite a bit more when we increase the mileage
23 that much more. The actual jump is a smaller
24 percentage than our mileage jump, so that's why
25 that reflects there. We have taken into

1 account the hundred new vehicles but also the
2 cost of the other 178 older vehicles on the
3 road has also increased. It kind of offsets
4 itself a little bit. You would expect that
5 number to be possibly a little higher again
6 because of all of mileage, but there is an
7 offset.

8 We do look at the mileage of all of our
9 vehicles new versus the older vehicles. The
10 older vehicles get an increase in cost per run
11 per mile. The newer vehicles run a smaller run
12 per mile. Again, we see our total miles
13 increase by about 10 percent this year. That
14 really is proportionate or a little less than
15 we would expect.

16 MR. DUROSEAU: Thank you.

17 MR. KHZOUZ: Let's go ahead and move
18 forward.

19 On the operating budget capital plan, I
20 want to give everyone an update on what's going
21 on, what the major highlights for capital plan
22 is. You're going to see a couple of slides
23 that look like an eye exam here that you're not
24 going to be able to read. This is the high
25 level and the major customer facing things that

1 you'll see on the plan.

2 Final phase remodel interior Rosa Parks
3 HTC, that's Hempstead Transit Center, Rosa
4 Parks Hempstead Transit Center. This final
5 phase, which will start a little later this
6 spring, will include new A.D.A. sliding doors,
7 new air curtains, new Terrazzo floor, new wall
8 surfaces, and some new poured and stamped
9 concrete. And then, we'll be complete with the
10 center until the next round. That really
11 updates the center completely. We've touched
12 every surface. It looks great and it's really
13 an inviting place to be. As we finish out this
14 next quarter, we'll really be proud of the
15 center and where it's come from.

16 We have 39 new fixed-route buses coming
17 this year plus 6 electric buses. We'll talk
18 about that on the next slide. The 39 new
19 fixed-route buses will replace some of the
20 older New Flyers that are in the fleet. Again,
21 just refreshing. We'll have to keep a close on
22 how deliveries go against supply chain issues
23 have delayed some deliveries. We expect to
24 receive those 39 vehicles before the end of the
25 year. How much they'll be in service before

1 the end of the year is still up for debate, but
2 we'll keep everybody abreast of how things
3 come.

4 The battery electric buses and the BEB
5 infrastructure for those buses will be procured
6 this year. The buses are already done. The
7 charging stations are already complete and
8 purchased. Now, it's the infrastructure that
9 we need to purchase. In other words, we've got
10 to break ground and get the charging locations
11 put into operation. We expect those functions
12 to all happen before this side of the year.

13 The CNG island, the fuel island, gets an
14 upgrade this year also, the last part of a \$12
15 million upgrade that we did in the CNG fueling
16 station a few years ago. We put off doing the
17 fuel island upgrade. The new fuel island
18 upgrade will us to fuel buses faster and safer
19 with a better overall cover for the weather.
20 So, we're excited to have that and it just adds
21 more amenities to the facility here.

22 Lastly, we hope that this year we will
23 begin the implementation of the new MetroCard
24 replacement system called OMNY. That being
25 said, that is not our product. That's an MTA

1 product and we don't control the timing on
2 that. We have reserved some operating or
3 capital funds to be able to get this done.

4 MR. BERSE: Before you move on, two
5 questions.

6 The battery electric buses, what is their
7 range and how long does it take to recharge
8 them?

9 MR. KHZOUZ: A deep recharge takes a
10 minimum of 6 hours. We'll be recharging these
11 vehicles on the overnight. The range that that
12 full charge and deep charge will get is
13 anywhere from 140 to 180 miles depending on
14 loads and temperature conditions.

15 So, that is more than enough to cover a
16 full day of service.

17 MR. BERSE: Okay.

18 MR. KHZOUZ: As we move on, you'll see the
19 details the two next pages are the actual
20 capital plan, you know, details. Again, it's a
21 little difficult to read, but it is all there
22 for your approval and for you to look at.
23 These are all grant-funded -- a bit difficult
24 to read, but we're managing these projects and
25 they're all planned for this year.

1 Let's move on to the scorecard. These are
2 our performance KPIs or key performance indexes
3 that we report to the county. Our on-time
4 performance goal, by the way, is now raised to
5 90 percent not 70 percent on the fixed-route
6 side. For the first quarter, we had
7 91.35 percent. Proud to be able to say that.
8 We want to be able to hit a consistent 92
9 percent before the end of the year and
10 potentially go as far as 95 percent on time
11 with our fixed-route fleet. That's a pretty
12 aggressive goal. I don't know that there's
13 another northeast system that does that. We
14 think we can do it.

15 Second is number of -- percentage of
16 missed pullouts because of mechanical issues or
17 driver shortages. Our goal is zero. In the
18 first quarter, we had 1/10 of 1 percent missed
19 pullouts. We have about 10,500 pullouts a
20 month. So, 30,000 or so pullouts for the year.
21 We had 1/10 of 1 percent missed. That doesn't
22 mean that the bus did not complete its trip for
23 the first time point, it just means it did not
24 pull out of the gate on time for this location.

25 Accidents: We had a pretty good accident

1 performance for the first quarter. As a
2 percentage of 100,000 miles, about one accident
3 or one preventable accident per 100,000 miles.
4 So, we made our goal there. Overall,
5 fixed-route performance was pretty good on the
6 KPIs.

7 On the Paratransit side, our called
8 answered ratio, in other words, the amount of
9 calls we actually answered before a hang up,
10 96 percent. I'm pretty proud of that.

11 Our on-time performance is hovering at
12 about 84 percent, 87 for the month, but 84
13 percent is pretty good our on-time performance
14 above our goal. Ideally, we would try to be at
15 85 percent. But, again, pretty happy with that
16 performance. We continue to push on that.

17 Missed pullouts a little higher. Again,
18 that doesn't mean anyone missed a trip or was
19 not picked up. It just means that the pullout
20 from our gate or depot was not on time on our
21 performance end. It was a half of a percent.

22 Accidents were up a little bit from 1.2 to
23 1.43 per 100,000 miles traveled. We had a
24 couple of minor dings that hit us pretty hard,
25 mirror dings, scrapes, curb hits, that kind of

1 thing can throw us over. We'll continue to
2 buckle down on that.

3 Our productivity has increased from 1.3
4 passengers per hour to 1.43 passengers per
5 hour. I'm happy to be able to report that
6 productivity is staying steady at about that.
7 We are improving out on-time performance, so
8 there's no degradation of on-time performance
9 because we have more passengers on the vehicle.

10 Overall, a fairly good first quarter,
11 still some room for improvement. But I want to
12 make sure everybody understands these are all
13 customer facing KPIs. That's how we plan our
14 business with our customer ride at the center
15 of out KPIs and we'll continue to strive for a
16 better performance as each quarter goes on.

17 We'll give everybody a service update.
18 Again, the great news is no service decreases,
19 all service increases. We don't have to talk
20 about fare increases. I'm very, very happy to
21 report the increased frequency daily and
22 especially on weekends we're seeing riders
23 return on weekends at a much higher rate than
24 the daily riders. Again, that speaks to a lot
25 of our riders who work non-traditional roles

1 whether it be healthcare, or hospitality,
2 frontline workers, weekends are important. We
3 have increased not only the frequency on a lot
4 of routes but we've also added a span, so
5 earlier trips and later trips.

6 The benefits are almost across the board
7 on every route where we were able to add -- I'm
8 going to pick one very quickly. The N24, two
9 trips added on the weekdays, six trips added on
10 Saturdays, P.M. frequency improved to 30
11 minutes, six trips added on Sunday, and it goes
12 on, and on, and on. I'm not going read the
13 whole list right at this moment but it is there
14 for everyone to see. Very, very happy to
15 report this. It really increases the robust
16 nature of a healthy transit system. And,
17 again, we're able to do this through the
18 support of our legislators both in Albany and
19 locally. We couldn't do it without them.

20 Again, very, very happy to report this.
21 This is something to celebrate that everyone's
22 worked very, very hard to achieve.

23 Part of the service updates, I'm also glad
24 to announce what we're calling Mini, a new
25 service, that is a blend of the best of

1 micro-transit, the best of fixed-route, and the
2 best of Paratransit. It uses a smaller vehicle
3 to service and connect communities. It's
4 really a community-based service. It allows
5 people to travel -- in this case, this is the
6 first roll out we have -- will travel from
7 Merrick and Freeport all the way up to
8 Lynbrook, in between connecting on the N4, the
9 N15, the N31 and 32 so people don't have to
10 travel back into the center of the hub of the
11 system. They don't have to travel back. If I
12 live in Merrick and have to get up to the N32,
13 I don't need to go into Hempstead and then come
14 back out. I could literally hail Mini and it
15 will come. I will get on the vehicle and then
16 go up to the 31/32. It is a revolutionary,
17 innovative design. You see on the screen now
18 the very first Mini area that we're going to
19 cover. Anything within that shaded bubble,
20 you'll be able to get a door to door pick up
21 and delivery in there. We'll have vehicles
22 roaming this shaded bubble area. Once you hail
23 it, the hail will then go to the driver, and it
24 will respond to you how long to wait for a pick
25 up, and then you accept the ride, and the

1 driver is on its way. Paratransit customers
2 can also use this to set up a ride within an
3 hour or so. They don't have to call for a
4 reservation anymore. They can use this system.
5 We're very, very excited about it.

6 The polygon or the shaded on-demand zone,
7 we will continue to watch week over week and
8 make adjustments to that polygon as we need to.
9 The greatest part about this is Mini transfers
10 to fixed routes free. You use your regular
11 card. For the first 30 days, it's free for
12 everyone trying it. And our hope is that we'll
13 roll this out to sectors all over the county in
14 the next 24 months or so.

15 This will be the first one. We hope to
16 launch in early June. Stay tuned for more. A
17 great innovation for Nassau County.

18 MS. RICHARDS: We would like to welcome
19 Committee Member Mr. Reginald Benjamin has
20 joined us.

21 MR. BERSE: Does this Mini have a number
22 or it's called Mini?

23 MR. KHZOUZ: It's called Mini. Line 1
24 will be the --

25 MR. BERSE: Line 1 will be the number, all

1 right.

2 MR. KHZOUZ: We'll continue to evolve this
3 a little bit. People will end up knowing it as
4 Lynbrook Merrick or whatever it ends up being.
5 The whole idea here is it will evolve over time
6 to serve areas or riders that we don't
7 currently identify on this map. But because of
8 the way the data is collected, we can
9 understand where people are hailing, and when
10 they're hailing, and we can adjust the zone as
11 we go forward.

12 Again, I want to celebrate the new
13 vehicles coming, the 33 New Flyer CNG buses
14 will be here hopefully before the fall.
15 They're the traditional orange and yellow
16 stripe that we're all used to seeing, the real
17 sleek look; very, very happy to see that.
18 We'll have one of the newest fleets on the east
19 coast. Great for our passengers, great for our
20 drivers, and overall, a fantastic asset to
21 Nassau County.

22 On the right, you see the color scheme and
23 new design for the electric buses. Also, New
24 Flyer vehicles, we're very, very happy to have
25 these coming in. And you can see the very

1 distinctive lightning bolt center and the NICE
2 Bus logo repeated across the back.

3 Able ride has completed their online
4 booking trip management function now. It is
5 live to all clients. So, any client can now
6 book and manage their trips online. They don't
7 need to go to the telephones anymore. If they
8 feel comfortable with online trip management,
9 it's another option for them to use. It took
10 us about 3 and a half, 4 months to get it
11 online. And the hard work of everybody, it's
12 up and running, and is being used now, and
13 rolled out to everyone. So, very happy that's
14 out there now, so that's fantastic for the
15 Paratransit team.

16 I think if I could, Chairman, if you'd
17 like I can go through the comments first and
18 then we can go back to budget votes and
19 acceptance. If anyone on the board maybe has
20 any questions we can go to that also.

21 MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Khzouz?

22 MR. KHZOUZ: Yes, sir.

23 MR. CHAIRMAN: Can you address a little
24 bit about since we have to vote on Title 6, I
25 think we should discuss that before we go to

1 the public comments.

2 MR. KHZOUZ: Of course.

3 Title 6 is an FTA required document that
4 we need to update every 3 years. It starts
5 with a system-wide survey of at least 8,000
6 riders, in our case it's 8,000 riders. We hire
7 an outside company to do this survey. The
8 survey tells us everything from socioeconomic
9 status, to zip code, accessibility to driver's
10 license or cars, how long they walk to a stop,
11 why they use the bus, family income, what
12 language they're comfortable speaking. We use
13 that to ensure we adjust our service as the
14 demographics change in the county. It's a
15 very, very large survey. it's very extensive.
16 It takes months, and months, and months to put
17 together. So, that survey has to be updated
18 every 3 years. Once we receive that survey, we
19 use the data from that survey to update the
20 Title 6 program plan.

21 The Title 6 program plan basically states
22 that because we receive federal funds, we
23 aren't required to not use any bias in the way
24 we distribute service or assets to the people
25 we serve. And the Title 6 plan shows that. It

1 shows that there's a consistent level of
2 service through minority communities, through
3 low-income communities, and through whether it
4 be secondary language communities, English not
5 my first language communities, that sort of
6 thing. It demonstrates that we don't use any
7 bias when we roll out certain programs or plans
8 and that there's no bias at all. The plan in
9 front of you basically describes that. Once
10 it's approved and accepted, then the county
11 executive will sign it and then it will go to
12 the FTA for their scrutiny and approval.

13 MR. CHAIRMAN: Were there any changes in
14 that plan from 2001 to 2022?

15 MR. KHZOUZ: We have seen a shift in how
16 people identify themselves in the Village of
17 Hempstead. We have seen a large growth in
18 Hispanic Latinx community members into the
19 community, Spanish as a first or second
20 language has grown quite a bit. We already
21 have put plans into place and have since day
22 one. All our communications are in English and
23 Spanish. They're all translatable on the
24 buses. There's language support on the
25 vehicles and a program plan for that. On top

1 of that, we also see people using the vehicles
2 differently than they used to. There's much
3 more weekend ridership and much more late-night
4 ridership than we saw initially 3 years ago.
5 Some of that, obviously, is through the
6 pandemic we see a shift. Other than that, the
7 way the service is used and the demographics we
8 see haven't changed much. We don't expect them
9 to change much in the next 3 years.

10 MR. CHAIRMAN: If we'd like to move on at
11 this point, I think we should hear the public
12 comments, and you'll be reading those, I
13 believe, and you're free to address them
14 individually or afterward, however you deem
15 appropriate.

16 MR. KHZOUZ: Certainly.

17 I'm going to start with -- and I'm going
18 to butcher some of these names, I apologize,
19 and again maybe that has something to do with
20 my last name. Joe from Levittown, he writes
21 happy tenth anniversary to NICE. As a regular
22 rider, I had to share my trepidations when
23 Nassau County MTA bus operation was privatized
24 and there were times of budget and service cuts
25 that justified those hears.

1 Since becoming a regular part of these
2 meetings, I've seen NICE become a system we can
3 all be proud of run by dedicated individuals
4 who listen to their customers, and, whenever
5 possible, act on their behalf.

6 Under NICE, improvements have been made
7 throughout Nassau bus transportation system
8 both in scheduling and infrastructure with only
9 a minimal adverse effect on less traveled
10 routes referring more specifically to my
11 personal focus on Newbridge Road. While we
12 have the lost the luxury of the N50 on weekday
13 schedules for the N49 has been normalized to
14 hourly service and consistent time that reduces
15 the need to check schedules and online sources,
16 and the additional added benefit of increased
17 early morning and evening service. Saturday
18 schedules still have some inconvenient
19 90-minute gaps, but I must say I'm both pleased
20 and satisfied with the progress made.

21 That's a very night comment from Joe.

22 MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it is.

23 MR. KHZOUZ: Janeka writes times the Long
24 Island Railroad is supposed to connect to NICE
25 bus is unrealistic. Times need to be reviewed.

1 The morning trains are okay, but the
2 afternoon trains to bus doesn't work. One
3 example is the 5:38 train from Penn Station.
4 It reached Hempstead at 6:38 and the N35 bus to
5 Baldwin leaves Hempstead at 6:36. I have to
6 wait another 20 minutes for the bus. The 5:51
7 train from Penn Station reaches Hempstead at
8 6:46, so it only makes sense to take the 5:51
9 train, which defeats the purpose of catching
10 the earlier train.

11 I totally understand that, unfortunately,
12 every route has multiple connections. If we
13 make one, we break another. We try to do our
14 best. We are going to research this a little
15 bit more but I know it's somewhat of a puzzle
16 piece. If we make the Long Island connection,
17 there most likely will be a broken connection
18 somewhere else along the route and/or headways
19 will be mixed up a little bit. We'll continue
20 to work Long Island Railroad and try to
21 schedule those a little bit better.

22 That's a really good point.

23 Richard writes when is NICE going to
24 install OMNY on their buses?

25 Also, how is NICE going to ask the

1 legislators for more funding so that we can
2 restore bus lines?

3 Richard, I think I talked a little bit
4 about OMNY earlier. Again, we don't control
5 this product. This is an MTA product. We are
6 working with the MTA on getting a schedule done
7 and being cooperative with them, but it's
8 really up to them to allow us to do that. I
9 hope it'll be soon. We all hope it'll be soon,
10 so let's keep our fingers crossed.

11 As far as working with legislators, we do
12 that now. I think we can all give everybody a
13 high-five for all that we've accomplished for
14 this year.

15 Restoring bus lines that have left us in
16 the past, the likelihood of those coming back,
17 probably not in the way we think they would
18 come back. I think we have to think about
19 solutions like Mini to be able to bridge those
20 areas with less service. And again, I think
21 that's the way we go for now. I like the fact
22 that we're increasing frequency and span on the
23 service that we do have, and that's really the
24 way we want to go right now, and then add some
25 service if we need to as we go forward.

1 Let's move on.

2 John Michno from Mineola writes we need
3 more service on the N22 and N24. These lines
4 are unreliable and there are breakdowns.

5 The N22 and N24 both get more service.
6 So, yay, John; yay, everybody. Perfect.

7 John also writes a lot about breakdowns.
8 He wrote a little bit about breakdowns earlier
9 and wanted me to address that. And I'll
10 address it now. We really don't have an issue
11 with breakdowns. We measure them two different
12 ways, mean distance between road failures and
13 that means a bus has broken down and cannot
14 finish the run, it needs to be towed, it needs
15 to be replaced, but it has broken down
16 completely. If we can't get another bus there
17 within a few minutes, then that is a breakdown,
18 and that's how we get counted against it.

19 I will say we are now at 12,800 miles
20 between road failures, quite a bit higher than
21 the average in the northeast. Again, some of
22 that has to do with new fleet, but that's a
23 pretty good number.

24 If a bus is missing, it could be a number
25 of different things. It could be a detour, it

1 could be construction, it could be stuck behind
2 a railroad crossing, it could've had an
3 accident. It's not just a maintenance issue.
4 We've got to keep that in mind, but I'm really
5 proud of our reliability with only one-half of
6 1 percent of missed pullouts, again another
7 great KPI to look at. It's something we should
8 all be proud of.

9 Matt Camper writes is there any way that
10 you could look at having the new ride share
11 service available at East Meadow, especially
12 along the corridor of Merrick Avenue where the
13 N51 used to serve since a lot of people need
14 service to and from the Merrick Long Island
15 Railroad Station and NCC in East Meadow.

16 That's a great point. Certainly, that's
17 an area that we're looking at for future
18 roll-outs of Mini. That would be a perfect
19 example of how we can backfill an area that may
20 have had a fixed route bus in the past now has
21 a flexible bus that can maybe even serve more
22 people than the old system. That's a good
23 point. We will certainly put it on the wish
24 list as we go forward.

25 Andy Pollack writes as part of the new

1 draft plan for the Queens Bus Redesign 2.0, the
2 MTA is planning to start the Q43 at LIJ
3 Hospital. Is NICE planning to cut the N26
4 between Great Neck and Jamaica if this plan of
5 the new draft does happen?

6 No. We have no plans to cut service.
7 We'll continue to work with the MTA to ensure
8 that our service is complimentary, but we have
9 no plans to cut service on the N26, so that's
10 good news.

11 This is -- the next bunch of questions is
12 from one rider advocate, Charlton D'Souza, and
13 I'll try to read them fairly quickly. I know
14 this is a conglomeration of input that he got
15 from a lot of different people that he works
16 with and we appreciate the input.

17 Number 1, will NICE be fully
18 air-conditioned this summer? What temperature
19 determines the need for air-conditioning to be
20 inside the bus? When it's 90 degrees, on many
21 occasions, there's no air-conditioning and the
22 windows are closed inside the bus, which is bad
23 especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the
24 bus gets overcrowded.

25 Many bus drivers cannot put the

1 air-conditioning on because the bus will break
2 down, including the newer buses are
3 overheating.

4 I'm not sure where he gets this
5 information but let me just clarify. On
6 May 15, I believe, let me double check -- on, I
7 believe, it's May 15, that's going to be our --
8 we're going to go with that date right now, all
9 the air-conditioning gets turned on in all the
10 vehicles. So, all the air-conditioning is on.

11 On newer buses, the driver controls the
12 air-conditioning. So, the driver will put the
13 air-conditioning on and off as he feels it's
14 needed.

15 On the older buses, it's really kind of on
16 all the time. So, buses don't break down if
17 there's air-conditioning that works on it. I'm
18 not sure where that comes. They don't overheat
19 because of the air-conditions. We have done an
20 extensive heating and air-conditioning program
21 so I don't think we're going to have this
22 problem this year. That's the shortest answer
23 I can give you, but we can talk more offline
24 somewhere else.

25 Again, May is when we turn on

1 air-conditioning and it's available to
2 everybody. So, I'll wait for the complaints of
3 buses being too cold this year. We'll see how
4 that goes.

5 Are NICE bus filters inside the bus able
6 to refresh the air inside the bus?

7 Yes. During the beginning of the
8 pandemic, we upgraded all the buses to HEPA
9 filters, all the filters to HEPA filters, so
10 they are much more robust and they refresh the
11 air inside the bus.

12 Number 3, why can't NICE run N88's bus
13 service to Jones Beach every weekend in June
14 from Memorial Day so the service is consistent.
15 Some N4 Saturdays and Sundays should also start
16 in the evening from Jones Beach and go express
17 so the park workers and day trippers have a one
18 seat ride to Jamaica.

19 So, I'll address the first part of that.
20 We traditionally start each service on the
21 weekends in early June and then go to seven
22 days during Memorial Day. That's basically
23 because we don't -- in the past when we've run
24 full bus service in early June to the Jones
25 Beach facility, there are no riders on the bus.

1 Doesn't make great sense. It doesn't allow us
2 to extend the service in September because we
3 have a budget to run. Those are the kinds of
4 things that we have to keep in mind.

5 Also too, what we found right now and
6 until we get somewhere on the other side of
7 full 100 percent return to ridership, we're not
8 going to spend more resources on additional
9 Jones Beach service. I would rather spend
10 those resources on more frequency Monday
11 through Friday and Saturday and Sunday regular
12 service inside the county. This is important,
13 I understand that, but I think the service --
14 currently service levels are appropriate for
15 ridership currently.

16 We'll continue to look at it. And as we
17 go forward, maybe there will be a change as we
18 go forward.

19 MR. BERSE: Just to clarify there, you
20 said Memorial Day and I think you meant Labor
21 Day.

22 MR. KHZOUZ: I mean Labor Day.

23 MR. KHZOUZ: Number 4, many NICE buses are
24 filthy N6, 22, and 24. Why can't NICE bus have
25 two cleaners at 165 Street in Jamaica.

1 What we're talking about -- buses get
2 cleaned multiple times a day if they come in
3 and out of Hempstead. The problem is when a
4 full bus goes to Jamaica, unfortunately,
5 there's trash left on the bus. This particular
6 person is asking why can't we have cleaners in
7 Jamaica come on and clean the buses as they
8 turn around in Jamaica. That's a good point.
9 We'll look into that to see if we can get that
10 done especially as ridership continues to come
11 back. It's a good point. Certainly, we will
12 study that a little bit more.

13 Number 5, the N22 two transfer points at
14 Roosevelt Field are using up passenger pay per
15 ride subway transfers. Why can't bus drivers
16 give a paper transfer because the programmed
17 transfers don't work. They should work. I'm
18 not sure why they're not. We need more detail
19 there.

20 So, I'm going to answer this to the
21 important who wrote it, if that happens, we
22 need to right away the day, the time, and the
23 bus numbers so we can investigate. That
24 shouldn't be happening and we'll take a look at
25 that a little more detail.

1 Number 6, on the N4 some city line stops
2 like Farmer Boulevard and Springfield Boulevard
3 should be kept and a free paper transfer should
4 be given to NYCT. Did NICE bus reach out to
5 MTA NYCT bus about the plan of asking to use
6 MTA buses.

7 Those stops were not removed. I'm not
8 sure where the confusion is. Those stops are
9 still there. There shouldn't be any transfer
10 issue there either. Again, we'll look into it
11 and make sure -- the Farmers and Springfield
12 are still active stops.

13 Number 7, is the city line bus stop at
14 Belmont parking being restored for Islander
15 fans from the new stadium and for Belmont
16 parking meets. Unfortunately, the new stop
17 that's currently there is very far from the
18 city line and that's ridiculous.

19 We'll have to look at that and see how
20 things roll out. We have seen no real
21 ridership yet for Belmont Park, for concerts,
22 for events, that kind of thing, but we'll have
23 to roll it out. Unfortunately, what was
24 supposed to happen at that current stop, there
25 was supposed to be an entry gate behind the

1 stop right below where the pedestrian overpass
2 is going to go. I'm not sure if the developer
3 plans to go back and add that at some point.
4 We'll certainly look at that, but that's maybe
5 a coordination effort with the developer and
6 we'll work through that.

7 Next page, please.

8 Coming to the end here, guys.

9 Why can't NICE bus put out a notification
10 on Twitter app when a bus breaks down or the
11 run is not being covered especially on routes
12 with hourly gaps so passengers can know in real
13 time.

14 So, this is something we're working
15 through right now. It's got to go through our
16 command center. What's happening in a lot of
17 cases is by the time the notification goes out,
18 the breakdown, the accident, or the detour has
19 been cleared. So, we're trying to work out a
20 better system to get real time out to
21 everybody. Be patient. I think we started
22 playing around with that idea now on a pilot
23 basis. We have to get better at it. It's a
24 really good point, so thank you for that input.

25 Why can't NICE bus automatically start

1 cross honoring Long Island Railroad tickets on
2 regular parallel bus routes, like the 22, 24,
3 4, 6, 15, and 20G during a major, unplanned
4 service disruption to help passengers rather
5 than wait for Long Island Railroad to call NICE
6 bus. Sometimes, passengers have to wait over 2
7 hours for the MTA to issue a declaration plan
8 as an alternative.

9 That's not our decision. That is the Long
10 Island Railroad's decision. And the reason
11 that's there is because again, in some cases,
12 we automatically start cross honoring and the
13 system, Long Island Railroad, could come back
14 online.

15 We really need to wait for them to give us
16 the authorization to start. We can't
17 unilaterally decide for the Long Island
18 Railroad, hey, you need us.

19 So, they need to call and we'll respond
20 accordingly. Again, that's not our call, but
21 it's a good point, but it is not our call.

22 Number 10, how many breakdowns were there
23 in 2022 so far on the new buses in the fleet?

24 So, I don't know what total 2022 has been.
25 This doesn't break down new buses versus old

1 buses. I do know for the month of March, we
2 had 58 breakdowns. So, 58 cannot continue in
3 service breakdowns.

4 Let me put that in context. We had 60,000
5 trips in the month of March and we had 58
6 breakdowns. So, a very, very tiny fraction of
7 breakdowns where we could not continue.

8 Again, that's the comparison. Again, very
9 happy -- actually, ecstatic with our rad
10 failures. That's a standard transit KPI and we
11 are by far outperforming most northeast
12 systems.

13 Does NICE Bus have a preventative
14 maintenance program for its newer buses.

15 Yes, there's a preventative maintenance
16 program. We have to follow the preventative
17 maintenance program in order for the buses to
18 stay in warranty. 98 percent of our fleet is
19 done on the preventative maintenance program on
20 time. In other words, when it says 30,000
21 miles, we do it on time 97 percent of the time.
22 So, it keeps those buses in warranty. And,
23 again, it's a benefit to make sure that we are
24 good stewards of the assets that the county
25 allows us to keep on.

1 Number 12, would the new on-demand service
2 be added to include areas like where the 45 and
3 51 used to serve? Basically, wanting to know
4 if the on-demand service will be included
5 specially since it's been 2 and a half miles
6 between where the 54 and 55 and N19 service in
7 Merrick and Bellmore.

8 Again, we'll continue to look at different
9 areas to roll those out. You saw the original
10 rollout or the first rollout. The planners are
11 working on that right now and right behind that
12 will be rollout number 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. And,
13 again, it's a 24-month plan. Let's see how it
14 goes and let's keep our fingers crossed its
15 well accepted so.

16 I think that was it.

17 At this point, I think I'd like to take
18 any questions of the board -- the board might
19 have as far as current service, or projected
20 service for the year, or anything else I talked
21 about, I'd be happy to answer questions.

22 MR. CHAIRMAN: Just to comment, I think
23 some of these public comments were quite good
24 today and can only lead us in better service.

25 MR. KHZOUZ: I agree. That's great input

1 and we'll certainly investigate and look at all
2 these different challenges.

3 MR. BERSE: I could come up with two
4 things here. Number 1, you showed us on those
5 battery buses a new design. What does it cost
6 us to decorate these buses with the patterns
7 that they have because I have an acquaintance
8 who works in the yard for MTA in Queens and
9 they say that their new decorations that
10 Governor Cuomo mandated cost \$30,000 per bus
11 when they altered it from the old style.

12 So, what does it cost us for what we're
13 doing?

14 MR. KHZOUZ: The design cost us nothing,
15 so that's a positive. This design was a
16 function of in-house design work. So, design
17 work cost us nothing.

18 The pattern and applying, this is a wrap,
19 it's a sticker basically. The wrap doesn't
20 cost us anything more than the design does.
21 There is no increase cost.

22 MR. BERSE: And the other thing was I want
23 to reiterate something that I've been saying
24 for quite a long time, that I believe that some
25 sort of universal cards be given to committee

1 members that would be willing to ride the
2 actual runs and see what some of the public is
3 talking about. And we have always liked skated
4 around this issue and never really addressed
5 it, so I want to throw it out there again.

6 MR. KHZOUZ: Yes. So, that is possible
7 certainly and we could talk offline about how
8 to get that done through an exchange afterwards
9 or in the coming days.

10 MR. BERSE: Okay, because that is the kind
11 of thing that we have always said and nothing
12 ever got accomplished. I'd like to see that
13 finally happen.

14 MR. KHZOUZ: I will make myself a note and
15 we'll follow up individually.

16 MR. BERSE: Make sure it's not a B flat.

17 MR. KHZOUZ: You've never heard me sing.

18 MR. BERSE: You never want a bus to be
19 flat.

20 MR. KHZOUZ: Any other puns? No, okay.

21 MR. BERSE: I guess I punished everybody
22 enough.

23 MR. DISILVIO: I'm glad that's on the
24 record.

25 MR. CHAIRMAN: The fact we have completed

1 the public comment and have pretty much gone
2 through the agenda, at this point I'd like to
3 address two major issues we have today. The
4 first being which is approval of the 2022 Title
5 11 Report Plan.

6 So, I'd like a member to move to make a
7 motion to adopt that Title 11 report.

8 Would anybody choose to make a motion?

9 MR. ROSARIO: Make a motion.

10 MR. DUROSEAU: I second it.

11 MR. BERSE: Good, I've been talking too
12 much. You guys did it.

13 MR. DUROSEAU: I just wanted to check my
14 volume.

15 MR. CHAIRMAN: With that, if we can get a
16 shout out, I guess it's okay. All those in
17 favor can say aye.

18 (A round of ayes.)

19 MR. CHAIRMAN: Any opposed? No opposed
20 and no abstentions.

21 Vote carries and acceptance and approval
22 of the 2022 Title 11 program plan carries.

23 Let the minutes note that accordingly.

24 Now, Mr. Khzouz, since the budget is not
25 legally finalized, irrespective of political

1 issues, and it's wonderful that service has
2 increased and that there's no fare increase,
3 I'm certainly happy, you know, as to everything
4 I've heard today.

5 However, unless you have an issue, I think
6 the proper way to take a vote today since
7 there's always a little possibility of anything
8 that we'll approve or we'll take a vote on the
9 budget on a conditional basis.

10 MR. BERSE: Just make the motion that way.

11 MR. CHAIRMAN: That's what I plan to do.

12 I'd like to make a motion to approve the
13 2022-23 financial budget proposal for
14 \$148,450,000 on a conditional basis subject to
15 approval of receipt of the STOA money.

16 Would someone move to adopt the
17 resolution?

18 MR. BERSE: Second.

19 MR. CHAIRMAN: Who made the motion?

20 MR. BERSE: You did, didn't you?

21 MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I'm asking for someone
22 to make the motion, please.

23 Mr. Berse, you made the motion.

24 Can somebody second.

25 MR. ROSARIO: Second.

1 MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Rosario.

2 MR. CHAIRMAN: We'll take a vote.

3 We can do this again. I guess I could
4 call it out.

5 Mr. Berse?

6 MR. BERSE: Aye.

7 MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rosario?

8 MR. ROSARIO: Yes.

9 MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Duroseau?

10 MR. DUROSEAU: Yes.

11 MR. CHAIRMAN: Is Mr. Benjamin on this
12 call? I see his name on the bottom of the
13 screen.

14 MR. BENJAMIN: This is son listening in.

15 MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, nice of you to listen
16 in. You can tell your dad what occurred.
17 However, unless he's present, I'm sorry we
18 cannot accept your vote. I'm sure you
19 understand that.

20 Thank you.

21 In any case, I have a vote and I vote to
22 approve the conditional budget. So, therefore,
23 the vote carries to approve the 2022 budget at
24 \$148,450,000 subject to approval by the New
25 York State budget.

1 I think that's our important issues for
2 today. Before we leave, I'll give the
3 committee one more opportunity if they have any
4 further questions before I request an
5 adjournment of the meeting.

6 I don't see anybody who has any further
7 questions.

8 With that, would someone please make a
9 motion. We'll move to make a motion to adjourn
10 our meeting.

11 MR. ROSARIO: Motion to close.

12 MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Rosario.

13 And second?

14 MR. DUROSEAU: I second it.

15 MR. BERSE: Third.

16 MR. CHAIRMAN: And we have that.

17 All in favor?

18 (A round of ayes.)

19 We have unanimous consent to adjourn our
20 meeting.

21 I want to thank everyone for attending.
22 Yes, we all have personal meetings and fully
23 understand what's going around now. And I
24 personally can only wish that things do improve
25 and we can all touch hands pretty soon. I want

1 to thank everyone for their attendance, for
2 their comments, and participation.

3 Again, I think the public comments were
4 extremely good and very astute. And I want to
5 thank Mr. DiSilvio for helping coordinate a lot
6 of things. Coordinating these meetings are not
7 easy. There are a lot of people in attendance
8 here not just the committee members. I'd like
9 everybody to understand that. Mr. Khzouz has a
10 lot of staff people who are involved in this.
11 Mr. DiSilvio has a very heavy schedule with the
12 county and to get everybody together is not
13 easy. We had to do this way in advance before
14 mandates were dropped, and I fully understand
15 that, and I'd like everyone else too.

16 Last but not least, I'd like to thank NICE
17 Transportation for everything they do and
18 everything they try to do.

19 With that, I'd like to wish everyone a
20 good night and thank you for attending.

21 MR. KHZOUZ: Thank you, everybody.

22 (Time noted: 6:31 p.m.)
23
24
25

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

I, ESTAMARIE CASTELLI-VELEZ, a Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of New York, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and accurate transcript to the best of my knowledge and ability.

I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Estamarie Castelli-Velez

ESTAMARIE CASTELLI-VELEZ

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