

OFFICE OF THE  
DEMOCRATIC MINORITY



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## Inter-Departmental Memo

To: Mr. William Muller III, Clerk of the Legislature

From: Peter J. Clines, Esq., Minority Counsel 

CC: Hon. Norma Gonsalves, Presiding Officer  
Hon. Kevan Abrahams, Minority Leader

Date: October 21, 2013

Re: MINORITY BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND NARRATIVE AMENDMENT IN THE  
NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTION - CLERK ITEM 411-13

Attached please find the above referenced Minority Budget Amendments and Narrative which has been form approved as per the Rules of the Legislature.

I have sent a copy of said amendments to County Attorney John Ciampoli and request that, in his role as attorney for both caucuses in the legislature, he direct his office to work in conjunction with OMB to conform the attached amendments and narrative to Clerk Item No. 611-13 to the technical form of an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitution.

This request is being made as it has been the past practice for the Minority's amendments to be presented in this manner.

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CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE

**2014 BUDGET  
DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS AMENDMENTS  
NARRATIVE**

**Eliminate Redundant and Patronage Jobs:** Eliminates \$5,000,000 in various departments in the form of multiple Deputy Commissioners such as in Public Works and Parks, Recreations and Museums. Many of those departments have seen headcount reductions as a result of the retirement incentives offered in 2011 and 2012. Clearly, with a reduced head count there is less, not more, of a need for high level administrative and redundant positions. For example, eliminate 2 County Executive Director positions at \$167,000; and the assistant to the director position in the County Attorney's Office at \$55,000. Also eliminates the positions of various employees who took the retirement incentive in 2012 and were hired back on a part time basis, thus becoming "double dipping" employees. Finally, eliminates patronage positions that the Mangano Administration has added to the salary and benefits line during his short tenure.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$5,000,000**

**Reduce County Attorney Outside Special Counsel Contracts:** This reduction will return the County Attorney's Office to the good government practice of utilizing in-house counsel to handle the vast majority of legal matters. Under the previous administration the long standing practice of outside counsel legal contracts being doled out to politically connected firms (e.g., Rivkin Radler, Mangano's former law firm, received several lucrative contracts) was virtually eliminated.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$4,500,000**

**Independent Audit Unit:** We propose the establishment of an independent audit unit reporting directly to the Legislature in order to identify areas of waste, fraud and abuse. Its function will be to audit County departments, contracts, expenditures, payroll, health insurance costs, benefit calculations, vendor payments, etc. The unit will submit an annual audit plan for legislative approval. The unit's sole function will be to carry out audits, and will not be tied to the agenda of any single agency, department or elected official. It will therefore possess the freedom and independence necessary to objectively identify areas of savings and vigorously pursue audits. As a corollary of the audit unit, we also propose the creation of an independent audit committee to oversee the formulation of an annual audit plan and monitor its implementation.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$15,000,000**

**Centralized Revenue Department:** It is imperative that the County obtain every possible dollar of revenue from grants, fees and contracts to which it is entitled under law. Accordingly, we propose the creation of a centralized revenue department in the executive branch of County government. All County agencies and departments would be legally mandated to fully cooperate with the centralized revenue department to ensure full billing and collection of amounts due the County under existing contracts and fee provisions. As part of its mission, the revenue department would also focus on maximizing the County's eligibility for federal and state grant funding. The revenue generated from a functional revenue department would more than offset its costs.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS/REVENUE: \$15,000,000**

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APPROVED AS TO FORM  


**Centralized Accounting Department:** Currently, the County has no centralized accounting body and its accounting capacity, to the extent it exists at all, is scattered through its many departments, units and agencies. The County is sorely in need of a centralized accounting unit to provide essential internal oversight and monitoring of the fiscal activities of the County and its departments and agencies. It is unacceptable that Nassau, one of the largest municipal corporations in the United States, with a nearly three billion dollar budget, should lack such a basic fiscal management tool. We propose that such a department be established as expeditiously as possible so that the County can begin to realize the fiscal benefits which will inevitably flow from a properly functioning accounting department.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$8,000,000**

**Reduce IT Ordinance employees from 4 to 1 and Reduce IT overtime Budget including Fringe:** Another bloated department at the top. There is simply no need for so many appointed employees.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$500,000**

**Reduce IT Contractual Services:** Contractual services in IT has increased from \$7.4 million in 2012 to \$10.4 million in 2014.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$1,000,000**

**County Legislature (Legislature Central Staff):** Reduce legislative salary line by five hundred thousand dollars plus fringe benefit reduction.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$700,000**

**Risk Management Reforms:** Enhance the auditing of the workers compensation cases and savings from intermittent lost time.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$3,000,000**

**Nassau Accountability Act:** At the County Executive's discretion the Legislature authorizes the reduction of operations in the amount of \$5,000,000 to enforce streamlined County operations, Countywide adherence to the INTIME time keeper system, promote energy efficiency throughout County facilities and reduce the volume of paper used by County departments; eliminate paper payroll and require direct deposit; utilize a contract management system; eliminate duplicate and unused software licenses; select the best procurement practice for the size of the procurement.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$5,000,000**

**Reduce OTPS:** All of the funds in this budget line are expended at the County Executive's discretion. The Legislature hereby authorizes the reduction of 3% of all expenses other than personnel services to be reduced throughout the County.  
**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$15,000,000**

**Consolidate Nassau County Treasurer's Office with Nassau County Comptroller's Office:** In order to streamline government operations, increase efficiency by eliminating overlapping functions, we propose consolidating the Nassau County Treasurer's functions with the Comptroller's office. The July 2012 management letter issued by Deloitte and Touché stated that the Treasurer's office and the County's debt management office had "serious" and "material" internal control weaknesses. Consolidating these two departments and reassigning responsibilities of the accounting and debt management staff would improve oversight and internal controls, as well as eliminate number of appointed positions budgeted in

the two offices from 16 to 8, saving the County over \$1,000,000.

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$1,000,000**

**Repealing Salary Increase for County Executive:** Although he has been personally accepting the money throughout his entire term, the County Executive now states that the 2007 salary increase was a mistake. Accordingly, the County Executive's salary should be reduced by \$65,000.

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$65,000**

**Reduce the General Expenses in Office of Constituent Affairs:** The proposed 2014 budget is \$3.9 MILLION, 6.1% increase from 2013. We propose reducing the budget by \$2 million dollars to encourage elimination of abuse of constituent mailing.

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$2,000,000**

**Assessment Reform:** Assessment reform bill introduced by Legislators Denenberg and Wink in April of 2009 as Clerk Item No. 285-10 will change the calendar for the Assessment Reform Commission (ARC) to complete their substantive review of applications before them. This will result in a vastly more accurate assessment roll for subsequent years thus eliminating the majority of refunds and saving the County the cost of issuing refunds for incorrect assessments.

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$25,000,000**

**Medicaid Waste/Fraud/Abuse Program:** The County loses millions of dollars a year to rampant Medicaid fraud, a cost which must ultimately be borne by the tax payer. We propose to reinvigorate the County's ability to uncover and combat Medicaid waste, fraud and abuse, to cooperate effectively in criminal prosecutions against the perpetrators of Medicaid fraud and to maximize recoveries in civil and criminal Medicaid fraud proceedings. The cost of the additional legal, financial and investigatory personnel necessary to carry out these tasks will be more than offset by the savings to the County.

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$3,000,000**

**Reduce County Clerk overall budget 15%:** Upgrade and improve accounting systems, internal controls, automate filing and record keeping increasing efficiencies and achieving savings to permit a 15% reduction in the County Clerk's budget.

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$900,000**

**Increase Funding for Human and Social Services:** Thousands of disadvantaged citizens in Nassau depend upon human and social service programs funded by the County. Regrettably, the County Executive's proposed 2014 budget continues the callous policy of depriving critical human and social service programs, including the Youth Board, and Mental Health from adequate funding. We propose increasing funding to the human and social service agencies, with a minimum of \$1,000,000 to youth services and a minimum of \$1,000,000 for Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disability services. We further propose to restore the special fund dedicating red light camera revenues exclusively to support human and social service programs.

**TOTAL COST: \$5,000,000**

**Tax Certiorari Payments:** As recognized by NIFA, the County continues to underfund Tax Certiorari expenditures. The 2014 budget contains only \$10,000,000.00 for property tax refunds. Based on the history of these payments, the County's continued reliance on bonding to pay for tax certiorari expenses must be stopped. We propose increasing funding tax certiorari expenditures by \$40,000,000.

**TOTAL COST: \$40,000,000**

**NICE Bus and Able-Ride Bus Restoration:** While the County boasts that the new operator is saving money, it ignores the costs that come with that "savings" in the form of dramatic ridership reductions and rider dissatisfaction. A NICE survey released last month found a 32 point drop in ridership satisfaction (61 percent to 29 percent) over the same time period in 2012 and ridership, according to the National Transit Database, through August 2013, has fallen by 5.2 percent since NICE took over operations in 2012. If ridership continues this year's trend, 2013 ridership will be the lowest it has been in 15 years. We propose to increase funding for the NICE BUS, including Able-Ride, by \$4,000,000.00.

**TOTAL COST: \$4,000,000**

**Funding for Suits and Damages:** Nassau County's 2014 budget has essentially eliminated all of the costs related to lawsuits and damages. Administration only budgeted \$3,000,000.00 for judgments and settlements, and is planning to fund these expenditures by additional borrowing. NIFA has directed the administration to stop using this "fiscally imprudent funding practice". We propose increasing the 2014 budget to fund \$17,000,000.00 for judgments and settlements.

**TOTAL COST: \$17,000,000**

**Eliminate Sewer and Storm Water Usage Fee:** Although budgeted for the past three years, these fees have never been collected and continue to be mired in ongoing litigation, there is no legitimate reason to believe the fees will materialize this year. We propose to eliminate these revenues incorrectly budgeted in the Sewer and Storm Water District.

**TOTAL COST: \$12,000,000**

**TOTAL ADDITIONAL EXPENSES: \$ 78,000,000**

**TOTAL SAVINGS: \$ 104,665,000**

**TOTAL NET SAVINGS: \$ 26,665,000**

Description of Increase/Reduction	Technical Change	Title of Change	\$ Reduction/Increase
Eliminate patronage and redundant jobs throughout the County (including fringe benefits)	Reduce AA, AB.		\$ 5,000,000
Reduce County Attorney Outside Contracts	Reduce DE	Contractual Services	\$ 4,500,000
Establish Independent Audit Unit	County Wide		\$ 15,000,000
Centralized Revenue Department	County Wide		\$ 15,000,000
Centralized Accounting Department	CE		\$ 8,000,000
Reduce IT positions and IT OT Budget	Reduce AA	Salaries, Wages	\$ 500,000
Reduce IT Contractual Services	Reduce DE	Contractual Services	\$ 1,000,000
Reduce the Salaries in County Legislature (Central Staff)	Reduce AA	Salaries, Wages	\$ 700,000
Risk Management Reforms	Reduce AC	Workers Comp	\$ 3,000,000
Nassau Accountability Act	County wide		\$ 5,000,000
Reduce OTPS across the County	Reduce BB and DD		\$ 15,000,000
Consolidate Treasurer's Office with Comptroller's Office	Reduce AA	Salaries, Wages	\$ 1,000,000
Repeal CE salary increase	Reduce AA	Salaries, Wages	\$ 65,000
Reduce Expenses in Constituent Affairs	Reduce AA, DD.	Salaries, General Expenses	\$ 2,000,000
Reduce County Clerk budget by 15%	Reduce AA, DD.	Salaries, General Expenses	\$ 900,000
Assessment Reform	County Wide		\$ 25,000,000
Medicaid Waste/Abuse/Fraud Program	Reduce XX	Social Services Medicaid	\$ 3,000,000
Increase in funding for Human and Social Services	Increase DE	Contractual Services	\$ (5,000,000)
Tax Certiorari Payments	Increase OO	Other Expenses	\$ (40,000,000)
NICE Bus/Able-Ride Funding	Increase DE	Contractual Services	\$ (4,000,000)
Funding for Lawsuits and Damages	County Wide	Other Expenses	\$ (17,000,000)
Eliminate Sewer Storm Water Usage Fee	Sewer District BH	Dept Revenues	\$ (12,000,000)
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS:</b>			\$ 104,665,000
<b>TOTAL COSTS:</b>			\$ (78,000,000)
<b>TOTAL NET SAVINGS:</b>			\$ 26,665,000