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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

NORMA GONSALVES,
Presiding Officer

VETERANS AND SENIOR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

C. WILLIAM GAYLOR, III
Chairman

1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York

Monday, December 5, 2016
3:14 P.M

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2 A P P E A R A N C E S:3 C. WILLIAM GAYLOR III
4 Chairman5 ROSE MARIE WALKER (substituted by
6 Vice Chairwoman Laura Schaefer)

7 DENNIS DUNNE

8 VINCENT MUSCARELLA

9 CARRIE SOLAGES,
10 Ranking

11 DELIA DERIGGI-WHITTON

12 ELLEN BIRNBAUM

13 MICHAEL PULITZER,
14 Clerk of the Legislature

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LIST OF SPEAKERS

GERALD PODLES AK 6

META MEREDAY 11

1 Veterans and Senior Affairs 12-5-16

2 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: At this time
3 I'll call the Veterans and Senior Affairs
4 Committee to order. I would ask the clerk
5 to please take the roll.

6 CLERK PULITZER: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman. Legislator Ellen Birnbaum?

8 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Here.

9 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Delia
10 DeRiggi-Whitton?

11 LEGISLATOR DERIGGI-WHITTON:
12 Here.

13 CLERK PULITZER: Ranking Member
14 Carrie Solages?

15 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

16 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator
17 Vincent Muscarella?

18 LEGISLATOR MUSCARELLA: Here.

19 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator
20 Dennis Dunne?

21 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: Here.

22 CLERK PULITZER: Legislator Laura
23 Schaefer?

24 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Here.

25 CLERK PULITZER: Chairman C.

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2 William Gaylor III?

3 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Present.

4 CLERK PULITZER: We have a
5 quorum.

6 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Thank you,
7 Clerk of the Legislature. I'm going to
8 need a motion to suspend the rules as we
9 have one item on the addendum today.

10 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: So moved.

11 LEGISLATOR MUSCARELLA: Second.

12 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Motion by
13 Legislator Dunne, seconded by Legislator
14 Muscarella. We need to vote on suspending
15 the rules. All in favor?

16 (Aye.)

17 Any opposed?

18 (No verbal response.)

19 The motion carries.

20 So the item we have before us is
21 Clerk Item 605-16, it's a proposed local law
22 to amend the Nassau County Administrative
23 Code in relation to granting a real property
24 tax exemption to certain veterans who
25 participated in Operation Graphic Hand.

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2 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Is there a
3 motion?

4 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: So moved.

5 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Motion by
7 Legislator Dunne, seconded by Legislator
8 Schaefer. All in favor?

9 (Aye.)

10 The item is before us. Anyone
11 from the administration to talk about it?

12 MR. PODLESACK: I have been asked
13 by the County Attorney to speak on this
14 item. It is a legislative submitted item.
15 This grants a real property tax exemption to
16 members of the reserve who were called to
17 active duty in 1970 when there was an
18 incident involving a strike by the United
19 States Postal Service. These reservists
20 were called to active duty to help to make
21 sure that the mail continued to move.

22 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Thank you.

23 Do we have any comments from
24 legislators? Legislator Dunne.

25 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: Just to be

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2 perfectly clear on this, in 1970, anybody
3 who served in the reserves can only get
4 benefits from the Veterans Administration or
5 any federal government or any state
6 government, actually, if they do 180 days of
7 active duty for other than training
8 purposes. This training did not last long.
9 They didn't do 180 days, so they are not
10 eligible for any veteran's benefits in any
11 way, shape or form, statewide, anywhere.

12 So, what is great about what
13 we're doing is, they did provide an
14 incredible service, because if the mail shut
15 down, then the senior citizens wouldn't get
16 their checks from social security, your
17 bills wouldn't be paid, it would be a real
18 horror story.

19 So they had to call in the
20 National Guard and the Reserves and this is
21 one thing that we can give to them and they
22 will finally have a benefit. So I think
23 that this is a wonderful thing we're doing
24 and I encourage my colleagues to vote for
25 this. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Any other
3 legislators? Legislator Solages.

4 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.
5 If you could just explain how does this
6 Alternate Veteran's Exemption work, how does
7 it work?

8 MR. PODLESAK: What it actually
9 does, it merely allows the veterans it
10 embraces to be included with all other
11 veterans that receive the benefit of an
12 exemption. It's a matter of taking these
13 people and moving them into the
14 classification with all of the other
15 veterans.

16 So however the veteran's
17 exemption works now, that is beyond my
18 knowledge. What it does, it puts them into
19 the same classification as other veterans.

20 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: I can explain
21 it because it used to be, a veteran's
22 exemption in the old days was based upon the
23 income you received from the VA whether it
24 be educational, disability, or any monetary,
25 52-20 club which was unemployment back in

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2 World War II, so those were monetary
3 benefits that the veterans received which
4 applied to their veteran's tax exemption.
5 Then they came out with a new thing with the
6 Alternate Veteran's Exemption which, if you
7 served during a wartime you get X amount, if
8 you served in a war zone you get X amount.
9 If you get a disability, half of the
10 disability, if it's 100 percent, you got 50
11 percent added to that. That's the Alternate
12 Veteran's Exemption. So that's the category
13 they put them in, the Alternate Veteran's
14 Exemption.

15 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Now I
16 understand. Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Legislator
18 Birnbaum.

19 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: I'm very
20 happy that we're able to extend this benefit
21 to our veterans and I always like to see the
22 county helping veterans in any way we could.

23 Do we have any idea how many
24 people would be eligible for this?

25 MR. PODLESACK: I have no

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2 information on that.

3 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Do you,
4 Dennis?

5 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: You know, the
6 amount of veterans is shrinking so quickly,
7 so rapidly, so, even if it's just three, it
8 would be great, it's a real happy face on
9 what we're doing for veterans. But I'm sure
10 it's like probably 300 or could even be
11 3,000.

12 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Did we get
13 requests from veteran groups?

14 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: The veterans
15 that served in reserves always ask what
16 benefits they can have but I served during
17 the mail strike, that's active duty for
18 other than training purposes, but it wasn't
19 enough time. So they never got anything.
20 It's a good thing.

21 The people that served in 1970, I
22 don't think there is a lot around anymore,
23 so I don't think it's going to be a major
24 hit to the tax rolls. I think it's just
25 going to be a nice thing we're doing for

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2 them.

3 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Well, I'm
4 happy that this will go into effect next
5 year?

6 MR. PODLESACK: Just to add
7 additional information, this was after the
8 state legislation that authorized the
9 opt-in, and the opt-in takes effect on
10 January 1.

11 This legislation needs to be
12 passed now in order for the opt-in to take
13 effect January 1.

14 LEGISLATOR BIRNBAUM: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Any other
16 questions from legislators?

17 (No verbal response.)

18 Is there any public comment? Ms.
19 Mereday.

20 MS. MEREDAY: Meta J. Mereday.
21 First of all, I'm so glad that this is not
22 just a blank page under Veteran's Services.

23 One day I might come here and
24 there will be more things. I will take what
25 I can get.

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2 I'm also concerned, one, how are
3 those that qualify going to be contacted?
4 I'm just hoping this isn't something else
5 that's going to get tucked under a list, and
6 considering that from the information that
7 was presented there is an opt-in deadline.
8 I think we need to get it beyond just like
9 having this little discussion here and
10 possibly doing a little photo-op thing, we
11 need to expand on that. We have so many
12 benefits that our veterans are due that they
13 are not even aware of.

14 I would hate for those who are
15 struggling here and considering this one is
16 46 years in the making but we still have
17 Korean War veterans who do not know that
18 they can also apply for benefits because
19 we're not doing a great job of notifying
20 them of the various services and supports
21 that our tax dollars pay for.

22 That's my first concern. So I
23 would hope that whether it's the County
24 Attorney's Office or the administration or
25 the individual legislators themselves since

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2 we spend so much money in mailing that we
3 could include that possibly and get the word
4 out through the various forms of media that
5 come here when they want to dig up the
6 additional dirt that happens at the tax
7 payer's expense.

8 So I'm hoping that we can do that
9 and I'm just, again, I'm glad the question
10 had been asked that how many does this
11 impact because I think this is something
12 that we need to do something actively to try
13 to determine connecting with our VFW halls,
14 American legion halls, but we need to do
15 more to kind of answer those questions as
16 opposed to, we don't know.

17 I was always thought if I said, I
18 don't know, I was always supposed to add,
19 but I will find out.

20 I do support this and I hope that
21 we can as I said proactively incorporate
22 this, again, for those veterans who may
23 still have their home and can definitely use
24 this type of exemption and to broaden the
25 scope because there are so many benefits

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2 that our veterans are not aware of and they
3 do need to know about these types of
4 services.

5 So I do support this and I thank
6 this body for hopefully moving forward with
7 this item. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Thank you,
9 Ms. Mereday, for those comments. Just
10 looking back over some notes from the After
11 Action Report from that operation, there
12 were 25,500 service members called to active
13 duty for that two week period in New York.
14 How many of those are currently still alive
15 living in Nassau County, I'm not sure if
16 that information even exists.

17 But the key to success in this
18 kind of program or a similar type of
19 programs is absolutely by getting the word
20 out, by people such as yourselves who are
21 advocates for veterans, by the legislators
22 up here in our daily doings and the county
23 getting the word out as best as possible to
24 ensure that all veterans that are eligible
25 for this tax exemption program are made

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2 aware of it and take advantage of it.

3 Is there any other public
4 comment?

5 (No verbal response.)

6 There being no further
7 discussion, all those in favor of Clerk Item
8 605-16, a proposed local law to amend the
9 Nassau County Administrative Code in
10 relation to granting a real property tax
11 exemption to certain veterans who
12 participated in Operation Graphic Hand
13 indicate by saying aye.

14 (Aye.)

15 All those opposed?

16 (No verbal response.)

17 The item passes.

18 There being no further business
19 before this committee, may I have a motion
20 to adjourn?

21 LEGISLATOR DUNNE: So moved.

22 LEGISLATOR SCHAEFER: Second.

23 CHAIRMAN GAYLOR: Motion by
24 Donald Dunne, seconded by Denise Schaefer.
25 All those in favor indicate by saying aye.

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2 (Aye.)

3 Any against?

4 (No verbal response.)

5 This committee is now adjourned.

6 Finance is next.

7 (Whereupon, the Veterans and

8 Senior Affairs Committee adjourned at 3:25

9 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, FRANK GRAY, a Shorthand Reporter and
Notary Public in and for the State of New
York, do hereby stated:

THAT I attended at the time and place
above mentioned and took stenographic record
of the proceedings in the above-entitled
matter;

THAT the foregoing transcript is a true
and accurate transcript of the same and the
whole thereof, according to the best of my
ability and belief.

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

FRANK GRAY