

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY**  
**MINUTES: July 30, 2007 - 9:00am**

**MEMBERS:**                   **Chair:** Burton; **Legislators:** Burrows, Swanson,  
Pinto

**IN ATTENDANCE:**       **CE's office:** B. Randolph; **CMH:** G. Mitchell, D.  
Austin, L. Bartus; **L&R:** W. Fallon ; **BOL:** C.  
Giliberti, L. Goldstein, M. Montalto, R. Pezzullo

With a quorum present, the Committee on Public Safety & Security was called to order at 9:10 a.m.

Present were County Department of Community Mental Health (CMH) Commissioner, Dr. Grant Mitchell, the CMH Director of Alcohol Abuse Services, Dahlia Austin, and TASC Program Administrator, Linda Bartus.

TASC (Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities) is charged with responding to any and all misdemeanor or felony cases in which substance abuse or mental illness are perceived factors. The program exists within the county's Community Mental Health (CMH) Department. The program was created in 1979.

Due to the 2006 reform of DWI law in New York State (increased enforcement throughout the state and in Westchester County), the number of DWI arrests has increased considerably – thus increasing the volume of cases referred to TASC.

Legislator Burrows then asked the CMH representatives if they could return to the Committee with “hard figures,” demonstrating the cost savings made possible by the TASC diversion program (in other words, the cost of an individual staying in jail vs. the cost of someone going through the TASC program).

Legislator Pinto added that such a contrast could also be sent to the state to reinforce the need for increased resources being channeled to the county program, which is the largest program in the state.

Dr. Mitchell explained that the state provides 50% of TASC funding – roughly \$750,000 – with the remainder of funding coming from the county tax levy (approx. \$800,000). In order to avoid increasing the amount requested from the county, TASC and CMH have written to the NYS Division of Probation & Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) Commissioner, alerting the department to the need for increased resources. Chair Burton asked that TASC officials keep the Committee apprised of any response from the state.

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The Committee also reviewed **agenda item #71** (also referred to B&A [A180], 7-9-07), which involves the provision of Labs & Research (microbiological) services in connection with inmate medical services at the County Correctional Facility.

The County Labs & Research Director of Administrative Services, Bill Fallon, was present to describe the rationale behind the request. The bond act was approved in a unanimous vote (4-0), on the motion of Legislator Swanson and seconded by Legislator Pinto.

Before closing the meeting, committee members reviewed and approved the minutes of Public Safety & Security meeting of June 25, 2007 – 9am. On the motion of Legislator Pinto and seconded by Chair Burton (4-0).

At 10:15am, on the motion of Chair Burton and seconded by Legislator Pinto, the Committee on Public Safety & Security meeting was adjourned.

*NB - Full audio minutes are available on file, as well as other meeting materials.*