

SUFFOLK COUNTY COURT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

General Membership Meeting

**Suffolk County 5th District Court
3105 Veterans Memorial Highway
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
October 7th, 2026**

1. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

- a. Moment of Silence

2. ROLL CALL

- a. The Executive Board, comprised of Mr. John Tufarella (President), Mr. Raymond Trezza (1st Vice-President), Ms. Linda Scio (2nd Vice President), Mr. James Vergano (Secretary Treasurer), and Ms. Danielle L. Vios (Recording Secretary) is PRESENT.
- b. 25 Delegates PRESENT / 6 Delegates EXCUSED

3. READING OF THE PRIOR MINUTES

- a. Motion To Waive

4. TREASURE'S REPORT – as of 10/07/2026

***given by Secretary Treasurer James Vergano**

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| a. Union Account | \$139,980.29 |
| b. Welfare Account | \$476,401.04 |
| c. PAC Fund | \$20,687.72 |
| d. Scholarship Fund | \$89,064.02 |
| e. Welfare Investments | \$5,613,190.35 |

****This money is earmarked for the Welfare Fund as “Reserves” which will enable us to be self-sustaining without contributions from OCA if something were to happen. Cannot be used for anything else.**

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| f. Union Investments | \$465,826.70 |
|----------------------|--------------|

The next payment of \$599k from the State will be made within the next few days. These payments are made quarterly. Our end goal would be to hopefully buy our own building, office space or “office condo” which would ultimately save the Union on monthly expenses such as rent. President Tufarella continues to discuss how well the Union is doing financially, and how far we have come.

Our Scholarship Fund has been doing so well that we are opening a separate investment account just for Union Scholarships. We will be increasing the number of scholarships we will be awarding to members at the April General Membership Meeting.

*The Scholarship Fund is a separate account that cannot have money moved into it from any other Union account. The Scholarship Fund is fully funded from our Fundraising Events such as Top Golf and the yearly Dinner Dance. Last year we started doing our own Journal, generating our own money without paying another company to do so. This year we have sold more ads than last year and we are still selling!!

5. SICK LEAVE BANK

- a. The Current SLB balance is approximately 61,874hrs. (approx.)
- b. (14) Members have been granted 3,847hrs (approx.) to date
- c. SCCEA President Tufarella has not decided if we will be taking the yearly contributions from the membership this April. The last time the hours were taken was (2) years ago.
- d. Delegate Annette Lambraia inquired if we are able take as low as 1hr yearly.
- e. The only **yearly** SLB contributions have come from NEW employees (21hrs) and new Transfers (14hrs). Members who have transferred out of the Union and have transferred back, we do not take the required contribution again.
- f. SLB contributions also come from retirees who retire with over 1400hrs of accrued and unused Sick Leave Credits.
- g. Discussions were had about the required SL hours for Retirees when they retire to offset the cost of Health Insurance and Service Credit:
 - *1400hrs for Family Plan with 9months Service Credit
 - *700hrs for Single Plan (+700 for 9month Service Credit)Any remaining hours would be donated to the SLB

6. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

- a. We currently have (18) people being represented with (1) on the way.
- b. In the last (3) weeks, we have had (9) formal counselling sessions.
- c. OCA has mandated Bias and Harassment Training for all employees and put out memos to keep employees informed of the updated policies put in place.
- d. Please be mindful of your surroundings and respectful of your coworkers.

- e. Disciplinary Actions can be lengthy and very costly investigations. One of the Unions' most costly expenses is the Attorney fees for Disciplinary Actions.
- f. Under no circumstances should Court Employees be using personal cell phones to facilitate or schedule attorney appearances in any of the parts in any of the courthouses. Not only is it inappropriate, but we are also not compensated for doing so and it is not part of our job. If the court cannot function efficiently without this practice, then something is fundamentally wrong, and the administration should come up with a solution to address the problem.

7. GRIEVANCES

- a. **None currently pending**

8. LEGISLATION

- a. Tier 6 is ALWAYS being worked on. Every opportunity we have, we try to make changes. There have been some benefit improvements made such as the 5yr Vesting, Pensionable Overtime, and FAS from 5yrs to 3yrs.
- b. Every year bills are submitted for 30/55 for Tier 6, but they have not been successful. This year our bill made it to the Governors desk unopposed with OCA supporting it, and the Governor still declined to sign it despite signing a bill to lower the retirement age for Teachers.
- c. President Tufarella discussed that along with the other court unions, they have met with Bruce Blakeman and he has said that if he does get elected to office, his words were "PASS ME THE PEN" in reference to signing a 30/55 bill for our Tier 6 employees. ****SEE ATTACHED LETTER****
- d. Our only motivation for supporting any Politician is strictly based on what they can do for us, in NO WAY is it Politically motivated.
- e. Captain Mattera inquired if the changes in the Tier 6 Bill are also in the percentages or just the age. President Tufarella explained that at this time the main concern is the 30/55.
- f. Delegate Michale Parisi inquired about potentially raising Union Dues and attaching PAC Fund donations like PD to get our Union more Bargaining Power. President Tufarella addressed and discussed the differences in the structure of the Unions.
- g. Lieutenant Martinez inquired about the potential of having a PAC Fundraising Event and have we ever thought of having one.

President Tufarella and Secretary Treasurer Vergano said they would have to look into it if we are able to do so.

- h. Delegate Annette Lambraia brought up the fact that the workforce is getting younger and younger, and they will be working for longer and they should be getting more involved fighting for Tier 6 changes. President Tufarella brought up a good point that the younger generation in this job is becoming deficient in all (3) things: retirement / salary / health insurance. We have found some have been leaving for other agencies for better benefits.
- i. The Unions is endorsing SCCEA member Kelly Reape for Supreme Court Judge. We are confident Kelly will be an outstanding Jurist and encourage our members to vote for her in November.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. **SCCEA Dinner Dance 11/10/2026** – New Venue **Villa Lombardi's**
SCCEA MEMBERS \$100pp
- b. **10/22 Vendors in Central Islip:**
***Jeff Bernstein (insurance/Identity shield)**
***Island Federal Bank**
***Acclaimed Mobile Health – they will be at there to sign up members for upcoming dates: 11/16 in Riverhead & 11/17 in Central Islip**
- c. **New Committees:** Upon the retirement of Brian Burke, Delegate Daniel Rapisarda has replaced him as a Trustee on the Welfare Fund Committee
Labor Relations Committee: Delegates Maureen Sarian & Kristina Kahres

Negotiation Committee:
Kerry Bassett, Jennifer Hoffman, Kristina Kahres, and Nicholas Tabile
- d. **President Tufarella opened the floor for questions/comments...**
****Special Session for Contract Negotiations will commence**

10. NEGOTIATIONS

- a. The Negotiating Committee will be having their 1st contract discussions with OCA on October 21st

- b. Downstate we collectively have (11) Unions and together we have formed a coalition to work together to negotiate a fair & equitable contract.
- c. Initially they offered a 4.5% and then 5yr 18%
- d. The 18% over 5yrs is already established. SCC Benincasa inquired if this is the case & President Tufarella confirmed.
- e. Accepting the 1yr or 5yr extender takes away your ability to negotiate anything else in the contract and locks you into that 1yr or 5yr without ANY further demands for change.
- f. OCA has an operating budget of over \$3 Billion. We expect them to do more to compensate their employees.
- g. Delegate Nicholas Tabile inquired if they could take Retro off the table. President Tufarella responded that they initially tried to say that they wanted the contract ratified by November or they wouldn't get the retro in the budget by April. IN the past we've had it in late December and it was in the April budget.
- h. Discussions were had about what the Negotiating Committee will take to OCA on October 21st

11. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

MEETING ADJOURNED



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DANIELLE VIOS
Recording Secretary

After much discussion and consideration, the Suffolk County Court Employees Association, the Court Officers Benevolent Association of Nassau County (COBANC), the New York State Court Officers Association and the New York State Supreme Court Officers Association are pleased to issue a joint endorsement of Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman for Governor.

On September 14, 2026, County Executive Blakeman met with Union members and discussed various topics of importance, including Tier 6 and its continuing effects on the Court System. We discussed how Tier 6 pension issue continues to harm recruitment, retention, and morale among prospective and current court employees. Mr. Blakeman demonstrated that he understands how Tier 6 is contributing to recruitment and retention challenges in the court system and committed to making the necessary changes to address the problem. Specifically, Mr. Blakeman indicated that he would sign a bill to reduce the retirement age of Tier 6 employees. This position stands in stark contrast to that of his opponent who has vetoed legislation on this issue that was unanimously passed and repeatedly supported by the Unified Court System. Mr. Blakeman also indicated that as Governor, he will use the powers of the office to make front line staffing a priority and work with the judiciary and the Office of Court Administration to ensure that resources are allocated where they are needed most.

The Unions strongly believe that they can no longer accept Tier 6 employees having less retirement security while performing the same critical jobs as those in the lower tiers. The time has come for real changes to Tier 6, and we believe that Bruce Blakeman is the best candidate to help effectuate those changes. For that reason, we urge all of our members to vote for Bruce Blakeman for Governor this November.