

Ulster County Legislature



UC RRA Reform Committee

Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2024 at 9:00 AM

KL Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building, Kingston

Committee Members:

Mike Baden, Chair

President, Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors and Mayors

Tracey Bartels, Vice-Chair

Legislative Chair Designee

Legislator Manna Jo Greene

Energy, Environment & Sustainability Representative

Laura Petit

Minority Designee

Comptroller March Gallagher

Ulster County Comptroller

Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle

Ulster County Executive Designee

Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair

UCRRA Board of Directors

PRESIDING OFFICER: UCRRA, Chair Baden

LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant

PRESENT: Chair Baden, Vice-Chair Bartels, Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle, Laura Pettit, Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair UCRRA Board of Directors

ABSENT: Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider

Call Meeting to Order: 9:13 AM

Approval of the May 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion No. 1

Motion to APPROVE the Minutes of the May 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion By: Laura Petit
Motion Seconded By: UCRRA Vice-Chair, Gordon
Voting In Favor: Chair Baden, Vice-Chair Bartels, Deputy County Executive LaValle, UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon, Laura Petit
Voting Against: 0
Abstention: 0
Disposition: **MINUTES APPROVED**

Chair Baden & UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed the UCCRA's affiliation with the UCRRA board.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested a lack of state support and focus on reduction has hindered implementation of an independent agency for waste management.

Deputy County Executive LaValle and UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed potential solutions for improving the relationship between the legislature and executive branches in Ulster County.

Deputy County Executive LaValle and Chair Baden agreed on separate entity for landfill oversight.

Laura Petit advocated for more inclusive representation on the agency board to address waste reduction and landfill concerns.

Laura Petit expressed concern about political appointments and the potential for turnover.

Vice-Chair Bartels emphasized the need for urgency in addressing the issue, citing the potential loss of a five-year contract.

Chair Baden suggested a smaller board size, such as seven members, to improve coordination in emergencies.

Chair Baden suggested increasing board members from 5 to 7, with 3 appointed by legislature and 2 by County Executives, one by Supervisor's Association and one at large, appointment to be considered.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested Legislative appointments instead of minority appointments.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon suggested limiting UCRRA board members to 7-9 to avoid complications of large board, "public posturing" and ensure non-partisanship.

Chair Baden proposed a two-year term for board members to address minority majority issue.

Vice-Chair Bartels discussed potential solutions to address political issues with executive appointments in a democratic body. Supervisors and Executive's appointees rarely face legislature confirmation, but it's important for budget responsibility.

Chair Baden suggested requiring a supermajority vote by the Legislature to overrule executive recommendations.

Committee chairs and vice chairs would have to be appointed, potentially limiting diversity.

Chair Baden suggested that the supervisor's association appointee should be either a supervisor or the body's designee.

Vice-Chair Bartels requested a membership list of solid waste management agencies and departments across the state.

Deputy County Executive LaValle and Chair Baden discussed solid waste management planning units in New York State, with Deputy County Executive LaValle using the DC site for the list of planning units.

Deputy County Executive LaValle clarified that there are 69 recognized planning units in the state, with some confusion about the exact number.

Delaware County has a Solid Waste Authority, but it's not clear who can participate in decision-making.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon and Chair Baden discussed the makeup of the UCRRA board.

Chair Baden suggested a 7-member board with 3 legislative appointments, including Kingston.

Chair Baden suggested giving executive branch more power on the UCRRA board, potentially with 2 executive appointments and 3 legislative appointments.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider proposed increasing the board size to 9 members, with 5 legislative appointments and 4 executive appointments, including 1 from the towns.

Chair Baden and UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon suggested keeping current board members and phasing in new ones to maintain continuity.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider and Vice-Chair agreed that state enabling legislation is necessary for new board makeup and terms, and continuity should be considered.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon and Chair Baden discussed the delay in passing a bill to change the reporting requirements for the UCRRA Board, with UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon expressed concern that it may take several months or even years to pass. Other members were more optimistic it could occur quickly.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider provided an update on the latest version of the draft bill, which will be submitted in October after changes are made in response to comments received from the agency board.

Chair Baden seeks feedback on draft report's organization and content.

Committee members discussed challenges with managing waste in rural county.

Transfer stations charge based on volume, not weight, to avoid double charging for larger containers. Chair Baden mentioned that private haulers are trying to make a profit, while transfer stations are trying to break even.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon shared a funny story about the complications of garbage collection, including a neighbor's pickup being handled by a different company than the one picking up his own garbage but on a different day, from a different corporate franchise.

Haulers are required to offer recycling services to commercial customers but may not always provide separate bins for trash and recyclables.

Discussion on potential recommendation to mandate flow control of all recycling.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider provided a ballpark estimate of the cost of Upper Mohawk River dredging.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed creating solid waste districts, with potential for color-coding each district.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlighted the need to analyze data on herbicide use in rural areas, with Rochester providing an example of easily accessible data.

Chair Baden noted that 50-55% of Rochester's population uses the transfer station, while some people only use it for recycling.

Laura Petit expressed concern about smaller haulers being pushed out by district-based collection, potentially leading to higher costs for consumers.

Chair Baden and UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider discussed the percentage of waste generated by residents versus larger institutional users in Kingston, with Chair Baden thinking it's lower than he expected.

Chair Baden and UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed the specificity of recommendations for the report, with Chair Baden advocating for overarching recommendations and UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon cautioning against micromanaging.

The committee agrees that specific recommendations for materials, such as the bottle bill, are feasible and can be made, while other recommendations may be more general in nature.

Chair Baden shared that New York City is now trying a pilot pizza box disposal program in two locations. Where people have Pizza Parties in the park, and you can dispose specifically of your pizza box.

Laura Petit suggests pizza boxes could be recycled if they are clean and free of food residue.

Next Meetings:

Thursday, May 23rd @ 9:30 AM

Thursday, May 30th @ 9:30 AM

Adjournment

Motion No. 2:

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion Made By:

UCRRA Vice-Chair, Gordon

Motion Seconded By:

Laura Petit

No. of Votes in Favor:

5

No. of Votes Against:

0

TIME: 10:45 AM

Respectfully submitted:

Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant

Minutes Approved:

June 13, 2024