

# Ulster County Legislature



## UC RRA Reform Committee

### Meeting Minutes

May 23, 2024 at 9:30 AM

KL Binder Library, 6<sup>th</sup> 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, Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle, Laura Pettit, Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair UCRRA Board of Directors

**ABSENT:** None

**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider

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**Call Meeting to Order:** 9:34 AM

**Approval of the May 10, 2024 & May 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes** -were postponed till next committee meeting, Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>.

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Chair Baden Confirms Kelly, John Petronella and Dave Pollack from DEC will be attending the next UCRRA meeting, Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion ensued on how to prepare for the meeting, including circulation questions in advance and asking follow up questions after hearing from the attendees on the state's process for siting a landfill.

Discussion on export of solid waste from New York state, including impact on climate change and available capacity.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider discussed potential limitations on importing waste from outside counties.

Laura Petit and Comptroller Gallagher discussed the transfer of waste from other counties to New Paltz, with Laura Petit expressed concern about the source of generation and Comptroller Gallagher agreeing that the existing contract should be enforced.

Jim Gordon, RRA Board member, highlights the financial impact of the waste transfer, stating that the county gained tens of thousands of dollars in revenue but also broke the terms of contract.

Legislator Greene advocated for better communication and stakeholder engagement in landfill siting process.

Chair Baden acknowledged a large portion of the population may not care about the issue, requiring a shift in mentality.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider and Chair Baden discussed the financial benefits of using a county-owned waste management facility, either regionally with surrounding counties, or solely for UC, Benefits include reduced transportation costs and potential financial savings for county, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions from current system of trucking waste long distance.

Vice-Chair highlighted the urgency of the situation, emphasizing that the county has exhausted all opportunities for delay and that the financial and environmental consequences of inaction will be severe.

Chair Baden stated community organizations and schools should be involved in spreading the message to combat skepticism of political.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested including communication element in consultant contracts to avoid using terms like "dump" and "trashing agency."

Chair Baden provided listing of trash-related agencies waste management plans in counties statewide. Their board of director affiliations range from 5 members to 17 members and their affiliations range from all elected officials to some elected, to none.

Chair Baden explained that enabling legislation prohibits elected on citizen boards in most states.

Chair Baden agreed to send a link for deeper analysis and potential findings of solid waste laws.

Legislator Greene proposed alternative to ex officio board members, Chair Baden raised legal concerns.

Amanda LaValle suggested adding a column to the spreadsheet to indicate whether an agency is state-created or state-controlled.

Comptroller Gallagher expressed concerns about the size and composition of the board, preferring executive appointments and representation from local officials. Comptroller Gallagher does not want to see a county department. She thinks five-member board is too small and would like to see Executive and Legislative appointments. She would also like to see the Town Supervisors and Mayors Association make recommended appointments as well. She does not want to see a bar to elected officials serving. Committee Chair Baden said that committee had generally agreed to those guidelines at previous meeting, (which Comptroller was unable to attend).

Chair Baden found two dissolved public benefit corporations in his research. Comptroller Gallagher suggested adding them to the list for transparency.

Chair Baden mentioned Ulster County's unique prohibition on elected officials serving on its solid waste authority, and the absence of regulated recyclables flow control in the enabling legislation.

Chair Baden agreed that Ulster County is the only one with this prohibition but is unsure if it's in the same section as committee members.

UCRRA Vice-Chair, Gordon and Chair Baden discussed potential appointments for the Resource Recovery Agency Board, including 3 from the Legislature, 2 Executive office and 1 from the host community.

Chair Baden suggested 3 Legislative appointees, with one from the minority, majority and one from the chair, while UCRRA Vice-Chair, Gordon suggests adding a representative from the host community.

Chair Baden suggested two-year terms for board members to address complexity of UC Legislature requiring legislative minority gets representation.

Vice-Chair Bartels opposed reappointment every two years, citing lack of continuity. She also suggested doing away with requirement for leg. minority getting a rep. on UCRRA board. She said only UC has that requirement and it is undemocratic and needlessly complex.

Chair Baden suggested creating a position for a host community in legislation, but Vice-Chair Bartels is uncomfortable with the idea.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon and Chair Baden discussed potential conflicts between the Executive and Legislature in the appointment process.

The Committee members discussed potential changes to the composition of the UCRRA Board, including the number of members and the qualification for appointees.

Committee members discussed potential sizes and representation of the UCCRA board with County legislative and the executive branch, the super. assoc. and host community member...discussed level of elected officials' inclusion on the board.

Chair Baden and UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider discussed waste management in Kingston including private haulers, municipal pick up and flow control.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed concern about limiting elected officials on the UCRRA Board, suggesting a category-based approach to prevent posturing.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested a balance between elected and appointed officials to ensure everyone's voice is heard, like Rockland County's all-elected board.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested limiting elected officials on the committee to one per category.

Chair Baden proposed that the host community should have one elected official on the committee.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested that the legislature may change the solid waste management plan, but the exact details depend on how solid the plan is.

Chair Baden and UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider discussed the importance of geographic representation of the UCRRA Board, with Chair Baden suggesting that transfer stations are still necessary.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested simplifying the appointments process by basing it on population, with no confirmation required for appointments from the Herkimer legislature.

Chair Baden and UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider agreed that the current board is working well together and suggest sticking with the current composition of 5 Legislative appointments, 3 Executive appointments, and 1 supervisor associate appointment.

Chair Baden suggested giving host community control over appointments to board, with 3 community members and 2 Legislator.

Committee members were open to either the 4,3,2 or 5,3,1 proposal, with no elected officials and a limit on legislator representation.

Vice-Chair Bartels argued that supervisors focus on their towns' interests can lead to a lack of consideration for the county-wide view.

Vice-Chair Bartels and Chair Baden disagreed on the role of supervisors in representing their districts versus the county-wide view.

Vice-Chair Bartels argued that supervisors prioritize local interests over the entire system and thus should not have 2 seats on a nine member UCRRA Board.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested keeping current board members as 5 Legislative, 3 Exec, and 1 supervisor's, association appointee, with at least one representing the host community.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon, opposed making it mandatory that Legislative appointments include elected officials, seeking flexibility in the system.

Chair Baden suggested limiting Legislative appointments to no more than two, with no more than two being elected officials or staff appointees to the entity reporting to the body.

The committee informally agreed that there will be a recommendation for a nine member UCRRA board, with 5 Legislative, 3, exec and 1 supervisor. assoc. appointees, details to be decided include a host community rep, and number/configuration of elected officials on the board.

**Next Meetings:**

Thursday, May 30<sup>th</sup> @ 9:30 AM

**Adjournment**

**Motion No. 2:**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**Motion Made By:**

UCRRA Vice-Chair, Gordon

**Motion Seconded By:**

Chair Baden

**No. of Votes in Favor:**

7

**No. of Votes Against:**

0

TIME: 11:16 AM

**Respectfully submitted:**

Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant

**Minutes Approved:**

June 13, 2024