

Ulster County Legislature



UC RRA Reform Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 21, 2024 at 3:00 PM

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

Committee Members:

Mike Baden, Chair

Representative, 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: Chair Baden

LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Michael Tierney, Legislative Support Specialist

PRESENT: Chair Baden, Vice-Chair Bartels (over zoom), Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle, UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon, Laura Pettit

ABSENT: None

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider, Casey Plasker, Circularly

Call Meeting to Order: 3:03 PM

June 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes postponed to next meeting.

Comptroller Gallagher shared updated timeline for budget adoption and public hearings. There will be a presentation of an estimated net service fee on August 1st that the upper board would present a draft of an adopted draft budget to the Legislature, the middle of August, the Legislature would have two weeks to review and make comments back, and then it is really in the court of UCRRA to do what they do, they don't adopt their budget until they have to, which is a Nov 1st deadline.

Comptroller Gallagher sent budget information to Budget Director Ken Juris for early awareness.

Deputy County Executive LaValle and Comptroller Gallagher discussed the timeline and magnitude of a net service fee in a contract.

Legislator Greene felt that things are going to be changing at the agency, both internally and in terms of the Reuse Innovation Center, and hopefully the Zero Waste implementation plan she would like to ensure that the contract is the place to do this, and that it gets revisited in five years. Chair Baden clarified what Legislator Greene suggested, recommendation would be for a five-year contract with a renewal period to be determined at that time, believes that is a smart move.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed concerned about recommending a 5-year term, doesn't feel comfortable recommending a five-year term to the Legislature, feels it's too short and may forestall action.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider felt differently than Vice-Chair Bartels and and a feels that a 5-year term makes sense, he suggested a 5-year contract with renewal options to align with the county's solid waste plan and potential changes in state regulations.

Chair Baden proposed a mandated review at the end of 5 years between the agency and the Legislature to assess amendments to the contract based on benchmarks and changes in recycling goals.

Vice-Chair Bartels emphasized consensus and firm recommendations in a 5-year contract, addressing multiple aspects of waste management.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested multi-year budgeting as a requirement for agency contracts to ensure long-term financial planning.

UCRRA Vice-Chair expressed concern about bonding for UCRRA without a guaranteed revenue stream and suggests county signing off on bonding as a backstop and suggested a benchmark, this will track progress but must be flexible to avoid inefficiency.

Vice-Chair Bartels supports removing legislative approval for bonding over \$500,000 but remains skeptical about legality.

Vice-Chair and UCCRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed alleviating concerns about bonding cap and legality of autonomous agency.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider he thinks it's important to spell out in the contract that the county would be the backstop or assume responsibility terminated contract, prior contracts term was tied with the last bond payment, which is why it's up this year.

Legislator Greene clarified that cap is not a cap but opposite, allowing bonding up to \$500,000.

Legislator Greene: Bond approval requires legislature vote but may not happen.

Jim Gordon: Landfill debate became political, making bond approval unlikely.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested tying tipping fee to operations to ensure long-term funding for waste management.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed concern that increasing debt service could lead to unmanageable tipping fees and alternative methods.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed concerns about the reluctance to spend money on a net service fee, citing the need for a sustainable solution.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider highlighted the \$11 million budgeted for transportation and disposal fees, suggesting a potential debt service fee on a landfill.

Chair Baden expressed concern about setting too many benchmarks, which could lead to agency failure because there is so many variables going into achieving each benchmark.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested a rolling five-year capital plan with key indicators to bridge the gap between contracts and budgets.

Deputy County Executive LaValle and Chair Baden discussed ways to finalize the report, with Chair Baden suggesting two more meetings to ensure quality.

Comptroller Gallagher and Chair Baden discussed a rolling capital plan and board composition. Agencies should have autonomy, but with cap on size to maintain independence.

Committee members debated whether to remove cap on waste management agency's spending or continue with flow control.

Laura Petit has concerns about creating a monopoly and liability for the county if cap is removed.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider and UCCRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed the importance of flow control of regulated recyclables to improve recycling operations.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider mentioned the need for enforcement and compliance to ensure mandatory source separation law is followed.

Vice-Chair Bartels doubts accuracy of recyclable numbers, advocates for flow control.

Vice-Chair Bartels debates best approach for regulated recyclables, capacity concerns.

Deputy County Executive LaValle questioned the feasibility of building a MRF for glass recycling in Ulster County without a market.

Committee members discussed potential flow control of recyclables to address financial challenges.

Legislator Greene opposed flow control for recyclables, citing enforcement issues.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider suggested doing a short-term bid for single stream recycling to determine market demand and feasibility of upgrading recycling infrastructure.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider expressed skepticism about the potential for increased recycling revenues, citing operational costs and infrastructure investments as major concerns.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed concern about intersection of 85% recycling goal and lack of market for recycled materials.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested legislation can drive domestic plastic recycling market, citing California's garbage bag requirement as an example.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon highlighted the potential value of recyclables in the future, suggesting they may become invaluable in 5-20 years.

Comptroller Gallagher agreed flow control for regulated recyclables should be considered, but not recommended at present.

Chair Baden explained changes to the UCRRA board appointment process, including term lengths and confirmation requirements. 9 members, 5 appointed by the Legislature, 3 by the county executive, 1 from the Supervisors Association.

Vice-Chair discussed potential changes to the county charter, including geographic diversity in appointments and representation from the host community.

Laura Petit and Comptroller Gallagher discussed expanding the UCRRA Board size and makeup.

Members agreed on a unanimous vote for nine appointments, with a preference for the supervisors Association over two appointments.

The board will expand from 5 to 9 members, with existing members' terms ending and new members appointed by the legislature and executive.

Existing members' terms will be extended to 3/31 if the current term ends on 12/31, and they can be reappointed or replaced by the legislature or executive. The Legislature can reappoint if they choose to, or they can appoint somebody else. So, the first year, the Legislature is only appointing

two people. There are three continuing, and the executive is appointing three and the supervisor appointing one and every year one executive appointment is coming up every year.

Next Meetings: Friday, July 12, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

Adjournment

Motion No. 1: MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion Made By: UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon
Motion Seconded By: Deputy County Executive LaValle
No. of Votes in Favor: 7
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 4:47 PM

Respectfully submitted: Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant
Minutes Approved: August 1, 2024