

Ulster County Legislature



UC RRA Reform Committee

Meeting Minutes

December 20, 2023 at 10:00 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 (arrived @ 10:13 AM)

Chair, Ulster County Legislature

Legislator Manna Jo Greene

Chair, Energy, Environment & Sustainability Committee

Legislator Laura Petit

Minority Designee

Comptroller March Gallagher

Ulster County Comptroller

Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle

Ulster County Executive Designee

Andrew Ghiorse, Chair

UCRRA Board of Directors

Call Meeting to Order: 10:05 AM

Approval of the December 7, 2023 Meeting

Motion No. 1 **Motion to APPROVE the Minutes of the December 7, 2023 Meeting**

Motion By: Comptroller Gallagher

Motion Seconded By: Chair Ghiorse

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Chair Ghiorse, Vice Chair Bartels, Legislators Greene, Petit, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Lavalle (Bartels Absent)

Voting Against:	None
Votes in Favor:	6
Votes Against:	0
Disposition:	MINUTES APPROVED

Chair Baden proposes prioritizing diversion, disposal, and intergovernmental regulations based on meeting discussions.

Chair Baden presents a framework for organizing topics related to waste management, including identifying stakeholders and actions designated for each category.

Chair Baden discuss the importance of protecting existing initiatives, such as electronics recycling and household hazardous waste days, while also identifying new policies and strategies for diversion.

Chair Baden recognizes the importance of including a SWOT analysis in the report, but neglected to include it initially.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggests including financial information in the matrix to round out the report and address funding for new programs.

Chair Baden Mike Baden proposes a matrix to categorize existing programs related to diversion, including flow control, yard waste, and food waste.

The Committee discusses the classification of electronics and plastic bag law as diversion, with some members questioning their inclusion in this category.

Legislator Greene emphasizes the importance of addressing the overarching Zero Waste implementation plan, which includes diversion and reuse initiatives, and highlights the urgency of the Reuse Innovation Center's implementation this year.

Committee members disagree on their role in advancing waste reduction policies, with some advocating for recommendations to the legislature and others focusing on gathering information and presenting a report in June.

Committee member seeks to clarify local solid waste management plan and identify ways to support municipalities in achieving zero waste goals.

Chair Mike Baden suggests environmental committee or other stakeholders should handle funding for waste management initiatives.

Legislator Greene emphasizes the importance of implementing the Zero Waste implementation plan and local Solid Waste Plan.

Chair Baden emphasizes the importance of presenting a comprehensive report to the Ulster County Legislature, rather than making individual recommendations.

Comptroller Gallagher agrees, highlighting the need for a single report containing multiple recommendations, including the adoption of the swipe being formally adopted by the county.

Committee discusses waste diversion and reuse Innovation Center, stuck on facility location and budget.

Chair Ghiorse recommends more planning and specificity in report for reuse innovation center.

Comptroller Gallagher emphasizes need for detailed engineering perspective and cost analysis for waste management center.

Legislator Greene believes that transfer stations must be integrated into the system for it to work effectively.

Committee members agree on the importance of a comprehensive plan for managing waste, but disagree on the best approach.

Legislator Petit discusses the importance of including transfer stations in the Solid Waste Plan, citing their large geographic area and the need to ensure proper disposal.

Chair Ghiorse suggests involving the county in the process of sterilizing and selling mattresses, rather than relying on private sector solutions.

Committee member expresses frustration with limited space for donated items at transfer station.

Legislator Greene suggests reviewing the Reuse Innovation Center by an existing committee, such as the recycling oversight committee, to ensure diverse perspectives and build on existing work.

Chair Ghiorse highlights the importance of including scrap metal in the report on reusable materials, as it's something that towns take and handle themselves without agency involvement.

Chair Baden emphasizes the need for clear responsibility and order in addressing the issue of waste management in the county.

Vice Chair Bartels and Amanda discuss the role of the recycling oversight committee in recommending the inclusion of reuse initiatives in the 2025 contract.

Chair Ghiorse emphasizes the importance of equal taxation and addressing inequities in the distribution of costs for recycling and reuse initiatives.

Chair Baden suggests potential cost savings from waste diversion, including reduced trucking costs and extended landfill lifespan.

Town officials prioritize waste diversion to reduce costs and environmental impact.

Vice Chair Bartels expresses concern about the financial burden of implementing recycling initiatives and the potential for cost savings to be negligible.

Chair Baden acknowledges the cost of recycling but emphasizes the importance of diverting materials from landfills, even if it doesn't result in immediate cost savings.

Chair Ghiorse discusses the cost of a landfill in a small town, suggesting it's not worth the investment.

Chair Ghiorse expresses frustration with a proposed study on reopening landfills, believing it to be a waste of money.

Chair Baden questions the relevance of town zoning laws in the discussion, suggesting that a government agency will be exempt from them.

Vice Chair Bartels expresses concern about the landfill study and its potential impact on the community, emphasizing the need for a collective conversation about how and where to site a landfill.

Vice Chair Bartels highlights the benefits of the Oneida-Herkimer model, where the host town pays no town taxes and receives various support systems and suggests that this could be a viable option for the community.

Vice Chair Bartels expresses concern about a landfill study being led by agencies without community involvement, leading to a lack of engagement and potential failure.

Chair Ghiorse disagrees with the idea of a landfill, citing geographical and community opposition, and suggests a collaborative process to determine the best course of action.

Chair Baden questions the feasibility of a landfill as the only option for waste disposal, while Chair Tracey Bartels and Legislator Manna Jo Greene emphasize the importance of diversion.

Mike Baden suggests organizing conversations around diversion, with a goal of identifying which existing programs or topics fall under the categories of financial, intergovernmental, disposal, and recycling.

Legislator Greene suggests including zero waste implementation plan, reuse Innovation Center, municipal transfer stations, and other disposal options under diversion, and local solid waste plan, contract bonding, flow control, and service fee under intergovernmental.

Comptroller Gallagher suggests the agency should bear responsibility for dealing with waste items or consider folding into the county department.

Vice Chair Bartels agrees, highlighting the need to identify and solve the "WHO" problem (i.e., who is responsible for enforcing waste laws) and other issues.

Vice Chair Bartels expresses frustration with lack of enforcement of organics regulations in the tipping floor.

Legislator Greene and others express frustration with lack of enforcement of environmental regulations in their community.

Vice Chair Bartels said that agency faces pressure to balance budget despite lack of support from contractual understanding.

The group agrees to schedule the meeting for Friday, January 5th at 9am, with Mike Baden and Andrew Ghiorse in favor.

Chair Baden and Chair Ghiorse also schedule a meeting for Thursday, January 18th at 1:00-2:30 PM.

Schedule January Meetings: Friday, January 5, 2023 @ 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM
 Thursday, January 18, 2023 @ 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Adjournment

Motion No. 2:

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion Made By:

Comptroller Gallagher

Motion Seconded By:

County Executive LaValle

No. of Votes in Favor:

6

No. of Votes Against:

0

TIME: 11:33 AM

Respectfully submitted: Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant

Minutes Approved: January 5, 2023