

# Ulster County Legislature



## UC RRA Reform Committee Meeting Minutes

**June 26, 2024 at 9:00 AM**

KL Binder Library, 6<sup>th</sup> 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 9:09am), Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle, Laura Pettit

**ABSENT:** UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon

**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

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

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**Call Meeting to Order:** 9:06 AM

**Approval of the June 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion No. 1**                                      **Motion to APPROVE the Minutes of the June 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion By:** Legislator Greene  
**Motion Seconded By:** Comptroller Gallagher

**Voting In Favor:** Chair Baden, Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive LaValle, Laura Petit

**Voting Against:** 0

**Abstention:** 0

**Disposition:**                                      **MINUTES APPROVED**

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UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider gave UCRRA update, zero waste is under consideration, with a focus on organics diversion and various zero waste initiatives.

UCRRA Executive Director Rider interpreted the solid waste management plan as that essentially only 15% of waste materials will be landfilled or combusted. He stated that it makes it seem like there's some kind of baseline is being reduced by 85%, there is recycling happening already and diversion. Chair Baden provided this context from the New York State solid waste management plan, including charts and text from both the state and county plans.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested on the intergovernmental relations section, should be divided into things that is needed or wanted at the state level and also having things wanted by the county legislature.

Comptroller Gallagher recalls a strong discussion at the table about transfer stations and on-site reuse at the county level.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed concern about the language used in the findings and conclusion section. Chair Baden responded that he wanted to go through those one by one in this meeting.

Vice-Chair Bartels emphasized importance of specific recommendations with action items.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested adding an economic section to the report to address market uncertainties and the future reality of diverted items.

Mike Baden struggled with combining topics like diversion, economics, intergovernmental, and disposal, and suggests sectioning them off for clarity.

Comptroller Gallagher highlights findings and support, while Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested echoing state solid waste management plan's circular economy framework.

Chair Baden suggested organizing findings and conclusions into topics, prioritizing high-priority tasks.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider suggested grouping tasks by topic and prioritizing high-priority ones while others prefer keeping them separated.

Comptroller Gallagher seeks improved document organization for easier navigation.

Comptroller Gallagher discussed potential executive summary format, including prioritized findings and recommendations.

Committee members discussed the executive order, with Comptroller Gallagher suggesting a hub-and-spoke for organics recycling.

Comptroller March Gallagher suggests initiative to find programs versus system.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested avoiding the word "should" in recommendations to the legislature.

Deputy County Executive LaValle recommended being clear on priority implementation items for the contract negotiation.

Chair Baden suggested reviewing the working bullet points list to ensure consistency in recommendations.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider explained source separation and C&D in waste management. Transfer stations merge C&D waste despite potential for separation for recycling.

Laura Petit discussed the issue of source separation of Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste in Ulster County, mentioning that it is not regulated and that some companies may be taking it to their own facilities for processing mandating C&D recycling could be a solution but would require building capacity to bring in a material that is about 30% to 40% of the waste stream.

Committee members discussed expanding accepted materials and infrastructure for recycling, with a focus on phasing in new materials and increasing capacity.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested giving more detail on why specific infrastructure is needed.

Diversion center could create feedstock for waste-to-energy facility, reduce congestion at tipping floor.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested improving public outreach and education program, expand the footprint, the institutions, the staffing, and the budget to reach a broader audience.

Chair Baden divided 180,000 people by 4 pounds per day by the number of tons to estimate waste production, resulting in 360 tons of waste per day.

Tracking pounds per day helps agency understand waste management efforts and make recommendations for improvement.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested specific recommendations for each agency and legislature, such as increasing resources for recycling or education outreach.

Chair Baden and Comptroller Gallagher agree on breaking up recommendations into smaller, more specific points.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested 100% Organics diversion by regulation to build capacity over time.

Legislator Greene suggested implementing a mattress take-back program.

Vice-Chair Bartels wondered if yard waste really is ending up in municipal solid waste, and questioned on how much is actually diverted.

Comptroller Gallagher and Chair Baden discussed prioritizing recyclable items for state regulations, with a focus on cigarette butts and e-cigarettes. They also discuss incentives for reusable and refillable products, with a focus on bulk purchases and bring-your-own containers.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlighted the lack of action on lead in children's toys and harmful chemicals in consumer products, despite support from the legislature and the public.

Chair Baden and Deputy County Executive LaValle expressed concerns about the cautious approach to legislative action items, including single-use product restrictions and standards for deconstruction materials.

Comptroller Gallagher highlighted the potential for private sector management and coordination opportunities in waste reduction efforts.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested requiring clear standards for county property use and contracts.

Deputy County Executive LaValle expressed skepticism about alternative technologies, worrying about "trash alchemy" and flow control concerns.

Group discussed potential issues with private facilities receiving waste, including flow control and legal concerns.

The committee discussed the length of the contract for the UCRRA, with some members suggesting a five-year contract with options to renew, while others prefer a longer contract with benchmarks to achieve by a certain point.

The committee also discusses the location of landfills, with some members advocating for regionally located landfills and others suggesting a study on landfill reduction and waste reduction before making a decision.

Chair Baden proposed regulating C&D as recyclable to improve recycling efforts.

Chair Baden suggested county managers, or an outside agency should manage the recycling program.

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

**Adjournment**

**Motion No. 1:** MOTION TO ADJOURN

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Greene  
**Motion Seconded By:** Laura Petit  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 6  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0

TIME: 11:07 AM

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