

**Energy & Environment Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: May 8, 2017 at 6:30
LOCATION: Howard C. St. John Business Resource Seminar Room,
SUNY Ulster, Stone Ridge, NY
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Richard Parete and Tracey Bartels
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn A. Tantillo, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Tracey Bartels, Ron G. Lapp, Jr and Mary Wawro
ABSENT: Legislator Jonathan Heppner
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Manna Jo Greene; James Halloran; James Bell, Barbara Jean Weyant, Carol Meyer, Rod and Lourd Basten, C. Flemming, Laura Shaine Cunningham, Kathy Nolan, Catskill Mountainkeeper;

Chairman Parete called the meeting to order at 6:13 and continued a discussion with residence regarding the proposed Fire Training Center project.

Motion No. 1: To Approve the Minutes of April 10, 2017

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Wawro

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators R. Parete, Bartels, Lapp and Wawro
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Approved

Motion No.2: To approve Resolution No. 217 - Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature to Execute An Amendment to Contract C09-00722, With The New York City Department of Environmental Protection, To Allow DPW to Continue Winter Maintenance Around The Ashokan Reservoir Through June 29, 2016, In Exchange For Reimbursement Of Costs By New York City Department Of Environmental Protection

Resolution Summary: This resolution would authorize the Chairman to sign a contract with the NYSDEP to reimburse Ulster County DPW for winter maintenance around the Ashokan Reservoir performed by between April 2, 2016 and June 29, 2016.

Motion By: Legislator Bartels
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Lapp

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators R. Parete, Bartels, Lapp and Wawro
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Approved

Old Business:

- **Proposed Plastic Bag Legislation** – Chairman Parete and Legislator Bartels discussed issues they want to address before moving forward.
- **Climate Smart Committee** – Legislator Greene gave a brief update on issues discussed at the Climate Smart Committee.

Legislator Greene said she planned to talk to county officials Amanda Lavallo and Dennis Doyle to see if it would be helpful for the county to have a county wide energy coordinator. The committee discussed how a coordinator could help advance the transition to energy efficiency measures that could help the county and the state reach the goals of the NYS Reforming the Energy Vision.
- **Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission**- Legislator Bartels said she had been making final edits to the report and the committee planned to present it to the UCRRA before giving it to the Legislature.

New Business:

- **Hudson River Anchorages** Chairman Parete discussed proposed state legislation that would give the State of New York jurisdiction over the siting of anchorages in key areas of the Hudson River. A memorializing letter is being prepared for legislators to sign tomorrow night.
- Legislator Greene told the committee about an event at SUNY Ulster and a presentation from the University of Delaware regarding a study they did of the Hudson River in cooperation with the NYSDEC. It showed areas where hundreds of sturgeons spawn and the scarring on the bottom of the river caused by the anchors of these ships.
- The committee had a discussion regarding the anchorages and proposed legislation.

Chairman Parete reminded the committee that the June meeting was moved to Tuesday, June 13 at 6:00. The College Budget hearing has been scheduled for Monday, June 12. There was a brief discussion that if the committee only has one or two resolutions as they did tonight they might hold a brief meeting on Monday June 12 so everyone doesn't have to make another trip to the College.

Chairman Parete asked if there was any other business, hearing none

Motion to Adjourn

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Lapp

No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0

Time: 7:24 pm

Respectfully submitted: Fawn Tantillo, Deputy Clerk
Minutes Approved: July 10, 2017

***Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission Public Statement of Concern
Regarding the Proposed Fire Training Station in Cottekill
May 1, 2017***

We, the Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission (ECC), appreciate the heroic life-saving contributions of Ulster County's firefighters and the need for fire training. We thank all firefighters for their indispensable public service. We are also deeply concerned about the choice of a site for the proposed fire training center on Cottekill Road in Stone Ridge. In particular:

- The potential human health impact, such as the effects of smoke and particulate matter on those with respiratory illnesses
- Environmental impacts, such as wetlands degradation, degradation of wildlife habitat, air quality impacts, water runoff, and soil impacts
- Quality of life impacts such as smoke, noise pollution, light pollution, heavy truck traffic, and idling vehicles, all of which are likely to occur on nights and weekends because training sessions for volunteer firefighters cannot be scheduled during business hours.

The site is in a residential area, close to dozens of homes. The site itself includes a thriving wetlands and the nearby area is habitat for apex predators such as barred owls, black bear, coyotes, and fishers, the presence of which is evidence of a particularly rich eco-system. The proposed site contains economic value for its natural beauty, wetlands, and habitat; indeed, it is our County's great natural beauty that generates a robust tourism economy for us.

To quote an article from *Fire Rescue Magazine*: "Be very cautious about selecting a site next to residential areas.... I've witnessed air inversions and winds that keep smoke at ground level for a half-mile from the burn. It's best to find a location where there's a buffer between the site and a neighborhood. Better yet, find an area that's nowhere near a neighborhood... Think about your training facility like it's a manufacturing facility capable of creating pollution. Why? You have heavy trucks and numerous cars entering your facilities, and these vehicles require parking areas. You have water runoff that may need to be captured, and you produce airborne particles. With this in mind, consider these possible neighbors: rail yards, sewage treatment plants, industrial areas, warehouses and used gravel-producing areas.... My experience has shown that facilities near rail lines, green spaces, sewage plants or warehouses operate without constraints. But put a few single-family homes or a major roadway within view, and the compromises and restrictions begin to take hold."

<http://www.firerescuemagazine.com/articles/print/volume-3/issue-12/training-0/design-a-great-training-facility.html>

In order to satisfy our concerns, the Marbletown ECC recommends that:

- 1) The most rigorous, complete, and independent environmental study be carried out before any decision is made to site a fire center in Cottekill or in any residential neighborhood in the County; selection of an impartial entity to carry out the study is crucial.
- 2) Alternative sites for this project be sought, with a preference for industrial sites without nearby residents.

Thank you for your consideration,
The Marbletown Environmental Conservation Commission

Tom Konrad Ph.D., CFA®, Chair

Margot R. Becker

Iris Marie Bloom

Amy Moses, RA

Eric Stewart

Submitted by
Clare Fleming
5/8
2017

First, we thank the committee for allowing us to speak, and we thanks SUNY Ulster for welcoming us to their designated “smoke free” campus.

Second, we cherish our fire fighters and other first responders and are immeasurably grateful for their sacrifices on our behalf. We believe they deserve the best training money can buy.

Third,

- we cherish, too, our hard-fought zoning laws in Marbletown;
- we cherish the peace and serenity of this part of the world, a key reason why so many of us move here, and so many of us stay here for decades and generations;
- we cherish the irreplaceable sounds of wildlife as well the sounds of blessed silence
- we cherish our potable well water and clean air

Fourth, couple points floating out there:

Legislator Chairman Ronk expressed to me last week that the proposed FTF would be no different than ‘yet another wood stove on Cottekill Road’ and, with a good dash of sarcasm that “the only place to build [a FTF] in order to [placate voters] would be on the very ‘top of a mountain.’”

Legislator Parete is quoted in the current BSP saying, “There’s state and federal monies that are available because [the proposed site on Cottekill Road] is part of a community college, so there’s funding available that wouldn’t be available if it were another site.”

We spoke to SUNY Ulster President Roberts who reports that, yes, State ED funds are available for capital improvements, and he provided an ironic example, given the intense light pollution that a FTF will create as it practices until 9:30 pm five nights a week: SUNY Ulster is changing out all of its campus

no longer
streetlamps to new bulbs that will not illuminate the night sky. Roberts said he believes that any capital-related State ED funding for the FTF would attach to the college as long as the FTF were linked to its curriculum, regardless of the physical siting of the FTF.

Additionally: the site in question is so precious a wetland sanctuary to a thriving native wildlife that the Town of Marbletown's Environmental Conservation Committee issued a public "Statement of Concern" in which it urged lawmakers to ensure:

1) The most rigorous, complete, and independent environmental study be carried out before any decision is made to site a fire center in Cottekill or in any residential neighborhood in the County; selection of an impartial entity to carry out the study is crucial.

2) Alternative sites for this project be sought, with a preference for industrial sites without nearby residents.

Finally, we have been told in informational, town, and county committee and legislature meetings that SUNY Ulster is completely in favor of the FTF being located on Cottekill Road and is interested in hosting a firematics curriculum to tie into the proposed FTF.

When asked about this in person today, SUNY Ulster President Roberts said he knew about the idea of a FTF but shook his head and informed us that "We learned about this proposed site [on Cottekill Road] when you did: about three weeks ago."

Has this site on Cottekill Road – “free land” that it may be – been pre-selected using a priori criteria with the notion that if the residents were kept in the dark – as we were until four weeks ago – the county could squeak this past the Town?

inform early
so no one takes offense
discussion

w/ all stakeholders

One-mile radius

292 residences

2 elem

1 college + lib

5 produce / food farm

7 horse farms

1 spiritual retreat

51 acres wildlife

Trinity Sanct.



List of Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Fish & Wildlife Species of New York State

Endangered

Those endangered species which meet one or both of the criteria specified in section 182.2(g) of 6NYCRR Part 182 and which are found, have been found, or may be expected to be found in New York State include:

	Common Name	Scientific Name
Molluscs	¹ Dwarf Wedgemussel	<i>Alasmodonta heterodon</i>
	¹ Pink mucket	<i>Lampsilis abrupta</i>
	¹ Clubshell	<i>Pleurobema clava</i>
	¹ Fat pocketbook	<i>Potamilus capax</i>
	Rayed Bean	<i>Villosa fabalis</i>
	² Chittenango Ovate Amber Snail	<i>Novisuccinea chittenangoensis</i>
Insects	Tomah Mayfly	<i>Siphonisca aerodromia</i>
	^{1,3} American Burying Beetle	<i>Nicrophorus americanus</i>
	Hessel's Hairstreak	<i>Callophrys hesseli</i>
	¹ Karner Blue Butterfly	<i>Lycaeides melissa samuelis</i>
	Regal Fritillary	<i>Speyeria idalia</i>
	Persius Duskywing	<i>Erynnis persius</i>
	Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus centaureae wyandot</i>
	Arogos Skipper	<i>Atrytone arogos arogos</i>
	Bog Buckmoth	<i>Hemileuca species 1</i>
	Pine Pinion Moth	<i>Lithophane lepida lepida</i>
Fishes	¹ Shortnose Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>
	³ Silver Chub	<i>Macrhybopsis storeriana</i>
	Pugnose Shiner	<i>Notropis anogenus</i>
	Round Whitefish	<i>Prosopium cylindraceum</i>
	Bluebreast Darter	<i>Etheostoma camurum</i>
	³ Gilt Darter	<i>Percina evides</i>
	³ Spoonhead Sculpin	<i>Cottus ricei</i>
	Deepwater Sculpin	<i>Myoxocephalus thompsoni</i>
Amphibians	Tiger Salamander	<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>
	Northern Cricket Frog	<i>Acris crepitans</i>
Reptiles	Mud Turtle	<i>Kinosternon subrubrum</i>
	² Bog Turtle	<i>Clemmys muhlenbergii</i>
	¹ Atlantic Hawksbill Sea Turtle	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
	¹ Atlantic Ridley Sea Turtle	<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>

	¹ Leatherback Sea Turtle	<i>Dermochelys coriacea</i>
	Queen Snake	<i>Regina septemvittata</i>
	Massasauga	<i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>
Birds	Spruce Grouse	<i>Falcipennis canadensis</i>
	³ Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
	Black Rail	<i>Laterallus jamaicensis</i>
	^{1,2,4} Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>
	^{1,3} Eskimo Curlew	<i>Numenius borealis</i>
	¹ Roseate Tern	<i>Sterna dougallii dougallii</i>
	Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
	Short-eared Owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>
	Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Mammals	¹ Indiana Bat	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>
	³ Allegheny Woodrat	<i>Neotoma magister</i>
	¹ Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter catodon</i>
	¹ Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>
	¹ Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>
	¹ Finback Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>
	¹ Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>
	¹ Right Whale	<i>Eubalaena glacialis</i>
	^{1,3} Gray Wolf	<i>Canis lupus</i>
	^{1,3} Cougar	<i>Felis concolor</i>

Threatened

Those threatened species which meet one or both of the criteria specified in section 182.2(h) of 6NYCRR Part 182 and which are found, have been found, or may be expected to be found in New York State include:

	Common Name	Scientific Name
Molluscs	Brook Floater	<i>Alasmodonta varicosa</i>
	Wavy-rayed Lampmussel	<i>Lampsilis fasciola</i>
	Green Floater	<i>Lasmigona subviridis</i>
Insects	Pine Barrens Bluet	<i>Enallagma recurvatum</i>
	Scarlet Bluet	<i>Enallagma pictum</i>
	Little Bluet	<i>Enallagma minisculum</i>
	^{2,3} Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela dorsalis dorsalis</i>
	Frosted Elf	<i>Callophrys irus</i>
Fishes	Lake Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser fulvescens</i>
	Mooneye	<i>Hiodon tergisus</i>
	³ Lake Chubsucker	<i>Erimyzon sucetta</i>
	Gravel Chub	<i>Erimystax x-punctata</i>
	³ Mud Sunfish	<i>Acantharchus pomotis</i>

	Banded Sunfish	<i>Enneacanthus obesus</i>
	Longear Sunfish	<i>Lepomis megalotis</i>
	Longhead Darter	<i>Percina macrocephala</i>
	Eastern Sand Darter	<i>Ammocrypta pellucida</i>
	Swamp Darter	<i>Etheostoma fusiforme</i>
	Spotted Darter	<i>Etheostoma maculatum</i>
Amphibians	None Listed	---
Reptiles	Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>
	² Green Sea Turtle	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
	² Loggerhead Sea Turtle	<i>Caretta caretta</i>
	Fence Lizard	<i>Sceloporus undulatus</i>
	Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>
Birds	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
	Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>
	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
	King Rail	<i>Rallus elegans</i>
	Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>
	Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
	Least Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>
	Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>
	Henslow's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>
Mammals	^{2,3} Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>
	² Northern Long-eared Bat	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>

Special Concern

The following are designated as species of special concern as defined in Section 182.2(i) of 6NYCRR Part 182. Species of special concern warrant attention and consideration but current information, collected by the department, does not justify listing these species as either endangered or threatened.

	Common Name	Scientific Name
Molluscs	Buffalo Pebble Snail	<i>Gillia altilis</i>
	Fringed Valvata	<i>Valvata lewisi</i>
	Mossy Valvata	<i>Valvata sincera</i>
Insects	Unnamed Dragonfly Species	<i>Gomphus spec. nov.</i>
	Southern Sprite	<i>Nehalennia integricollis</i>
	Extra Striped Snaketail	<i>Ophiogomphus anomalus</i>
	Pygmy Snaketail	<i>Ophiogomphus howei</i>
	Common Sanddragon	<i>Progomphus obscurus</i>
	Gray Petaltail	<i>Tachopteryx thoreyi</i>
	Checkered White	<i>Pontia protodice</i>
	Olympia Marble	<i>Euchloe olympia</i>
	Henry's Elfin	<i>Callophrys henrici</i>
	Tawny Crescent	<i>Phyciodes batesii</i>

	Mottled Duskywing	<i>Erynnis martialis</i>
	Barrens Buckmoth	<i>Hemileuca maia</i>
	Herodias Underwing	<i>Catocala herodias gerhardi</i>
	Jair Underwing	<i>Catocala jair</i>
	A Noctuid Moth	<i>Heterocampa varia</i>
Fishes	Mountain Brook Lamprey	<i>Ichthyomyzon greeleyi</i>
	Black Redhorse	<i>Moxostoma duquesnei</i>
	Streamline Chub	<i>Erymystax dissimilis</i>
	Redfin Shiner	<i>Lythrurus umbratilis</i>
	Ironcolor Shiner	<i>Notropis chalybaeus</i>
Amphibians	Hellbender	<i>Cryptobranchus alleganiensis</i>
	Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>
	Jefferson Salamander	<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>
	Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>
	Longtail Salamander	<i>Eurycea longicauda</i>
	Eastern Spadefoot Toad	<i>Scaphiopus holbrookii</i>
Reptiles	Southern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana sphenoccephala utricularius</i>
	Spotted Turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>
	Wood Turtle	<i>Clemmys insculpta</i>
	Eastern Box Turtle	<i>Terrapene carolina</i>
	Eastern Spiny Softshell	<i>Apalone spinifera</i>
	Eastern Hognose Snake	<i>Heterodon platyrhinos</i>
Birds	Worm Snake	<i>Carphophis amoenus</i>
	Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>
	American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>
	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>
	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>
	Northern Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
	Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>
	Black Skimmer	<i>Rynchops niger</i>
	Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>
	Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>
	Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>
	Horned Lark	<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>
	Bicknell's Thrush	<i>Catharus bicknelli</i>
	Golden-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora chrysoptera</i>
	Cerulean Warbler	<i>Dendroica cerulea</i>
	Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>
	Vesper Sparrow	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>
	Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>
	Seaside Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus maritimus</i>
Mammals	Small-footed Bat	<i>Myotis leibii</i>
	New England Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus transitionalis</i>

¹Currently listed as "endangered" by the U. S. Department of the Interior.

²Currently listed as "threatened" by the U. S. Department of the Interior.

³Species is extirpated from New York State.

⁴Piping Plover is listed as federally endangered in the Great Lakes Region, and as federally threatened in the Atlantic Coastal Region.

Definitions

Extinct - Species is no longer living or existing.

Extirpated - Species is not extinct, but no longer occurring in a wild state within New York, or no longer exhibiting patterns of use traditional for that species in New York (e.g. historical breeders no longer breeding here).

Endangered - Any native species in imminent danger of extirpation or extinction in New York State.

Threatened - Any native species likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future in New York State.

Special Concern - Any native species for which a welfare concern or risk of endangerment has been documented in New York State.

Authority

Environmental Conservation Law of New York, Section 11-0535 and 6 NYCRR (New York Code of Rules and Regulations) Part 182 - effective (last promulgated in state regulation) December 4, 1999.

Revision History

Effective April 24, 2000 - Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) was added to the Threatened list.

Effective August 8, 2007 - Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was removed from the Endangered Species List by the U. S. Department of the Interior.

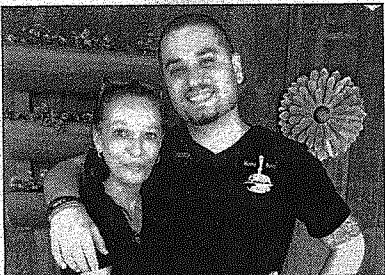
Effective May 4, 2015 - Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) was added to the Threatened list..

BlueStone Press

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Mother and son open restaurant
PAGE 13



Friday night lecture/film series at the D&H Canal Musuem
PAGE 10



A talk on the history of the Catskill Aqueduct
PAGE 23

Calling all Stone Ridge Library Fair volunteers

The 71st annual Stone Ridge Library Fair is set for Saturday, June 10, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., with the "Bag Sale" on Sunday, June 11, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the library, 3700 Main St./Route 209, Stone Ridge.

And, as always, the library relies on the wonderful fair volunteers to make it all happen. Returning volunteers will receive an email from long-time fair volunteer coordinator Barbara Cazakoff to request help. And this year, the library is reaching out to recruit new volunteers.

Volunteer tasks include: runner and cashier for the food booth; servers, mixers and a cashier for the beverage booth; baking donations prior to fair, servers, coffee prep and cashier for the coffee, tea and baked goods booth; strawberry prep (Friday), booth set-up, server and cashier for the strawberry shortcake booth; server and cashier for cotton candy; moving toys to yard/set-up and cashiers for toys and many more.

To sign up, contact Cazakoff at babscz@gmail.com. For more information, call 687-7023 or visit stoneridgelibrary.org.

Concern spreads over county's fire training center

Proposed fire training facility draws criticism

Jodi La Marco
BSP Reporter

SUNY Ulster will likely become the home of a new fire training center. The project is one of several included under the Ulster County Executive's Capital Improvement Program, and it carries an estimated price tag of more than \$1.92 million.

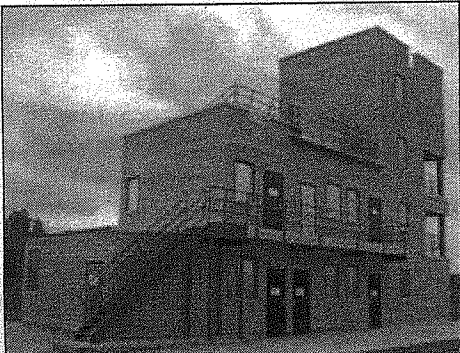
According to a press release put out by the county executive's office in 2015, the proposed facility was targeted to be "fast tracked." Firefighters are required to undergo both initial and ongoing trainings. At present, Ulster County does not have its own fire training center, and the proposed facility would allow Ulster's 1,400 firefighters, most of whom are volunteers, to train

closer to home. In addition to classroom training, controlled burns fueled by propane, hay or wood will also take place on site.

While the need for such a center has arguably become a necessity, some residents who live near the proposed location on Cottekill Road feel that the site location should be reconsidered.

During the May 2 meeting of Marbletown's Town Board, the town's Environmental Conservation Committee chairman, Tom Konrad, submitted a statement on behalf of the ECC regarding the center. The document lists a number of concerns, including the facility's potential impact on wildlife and neighbors.

"The site is in a residential area, close to dozens of homes," the statement says. "The site itself includes a thriving wetlands, and the nearby area is habitat for apex predators such as barred owls, black bear, coyotes and fishers, the presence of which is evidence of a particularly rich



Included in Ulster County's list of Capital Improvement Projects, a fire training facility (such as the one pictured above) may be coming to SUNY Ulster in Marbletown. The project is being overseen by the County Planning Board.

ecosystem." Also included in the document is an excerpt from an article that appeared in Fire Rescue Magazine. The article argues that

See Fire, page 10

School budget increases by 2.7 percent; tax levy decreases by 1.35 percent

School budget vote is on Tuesday, May 16

Tessa Romita-Herron
BSP Reporter

A public meeting was held on Tuesday, May 2, to discuss the proposed \$63,385,211 Rondout Valley School District budget.

"(The budget) is our best guess of what's going to happen and where we want to go," said Superintendent of Schools Rosario Agostaro. This year's budget aims to maintain and enhance current programs while adding new courses, programs and resources to continue to improve the academic rigor and better prepare students for life after high school.

In the last year, the district has seen concrete evidence of improved performance. In 2015-2016, Rondout Valley High School's graduation rate was 93 percent, up from 85 percent in the prior year and

the highest it has been in more than 12 years. Coincidentally, U.S. News & World Report just came out with its Best High Schools Ranking. Not only did Rondout Valley High School rank for the first time, it ranked 175 out of 2,167 schools in New York state and 2,241 out of more than 22,000 public schools in the United States.

"Our focus is to provide the best educational opportunities for students, to invest in our facilities as centers of learning and safe environments for all, and to promote the greater use of newer technologies that keep students and staff competitive across the nation," said Agostaro.

While most anyone would say that it is a no-brainer that we want our kids to receive the best education available, many property owners bristle when we see our tax bill. The good news this year is that not only did the school district not increase the tax levy, it managed to decrease it by \$482,275, or 1.35 percent. Keep in mind that when preparing the annual budget,

See School budget, page 12

BUDGET REVENUE SOURCES				
	2017-2018		2016-2017	
	\$	%	\$	%
State Aid	\$23,265,311	36.7%	\$22,766,301	36.9%
Tax Levy	\$35,158,236	55.5%	\$35,640,511	57.7%
Fund Balance	\$3,616,972	5.7%	\$1,790,787	2.9%
Other Sources	\$1,344,692	2.1%	\$1,519,777	2.5%
BUDGET	\$63,385,211	100.0%	\$61,717,376	100.0%

WHICH EXPENSES MAKE-UP MOST OF THE BUDGET?		
	2017-2018	2016-2017
Retirement Contributions (ERS & TRS)	\$3,260,013	\$3,674,379
Health Benefits	\$10,324,383	\$9,500,119
Social Security Benefits	\$2,292,961	\$2,262,545
Employee Salaries	\$29,222,173	\$28,717,546
Debt Service	\$4,824,344	\$3,887,369
Total	\$49,923,874	\$48,041,958
% of Total BUDGET	78.8%	77.8%

Fire

from page 1

when choosing a site for a fire training facility, residential areas should be avoided. "It's best to find a location where there's a buffer between the site and a neighborhood," the article states. "Better yet, find a site that's nowhere near a neighborhood."

Marbletown's Town Board meeting also attracted the attention of roughly a dozen neighbors, many of whom gave statements of their own.

"I am a Cottekill Road resident. I became aware of this facility proposal about three weeks ago," said Claire Flemming. "Speaking for myself and others, we do cherish the services of the firefighters ... it's just seemingly not the right site. We're in a residential neighborhood, and this type of facility is more typically appropriately sited in more industrial regions."

In response to these concerns, Deputy County Executive Robert Sudlow said that the center will be designed to mitigate potential impacts. In addition to capturing stormwater, the facility will also retain smoke produced by burns.

The proposed site is owned by the county, which means that Ulster County's Planning Board will serve as lead agency. Constructing the facility on college property means that the project will likely be eligible for funding. "There's state and federal monies that are available because it's part of a community college, so there's funding available that wouldn't be available if it were another site," explains Rich Parete, legislator for Ulster County's 18th District.

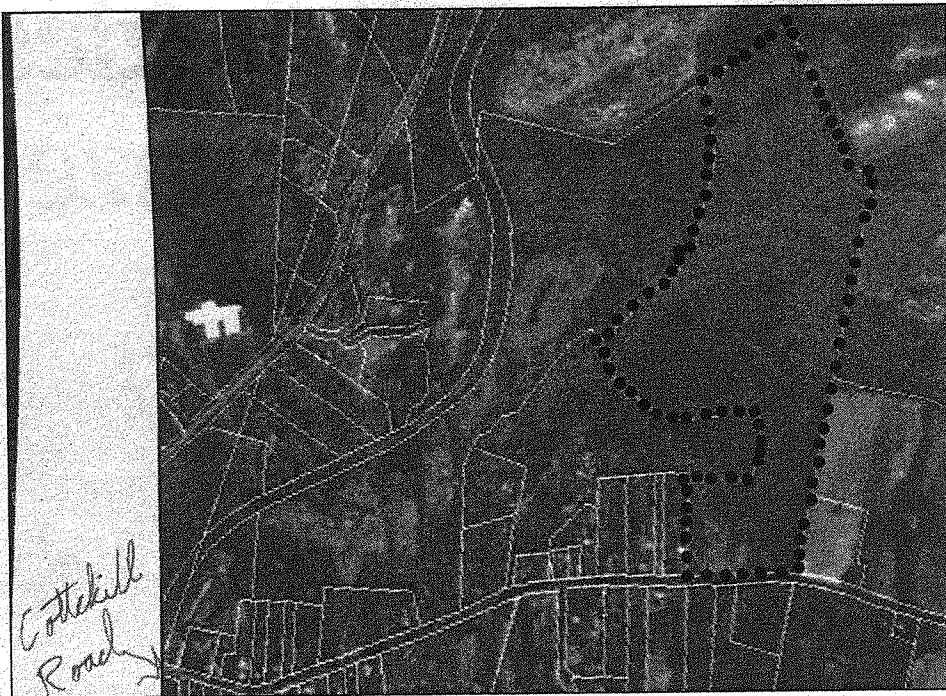
The SUNY Ulster site has also been given priority due to its location within the county.

Transparency was another topic of concern among attendees of the May 2 board meeting. "The process started in 2015 when the site selection committee went out, and the fact that the town was not informed of it -- the residents were not informed of it until it was essentially a done deal -- is really concerning to me," said resident Mary Ellen Flemming.

Flemming had also attended a public information session hosted by the Ulster County Planning Board on May 1, and she referenced some of what had been said during that meeting.

"Even though Dennis Doyle (director of the Ulster County Planning Department) said that this is just the beginning, it was obvious to all of us there that this has already been decided. One of the things that steers them in this direction is the college will be getting state education funds ... that has so heavily weighted their site selection that I think we lost from the beginning."

Parete agrees that the county should have handled the process differently.



A 50 acre lot with frontage on Cottekill Road, owned by Ulster County as part of SUNY Ulster, though not attached to the campus. The County wants to site a fire training center that's part of a list of Capital Improvement Projects for 2015 - 2020.

When reached by phone, Parete said, "I know it was in the capital plan, but there's a lot of projects that are in the capital plan for eight, 10, 15 years. We didn't realize it was going this fast. The county should have done a better job notifying the public that they were looking at spots, because this committee was formed in 2015. They've been looking at four or five sites around the county, and this committee settled on the college."

Sudlow said that while the county aims to be transparent, it would have been premature to notify residents earlier. "It's not practical to reach out to people -- because you know you're going to get the response that we're getting -- until we have some data to share with them," he said. "They're working on the mapping the environmental work right at the moment. We don't have a product yet. We don't have anything formally in place yet. When that's available, that will be shared."

Yet another issue raised during the Town Board meeting was that of the project's classification through the State Environmental Quality Review Act. There are a number of criteria that determine classifications under SEQRA, such as proximity to historic buildings and recreation areas. The facility was classified as an "unlisted action" by Amanda Levalle, coordinator of the county's Department of the Environment.

"Levalle said it was an unlisted action because they were not disturbing more than 10 acres," explained Marbletown Supervisor Mike Warren.

According to Marbletown Zoning Board Secretary Maggie Colan, it is arguable that the project is eligible for a Type 1 designation. "If it came to the town, I have no question it would be a Type 1 action," Colan explained. "By classifying it as an

unlisted action, the county is then saying we are not required to include anybody else in the review."

Doyle says that a coordinated review will in fact be conducted. According to the NYDEC website, "Coordinated review is the process by which all involved agencies cooperate in one integrated environmental review." Doyle says that Marbletown's Planning Board is not being considered as a potential involved agency, but rather, as an "interested" agency. Interested parties, however, don't have any decision-making rights. According to the New York DEC website, "There is no obligation for the lead agency to coordinate review with interested agencies (although it may do so)."

Before construction can begin at SUNY Ulster, preliminary studies are required to determine if the site is suitable. The \$82,406 cost of those studies must first be approved by the county legislature. "The study is going to pass. The votes are in the legislature to pass the study. If the study comes back that the area is not suitable, impacts are too much, certainly we need to find another spot for it," said Parete.

Manna Jo Greene, who serves as a legislator for Ulster County's 19th District, says that the county should take a step back before exploring the potentiality of the SUNY Ulster location. After attending the May 1 information meeting, Greene sent a letter to colleagues asking to reexamine potential sites.

"My conclusion from this meeting is that we still need to actively revisit siting for a county-wide fire training center, not as part of an environmental review for this specific site," she wrote, "but with a really open process that may well turn up a more appropriate site -- one at which negative impacts can be prevented, not just mitigated." **ESP**

BlueStone Briefs

D&H Canal Museum Friday Night Lecture/Film series hosted by David Kime

In celebration of the storied history of the Delaware and Hudson Canal, join host David Kime for the Friday Night Lecture/Film series, 7-9 p.m. every other Friday, May 12-Oct. 13, at the D&H Canal Museum and Historical Society, 23 Mohonk Road, High Falls.

On May 12, Vernon Benjamin, author of "The History of the Hudson River Valley From Civil War to Modern Times," will discuss the impact of the D&H Canal; on May 26, Dr. Sally Schultz, "The D&H Canal Company; Forming, Financing and Reporting on the Early 19th Century Corporation"; June 9, Rob Yasinsac of Hudson Valley Ruins will present a slide show of lost, saved and endangered historical architecture; June 23, Ronald Knapp, author "The Gunks: Ridge and Valley Towns Through Time," will present "Our Backyard"; July 14, Jack Kelly, author "Heaven's Ditch: God, Gold and Murder on the Erie Canal" will present "Opening America, Opening Minds: The Erie Canal Bicentennial," a discussion; Aug. 11, historian Walter Williams (videotaped in 1986) on "Rosendale: Cement, Mushrooms, Records and More," introduced by daughter Anita Peck; Sept. 8, Gene Dauner, longtime photographer, will present a slide show on the Wallkill Valley Railroad; Sept. 22, Bill Merchant, museum historian and curator, will give a presentation on "The Depuy Canal House, 1797-present"; Oct. 13, Marianna Boncek, paranormal investigator, will reveal the findings of an investigation into the Depuy Canal House over the summer; and on Oct. 27, filmmaker Tobe Carey presents "The First Artist in America," the story of Kingston's John Vanderlyn.

"The motivation behind this series is discovering and sharing local history and educating the public to the importance of that history," explained Kime. "There are a lot of talented people who have books, film, photos and great knowledge of our historical, beautiful Hudson Valley, and it is a real pleasure to offer a venue to convey it."

The museum is open 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. For more information, visit canalmuseum.org. D&H Canal Museum on Facebook, or call 687-2000.

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