

Ulster County Legislature



UC RRA Reform Committee

Meeting Minutes

January 5, 2024 at 9:00 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

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

Andrew Ghiorse, Chair

UCRRA Board of Directors

Other Attendees: Minority Leader Roberts, Legislator Stewart, Legislative Counsel Gordon

Call Meeting to Order: 9:02 AM

Approval of the December 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Motion No. 1

Motion to APPROVE the Minutes of the December 20, 2023 Meeting

Motion By:

Laura Petit

Motion Seconded By:

Comptroller Gallagher

Voting In Favor:

Chair Baden, Chair Ghiorse, Vice Chair Bartels, Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Lavallo, Laura Petit

Voting Against:

None

Votes in Favor: 7
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **MINUTES APPROVED**

Chair Baden calls meeting to order, discusses minutes and policy discussions.

Vice Chair Bartels clarifies that committee discussion should be conducted in public meetings, not via email.

Chair Baden agrees with this policy, stating that their town board follows the advice of their attorney to avoid discussing matters via email.

Committee members discuss email communication policies and potential violations.

Committee discusses diversion of criminal cases, identifies stakeholders, and plans to spend two meetings per month on the topic.

Comptroller Gallagher suggests including municipalities as stakeholders in solid waste management, as they play a critical role in diversion.

Chair Baden adds agricultural waste producers to the list of stakeholders, highlighting their contribution to the issue and the need for proper disposal.

Vice Chair Bartels questions whether agricultural users are coming directly to the agency or through private haulers and seeks clarification from the agency.

Chair Baden explains that farmers can no longer use transfer stations due to changed hauling regulations and must now go directly to the agency.

Chair Baden explains the stakeholder matrix he created, which categorizes stakeholders based on their level of involvement in diversion efforts.

Vice Chair Bartels and other legislators provide feedback and suggestions for the matrix, with a focus on refining the categories to better reflect the stakeholders' roles in diversion.

Comptroller Gallagher seeks to prioritize interconnected stakeholder concerns across sectors.

Chair Baden seeks clarity on report structure and timeline.

Laura Petit seeks a structured framework for discussing waste diversion goals.

Vice Chair Bartels emphasizes the importance of remaining topic-focused and gathering input from various stakeholders.

Committee members discuss the scope of their report on waste management in Ulster County, with some advocating for a focus on diversion and others suggesting a broader approach.

Frustration is expressed over the complexity of the topic and the need to organize the report in a way that is efficient and effective.

Legislators debate diversion of waste, resource recovery, and agency policies.

Vice Chair Bartels and others discuss categories of waste to be diverted from landfills.

Vice Chair Bartels highlights that regulated recyclables in Ulster County are strictly regulated, with violations subject to jail time.

Chair Baden and Legislator Manna Jo Greene discuss the importance of regulating other waste streams, such as bag plastic, which is not currently regulated correctly.

Committee members debate the effectiveness of existing waste management plans and the need for more education and enforcement to achieve zero waste goals.

Chair Ghiorse emphasizes the importance of enforcement in diversion efforts.

Comptroller Gallagher suggests printing a copy of the waste management whip for each meeting attendee to facilitate discussion.

Legislator Greene discussed on regulating waste types in Ulster County, with a focus on C and D (construction, demolition, and deconstruction).

Vice Chair Bartels questions why there hasn't been enforcement of regulations regarding recyclables in the county.

Vice Chair Bartels and Legislator Laura Petit discuss the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste, with a focus on enforcement and compliance.

Chair Ghiorse suggests bringing in the operations manager or sustainability coordinator to answer questions about waste management practices and compliance.

Vice Chair Bartels seeks answers on enforcement efforts and effectiveness in addressing recyclable waste diversion.

Chair Ghiorse discusses the challenge of enforcing recycling regulations, citing a lack of resources and education for commercial haulers.

Chair Ghiorse highlights the need for additional authority beyond enforcement officers to ensure compliance, suggesting the use of sheriff's deputies as a potential solution.

Chair Ghiorse suggests that code enforcement officers and health inspectors should be included in the police powers granted in 304, as they are responsible for ensuring compliance with laws related to public places.

Chair Baden agrees that compliance and enforcement are different things, and that finding a solution to the problem of non-compliance is a difficult task for the committee.

Enforcement of recycling laws is a concern, with a system in place but not implemented for years.

Comptroller Gallagher and Chair Baden discuss scrap metal categories, prioritizing top-level items.

Residents in one town separate and recycle scrap metal, generating \$10,000 in revenue per year.

Vice Chair Bartels highlights the issue of short-term thinking in waste management, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that considers market changes and the responsible disposal of appliances like air conditioners and refrigerators.

Legislator Greene agrees, stating that the focus should be on finding a comprehensive solution rather than just addressing individual problems.

Chair Baden explains how his town handles Freon disposal through a contract with a company that removes it from appliances, pays the bill, and then takes the unit to be recycled.

The group discusses the issue of inconsistent handling of Freon materials among transfer stations, with some towns having contracts and others not.

Chair Ghiorse explains that commercial violations of scrap metal laws are common, with people throwing scrap metal in their garbage instead of proper disposal methods.

Town officials prioritize scrap metal separation despite potential cost increases.

Deputy County Executive LaValle highlights cross-cutting threats from outside forces and market fluctuations in waste disposal, suggesting contract adjustments to account for variability.

Chair Ghiorse suggests eliminating town transfer stations and contracting with private haulers for bulk pickups, which could provide more regulation and fairness for people who can't drive.

Chair Baden agrees that town transfer stations can be inefficient and suggests ways to improve the system, such as using a deal with the Girl Scouts to collect deposit bottles and separate them in the system.

Vice Chair Bartels expresses concerns about decentralization and privatization of waste management services.

Legislative Counsel Gordon emphasizes the importance of evaluating the agency's operations and ability to handle issues, while Chair Baden suggests both focusing on the agency and considering broader questions about solid waste management.

Haulers and municipal transfer stations should be questioned on how they address scrap metal and recycling loss enforcement.

Chair Baden suggests emailing a document to all members instead of sharing it through a shared drive, as some members are still having issues accessing it.

Comptroller Gallagher proposes creating a grid to organize and prioritize items on the agenda, and Laura Petit offers to create an Excel spreadsheet to help with this process.

Chair Ghiorse mentions that the landfill search should be completed in 6-8 weeks, and the information will be shared with the board.

Chair Baden clarifies that the next board meeting will not be discussing the Executive Director position.

Committee members discuss organizing meeting notes and sharing them with legislative staff for distribution to board members.

Chair Baden and Comptroller Gallagher discuss sharing a Word document on OneDrive for committee members to make notes and comments. They agree to send each other their individual work and combine it into a single document for the committee.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggests creating visual process maps to better understand complex system interrelationships.

Chair Baden suggests compiling questions before bringing in a guest speaker.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 18, 2024 @ 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Adjournment

Motion No. 2: **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Motion Made By:	Comptroller Gallagher
Motion Seconded By:	Chair Ghiorse
No. of Votes in Favor:	7
No. of Votes Against:	0

TIME: 10:45 AM

Respectfully submitted:	Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant
Minutes Approved:	January 18, 2024