

# Ulster County Legislature



## UC RRA Reform Committee

### Meeting Minutes

**January 31, 2024 at 1:00 PM**

KL Binder Library, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, County Office Building, Kingston

#### **Committee Members:**

Mike Baden, Chair (Arrived at 1:08 PM)

*President, Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors and Mayors*

Tracey Bartels, Vice-Chair

*Legislative Chair Designee*

Legislator Manna Jo Greene (Arrived at 1:25 PM)

*Energy, Environment & Sustainability Representative*

Laura Petit

*Minority Designee*

Comptroller March Gallagher (Left at 2:06 PM)

*Ulster County Comptroller*

Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle

*Ulster County Executive Designee*

Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair

*UCRRA Board of Directors*

**Other Attendees:** Regis Obijiski, Chair of UCRRA

**Call Meeting to Order:** 1:10 PM

#### **Approval of the January 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

**Motion No. 1**

**Motion to APPROVE the Minutes of the January 18, 2024 Meeting**

**Motion By:**

Comptroller Gallagher

**Motion Seconded By:**

Laura Petit

**Voting In Favor:**

Chair Baden, Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Lavalle, Laura Petit

**Voting Against:**

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**Votes in Favor:** 5  
**Votes Against:** 0 (Legislator Manna arrived late)  
**Abstention:** 1 (Vice Chair Gordon)  
**Disposition:** **MINUTES APPROVED**

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Chair Baden aims to finish the simplified list by next meeting and focus on contract for two to three meetings before reporting to the legislature by June.

Comptroller Gallagher requests a folder for each meeting with documents distributed for discussion, to help committee members keep track of new documents and distinguish them from existing ones.

Vice-Chair Bartels and Legislator Laura Petit discuss the hazardous waste program in the county, including its history and ongoing efforts to improve it.

Chair Baden suggests implementing permanent facilities and legislative action to address the issue, while County Executive LaValle provides a potential workaround for boards with external leading members.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggests a permanent facility for small quantity generators, like a reuse center, to address limited options and high costs.

Chair Baden raises concerns about commingling reusable items at such a facility, citing potential personal liability and financial burdens.

Chair Baden notes that many people are well-intentioned but struggle to properly dispose of hazardous waste due to lack of access to convenient collection events.

Deputy County Executive LaValle confirms that Dutchess County charges a fee for residential hazardous waste disposal, which can provide an added cost for small quantity generators.

Chair Baden and Laura discuss the issue of organic food waste in the county, with Laura mentioning a program in Red Hook that collects household organic waste in bins and brings it to a composting facility.

Deputy County Executive LaValle explains that haulers in the area offer organics hauling services, including specialty haulers for food waste, and that residents can sign up for weekly or bi-weekly pickup of their organic waste.

Vice-Chair Bartels discusses organics waste legislation in Vermont and its potential for county-wide legislation.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlights restaurant waste's 99% organic or compostable nature, with some transfer stations attempting but struggling with proper composting methods.

Legislator Greene suggests working with Chamber of Commerce to educate businesses on recycling regulations.

Legislator Greene suggests organizing referrals and enforcing composting laws through a partnership with the Department of Environment and a compliance officer.

Laura Petit suggests networking with local farms to address organics waste.

Laura Petit suggests banning organics and waste oil from the waste stream to increase recycling. Vice-Chair highlights the financial implications of implementing composting programs, including the cost of hiring staff and utilizing existing resources and also suggested leveraging existing closed landfills with infrastructure, such as road networks and electricity, to operate composting programs at minimal cost.

Vice-Chair Bartels emphasizes the need for clear directives and potential costs in legislation for internet service fee.

Vice-Chair Bartels flags concern about legislature's co-opting of bonding authority and its legality, suggesting a need for discussion and potential legislation.

Chair Baden suggests creating a survey for transfer stations to gather information on their recycling practices and connect with municipalities.

Vice-Chair Bartels agrees and suggests sharing the survey with every transfer station to get a more accurate picture of recycling efforts.

Chair Obijiski emphasizes education and buy-in as crucial for successful diversion programs.

Chair Obijiski emphasizes the importance of enforcing zero waste legislation and involving all stakeholders, including the IRA, county health department, and environment groups.

Chair Obijiski highlights the public health risks of solid waste and the need for a collaborative effort to address the issue.

Comptroller Gallagher agrees that responsibility for food waste and other waste is already in the contract, and this creates cost that can be charged back to the county.

Comptroller Gallagher stated that haulers have different incentives when moving towards zero waste, and their profit motive may hinder their full engagement on certain topics.

Comptroller Gallagher and Legislator Greene discuss meeting agenda and document development.

Comptroller Gallagher mentions bringing up sections of the minutes for review and identification of what needs to be included in the report.

Chair Baden suggests creating a bullet-point summary of the discussion to write the section of the chapter on the topic.

Legislator Greene proposes summarizing the agreed-upon points at the end of each meeting to streamline the writing process.

Mike Baden suggests that the group should create a subchapter for each topic discussed, with a designated person taking minutes and bullet points for each topic.

Vice-Chair Bartels agrees that there is value in going back through minutes, but the group has not yet reached a consensus on what they are agreeing to in terms of putting it in the document.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggests supporting municipal transfer stations through annual seminars and cross-cutting initiatives.

Chair Baden recommends prioritizing action items and streamlining the document creation process.

Chair Tracey Bartels emphasizes the importance of analyzing the systemic failures in the criminal justice system, rather than just addressing individual issues.

Chair Baden agrees, suggesting that identifying goals and action items in an appendix of the report could be valuable for the legislature and RA, but analyzing all of that information takes time.

County Executive LaValle provides data on the percentage of the waste stream generated by C&D materials (almost 80,000 tons) and regulated recycling (25% of the waste stream).

Chair Baden suggests gathering information from other organizations on how they are addressing the issue of C&D waste and food waste and sharing it in a shared drive for future meetings.

Chair Baden emphasizes the importance of diversion in waste management, while Legislator Manna Jo Greene agrees but expresses concern about the time taken to discuss it.

Deputy County Executive LaValle and Chair Baden discuss organics management in local municipalities, including yard waste and food waste, with a focus on collaboration and education.

Chair Baden suggests a shared program for rural towns to piggyback off larger towns' leaf collection services, with potential grant funding for the initiative.

Vice-Chair Bartels shared that the EPA estimates in the U.S, the amount of C&D is double the amount of MSW.

Laura Petit suggests organizing the review process by including a statement of the review, action items, and recommendations in the report and Chair Baden agrees and adds that the contract should be redlined with changes, and the existing contract could be used as a starting point.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, February 15, 2024 @ 1:00 PM  
Friday, March 1, 2024 @ 1:00 PM

### **Adjournment**

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

**Motion Made By:** Laura Petit  
**Motion Seconded By:** Vice Chair Gordon  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 6  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0

TIME: 2:30 PM

**Respectfully submitted:** Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant  
**Minutes Approved:** February 15, 2024