

Ulster County Legislature



UC RRA Reform Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2024 at 9:30 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

Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair

UCRRA Board of Directors

PRESIDING OFFICER: Ulster County Legislature Vice Chair Bartels

LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Lizvett Bost, Legislature Administrative Assistant

PRESENT: Vice Chair Bartels, Legislator Greene, Former Legislator Petit, Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle, Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair UCRRA Board of Directors

ABSENT: Comptroller Gallagher

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider

Call Meeting to Order: 9:48 AM

Chair Baden Postponed the approval of the minutes, due to Committee Clerk still revising and working on them.

Chair Baden started meeting where they left off last with Universal waste, for example, batteries, Lamps etc.

Legislator Greene shared that some of the counties do more actively recycling batteries.

Laura Petit suggested state could do better with battery recycling, citing inefficiencies in current system.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed confusion about battery recycling and suggests education and outreach are needed.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested sharing best practices for energy efficiency, while UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider worried about end-of-life battery disposal for electric vehicles.

Discussion on how to handle difficult-to-recycle materials like Large EV Batteries.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider suggested holding more household hazardous waste events in different locations, including Ellenville.

Deputy County Executive Lavelle explored new options for handling hazardous waste, including a bulb grinder and shared services.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested making recommendations for regular drop-off locations for hazardous items.

UCRRA, Vice-Chair Gordon suggested offering an inducement coupon for bringing hazardous waste to a designated facility, to encourage people to participate.

Laura Petit shared that Rockland County has a virtual facility for handling hazardous waste, but the financial aspect is figured into their taxes.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested coordinating a trip to the Oneida-Herkimer County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, which is a seasonal full-time facility that accepts household hazardous waste year-round.

Discussion moved to technical assistance resources.

Chair Baden complemented the agency's technical assistance resources, particularly their use of social media to reach a wider audience.

UCRRA, Vice-Chair Gordon stated to maybe have leaders like the Mayor and Executive and may inspire change by participating in recycling efforts or educating students on the topic.

Legislator Greene emphasized the need for Climate Smart Schools program to engage students in climate action.

Legislator Greene emphasized the importance of haulers' direct contact with residents for effective composting and recycling enforcement.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested enforcing existing recycling laws to address contamination issues in the city's recycling program.

Chair Baden agreed that transfer stations are making an effort, but more needs to be done to hold haulers accountable.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested that the county should provide education and reminders to residents about the existing recycling law, and work with haulers to ensure they are enforcing it and UCRRA Executive Director

Marc Rider agreed and proposed working with the county on the property tax bill to remind residents of their obligations and how to find the law.

Vice-Chair Bartels explained that haulers are responsible for collecting recyclables, but there's no mechanism for them to ticket homeowners who don't separate their recyclables properly.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon, described how county waste contracts often result in commingled recyclables and trash, which can be difficult to separate later on.

Legislator Greene shared that local businesses in New Paltz are successfully composting food waste and herbs, with one restaurant in High Falls growing their own herbs on-site.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlighted the need to address the law requiring multifamily generators to submit an Action Plan, which has not been done in years.

Legislator Greene mentioned that commercial generators also need to submit an Action Plan, but it's not happening either.

UCRRA Executive Director Marc Rider and Chair Baden discussed the county's recycling report, which is due on March 1st and requires 100% compliance from municipalities and businesses.

Legislator Greene suggested considering additional criteria beyond number of employees for determining which businesses should be included in the recycling report, such as the amount of food waste generated.

Vice-Chair Bartels shared that Commercial and institutional sector generators must submit recycling plans to the executive director.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlighted the lack of enforcement of multifamily dwelling recycling plans in California, despite being required by law since 1992.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested reviewing and harmonizing various pieces of legislation related to waste management, including food waste, to ensure consistency and reinforce the same message.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested creating a list of relevant laws for the report, while Chair Baden proposed assigning it as a homework assignment for each member.

Chair Tracey Bartels suggested parsing out the list of laws and assigning them to different members, while Legislator Greene suggested taking on different laws based on their areas of expertise.

Committee discussed need for better enforcement of recycling laws in multifamily dwellings.

Vice-Chair Bartels and Legislator Greene discussed solid waste and recycling law, with a focus on composting and food waste prevention.

UCCRA Vice-Chair Gordon suggested reusing or recycling closed landfills to potentially earn revenue and address environmental concerns.

The group discussed the importance of hauler licensing and regulation in solid waste management, with a focus on implementing section 304 of the county code.

Deputy County Executive LaValle suggested creating a visual landscape of the waste management system to better understand the flow of materials and make recommendations.

Chair Baden agreed and suggested continuing to work on the visual representation, with a focus on understanding the system and making recommendations.

Vice-Chair Bartels and Laura Petit discussed the Ulster County government's sustainability initiatives, including a list of relevant laws and regulations.

The group also talked about the Zero Waste pilot program and the Zero Waste Park, with UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon and Chair Baden expressed reservations about their premature implementation.

Chair Baden agreed to prepare notes for the first meeting of April, to be shared with the group for feedback.

Legislator Greene suggested getting an update from Marc on the agency's progress on disposal, as there is active movement and RFPs have been issued.

The group discussed whether to focus on disposal or intergovernmental with the contract, with Chair Baden suggested they start with disposal next.

Advanced technologies for waste management and climate goals discussed in proposals.

Deputy County Executive LaValle shared a new climate pollution prevention plan document, prompting discussion on access and funding.

Next Meetings: Thursday, March 21, 2024 @ 9:30 AM
Thursday, April 4, 2024 @ 9:30 AM
Thursday, April 18, 2024 @ 9:30 AM

Adjournment

Motion No. 2: MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion Made By: Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair UCRRA
Motion Seconded By: Chair Baden
No. of Votes in Favor: 7
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 11:17 AM

Respectfully submitted: Lizvett Bost, Legislative Administrative Assistant
Minutes Approved: April 4, 2024