

Ulster County Legislature



UC RRA Reform Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 21, 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: Chair Baden, Vice-Chair Bartels, Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Amanda LaValle, Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair UCRRA Board of Directors

ABSENT: Laura Petit

QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider, Steve Ellman, Kingston, Peter Humpries, County resident.

Call Meeting to Order: 9:35 AM

Approval of the January 31, 2024 & February 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Motion No. 1

Motion to APPROVE the Minutes of the January 31, 2024 & February 15, 2024 Meeting

Motion By: Comptroller Gallagher
Motion Seconded By: Vice-Chair Bartels

Voting In Favor: Chair Baden, Vice-Chair Bartels, Legislator Greene, Comptroller Gallagher, Deputy County Executive Lavalle, UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon

Voting Against: 0

Abstention: 0

Disposition: **MINUTES APPROVED**

Chair Baden moved to the topic of disposal and invited UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider who updated the committee on UCRRA Disposal.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider discussed disposal of 140,000 tons of MSW, evaluating trucking and disposal companies, and considering advanced technologies for long-term solution, he raised a possibility of using anaerobic digestion to process organic waste, reducing landfill impact.

Vice-Chair Bartels and UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider discussed transportation disposal costs for recycling, including the carbon footprint and potential for local disposal through a pilot program.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider mentioned a company that won a NYSERDA award for vehicle-to-grid technology, which could help build out infrastructure for EV hauling equipment and transporting recycling to transfer stations.

Vice-Chair Bartels asked Marc Rider about contracting with alternative technology companies or purchasing their technology. UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider explained that the agency has hired Cornerstone to look at the hydro Request Report and other tasks, including reclaiming or landfill, and potentially asking them to look further into the matter.

Deputy County Executive LaValle questioned the scope of Cornerstone's study, seeking a more comprehensive evaluation of the landfill's environmental impact.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider mentioned that G.U.S. (Green Ulster Sullivan) it was a proposed regional landfill in the Hudson Valley, but was never open because of concerns about what waste could be sent there and whether it's being properly managed.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider and other officials are working on finding alternative waste solutions for counties in the region, including Orange and Westchester, which have incinerators that are up for permits in the near future.

Legislator Greene expressed concerns about adding electric vehicles to the grid without sufficient on-site solar generation.

Legislator Greene emphasized the importance of considering greenhouse gas emissions in waste management decisions.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon expressed concern about a waste management company's plan to turn organic waste into natural gas, lacking transparency on the final product's chemical makeup.

Chair Baden expressed interest in a smaller landfill and asks about the cost of monitoring the current landfill's carbon footprint.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider provides an estimate of \$10 million for the cost of shipping fees to the Seneca landfill.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlighted the importance of considering the impact of artificial limitations on landfill siting investigations.

UCRR Vice-Chair Gordon clarified that the hydro quest study was not seriously considered and that proprietary waste management facilities may require significant investment in solid waste to be profitable.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider and UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed the potential of anaerobic digestion systems to produce renewable natural gas and digestate.

UCCRA Vice-Chair Gordon expressed concern about using organics to produce natural gas, suggesting that it could limit the availability of compost for local farming and food security.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider emphasized the importance of considering alternative technologies beyond recycling to address the waste crisis.

Vice-Chair Bartels expressed skepticism towards for-profit companies' technologies, citing the need for feedstock and the potential for vicious cycles to keep things running.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider said doubling composting capacity may not be enough to meet 2030 organic waste diversion goal.

Comptroller Gallagher urged caution in addressing waste management issues, emphasizing the need for a fresh look at the problem.

Vice-Chair Bartels highlighted Vermont's successful compost legislation as a model for Colorado.

Vice-Chair Bartels raised questions about the legality of a move related to an autonomous agency's financial decisions.

Comptroller Gallagher suggested removing the bonding authority cap on the agency, which is currently in place.

County officials in the past expressed distrust of the agency and sought to limit its power through contract amendments and legislation and a bonding cap.

Vice-Chair Bartels suggested seeking legal advice to determine if a bonding authority cap is legally permissible and viable and Chair Baden agreed and suggests they could consult with their executive director, who is an attorney, for input.

Vice-Chairs Bartels expressed concern about the legality of limiting the agency's binding authority through contract and suggests conducting research on any relevant legislative resolutions.

Committee members discuss the importance of including disposal companies in their report.

UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon discussed diversity of solid waste disposal options, including small composting operations and haulers.

Community compost wants to be included in the discussion, but there is disagreement on how to navigate the industry and who should represent it.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider and Chair Baden discussed the need to reach out to haulers and other stakeholders for their input on waste management reform.

UCRRA Executive Director, Marc Rider suggested convening a meeting to gather feedback from haulers and other stakeholders, potentially through a letter of inquiry.

Chair Baden proposed drafting a letter to express concerns about infrastructure, staffing, and funding for the Recreation and Parks Department.

Peter Humphreys, a former town board member, shared his experience working on a transfer station project, where he regulated waste and reduced the town's deficit from \$41,000 to over \$400,000 in revenue. He emphasized the importance of proper waste disposal and diversion, citing examples of harmful substances like PCBs and microplastics, and offers his expertise to the commission.

Chair Baden expressed gratitude to Marc for providing valuable information and appreciates UCRRA Vice-Chair Gordon's perspective as the Executive Director.

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

Adjournment

Motion No. 2: MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion Made By: Jim Gordon, Vice-Chair UCRRA
Motion Seconded By: Vice-Chair Bartels
No. of Votes in Favor: 6
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 11:02 AM

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