

**Government Efficiency & Review Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**DATE & TIME:** April 17, 2017 – 5:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** COB, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Karen Binder Library  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Chairman John Parete  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk  
**PRESENT:** Legislators Belfiglio, Greene R. Parete and Ronk  
**ABSENT:** Legislator Briggs  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Tom Kadgen – League of Women Voters, Evan Gallo- Ulster County Comptroller’s Office, Ilona Ross and Kathy Nolan

Chairman J. Parete called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.

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**Motion No. 1:** **Moved to APPROVE the Minutes of the February 13, 2017 meeting**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Belfiglio  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Greene

**Discussion:** None

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Belfiglio, Greene, J. Parete, and R. Parete  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Minutes **APPROVED**

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**Old Business**

Chairman J. Parete informed the members that Purchasing Director Rider’s response to the committee’s memo requesting information on PLAs in the county was forwarded via email and included in the meeting materials. He stated that the last PLA entered into was for the new county jail. He advised the members that an article from the Woodstock Times, included in the materials, discussed costs of various rail road repairs. He continued by stating that the rail trail and the Family Court projects are expected to cost well over the million dollar threshold identified in the PLA policy.

The members briefly discussed the costs reported in the Woodstock Times article, the large increase in repair estimates and questioned how they were determined. The members discussed various proposals for the rail trail, included pedal cars. Legislator Belfiglio requested a copy of the Stone Consulting Report. The members briefly discussed the condition of various portions of tracks along the rail road.

The members decided to invite Director Rider to the next meeting to provide more information on the PLA “review process” mentioned in his memo and how it will be applied to the rail trail and Family Court projects.

Chairman J. Parete moved on to the topic of Affordable Housing/Housing Study under old business. He reminded the members that a letter was sent to each school district in the county for information on enrollment figures as a means to determine population losses. He continued by saying that housing and jobs

are contributing factors for the decesses. He added that a plan should be developed over the short term to commission a study on the availability and affordability of housing in Ulster County.

Legislator Greene commented that the subject of housing was initiated because of the committee's review of Resolution No. 411 of 2002 which established the Housing Consortium. She added that while she understood the explanation provided by RUPCO as to why the focus of the Consortium was shifted to the Continuum of Care and homelessness, she believed the consortium was needed and should be reactivated because issues of housing encompass more than homelessness. She added that determining the details and scope of a housing study should be the first charge of the consortium.

Legislator Belfiglio stated that he would like to know how many affordable housing units there are in the county. The members agreed that a study would be needed to gather that information. Chairman Ronk suggested reaching out to the Purchasing Department to issue an RFP for a Housing Study to determine the cost. Legislator Greene suggested reaching out to the Planning Department to see what information they already have. Legislator Belfiglio added that an assessment of emergency housing stock should be included in a study.

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## **New Business**

Chairman J. Parete informed the members that a letter was received from the Village of Ellenville requesting assistance with properties that have unpaid village taxes. He reminded the members that he brought up the issue a couple years ago. He advised the members that Mayor Kaplan was invited to the meeting but could not attend. He read from an email that the Mayor sent to Legislative Staff. The letter and the email were provided to the members in the meeting materials. Chairman J. Parete stated that the Legislature should again consider establishing a policy to make villages whole as is done for the towns and school districts. He added that the EIC program established by the Legislature could not be extended to properties in the villages because the county does not make them whole. He added that he would be reaching out to the program contacts again to inquire if there were any projects in the county and if anyone within a village boundary has inquired about the program. The members briefly discussed the matter of making schools, towns and villages whole in other counties around the state and the process for placing liens on properties.

Chairman J. Parete recognized Deputy Comptroller Gallo. Mr. Gallo informed the members that the Comptroller's Office is preparing for a Mental Health audit. He stated that there was tremendous interest from members of the committee as well as other legislators on the topic and said that the Comptroller's Office would like to request some type of follow-up, potentially in conjunction with the Public Health Committee and/or the Department of Health to define where they are headed and to discuss the limitations of what can be accomplished. Legislator Belfiglio stated that he would like to see an assessment of the services that were offered pre and post privatization as well as the quality of services.

Chairman J. Parete recognized Chairman Ronk who had a request for the committee. Chairman Ronk informed the members that he has had a couple of meetings with individuals from the Dart Corporation, which is a manufacture of polystyrene products, as well as some small business owners who have been negatively affected by the Styrofoam ban. He asked the members to explore the fact that Styrofoam is recyclable and stated that the county should look into implementing a Styrofoam recycling program. He added that food service Styrofoam accounts for little of the Styrofoam that ends up in the waste stream. He continued by saying that the bulk of Styrofoam waste comes from packaging materials. He showed the members "beads" which resulted from recycling Styrofoam. He added that anything that is made out of plastic can be made out of the "beads." He stated that a number of the products that have replaced Styrofoam as a result of the ban are entering the waste stream because they are also not recyclable, ie: wax coated paper cups.

Chairman Ronk also expressed his concern with the fines in the law calling them outrageous. He then showed the members some branded materials from KFC compared to unbranded products. He mentioned that KFC does not provide branded alternatives. He asked the members to review the unique packaging exemption section of the law and consider appropriate amendments to provide for more specific criteria of the exemption. He explained that the KFC request for exemption was denied by the Department of Health.

Legislator Greene commented that clean Styrofoam is easier to recycle and expressed her support for the implementation of a recycling program in Ulster County for packaging materials. She added that food container Styrofoam is more difficult to recycle due to the food waste that is often present. Legislator Belfiglio questioned the ability to recycle glass and plastic containing food waste but not Styrofoam. Chairman Ronk questioned whether tonnages have increased at the RRA as a result of the ban.

Chairman J. Parete thanked Chairman Ronk for bringing the issue to the committee. He added that he was also approached by a franchise owner who advised him that the cost of the ban resulted in him having to eliminate one employee. He added that the waste reduction argument of the ban was misleading. He reminded the members that he brought in disposable cups of various sizes and materials and demonstrated that the Styrofoam products weighed less than the other materials. Chairman Ronk stated that the owners of KFC shared with him that the ban has increased their food costs by 1% overall, about \$12,000/year, and said they would be happy to come to speak to the committee if they would like.

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Chairman J. Parete asked the members if they would like to change the meeting times to 5:30 PM. The members expressed their support for the change.

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Chairman J. Parete asked the members if there was any other business, and hearing none;

### **Adjournment**

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Belfiglio  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Greene  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 5  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**TIME:** 6:06 PM

**Respectfully submitted: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk**  
**Minutes Approved: May 15, 2017**