

**Health, Human Services & Housing Committee
Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: March 1, 2023 – 5:00 PM
LOCATION: KL Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair Uchitelle
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, and Petit
ABSENT: Legislator Stewart
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Commissioner Iapoce – Department of Social Services; Commissioner MacDonald – Department of Mental Health; Director Koppenhaver – Office for the Aging; Director Dawson – Youth Bureau; Deputy County Executives Contreras & LaValle – County Executive’s Office; Rachel Gans –public attendee

Chair Uchitelle called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM.

Motion No. 1: **Moved to approve the Minutes of February 1, 2022 Regular Meeting**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Corcoran

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 6

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Minutes Approved**

Chair Uchitelle recognized Department of mental Health Director MacDonald to give the members an update on the Crisis Stabilization Center and Respite Houses.

Commissioner MacDonald informed the members that the architectural plans for the crisis Stabilization Center (CSC) were finalized earlier in the year and identified PEOPLE, the Ellenville Regional Hospital and Gateway Community Industries as the providers that the county would be partnering with to operate the CSC. She added that the providers were excited to have input into the plans and the way the space was going to look, emphasizes design and décor that felt relaxing and welcoming and not clinical or sterile. She advised the members that the county was hoping to have the contract with PEOPLE, who will be the main provider and under whose license the CSC will be operating, ready for approval in May or June. She added that services are not expected to start until October, but early funding will help with recruitment and begin program planning. She advised the members that she believed bids were out for the construction side of things as well.

Chair Uchitelle asked for a projected CSC opening date and what requests may be made of the legislature in the interim. Commissioner MacDonald responded that Fall 2023, likely October is the projected opening

date. She added that the next request of the legislature would be the contract with PEOPLE for operational dollars, as well as resolutions for construction. Deputy County Executive Contreras stated that the bids for construction were still a couple months out. Chair Uchitelle requested that the Executive's Office continue to provide updates on the progress of both programming and construction in advance of resolutions being submitted to allow questions to be answered early to avoid project delays on the Legislature's side. Deputy County Executive stated they would share specifics on construction as early as possible.

Regarding Respite Houses, Commissioner MacDonald advised the members that the county was in the process of drafting a Request for Qualification and was hoping to publicize it in early March. She added that the potential site they are working on is in Ellenville. Chair Uchitelle asked if the county would be owning or renting the property. Commissioner MacDonald responded that the county would be purchasing the property, adding that this would be the first house in the county. Chair Uchitelle encouraged a second home be located north of Ellenville. Legislator Lopez thanked the Commissioner for the choice of Ellenville.

Chair Uchitelle recognized Deputy County Executive Contreras to update the members on housing efforts in the county, specifically regarding Elizabeth Manor, the Quality Inn, the Affordable Rental Upgrade Campaign and Golden Hill.

Deputy Executive Contreras stated that they have the demolition plan for Elizabeth Manor adding that the Bruderhoff is doing a lot of the work in-kind. She added that they are also working on community outreach, on-site volunteers, insurance and permitting as well as funding from the state Homeless Housing & Assistance Program (HHAP.) She added they were hoping to have a contract and Resolutions ready for the Legislature the following month, adding there is an open RFP for the operator. Chair Uchitelle and Legislator Erner to be looped into community outreach efforts. Legislator Petit asked for a timeframe for construction to begin. Deputy Executive Contreras stated that construction was not expected to start for at least a year. She added that securing the funding through the HHAP was time-consuming and the application approval process is very slow. There was a brief discussion on the pros and cons of using county funds for the project.

Chair Uchitelle advised the members that Legislator Erner was spearheading a letter to the state petitioning for housing related changes and stated that the issues with the HHAP process will be added to that letter.

Regarding the Quality Inn, Deputy Executive Contreras advised the members that they are finalizing the contract for water and sewer with the Town of Ulster which will run through July 2024. She stated that they are looking to start construction by Fall 2023, adding that there are various permits, permissions, construction plans, etc. that need to be finalized. Legislator Nolan asked for clarification as to whether the construction was for renovations to the existing building, or for new construction. Deputy Executive Contreras responded that they would be renovating. Legislator Erner requested that safety concerns in that area of Route 28 be considered during planning. The members briefly discussed Route 28 and safety concerns. Chair Uchitelle asked about the timeline and if the Legislature can assist in expediting the project. Deputy Executive Contreras responded that things were moving along, she had not heard reports of any delays and that construction was expected to begin in 2023.

Regarding the Affordable Rental Upgrade, Deputy Executive Contreras informed the members that an RFP has been published for operation of the program with a March 17 response due date.

Regarding Golden Hill/Penrose, Chair Uchitelle recognized the project would require a bigger conversation and asked for just a quick update. Deputy Executive Contreras agreed and advised the members that the developer is still in the process of negotiating a PILOT with the City of Kingston. She added that when the agreement is settled with the City, the developer will then be able to close the funding gap and move forward

with construction. Chair Uchitelle asked if the PILOT was standard or if a deviated PILOT was anticipated which would require Legislative approval. Deputy County Executive responded that they were not expecting a deviated PILOT, adding that the developers is pursuing multiple sources to close the funding gap, including HCR and petitioning state and federal representatives.

Resolutions for the ~~March 14~~ March 21, 2023 Legislative Session:

Resolution No. 76: Establishing A Policy Requiring Consideration Of Food Security Initiatives As A Condition Of Receiving Ulster County Funding For Affordable Housing Development And Certain County Capital Construction Projects

Resolution Summary: This resolution establishes that it shall be the policy of Ulster County that prior to the allocation of any County funding toward any affordable housing development projects in Ulster County, or toward Ulster County capital projects proposed after the effective date of this policy involving construction and development of space utilized for purposes of delivering a county service, it shall be required that such projects include consideration of food pantry facilities, community gardens, or similar food security measures as a component of said project.

Motion No. 2: **Moved Resolution No. 76 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion:

Legislator Nolan expressed support for the Resolution. Legislators Nolan and Erner requested to be added as co-sponsors of the Resolution. The members briefly discussed what specifically was required in order for county funding to be approved. Chair Uchitelle stated that he had a broader concern with normalizing food insecurity and being at peace with a concerning number of people in our communities who relay of food pantries and other non-profits for meals. He added that he was happy to support the Resolution but felt that normalizing food pantries as a goal should not be necessary. A brief discussion ensued.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there was any other discussion and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 6

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 77: Establishing A Policy To Prioritize The Mental And Behavioral Health Needs Of Ulster County By Initiating Assessment And Determining A Five-Year Plan

Resolution Summary: This resolution establishes that it is the policy of Ulster County to prioritize the mental and behavioral health needs of the County by initiating the assessment of the current mental and behavior health needs of Ulster County, with a goal of implementing a five (5) year action plan, and directs the Purchasing Director, in consultation with the Director of Mental Health, and with input from the Chair

of the Legislature or designee, within 90 days of adoption of the Resolution, to issue a RFP to 1) pull together 2022 data on Ulster County mental and behavior health needs and delivery distinguishing care provided through county program from those provided by contract agencies; 2) evaluate these data to identify gaps in care; 3) map out a plan identifying any services to be transitioned from contracted care to county-delivered; 4) conduct a cost-benefit analysis of these proposed changes; 5) set a five-year time line for any proposed change.

Motion No. 3: **Moved Resolution No. 77 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Corcoran
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Nolan

Discussion:

Chair Uchitelle stated that spoke to Legislation sponsor Legislator Walter who sent her regrets that she could not attend. He added that he thought it was a worthwhile endeavor and recognized that navigating the mental and behavioral needs system is complicated. Legislator Nolan expressed support for the initiative but felt some of the language could be read as leading or conclusory, but commented that the study may answer some of those concerns. Legislator Petit questioned why there was no financial impact. Chair Uchitelle stated that it was intentional that a dollar amount was omitted to discourage bidders from inflating estimates. A brief discussion about financial commitments and who from the Legislature would be designated to participate in the process.

Deputy County Executive stated that the Executive’s Office was supportive of the legislation and that Commissioner MacDonald has already started drafting the RFP. Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 91: Amending The 2023 Ulster County Budget – Department Of Social Services

Resolution Summary: This resolution makes certain amendments to the 2023 budget to allow the Department of Social Services to properly transfer State, Federal and other grant obligations for fiscal year 2022 and 2023, totaling \$1,396,777.00, to allow processing and payment in calendar year 2023.

Motion No. 4: **Moved Resolution No. 91 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion:

Commissioner Iapoce explained that DSS requests this annually and advised the members that there was a breakdown of the program and budgets provided with he Resolution. He added that the state’s fiscal year is

a main complicating factor. He added that the programs effected by this represents less than 1% of the DSS budget.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 92: Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$70,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Family Of Woodstock Inc. – Department Of Social Services

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves a \$70,000 contract amendment with Family of Woodstock to increase the not-to-exceed amount for the operation of the operation of the Darmstadt and Family Inn shelters and support services for homeless individuals for 11/1/22 – 12/31/22.

Motion No. 5: **Moved to Resolution No. 92 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion:

Commissioner Iapoce confirmed that the increase was not a result of the Living Wage Law adopted by the legislature. He stated that the increase was a result of an additional number of bed stays at the shelters. He added that the additional stays were directly attributable to a relaxing of COVID restrictions from those in place in 2021.

Legislator Erner stated he had a number of concerns not directly related to the resolution being considered. He asked if the committee could invite Family of Woodstock to a meeting to get a better understanding of the operation of the shelters and other programming that the county contracts with the for. Commissioner Iapoce asked that questions be provided with some specificity so answers can be provided detailing what state rules and regulations may be required and are not determined by the vendor. There was a brief discussion of emergency housing options for individuals, lengths of stay and voter registration records. Deputy County Executive Contreras asked to be a part of a meeting with Family of Woodstock when scheduled.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Chair Uchitelle informed the members that Legislative Counsel Ragucci was in attendance to speak to the recent Board of Ethics opinion issued pertaining to Resolution No. 200 of 2022 – Good Cause Eviction Law. Out of deference for Counselor Ragucci’s time, he advised the members that he would like to interrupt Resolution discussion to hear from him on the opinion.

Chair Uchitelle asked Counselor Ragucci to explain the opinion received from the Board Ethics in response to the question of whether Legislators who are landlords and/or tenants could vote on the legislation. Counselor Ragucci explained that the letter sent to the Board of Ethics cited the recently amended and adopted Ethics and Disclosure Law. He added that he felt the Ethics Board took an extremely broad interpretation of the law and he disagreed with that interpretation, adding he felt it was an overreach. He stated that, the Board’s letter implies that the Ethics Law “could have a conceivable indirect pecuniary or material benefit to all members of the legislature.” Chair Uchitelle commented that the letter implies that, in addition to landlords and tenants, anyone who owns a home should also refrain from voting on the law. Discussion continued with the members agreeing that Counsel should revisit the Ethics Law and consider further amendments that clarifies participation on laws of general applicability.

Legislator Erner asked if the members were amiable to ignore the letter and move forward with the resolution. Chair Uchitelle stated that there he was hesitant to move forward with the numerous unfavorable court cases on local attempts and renewed attention to address on the state level. He asked if there were any other questions for counsel and hearing none moved back into the agenda.

Resolution No. 93: Amending The 2023 Ulster County Budget To Accept Increased Funding From The New York State Office Of Mental Health For Supportive Housing, Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS), And To Amend Funding For Community Support Programs – Department Of Mental Health

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends the 2023 Budget to accept \$32,788 from New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) for increased funding for Supportive Housing, Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) as well as an amendment of the funding for Community Support Programs.

Motion No. 6: **Moved to Resolution No. 93 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Corcoran
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Petit

Discussion:

Commissioner MacDonald advised the members that this additional funding is the first of many they are expecting. Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 94 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$60,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Resource Center For Accessible Living, Inc. – Office For The Aging

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves a \$60,000.00 contract amendment with Resource Center For Accessible Living, Inc. to increase the not-to-exceed amount for costs associated with ancillary services to help keep EISEP clients safely in their homes, including architectural modifications, deep cleaning, purchase or rental of ancillary equipment, home modification services, and other services for 1/1/23 – 3/31/23.

Motion No. 7: **Moved to Resolution No. 94 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Corcoran

Discussion:

Director Koppenhaver explained that the RCAL is a community partner that preformed accessibility modifications to residences, such as widening doorways, ramps, safety bars, etc. The members briefly discussed the types of projects that have been completed and the process to evaluate requests. Chair Uchitelle asked how much RCAL was paying their employees. Director Koppenhaver stated that they were aware of the \$15/hr requirement. Chair Uchitelle stated that he would like the County Executive’s Office to gather wage information from all vendors to better position the Legislature to evaluate what people in the county are earning and whether that translates as a living wage. Legislator Petit asked if OFA connects people to other organizations/programs if RCAL can not help them. Director Koppenhaver confirmed that they refer seniors to many other organizations and state programs for assistance. The members briefly discussed how individuals are evaluated to determine if they have the ability to safely stay in their home.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 95 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$106,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Unlimited Care Inc. – Office For The Aging

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves a \$106,000.00 contract with Unlimited Care Inc. to provide in-home care assistance services for seniors in order to meet NYS requirements for recipients of grant funding, including Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) or Community Services for the Elderly (CSE) for 4/1/23 – 3/31/24.

Motion No. 8: **Moved Resolution No. 95 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Corcoran

Discussion:

Chair Uchitelle reminded the members that there were three similar resolutions approved by the committee last month. Director Koppenhaver thanked the committee and added that this contract was slightly different in that the individuals contracted with through this contract are dedicated solely to Ulster County. She added that they have a little more control and pay the aide a great wage, with mileage. She said it was a win for all involved and was very happy with the direction.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 96 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$4,088.00, Causing The Aggregate Contract Plus Amendment Amount To Be In Excess Of \$50,000.00, Entered Into By The County – Family Of Woodstock Inc. – Youth Bureau

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves a \$4,088.00 contract amendment with Family of Woodstock to increase the not-to-exceed amount for emergency residential and related respite services for runaway and homeless youth through the Family House program for 1/1/22 – 12/31/22.

Motion No. 9: **Moved Resolution No. 96 FOR DISCUSSION**

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Erner

Discussion:

Director Dawson thanked the members and stated that she learns so much when she attends the meeting. She added that previous administrations discouraged her attendance at meetings and was pleased that the current administration was open to her attending and sharing the work of the Youth Bureau. She advised the members that the amendment was due to the states fiscal calendar, adding that it was her understanding that there would be a change to a January – December calendar starting this year. She provided a brief overview of the Family House Program and the circumstances where she calls them for placement assistance. She added that there has been a change in the management of the program that she was very optimistic about.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there were any questions and hearing none called for a vote in favor of the Resolution.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Corcoran, Erner, Lopez, Nolan, Petit, and Uchitelle
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 6
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Chair Uchitelle advised the members that Resolution No. 91 on the agenda will be before the committee for a vote in April. He recognized Resolution sponsor Legislator Lopez to brief the committee on the Resolution.

Legislator Lopez explained that the resolution would proclaim April as Parkinson’s Awareness month in Ulster County and calls on Congress to re-introduce the National Plan to End Parkinson’s Act. He explained that the Act was before the 117th Congress but has not yet been introduced in the 118th Congress. He added that he has reached out to Congressman Molinaro who stated that he would reach out to Congressman Ryan to partner with him on re-introduction. The members of the committee asked to be added as co-sponsors of the Resolution.

Chair Uchitelle moved on to Old Business on the agenda; Resolution No. 461 - Adopting Revised Ulster County Fund Balance Policy To Dedicate Funding To Housing Justice. He advised the members that he sought to accomplish two things through the resolution: adjust the policy to make a compulsory allocation to a housing fund whenever the balance exceeded the threshold, and to make an initial allocation of \$20 million. He advised the members that he is withdrawing the Resolution in light of County Executive Metzger’s announcement at the State of the County of a \$15 million allocation. He stated that he intends to resubmit something that is in step with the County Executive’s goal.

Chair Uchitelle asked if there was any other old or any new business and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Nolan

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Erner

No. of Votes in Favor: 6

No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:42 PM

Respectfully submitted: Deputy Clerk Mahler

Minutes Approved: April 3, 2023