

**Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: July 7, 2021 – 5:15 PM
LOCATION: Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor, County Office Building
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairwoman Eve Walter
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner (arrived at 5:35 PM) & Parete
ABSENT: Legislator Haynes
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislative Counsel Cueva, Sheriff Figueroa, Deputy Tagliaferro – UC Sheriff's Office, Deputy County Executive Milgrim, Director Schmidt – UC Probation, Acting Director Erichsen – UC Emergency Communications/Management

Chairwoman Walter called the meeting to order at 5:19 PM.

Motion No. 1: **Moved to APPROVE the Minutes & Transcript of the May 24, 2021 Special Meeting**

Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Parete

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 3
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Minutes & Transcripts APPROVED**

Motion No. 2: **Moved to APPROVE the Minutes & Transcript of the June 2, 2021 Regular Meeting**

Motion By: Legislator Parete
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 3
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Minutes & Transcripts APPROVED**

Resolution No. 291: Confirming The Appointment Of Everett Erichsen As Director of Emergency Communications/Emergency Management

Resolution Summary: This resolution confirms the appointment of Everett Erichsen as the Director of the Department of Emergency Communications/Emergency Management.

Motion No. 3: **Moved Resolution No. 291 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Parete
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion:

Chairwoman Walter welcomed Mr. Erichsen and congratulated him on the appointment. Legislator Fabiano complimented Mr. Erichsen and stated that he has met him a few times and felt he would do an excellent job in the position.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 310: Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$30,100.00, Causing The Aggregate Contract Plus Amendment Amount To Be In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Public Safety Psychology, PLLC – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contact with Public Safety Psychology, PLLC in the amount of \$30,100 to extend the term of service for an additional year through December 31, 2022 for pre-employment psychological evaluations for deputies and corrections officers.

Motion No. 4: **Moved Resolution No. 310 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Parete

Discussion:

Chairwoman Walter asked the Sheriff if he wanted to describe the service provided. Sheriff Figueroa explained that the evaluation is required for new hires. Sheriff Figueroa informed the members that the use of polygraph as part of the evaluation process would be implemented in 2022 per new state requirements.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 311: Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment For \$2,596.00, Causing The Aggregate Contract Plus Amendment Amount To Be In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – New York Communications Company, Inc. – Ulster County Sheriff

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of a contact with NYCOMCO in the amount of \$2,596 to add additional radio equipment and increase funding for maintenance of county-owned radio equipment.

Motion No. 5: **Moved Resolution No. 311 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Parete

Discussion:

Sheriff Figueroa explained that the amendment is for an upgrade to radio equipment in the command post.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 312: Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget To Accept An Allocation Of Funds From The New York State Office Of Prevention Of Domestic Violence – Department Of Probation

Resolution Summary: This resolution amends the 2021 Budget to accept \$40,816.33 in additional state funding through the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault COVID-19 Recovery Fund from June 1, 2021 – September 30, 2021

Motion No. 6: **Moved Resolution No. 312 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Parete

Discussion:

Chairwoman Walter asked Director Schmidt if she could describe the program that the funding would be used for. Director Schmidt advised the members that the funds would be used to purchase and upgrade laptops as well as towards the purchase of a vehicle for their Crime Victims Assistance Program.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Resolution No. 313: Authorizing The County Executive To Execute An Agreement With Dutchess County For The Provision Of Reciprocal Conflict Defense – Public Defender’s Office

Resolution Summary: This resolution approves the execution of an agreement with Dutchess County to provide for legal representation to indigent defendants in the: Ulster County Court, Ulster County Family Court, City of Kingston Court and Town of Ulster Court or Town of Lloyd Court in Ulster County by Dutchess County Assistant Public Defender, and Dutchess County Court, City of Poughkeepsie Court, Town of Poughkeepsie Court or Dutchess County Family Court in Dutchess County by an Ulster County Assistant Public Defender, when the host County’s Public Defender’s Office is disqualified from representing and individual due to a legal conflict.

Motion No. 7: **Moved Resolution No. 313 FOR DISCUSSION**
Motion By: Legislator Parete
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion:

Deputy Executive Milgrim briefly described the program. Chairwoman Walter asked Deputy Executive Milgrim if he could help communicate to the Public Defender that the committee would appreciate it if she or a representative from her office could attend meetings when there is something before the committee pertaining to her office. Mr. Milgrim responded that he would reach out to the Public Defender.

Chairwoman Walter asked Deputy Executive Milgrim for an update on the Assigned Council position. She stated that the full time Assigned Council Administrator position had been filled, but the Assigned Council position remained vacant. Mr. Milgrim responded that they were in the process of finalizing a contract with a vendor for web-based programming to develop a pool of lawyers. Chairwoman Walter stated that OILS expects counties to have an Assigned Council Plan, adding that she has an initial draft plan and questioned when the county would be finalizing the plan and providing it to the state.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner, Parete & Walter
Voting Against: None
Votes in Favor: 4
Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Resolution ADOPTED**

Chairwoman Walter advised the members that the members on the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force will be finalizing their report at their meeting later in the month and will be making a presentation to the Legislature at the August Session. She informed the members that there would be a number of Resolutions presented for considerations, including a number of them creating positions in the county. She added that, although she and the Task Force believe the county would benefit from the immediate creation of the positions, she understood if the body desired to have the conversation as part of the 2022 Budget process.

Legislator Fabiano asked who developed the proposed resolutions. Chairwoman Walter responded that they resulted from the discussions of the Task Force members, adding that the Task Force has a diverse group of community members, individuals in law enforcement and the criminal justice system, judges, and others. Legislator Fabiano complimented her on the group's hard work.

She added that she would share the report with the members at the August committee meeting.

Chairwoman Walter asked the members if there was any new business and hearing none moved on to Continued Business – Examining and Understanding Violence in Ulster County and Efforts to Prevent it.

Chairwoman Walter summarized the discussions the committee has had on the subject and the information provided at the special meeting. She asked the members what they felt their next steps should be, including whether a hearing was still desired, and if so, who should be invited and what question(s) will they be asked.

Legislator Parete stated that violent crime is still out of control. He added that the committee has been discussing the issue for a year and feels that public safety is not being addressed and would like to move forward with a hearing to determine what has caused the significant increase in crime and what can be done about it. He suggested inviting elected officials, including the City of Kingston Mayor, state representatives, the District Attorney and Public Defender, police chiefs, others in law enforcement and maybe the state Attorney General.

Legislator Fabiano stated that he originally did not support the idea of a public hearing, but after having heard from the District Attorney, Sheriff and Probations Director, and after the many conversations in the committee, he is supportive of inviting individuals with more knowledge and experience to shed some light on issues the county is facing.

Chairwoman Walter stated that she does not support holding a hearing, adding that the members have heard from individuals in Ulster County who deal with crime on a day-to-day basis. She added that the underlying causes are understood and would like to pursue a more robust approach to violence prevention and provide funding to target the communities identified as having the highest levels of violent crime in the county: Ellenville, Kingston, New Paltz and Saugerties. She stated that a small group of individuals generally perpetrate the majority of crime. She suggested providing \$100,000 in funding to the Ulster Prevention Council to help each community to design prevention activities specific to their municipality.

Legislator Heppner stated that it is important to ensure that the committee's actions and recommendations are within the purview of the legislature similar to the recommendations that came out of the UCAN Task Force. He added that he supported the proposal to provide funding to the target communities through Ulster Prevention and recommended that they provide recommendations to the Legislature on how the funds were spent and what actions each community feels the Legislature can take.

Chairwoman Walter asked Sheriff Figueroa if he would describe the potential program he is looking to implement that ties in to crime prevention. Sheriff Figueroa advised the members that he has been meeting with the County Executive, Kingston Mayor and Kingston Police Chief to develop a plan to identify individuals known in the community to commit crimes and violent crimes and reach out to them. He added that there are a number of instances where crimes occur but the lack of witnesses creates barriers to developing a case. He advised the members that the program will include social workers, counselors, mental health professionals to provide individuals stuck in cycles of crime get the help they need, including vocational training. The program will be modeled after the Sheriff's ORACLE program.

Chairwoman Walter asked if the Legislature was willing to provide funding if the Sheriff would be willing to expand the program into the 4 target communities. Legislature Parete commented that he would like to hear from others in law enforcement and criminal justice if they have other or similar solutions. Chairwoman Walter commented that she values the Sheriff's professional opinion on potential solutions to crime prevention. She added that proactively reaching out to known criminals and violent individuals to let them know that they are on law enforcement's radar appears to be an effective deterrent.

Chairwoman Walter summarized the actions on the table:

- Have a hearing with invited state and local elected officials and individuals in law enforcement and ask why violent crime is happening and what should be done
- Put forth a Resolution funding the Sheriff's program and/or
- Put forth a Resolution to fund community based responses through Prevention Council

She stated that it would be possible to submit a funding request for these initiatives through American Rescue Plan Funding. She added that she would like the committee's support in making sure there are no cuts to the IPVI and SNUG programs.

Legislator Heppner suggested reaching out to state representatives asking for a summary on state funded initiatives to address violent crime. He also suggested inviting the Ulster Prevention Council to an upcoming meeting. Chairwoman Walter stated that she supported the suggestion to write to state representatives. She revisited the committee's desire to hold a hearing.

Motion No. 8: **Moved to HOLD A HEARING with invited guests who can enlighten the committee on public safety and methods of reducing particularly violent crime in our community**

Motion By: Legislator Parete
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Discussion:

Chairwoman Walter stated that it would be the responsibility of Legislator Parete to develop the list of guests and what the topic of the hearing would be and communicate that to the Deputy Clerk.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Fabiano, Heppner & Parete
Voting Against: Legislator Walter
Votes in Favor: 3
Votes Against: 1
Disposition: **Motion CARRIES**

Chairwoman Walter stated that she would take responsibility for drafting resolution for the other initiatives discussed and asked the members to let her know if they would like to co-sponsor the legislation. She added that she would reach out to Ulster prevention Council to see if they had any objections and asked Director Schmidt to let her know if there were other organizations that would also be appropriate. Legislator Fabiano stated his support for the hearing as well as Resolutions for the programs and initiatives discussed.

Legislator Parete stated that Legislator Heppner could register his votes on Resolutions before the committee prior to adjournment. Legislator Heppner stated that he supported all of the matters before the committee. The prior vote counts were updated by the Deputy Clerk to reflect Legislator Heppner's support.

Chairwoman Walter asked Deputy Sheriff Tagliaferro if he wanted to say anything to the members. Deputy Tagliaferro stated his support for the Sheriff's initiative and advised the members that he is a part of ORACLE and has seen firsthand the benefits of reaching out to people. He offered to provide additional information to the members about the effectiveness of reaching out to youth early in preventing incidents of crime and violence.

Chairwoman Walter asked the members if there was any other new or old business, and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Heppner
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:13 PM

Respectfully submitted: Deputy Clerk Mahler
Approved: August 5, 2021