

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Legislative Programs, Education & Community Services Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME : January 22, 2014 – 5:30pm
LOCATION : Karen L. Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building, Kingston, New York
CHAIRMAN : David B. Donaldson, Chairman – Present
RECORDER : Janet Salanitri, Adm. Assistant, SUNY, Ulster Co. Community College
LEGISLATORS
PRESENT : Leg. Mary Wawro, Leg. Manna Jo Greene, Leg. Lynn Archer and Leg. Craig Lopez
OTHERS
PRESENT : Carol Olszanecki and Sondra Lonstein of the Blue Water Navy Org., Tom Kadgen as Observer for League of Women Voters; and Theresa Brundaige, Aide to Leg. Lopez.
QUORUM : Yes

A QUORUM BEING PRESENT Chairman Donaldson called the meeting to order at 5:35pm and introduced Carol Olszanecki and Sondra Lonstein who requested to appear before this Committee in support of Resolution No. 33 and Resolution No. 34 on behalf of BlueWaterNavy.org.

PRESENTATION:

Ms. Olszanecki said Resolution No. 33 is to support the passage of H.R. 543 in the US House of Representatives. In 1991 the US Congress passed the Agent Orange Act for veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam but this was changed in 2001 to only cover those who served on the ground or in the rivers of Vietnam. Those who served off the coast, known as “Blue Water Navy Veterans” are not covered. Further the 2001 changes require “boots on ground” veterans to provide specific documentation which in many cases is difficult because they were only on land for a short time. Ms. Olszanecki also said that the herbicides found their way into the rivers and the ocean and while the desalination process took out the salt, it left in the dioxin, the main chemical in Agent Orange.

Ms. Olszanecki said Resolution No.34 is to support H.R. 1494 which has been passed by the U.S. House of Representatives (HR 2189)and is pending before Congress, which will direct the Secretary of Defense to make a public accounting of all ships known to have been in the waters near Vietnam during the Vietnam Era, in order to make applications and determine eligibility of sick or deceased Vietnam Veterans possible without the current delays.

MOTION #1 – Resolution #33 for the January 30, 2014 session.

Text of Motion : In Support of House of Representatives Legislation H.R. 543, an act cited as the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013”, which would clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam.

Discussion : Leg. Greene said this was similar to the aftermath of Hiroshima where many sailors were dispatched to that area and were exposed to radioactivity and later suffered from cancers and other illnesses. She said it is up to the federal government to protect the members of the Armed Forces who protect us. Leg. Lopez said he would personally like to thank Ms. Olszanecki and Ms. Lonstein for their hard work. It is a noble cause. Ms. Olszanecki said Cong. Gibson has worked tirelessly to this end. Leg. Lopez said he would like to be added as a sponsor to this bill and Chairman Donaldson said he believes that by this Resolution the whole committee is added.

Motion Made : Leg. Lopez
Seconded : Leg. Archer

Voice Vote : Yes
In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Wawro, Lopez, Archer and Greene
Opposed : None
No.in Favor : 5
No.Opposed : 0
Disposition : The motion to support House of Representatives Legislation H.R. 543, an act cited as the "Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013", which would clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, was unanimously approved.

MOTION #2 – Resolution #34 for the January 30, 2014 session.

Text of Motion : In support of House of Representatives Legislation H.R. 1494, an Act cited as the "Blue Water Navy Ship Accountability Act", which would direct the Secretary of Defense to Review the operation of certain ships during The Vietnam Era.

Motion Made : Leg. Wawro
Seconded : Leg. Lopez
Voice Vote : Yes
In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Greene, Archer, Wawro and Lopez
Opposed : None
No.in Favor : 5
No.Opposed : 0
Disposition : The motion to support of House of Representatives Legislation H.R. 1494, an Act cited as the "Blue Water Navy Ship Accountability Act", which would direct the Secretary of Defense to Review the operation of certain ships during The Vietnam Era, was unanimously approved.

ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING:

Report : Anne Cardinale, Director of the Office for the Aging was unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment. Chairman Donaldson asked for a motion on the following:

MOTION #3 – Resolution #27 for the January 30, 2014 session:

Text of Motion : Authorizing the Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature to execute a grant application with required assurances for the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) with The New York State Office for the Aging.

Discussion : Chairman Donaldson said this was a grant application to be executed by the Chairman of the Legislature. Leg. Archer said the grant application attached was not completed and was blank although the deadline for submission was December 13, 2013. Leg. Greene said she had no objection to approving this resolution provided that the completed application was provided to the full legislature at regular session. The committee concurred. Chairman Donaldson requested this recorder to convey this to the Legislature Clerk's Office. (See Recorder's Note below)

Motion Made : Leg. Wawro
Seconded : Leg. Greene
Voice Vote : Yes
In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Wawro, Greene, Archer and Lopez
Opposed : None
No.in Favor : 5
No.Opposed : 0
Disposition : The motion to authorize the Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature to execute a grant application with required assurances for the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) with The New York State Office for the Aging, was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chairman Donaldson advised that the next regular meeting of this Committee would be on Wednesday, February 5, 2014 at 5:30pm in the Howard C. St. John Room, Clinton Hall, Ulster County Community College. He also said he would like to hold some of the monthly meetings in different locations such as Community Action and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Recorder's Note: Regarding the discussion on Resolution #27, this Recorder was advised by the Clerk on the Legislature that at the Ways & Means Committee meeting following this committee it was explained that the application was not completed as it was not yet filed and will not be by the full session, but there was an extension on filing. This was explained by Ken Crannell, Deputy Ulster County Attorney and the completed application will not need to be provided for the full session as set forth above.

MOTION #4 - TO ADJOURN

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg Lopez and seconded by Leg. Archer, and Chairman Donaldson declared the meeting duly adjourned at 5:53pm.

Dated the 23rd day of January, 2014

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

Minutes Approved on March 5, 2014.