

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
Legislative Programs, Education & Community Services Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME : November 5, 2014
LOCATION : Howard St. John Room, SUNY Ulster County Community College, Stone Ridge, NY
CHAIRMAN : David B. Donaldson, Present
RECORDER : Janet Salanitri, Adm. Assistant, SUNY, Ulster Co. Community College
LEGISLATORS
PRESENT : Legs. Craig Lopez, Mary Wawro, Lynn Archer and Donald Gregorius
ABSENT : None
OTHERS
PRESENT : Mark Komdat, Dean of Administration, representing SUNY Ulster County Community College; Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County; Teresa Brundage, Assistant to Leg. Lopez; Jolyn Safron, Maria Maritsas, Marie Altenan and Ed Altenan all appearing for Kingston Action for Education; Victoria Vaughn, student; and Ken Crannell, Deputy Ulster County Executive
QUORUM : Yes

A QUORUM BEING PRESENT AND ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS BEING IN ATTENDANCE, CHAIRMAN DONALDSON CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 5:07 pm.

MOTION #1:

Text of Motion : Resolved to approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee of October 15, 2014.
Motion Made : Leg. Archer
Seconded : Leg. Wawro
Voice Vote : Yes
In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Wawro and Archer. Leg. Lopez abstaining.
Opposed : None
No.in favor : 4
No. Opposed : 0
Disposition : Motion passed – Minutes of the October 15, 2014 meeting of this committee unanimously approved as presented.

RESOLUTION #350 – COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

This resolution is before this committee and Chairman Donaldson recognized Jolyn Safron who appeared in support of the resolution. Ms. Safron said Kingston Action for Education is looking for the full repeal of Common Core. She talked about the stress felt by children taking so many standardized tests as well as the pressure placed upon educators to make all children perform uniformly even though they may not have uniform ability. She discussed the start of Common Core starting with the “No Child Left Behind” initiative of the federal government and “Race to the Top”. She said these things force children to meet certain goals and standards and these things cannot be legislated. She said the average parent was not aware of what was going on and what was involved. The “Race to the Top” funding was tied into it and that made it very attractive. Ms. Safron said that in order to qualify for this funding, the state had to agree to student assessment, data collection, teacher assessment and common core standards. She said common core is also an unfunded mandate and to continue to have to do this is going to place a large burden upon school districts. Chairman Donaldson said he just retired from teaching high school classes and he explained his experiences with this process. He said he believes it is being driven by book companies and testing companies and if he was still teaching he would not be able to say that or risk losing his job. Ms. Maritsis said common core is a one size fits all program and gave examples of her

own experience with why that is not a good comparison. Leg. Archer said she believed the first few years were to set base lines and to measure results, etc. and was very interested in understanding why so many felt this is not a good thing. Ms. Safron and Ms. Maritsis both believed that this testing does not take into account the different levels and the different ways students reach that levels. Also it looks bad for the teacher if not all the students succeed in reaching the same level.

Mr. Altceenan said one of the problems is that educators are losing control at a local level and at a state level and have handed control over to the federal level in order to obtain funding. Leg. Lopez, sponsor of this resolution, said he sees the biggest problem being that it is a federal program disguised as a state initiative and some believe it is a violation of the 10th Amendment. He said there is nothing in the Constitution that gives the federal government power over the state education system. Leg. Wawro said there is so much pressure on the small children and their parents to do things in a certain way. Leg. Gregorius asked is the group was doing anything other than asking for a supporting resolution. Ms. Safron said there were letter-writing campaigns, Albany trips, etc. all looking for the same solution. At this time Chairman Donaldson and Legs. Gregorius and Wawro asked to be added as sponsors of this resolution.

Resolution : **Resolution No. 350 for the November 18, 2014 session of the Legislature**

MOTION #2 – RESOLUTION #350:

Text of Motion : Supporting the reintroduction and passage of New York State Assembly Bill 07994 and Senate Bill 06267, an Act to Amend the Education Law, in relation to The Common Core State Standards Initiative and The Race to the Top Program.

Motion Made : Leg. Lopez

Seconded : Leg. Gregorius

Voice Vote : Yes

In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Archer, Lopez and Wawro

Opposed : None

No.in Favor : 5

No.Opposed : 0

Disposition : Motion passed. Resolution #350 unanimously approved.

SUNY, ULSTER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

Prior to reports and/or resolution, Chairman Donaldson said there was a person who wished to speak about a problem regarding the College's Daycare. He introduced Ms. Victoria Vaughn. Ms. Vaughn said she does not have children but her friend had a child in the college's daycare and her friend may have to drop out of school because she cannot afford to keep paying for daycare. The rates for daycare were discussed and Ms. Vaughn said one of the questions is why the college doesn't have a per hour rate instead of a either a full day or a half day rate. She said SUNY New Paltz has an hourly rate. Dean Komdat said the daycare is run by the College Association and he would have to find out the particulars. He does know, however, that the rates are competitive and we are one of the lowest in the area. It is not something the college makes money on. He did say we have to make sure we have staff on hand for a full day, not just for an hour. SUNY New Paltz has a much bigger daycare with many more staff and maybe that is why they can do the per hour rate. There were a lot of suggestions and referrals made for Ms. Vaughn to pass on to her friend.

Report by : Mark Komdat, Dean of Administration

Report : Dean Komdat discussed the resolution before this committee to approve the collective bargaining agreement between the County of Ulster and the UCCC Faculty Association. Dean Komdat said this is a four (4) year contract to run from September 1, 2014 through August 31, 2018 and has been approved by the college's Board of Trustees. He said the negotiations resulted in a 1.5% increase in salary retroactive to September 1, 2014, a 1.5% salary increase on September 1, 2015, a 1.75% salary increase on September 1, 2016 and a 2% salary increase on September 1, 2017. Also there were

changes negotiated related to the cost of health insurance premiums. For members of the Faculty Association hired after October 1, 2014: 1) the employee portion of the premium for individual or dependent care will be 20% of the cost; and 2) the employee spouse's health insurance premium cost, after retirement, will no longer be subsidized by the college. In all other respects the prior contract would remain the same. At this time Chairman Donaldson called for a vote on the resolution.

Resolutions : No. 399 for the November 18, 2014 session of the Legislature

MOTION #3- RESOLUTION #399:

Text of Motion : Approving the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County of Ulster and UCCC Faculty Association

Motion Made : Leg. Lopez

Seconded : Leg. Gregorius

Voice Vote : Yes

In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Archer, Lopez and Wawro

Opposed : None

No.in Favor : 5

No.Opposed : 0

Disposition : Motion passed. Resolution #399 unanimously approved.

At this time Chairman Donaldson brought Resolution No. 395 before the Committee. There was no discussion as the resolution also relates to Common Core (see Resolution No. 350 previous).

MOTION #4- RESOLUTION #395:

Text of Motion : Supporting the reintroduction and passage of New York State Assembly Bill 07994 and Senate Bill 1925 and Senate Bill 16832, an Act to Amend the Education Law, in relation to allowing school districts to opt out children with an individualized education program out of the "Common Core Standards" and certain testing.

Motion Made : Chairman Donaldson

Seconded : Leg. Wawro

Voice Vote : Yes

In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Archer, Lopez and Wawro

Opposed : None

No.in Favor : 5

No.Opposed : 0

Disposition : Motion passed. Resolution #395 unanimously approved.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ULSTER COUNTY:

Report by : Lee Reidy, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Education.

Report : Chairman Donaldson advised Ms. Reidy that the committee had put in the request for a budget amendment for her department; however, to date he has heard nothing. He asked her how many employees she had. Ms. Reidy said they currently have 35 full time people and there are also a few part-time people making the total somewhere between 35-40 employees. Ms. Reidy, on behalf of all her staff and her Board of Directors, thanked the committee for their efforts. She said they would be starting work on the budget for next year and would plan accordingly, most likely eliminating a few positions.

She discussed programming, in particular the Farm Bill which, like most federal legislation, is difficult to read and comprehend. Ms. Reidy said it is not that great for dairy farms, but we don't have that many in Ulster County anymore. However, she said, we do have one young man who decided he wants to be a

dairy farmer and he is actively working towards that and CCE is more than happy to help him whenever he has any questions at all.

Ms. Reidy said the Annual Meeting would be held on December 4th at the CCE offices in Kingston. There will be a talk on "The History of Agriculture in the Hudson Valley" which was recently given and which was very well received. She said there will be a new Board of Directors elected at this meeting also. She also passed on the news that Mary Marsters, long-time grants and contracts person, will be retiring by the end of the year and that her position will not be filled as a cost-saving measure. She also discussed the number of original grants, as well as the hiring of a new Nutritionist who will be working on the "Eat Smart New York" grant program. They also started a new 5-year grant with the NYC DEC Ashokan Watershed and they will be hiring a person that will be working with the Department of Planning.

Resolutions : None

ULSTER COUNTY VETERANS' AFFAIRS:

There is no report. Chairman Donaldson introduced proposed Resolution No. 392 setting a policy offering discount UCAT fares to veterans. Chairman Donaldson thinks this resolution should also go to the committee which handles public transportation. After discussion and it appearing that the resolution is not only before this committee, but is also before the Economic Development, Tourism, Housing, Planning & Transit Committee, as well as The Ways & Means Committee, that the committee would vote on the resolution. Also, it appearing that the resolution is sponsored by Leg. Kevin Roberts, Chairman Donaldson asked that he be listed as a sponsor also. Legislators Wawro, Lopez and Archer also asked to be listed as sponsors of this resolution:

Resolution: No. 392 for the November 18, 2014 session of the Legislature.

MOTION #5 – RESOLUTION #392

Text of Motion : Setting a policy offering discounted UCAT fares to Veterans.

Motion Made : Leg. Archer

Seconded : Leg. Lopez

Voice Vote : Yes

In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Archer, Lopez and Wawro

Opposed : None

No.in Favor : 5

No.Opposed : 0

Disposition : Motion passed. Resolution #392 unanimously approved.

ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE:

Chairman Donaldson recognized Ken Crannell, Deputy Ulster County Executive, who wished to bring the committee up-to-date on several matters involving the Ulster County Department of Veterans' Affairs . He said that among them is the appointment of Keith Bennett as Deputy Director and listed his qualifications. Several of the committee members commented that they are familiar with Mr. Bennett and his work in the community. Mr. Crannell also said there were adjustments to the budget due to increased cost for indigent burials which were discussed in this committee previously. Also, said Mr. Crannell, the county would be creating a veterans memorial to fallen soldiers and this would be erected in the front of the County Office Building and would honor those soldiers who died going back to the Revolutionary War if the records can be located.

At this time Chairman Donaldson presented to the Committee proposed Resolution No. 403 dealing with construction apprenticeships. The committee was again unsure as to why this resolution was before this committee but believed it may be because it dealt with a form of education. In any event it appears it also goes before Public Works, Laws & Rules and Ways & Means, the committee proceeded to vote on it.

Resolution : Resolution No. 403 for the November 18, 2014 session of the Legislature

MOTION #6 – RESOLUTION #403

Text of Motion : Setting a public hearing on proposed Local Law No. 15 of 2014 (A Local Law establishing a Construction Apprenticeship for agreements for certain bridge contracts in excess of \$500,000) to be held on Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 6:05pm.

Motion Made : Leg. Lopez

Seconded : Leg. Wawro

Voice Vote : Yes

In Favor : Chairman Donaldson, Legs. Gregorius, Archer, Lopez and Wawro

Opposed : None

No.in Favor : 5

No.Opposed : 0

Disposition : Motion passed. Resolution #403 unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

None

ADJOURNMENT MOTION #7:

There being no further business before this committee, on motion duly made by Leg. Lopez and seconded by Leg. Wawro and carried, Chairman Donaldson declared the meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Dated the 12th day of November, 2014

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

Minutes Approved: December 3, 2014