

**Laws, Rules & Government Services Committee  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

**DATE & TIME:** February 10, 2022 – 5:30 PM  
**LOCATION:** Powered by Zoom Meetings, Meeting ID: 898 5051 5613  
By Phone (646) 558-8656  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Chairman Heppner  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Jay Mahler, Deputy Clerk  
**PRESENT:** Legislators Gavaris, Levine, Roberts and Ronk (arrived 5:36 PM, left at 5:54 PM)  
**ABSENT:** None  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Legislative Counsels Ragucci & Gordon, Minority Counsel Pascale, Deputy County Executives Contreras & Rider, Commissioners Dittus & Quigley – UC Board of Elections, Commissioner Smith – UC Health Department, Haley Carr – UC Medical Examiners Office, Cheryl Schneider – citizen, Mid-Hudson News correspondent

Chairman Heppner called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM

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**Motion No. 1:** Moved to **APPROVE Minutes of the December 9, 2021 Special, December 20, 2021 Regular and December 21, 2021 Special Joint Meetings**

**Motion By:** Legislator Roberts  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Gavaris

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine & Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Minutes APPROVED**

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Resolutions for the February 15, 2022 Session of the Legislature

**Resolution No. 14:** Authorizing The Termination Of A Lease Agreement With CPR Kingston, LLC Bank For Space Used By The Board Of Elections

**Resolution Summary:** This Resolution authorizes the Chair to mail written notice of termination of the lease agreement with CPR Kingston, LLC effective April 30, 2022 for office space currently occupied by the Board of Elections located at 284 Wall Street, Kingston.

**Motion No. 2:** **MOTION TO POSTPONE Resolution No. 14**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Roberts

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine, Roberts & Ronk  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 5  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Resolution POSTPONED**

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**LATE Resolution No. 95:** Amending The 2022 Ulster County Budget To Create One Full-Time Deputy Medical Examiner (Medicolegal Investigation) Position – Department Of Health

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution amends the 2022 budget to create the position on Deputy Medical Examiner for an annual salary of \$71,053 plus benefits (\$59,302 salary to year end) effective March 3, 2022.

**Motion No. 3:** **Resolution No. 95 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Ronk  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Gavaris

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner & Levine  
**Voting Against:** Legislator Roberts  
**Votes in Favor:** 3  
**Votes Against:** 1  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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**Resolution No. 57:** Establishing Capital Project No. 621 – Voting System Replacement – Board Of Elections

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution establishes Capital Project No. 621 in the amount of \$1,400,000 for the purchase of new voting systems.

**Motion No. 4:** **Resolution No. 57 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Roberts

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine & Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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**Resolution No. 8:** Proclaiming The Twenty-Sixth Of November As “Sojourner Truth Day”

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution pays tribute to Sojourner Truth’s lifetime achievements and contributions promoting justice, freedom, equal rights and economic opportunity for all by proclaiming the 26th Day of each November as Sojourner Truth Day in Ulster County and encourages the passage of State Senate Bill S7341.

**Motion No. 5:** **Resolution No. 8 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Levine

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine & Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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**Resolution No. 9:** Appointing Chairwoman Tracey A. Bartels As The Ulster County Legislature’s Member To Serve On The County Jury Board

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution appoints Chairwoman Bartels as the Legislature’s appointment to the Jury Board for a term to expire on December 31, 2022.

**Motion No. 6:** **Resolution No. 9 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Roberts

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine & Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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**Resolution No. 16:** Setting A Public Hearing On Proposed Local Law No. 2 Of 2022, A Local Law Amending The Charter Of The County Of Ulster, Amending The Administrative Code, Repealing Chapter 44, Ethics And Disclosure, Of The Code Of The County Of Ulster, And Establishing The “Ulster County Ethics Law,” To Be Held On Tuesday, March 15, 2022 At 7:10 PM

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution sets a public hearing to provide the public the opportunity to offer comments on Proposed Local Law No. 2 of 2022 on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 7:10 PM

**Motion No. 7:** **Resolution No. 16 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Roberts

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine & Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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**Resolution No. 17:** Setting A Public Hearing On Proposed Local Law No. 3 Of 2022, A Local Law Amending Local Law No. 6 Of 2021, A Local Law Requiring The Payment Of A Living Wage To Employees Of Contractors And Subcontractors That Provide Services To Ulster County, In Relation To Living Wage For Social And Human Services, To Be Held On Tuesday, March 15, 2022 At 7:20 PM

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution sets a public hearing to provide the public the opportunity to offer comments on Proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2022 on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 7:20 PM

**Motion No. 8:** **Resolution No. 17 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Levine

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Motion No. 9:** **MOTION TO POSTPONE Resolution No. 17**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Roberts

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner, Levine & Roberts  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 4  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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**Resolution No. 24:** Confirming Reappointment Of A Member To The Ulster County Board Of Ethics

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution confirms the appointment of Gerald Benjamin to the Ulster County Board of Ethics for a term to commence immediately and continue through December 31, 2026

**Motion No. 10:** **Resolution No. 24 MOVED FOR DISCUSSION**  
**Motion By:** Legislator Gavaris  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Levine

**Discussion:** See attached transcript

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Gavaris, Heppner & Levine  
**Voting Against:** Legislator Roberts  
**Votes in Favor:** 3  
**Votes Against:** 1  
**Disposition:** **Resolution ADOPTED**

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Chairman Heppner moved on to the Forthcoming Local Laws portion of the agenda. See attached transcript.

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Chairman Heppner asked if there was any old or new business. See attached transcript.

**Adjournment**

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Gavaris

**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Roberts

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 4

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**TIME:** 6:11 PM

**Respectfully submitted:** Deputy Clerk Mahler

**Minutes Approved:** March 10, 2022

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**Chairman Heppner**

Let's get started. Legislator Ronk. Hopefully it will be joining us shortly if he's available. But again, welcome to laws and rules. You know, I'm really excited to Chair this committee going forward. Big shoes to fill. You know, Tracey is pretty impressive, especially as Chair of this committee, so I'm gonna try my best, but very grateful for the turnover. To have Legislator Gavaris, Legislator Ronk, Legislator Roberts, and the new addition of Legislator Levine to the committee. So if it's okay with you all, we'll get started. We have a few people that are going to present tonight that we're going to move ahead of the agenda. But to get going, can I get a motion to approve the committee meetings for December 9th, 20th and the 21st of December as a block?

**Legislator Roberts**

I'll make that motion.

**Legislator Gavaris**

Second.

**Chairman Heppner**

All in favor the Block?

**Committee Members**

Aye

**Chairman Heppner**

Then, going forward, let's go to so first, I just asked the board of elections to join us under the purview of this committee to give us an update on the move from their current position. So, I see we have Ashley on, is John, is John on too? So Commissioner Dittus and Commissioner Quigley. If you guys could just give us a little bit of an update on how the moves going and also if you want to speak on ... [inaudible] Commissioner Dittus, or Commissioner Quigley?

**Commissioner Quigley**

Sorry, I lost you there at the end. But I think I got the gist that you're looking for an update, pretty much for the move and everything else that we're going to be going forward with this year?

**Chairman Heppner**

Yep.

**Commissioner Quigley**

So current timetable for the move. After having met we meet weekly every Wednesday 9am over at The Daily Freeman building to check in with the development team that's building out the space. They are on track for end of May, which becomes a bit of that window where we can't move due to the prep for the primary. So we have been working diligently to see what we can do to potentially move that window up. Otherwise, we will be doing a half and half move where we'll have to move half before slash during that window and the other half after the primary election.

Things are going pretty smooth there. I know they have some supply chain issues. And now it seems like things are better at the moment. And we're looking forward to the new space. It's just being able to see how we're going to be laying out all of our equipment and mapping it on a layout has been tremendous to see that we'll have the room to grow should we have to take on additional functions. And speaking of growing we are thankful for the two new employees that were approved in last year's budget one of those has already started this past week. This was her first week and I believe Ashley's in search for her new person still and once they're added there'll be right in the mix going into a primary season that will be pretty busy. Anticipating a lot of county wide primaries.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you and Commissioner Dittus, do you have anything to add to that? Seeing that, do folks mind if we move Resolution?

**Commissioner Dittus**

Hi, Chairman Heppner. Can you hear me now?

**Chairman Heppner**

Yep.

**Commissioner Dittus**

Okay, I was having some issues with Zoom. I am ...

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you for making yourself available

**Commissioner Dittus**

I would just say on the subject of the office. We do go every Wednesday. So if any members of this committee are interested in meeting us it is at nine o'clock in the morning, but happy to have people come and see the progress. It is amazing from week to week how much they are getting done. So we are very excited, we're starting to plot out what different areas will serve to give us better functionality.

There's obviously a lot of changes that have been ongoing, and this year is no exception with counting absentee ballots before election day. So we are, knowing that it's giving us a lot of ability to plan out. So we're both really looking forward to have going into the new space, hopefully sooner than later. But supply chains have been sort of delaying things as we go.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. And again, thank you both Commissioner Quigley and Commissioner Dittus for making yourself available. Does anyone have any questions?

**Legislator Gavaris**

I make a motion to postpone Resolution 14

**Legislator Roberts**

Second.

**Chairman Heppner**

All in favor?

**Committee Members**

Aye.

**Chairman Heppner**

Alright, so next, I'm going to ask if the committee the committee is okay, we're gonna move up the late Resolution so Dr. Smith and the team can speak on that.

**Legislator Ronk**

I'll move it for discussion.

**Legislator Gavaris**

Second

**Chairman Heppner**

second by Legislator Ronk, second by a Legislator, moved by Legislator Ronk, second by Legislator Gavaris. Anyone have anything to speak on?

**Deputy Executive Contreras**

Um, I would like to just start and then I'll hand it over to Haley to do the presentation.

**Chairman Heppner**

Yep. Please go ahead.

**Deputy Executive Contreras**

Thank you. So Um, hi, everyone. My name is Johanna Contreras. I'm a deputy county executive for Health and Human Services. We also have Dr. Smith here who's our health commissioner and Haley Carr, who's a representative from the medical examiner's office. She has a really short five minute presentation about the office. But I just wanted to give a quick overview of our Resolution. In short, we're proposing to hire a new full time death scene investigator, this would be the second full time person in the office. The reason that we put this forth as a late Resolution is that we're facing an urgent coverage issue for death scene investigations. So basically, the medical, our chief medical examiner retired in the beginning of January, unexpectedly. And he had been taking on the bulk of death scene investigation coverage, ranging from 60 hours a week to 90 hours a week, depending on the week. And we've been trying to we need to backfill that position. But we haven't had any interest with those coverage expectations. And in the meantime, we're starting to get complaints that we're not getting to the death scenes in a timely manner. So that's why we're proposing to create this full time position that's not an MD, it's just to take on some of that coverage in a more cost effective way. So I'm going to turn it over to Haley really quickly to do the presentation and then we can take any questions that you all have

**Haley Carr**

Could the host please give me screen sharing capabilities please.

**Chairman Heppner**

Clerk Mahler should be doing that right now.

**Jay Mahler**

You're good on my end

**Haley Carr**

okay. All right. Can everyone see my screen now?

**Legislator Levine**

Yes.

**Haley Carr**

All right. So my name is Hayley Carr. I am the Deputy Medical Examiner and the medical legal death investigator for the county. I am here on behalf of our office, as Miss Contreras already said, to hopefully promote the addiotn of one new position to our team. Our office is a 24/7 365 day operation. We are mandated by both state and county law. We are a science based, independent investigative agency and our primary purpose is to establish how and why someone has died.

This is how our office is currently structured. All of our morgue facilities and more staff are through a contracted agency. So I'm primarily going to be focused on the left branch here which is under the Department of Health. This is our administrative and investigative branches. The Department of Health is of course overseen by Dr. Smith, the commissioner, and then we have the medical examiner which up until last month was Dr. Heller who is now retired and his two deputies, Dr. Sutt and Dr. Grovenburg who are part time employees, and the three of them rotated nights, weekends and holiday coverage. And then myself the full time death investigator, I'm in charge for nine to five business day operations as well as all of the administrative tasks that come up during the day and any death calls that happened during that time.

Every year, we bring in somewhere between 100-200 cases for autopsy. This number is very limited by the amount of resources that we have, we currently only have 14 positions open to hold a decedent at any given time, which means that we have about six positions over at Health Alliance and then another few over in Mary's Avenue campus. So our morgue space is quite limited. And because we share that space with the inpatient that's at the hospital, we receive constant pressure from them to be continually moving our cases through to make space for more decedents. Now, that being said, our morgue staff have other obligations. So we're quite limited on what days we can actually conduct autopsies. We currently do them three days a week, given the staff that we currently have. But at the same time, we receive hundreds of referrals every single year, it's much higher than this 199 cases we, you see here for 2021. But unfortunately, due to the current resources we have, we're only able to bring in about 200 of them. But our office is handling hundreds of calls every year.

When we receive a death notification, this is the series of steps that we typically take to conduct that scene investigation start to finish. Unfortunately, due to the lack of staff, there are some tasks, especially towards the end of a case, or if we decide to release a case from our jurisdiction that ultimately fall on the police departments that are Co, Co working on these cases with us. So when we can't complete these tasks, it falls to them. And this puts an undue burden on the police force, and can create friction between our agencies.

Following the scene investigation, these are all of the things that I do during business hours on every single case that comes through this office. The tests that I have highlighted in red are the ones that are probably the most time consuming. Each one of these cases can take up at least half a day, if not more of my time. And for example, on Monday, we had five cases. So not only was I dealing with all of this for each one of those cases, but I'm also handling all the other administrative tasks during the day and also taking additional death calls. And a lot of these tasks can only be performed during business hours, since a lot of them involve calling facilities and families.

So in addition to this, as I mentioned previously, I'm also responsible for all the administrative duties for the office. This includes phone calls, I get calls all day long from many, many people. And it's never consistent about the calls I'm going to get. These very easily take up hours of my time, as well as requests for autopsy reports, data entry, any thing we want to do for the office usually falls on me. And then anything else that comes in that's case specific.

There are tons of other tasks I'd love to be able to do that I think would be beneficial for the county, I've only had time in to be involved in just a handful of these. Specifically the HEAL study, working with the State Department and Ellenville regional on opioid fatality prevention. This has been my primary focus over the past year, but there are many, many other places where our office could be contributing. And we simply don't have the resources at this time to do that. Our office gives answers to families on what's usually the worst day of their lives. And we provide, provide very important statistical data that can impact legislation and how resources are allocated. I've been reached out to by the HEAL study many times asking questions about where do we put in a NaloxBoxes should we have NaloxBoxes? What about Narcan kits? Where are they going to be the most useful and the most cost effective. We also provide scientific evidence to support every case in this county that ultimately goes to trial, whether that's civil or criminal. So as we mentioned at the beginning, here, we are looking to add one additional staff member to our team, just to replace the staff member who retired in January. And I do hope you guys will all consider this proposal and I thank you so much for your time and letting me come speak to you tonight. Thank you so much.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. Anyone else on your team? Dr. Smith, I don't know if you had more to the presentation or should we take questions from the committee members?

**Dr. Smith**

That's your choice. You know, Chairman Heppner all that I could say is that because of the late notice that we got with respect to the chief MEs retirement, effective January 2, this has created the need to fill this position on a more urgent basis, as opposed to going through the budget cycle on a perhaps more regular basis. You know, the I think the thing that Haley did a very comprehensive review. But I think the thing to underscore is that, you know, the significant need to cover 24/7 365 days a week, is one of the most pressing needs in this particular situation. The county cannot be without a medical examiner, to respond to calls at any time of the day or night, or weekday or weekend. And this is probably the one of the most important factors right now in our need to hopefully have some decision regarding whether or not adding this particular position would be acceptable to the Legislature on your late Resolution. Again, we apologize for the late Resolution. But again, the circumstance that brought us here, the retirement January, led to us having to make this plea. Thank you.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you, Commissioner Smith. And thank you, Haley, and thank you, Deputy Executive Contreras. I know you've been making the rounds trying to get information out on this. To that, I believe Leader Ronk, do you have your hand up?

**Legislator Ronk**

Yeah, thank you. Sorry, I had jump on and off. I've got a little disabled ambulance problem right now. But we're working on it. Um, so I just I want to make the committee aware. I'm not going to belabor the point. You know, I obviously feel differently about this than a lot of folks do. You know, this isn't a question of whether or not you know, we need to hire a new chief medical examiner, I believe that we need to hire a new chief to replace Dr. Heller whether we hire this additional position or not, is that correct? Dr. Smith.

**Dr. Smith**

Legislator Ronk at the present time, the one of the deputy MEs has stepped into as Acting Chief ME position. That's Dr. Stutt. So the finalization of the decision as to Chief ME moving forward would have to be determined, but you're correct. In that you noted, but right now that there is someone least managing the acting ME roll. Yeah.

**Legislator Ronk**

Yeah, but my point is there. I feel as if in you know, Haley's presentation, it sounded as if it could be interpreted that we were not going to have to hire a new chief medical examiner, or another deputy chief, you know, that, that this would be not an additional position. And this is where, regardless of how you look at it, this is an additional \$71,000 Plus benefits is that accurate?

**Dr. Smith**

Who are you addressing Legislator Ronk myself or Johanna?

**Legislator Ronk**

I, dealers choice.

**Deputy Executive Contreras**

Yes, the answer is the answer is yes. Yes.

**Legislator Ronk**

Okay. Um, you know, I, you know, regardless if you want me, you know, Johanna, do you want me to address you with all the questions and you can pass them on to Dr. Smith, it really doesn't matter to me.

**Deputy Executive Contreras**

Sure, that's fine.

**Legislator Ronk**

Okay, so I can tell the committee that I reached out to the assistant county executive in Dutchess County, and Dutchess County just brought their services in house they used to contract out for it, I believe that they use a 1099 but they brought them in house and they have two death scene investigators at \$47,000 apiece. That's that's what they do. And now we're going to have multiple, you know, \$70,000 deputy medical examiner's doing that work. You know, I understand how, you know, on call time works. It sounds as if to me, we're trying to farm out beyond call time to somebody other than the chief medical examiner to make it easier to hire a chief medical examiner because the Chief Medical Examiner's candidates are not interested in doing this work, you know, and having to be on call is that relatively accurate?

**Deputy Executive Contreras**

Yeah, so the, the the interest that we've gotten so far in the medical examiner position is only in the administrative aspects of the role for the for the salary that it's at. And we definitely agree with you and I think I, we said this in the Health and Human Services Committee as well, that there will need to be a broader conversation about the Office of the medical examiner and our staffing model. What salaries were paying, you know, offering, especially for the chief medical examiner and and the other positions, because it's possible that that things need to be adjusted. In general, because the coverage is just is not working. So, um, yes, but I think that your point about the salaries being lower for the deputy medical legal investigators at in Dutchess County is well taken, I but I think that their salary for their chief medical examiner is much higher, and they also have a couple of other as far as we understand it, um, other doctors that are on their staff full time that are paid much higher as well. So our overall structure is just not not comparable right now. Um, so that's what I would.

**Legislator Ronk**

Yeah, I understand, um, you know, what I'll tell you is that, you know, I think the time to look at the overall structure is before we hire a new staff member who's fully benefited and, you know, at a relatively high salary, I'm gonna be a no at this time. I'm sure that the rest of the committee, you know, it seems like I'm the I'm the one who's got the real problem with this. I apologize. I have to I have to jump off and fix my ambulance. But I will. I'll speak to y'all soon. Thank you.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you Leader Ronk. Anyone else? Haley, was that your hand?

**Haley Carr**

Yes, I just wanted to jump in real quick just just to discuss the Dutchess medical examiner layout since I am familiar with them. Just as a point of clarification. The Dutchess County ME has been a long time in the making. I am very familiar with their staff over there. They're excellent folks. In fact, they're one of their medical examiner's comes and does work for us when Dr. Catenis is unavailable, just to kind of give a very brief overview of the way their office is situated. They have two pathologists performing autopsies on a daily basis, as well as a morgue attendant, and they have the the two death investigators who yes do receive the salary Legislator Ronk mentioned. They also have a chief investigator Bob Brady, he makes my understanding is somewhere around \$149,000 a year, which is again very long time in the in the making. His role is very, very similar to mine. And he has faced a lot of the same struggles that I have since coming into this position. He also has an administrative person on his team as well. And they also have a team of interns that come in so they do receive a lot more help than we have here in Ulster. I just wanted to touch on that.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. So on the Resolution, Resolution number 95. I'll call the vote. All in favor.

**Committee Members**

Aye.

**Legislator Gavaris**

Yes, for tonight. But I, Johanna and I are still gonna have the, we'll have follow up conversations. But I will vote yes for tonight.

**Chairman Heppner**

So all in favor, Aye.

**Committee Members**

Aye.

**Chairman Heppner**

Opposed?

**Legislator Roberts**

No.

**Chairman Heppner**

Resolution passes. Moving on now to Resolution number 57. Establishing capital project number 621 Voting System replacement board of elections

**Legislator Gavaris**

motion.

**Chairman Heppner**

Do I have a second?

**Legislator Roberts**

I'll second it

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. Any comments? With that call the question All in favor?

**Committee Members**

Aye.

**Chairman Heppner**

Opposed? Seeing none passes, unanimously. Moving on to Resolution number eight, proclaiming the 26th of November as Sojourner Truth day

**Legislator Gavaris**

I'll move it.

**Legislator Levine**

I'll second it

**Chairman Heppner**

Any comments, questions? On the Resolution?

**Legislator Roberts**

Jonathan?

**Chairman Heppner**

Yep, please go ahead Legislator Roberts

**Legislator Roberts**

if the sponsor doesn't mind, I'd like to add my name to it too.

**Chairman Heppner**

Yep, Clerk Mahler if you can make a note for that. All in favor?

**Committee Members**

Aye.

**Chairman Heppner**

Moving on Resolution number nine appointing Chairwoman Tracey Bartels as the Ulster County Legislatures member to the serve on the county jury board

**Legislator Gavaris**

moved.

**Legislator Roberts**

Second.

**Chairman Heppner**

On the Resolution

**Committee Members**

Aye

**Chairman Heppner**

Opposed? Seeing none passes unanimously. Resolution number 16. This is setting a public hearing on the proposed local law number two, this is the ethics law. Can I get a motion to move for discussion?

**Legislator Gavaris**

So moved.

**Legislator Roberts**

Second Jonathan.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. So I'm going to ask that the committee postpone this. But also with the commitment that working with Clerk Mahler will set up a time later this month after session to have a special meeting to kind of finalize this and get this done and proposed to our colleagues in the Legislature.

**Legislator Gavaris**

Motion to postpone

**Chairman Heppner**

Before we do that. I also believe we have counsel Ragucci on if he wants to give an update.

**Legislative Counsel Ragucci**

Sure, I'm happy to can you hear me Okay?

**Chairman Heppner**

Yep, thank you.

**Legislative Counsel Ragucci**

Okay, very good. So, as I'm sure the committee is aware, we've had a subcommittee meet and discuss the proposed local law for purposes of going through it meticulously to perhaps come up with some improved language in certain sections that we've flagged throughout the course of the laws existence, minority counsel, Pascale, and I've worked together to come up with additional language. And, in fact, I just received before our meeting today, the most recent draft that we've worked on collaboratively. And I would expect that we would be able to come to a conclusion to the process and have a fully revised local law by the end of our next meeting.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you, Deputy Executive Rider.

**Deputy Executive Rider**

Can I just ask that maybe the county attorney and counsel Ragucci and Gordon get together, I'd be happy to sit in, I just still have concern regarding the nomination and appointment process and just would like to hear legislative counsel's I mean, Section 808 of General Municipal Law article 18 specifically says that, in a county executive form of government, the county executive appoints all board members, and they're confirmed by the Legislature. So I think that for us on the executive's office is going to be the major sticking point. And if we could come to some kind of resolve before the next meeting, I think, you know, you could have potential agreement, as

long as we're just working, you know, moving forward. And be happy to, you know, sit down and have you Jonathan, or whoever in that meeting as well. I just, you know, we're at an impasse, there

**Legislative Counsel Ragucci**

Leader Heppner may I respond?

**Chairman Heppner**

Yeah, please go ahead.

**Legislative Counsel Ragucci**

Okay, that Deputy Rider, thank you for the comments. And with the consent of the Chair, I'd be happy to forward to you the most recent draft that we've been working on, so you can see the language and we can all be operating off the same document. And of course, with the inclusion of minority counsel, of course, including Dave Gordon and myself, I'd be happy to meet with you and and go through it with of course, the county attorney.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. So, Jay, Jay, and I will work together to reach out to all of you to coordinate a meeting. And we'll respond back to that. So on that Legislator Gavaris, do you make the motion to postpone?

**Legislator Gavaris**

So moved

**Chairman Heppner**

Do I have a second?

**Legislator Levine**

Second.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you all in favor the postponement?

**Committee Members**

Aye

**Chairman Heppner**

Postponed unanimously. So now move on to Resolution number 17. Setting a public hearing for proposed local law number three, a local law amending local law number six 2021 a local law requiring the payment of a living wage to employees of contractors and subcontractors that provides services in Ulster County in relation to living wage for Social and Human Services to be held on Tuesday, March 15 2022 at 7:20pm. Can I have a motion for discussion?

**Legislator Gavaris**

Moved for discussion

**Chairman Heppner**

Second?

**Legislator Levine**

Second

**Chairman Heppner**

thank you. Any discussion? [inaudible] Legislator Roberts then Legislator Gavaris. You're on mute Legislator Roberts.

**Legislator Roberts**

Thank you for your time, sir. I know traditionally, we're supposed to speak on the validity of this go into a public hearing and not about the law itself. But I do have a couple of questions. We're gonna raise the living wage from 15 to 20. Has anybody talked to the contractors or subcontractors and see what that is going to do to their budget? What is this, how is this gonna affect the county budget who has to pay more? And how did he come up with the \$20 Number? I mean, just today, the inflation numbers came out, and it was 7.5%, the highest in four years, does this \$20 an hour reflect that status?

**Chairman Heppner**

Is that a direct question to, so we do have, we do have a sponsor

**Legislator Roberts**

I was, a deputy county executive rider's here, maybe he knows some of the answers to that?

**Chairman Heppner**

So he's not the sponsor of the

**Deputy Executive Rider**

Yeah, I don't.

**Chairman Heppner**

But Legislator Petit, I see you just joined us. Welcome.

**Legislator Petit**

I did. Thank you.

**Chairman Heppner**

Did you get and of those questions from Legislator Roberts?

**Legislator Petit**

Yeah. So Legislator Roberts the, the living wage in Ulster County would be closer to 26 an hour for, you know, somebody to be able to afford to live and work here. It was increased 25%. To make it you know, to to bring it up closer to what our employees are getting paid and to the cost of living here. We are it has been postponed in committee. We are looking at some of the impacts that some of our contractors have said it's causing in their budgets. We have not gotten that information, we asked for it. So in this committee as well, we'd be willing to postpone. But for instance, we have a family contract where it was raised 150,000. And they're saying 60,000 of that was due to the \$15 increase. And that's only \$2 an hour. It's sad that we contract out and we expect people with bachelor's degrees to work for minimum wage of 13.20. It's not sustainable within Ulster County. But we will have those numbers for you with the other sponsor is, Joe Maloney, and we'll get those for you at the next meeting.

**Legislator Roberts**

Thank you very much.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you, Legislator Petit. Legislator Gavaris?

**Legislator Gavaris**

I was actually going to say the same thing because this came up in ways means and I'm also gonna make the motion to postpone it as well with there's still information that was requested by Ways and Means as well, which will not be there for the meeting next week. It doesn't sound like so

**Chairman Heppner**

Do I have a second?

**Legislator Roberts**

I'll second that

**Chairman Heppner**

On the postponement?

**Committee Members**

Aye

**Chairman Heppner**

So the postponement passes unanimously. Moving on to

**Legislator Roberts**

Chairman Heppner?

**Chairman Heppner**

yep.

**Legislator Roberts**

I am not sure if Cheryl Snyder has her hand up wants to speak.

**Chairman Heppner**

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't see that. Miss Schneider, would you like to speak?

**Cheryl Schneider**

Hi, thank you. This has come up now the third meeting, it would be really, really helpful if people were specific as to what data they're looking for. So when we talk about how many people impacted are we talking about FTEs, are we talking about the actual number of people who fill those FTE positions. Can we work with a deputy executive Rider to come up with those numbers? Is that a possibility? I mean it I would love to hear what Legislators say the actual metrics are because it makes it a lot easier to come up with those metrics. Thank you.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. Legislator Gavaris

**Legislator Gavaris**

I think the issue is that we saw contracts come back to us last year after we raised to the 15. And those numbers were dramatically higher than the previous contracts. Now, there's some discrepancy as to whether or not those were impacted because of this the salary increase, or it was increased because of other reasons. There's different versions going around. So that's why, I know in ways and means that was one of the questions that came up is, is this truly these? I mean, some of these contracts doubled in costs after the increase, is it a result of the \$2 an hour? Or is it a result of other factors, but it just happened to be coincidentally at the same time, that's the information that was requested. And still, and that's hopefully what we will be able to get.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. Deputy Executive Rider

**Deputy Executive Rider**

I just I will say that today, we got a request from legislative staff, Natalie Kelder, on the contracts that would be affected by this local law. In the first run, I have contract management, just doing a quick report. It looks like there's over 300 contracts that fit under the broad category of social services, and human services contracts. That's over seven departments and over 300 contracts. So that's where we're looking, it's going to take some time for us to get that information. And then legislative, you know, financial analysis, we'll do the actual analysis on what the cost will be. We're providing the contracts that will be effected.

**Chairman Heppner**

Thank you. Seeing no other hands, we can move on to Resolution number 24, confirming the reappointment of a member to the Ulster County Board of Ethics. I believe that this is Dr. Gerry Benjamin. Can I have a motion?

**Legislator Gavaris**

motion

**Chairman Heppner**

second?

**Legislator Levine**

Second

**Chairman Heppner**

on the Resolution, aye.

**Committee Members**

Aye.

**Chairman Heppner**

Opposed?

**Legislator Roberts**

I'm a no

**Chairman Heppner**

That passes three to one. And then so that concludes our agenda as for now. Just for folks to recognize Resolution number 15, that was postponed in Energy Environment and Sustainability. This is lo, Resolution number 15. Please review. If you have any questions, please reach out to the sponsors. Otherwise, open it up to any old business a new business at this point. Legislator Gavaris

**Legislator Gavaris**

Motion to adjourn.

**Legislator Roberts**

I'll second that.

**Chairman Heppner**

All right. Thank you. So thank you for a good meeting and have a great night.

**Legislator Roberts**

Thank you.

**Deputy Executive Rider**

Have a good night, everybody.

**Legislator Levine**

Thank you.