

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

DAVID B. DONALDSON, Chairman
TRACEY A. BARTELS, Vice Chairwoman
JONATHAN R. HEPPNER, Majority Leader
KENNETH J. RONK, JR., Minority Leader
VICTORIA A. FABELLA, Clerk



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MINUTES

NOVEMBER 8, 2021

PUBLIC HEARING

6:00 PM

Powered by Zoom. Meeting ID: 840 2730 8581, And By Telephone (646) 558-8656

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIR: 6:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG AND MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION:

Led by Legislator Litts.

ROLL CALL:

Present: 18

Absent: 5 (Legislators Fabiano, Heppner, Maio,
Parete, Petit)

Note: Legislator Parete arrived at 6:04 PM.

6:00 PM - CALL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING BY CLERK: Tonight's Public Hearing is on the Proposed 2022 Ulster County Budget and the Proposed 2022 – 2027 Capital Program

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were two speakers signed up for public comment. (See transcript)

1. Janet Knott
2. Michael Baden, Supervisor Town of Rochester

Motion by Legislator Litts, second by Legislator Bruno to adjourn the public hearing. All in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING ADJOURNED: 6:12 PM

MINUTES

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NOVEMBER 8, 2021

NEXT MEETING:

The second Public Hearing on the Proposed 2022 Ulster County Budget and the Proposed 2022 – 2027 Capital Program is scheduled for:

- Tomorrow, Tuesday, November 9, 2021 – Powered by Zoom Meeting, Time 6:00 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Ulster County Legislature will be held next **Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 7:00 PM.** Further Meeting details shall be forthcoming.

Ulster County Legislature
2021 Budget Public Hearing

Meeting Transcript
November 8, 2021

Chairman Donaldson

All right. We'll call the meeting to order. Please all rise for the pledge and I will ask Legislator Litts to lead the pledge.

Legislator Litts

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Chairman Donaldson

Please be seated. Madam Clerk roll call please.

Clerk Fabella

Archer.

Legislator Archer

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Bartels.

Legislator Bartels

Present.

Clerk Fabella

Bruno.

Legislator Bruno

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Cahill.

Legislator Cahill

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Corcoran.

Legislator Corcoran

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Criswell.

Legislator Criswell

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Delaune.

Legislator Delaune

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Donaldson.

Chairman Donaldson

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Fabiano.

Clerk Fabella

Gavaris.

Legislator Gavaris

Present.

Clerk Fabella

Greene.

Legislator Greene

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Haynes.

Legislator Litts

You put her up her hand up. She's here.

Legislator Bruno

She's muted.

Clerk Fabella

Okay.

Clerk Fabella

Heppner.

Clerk Fabella

Litts.

Legislator Litts

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Lopez.

Legislator Lopez

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Maio.

Clerk Fabella

Parete.

Clerk Fabella

Petit.

Clerk Fabella

Okay.

Clerk Fabella

Roberts.

Legislator Roberts

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Ronk.

Legislator Ronk

Present.

Clerk Fabella

Uchitelle.

Legislator Uchitelle

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Walter.

Legislator Walter

Here.

Clerk Fabella

And Wawro.

Legislator Wawro

Here.

Clerk Fabella

18 present five absent.

Clerk Fabella

Tonight's public hearing is on the Proposed 2022 Ulster County Budget and 2022 to 2027 Ulster County Capital Program. We only have one speaker signed up. Go ahead, Jay.

Jay Mahler

Madam Clerk, I'm sorry. I have someone in the waiting room. I was begging for a pause but I was begging on mute. So, if I could just let one person in real quick for you.

Clerk Fabella

Absolutely.

Jay Mahler

Good evening caller from (914) 388-5083. Would you be offering public comment this evening?

Mike Baden

I am.

Jay Mahler

Could we have your name for the record?

Mike Baden

Sure. It's Mike Baden Supervisor Town of Rochester.

Jay Mahler

Oh great. Thank you. Mr. Baden. The Clerk will call on you as soon as the time comes.

Mike Baden

Okay, thank you very much.

Chairman Donaldson

So, let's open up the public comment.

Jay Mahler

I have one more if you don't mind. I know - I have another person in a waiting room.

Chairman Donaldson

Can't the people start?

Legislator Ronk

Jay's gonna do her thing with the caller, Dave.

Jay Mahler

Good evening, Diane, who just joined us will you be offering public comment this evening? Diane, you're on mute and off camera.

Diane

No, thank you.

Jay Mahler

Okay, thank you. Go ahead, Madam Clerk thank you.

Clerk Fabella

Chairman Donaldson how much time are you going to allow each speaker?

Chairman Donaldson

Well, there's only a couple of signed up so than rather than give them a time limit just tell them they to get to their point.

Clerk Fabella

Okay, our first speaker tonight is Janet Knott. Remember to hit star six to unmute. Janet, if you can hit star six and unmute.

Janet Knott

Okay can you hear me?

Chairman Donaldson

Yes.

Janet Knott

Thank you, Chairman Donaldson, for listening to me and all the legislators. My name is Janet Knot I'm a licensed clinical social worker. I was employed by the Ulster County Department of Mental Health for 30 plus years before I retired in December of last year.

As a mental health professional and Clinical Risk Manager. I'm elated to hear that Ulster County is planning to commit substantial amounts of money towards mental health and substance use services.

I was employed at the time the county privatize mental health and substance use services outpatient clinics beginning in 2011 and ending in 2013. As you may recall, the golden Hill nursing home was also privatized. At the same time.

I witnessed changes in the delivery of mental health services. When the OMH state comprehensive outpatient program subsidies also known as cops gradually went away. All outpatient clinics that bill became revenue driven.

The changes brought a significant increase to clinician's caseload, increasing productivity standards. And then there was a greater demand for billable services only, leaving no time for other significant, important nonbillable activities to occur.

As a result, mental health services in this county have become extremely watered down.

The following licensed mental health clinics that operate in Ulster County or the ACC team, run by the Mental Health Association, the pros clinic at Gateway industries, Family Services Incorporated which receives or to receive a significant county contribution. The Institute for Family Health they run both article 28 and 31. Clinics, the Pinegrove clinic which is state operated, and then the children's clinics Aster clinic for children, and coordinated Children's Services at DSS However, they do not bill for services.

All the clinics who currently bill for services are not able to recruit and maintain qualified staff and are struggling.

I believe our clinic operating costs back in 2013 was around \$5.5 million.

As you may know or not, there is no state aid for outpatient licensed mental health clinics in New York state. So, although I am excited to learn about the monies to be spent for mental health and substance use services, I see that most of the money is to come from the American rescue plan. I question how these services will continue to operate once this money is spent.

How will these new services continue to operate and be sustained long term? It would be extremely devastating to spend large sums of money of one time money on mental health and substance use services only to see them to be dismantled, when there are no ongoing funding streams to maintain them.

I hope that you will consider what I've said look into it as you

look into the budget and passing of the budget. And I totally appreciate your time to speak to you tonight. Thank you so much.

Chairman Donaldson

Thank you.

Clerk Fabella

The next speaker is supervisor Mike Baden.

Mike Baden

Good evening, Chairman Donaldson and members of the legislature. I'm speaking tonight in support of capital project plan number 602. This is to utilize the American Rescue Plan funding for the O & W rail trail. This is a project that is very important to the town of Rochester. It will allow recreational use-continued recreational use of a very well utilized trail right now. So, I hope you will consider keeping that in the capital project plan. Also, I'd like to speak on behalf of the broadband plan. I apologize I don't have the number in front of me. Broadband to some communities is well served but in places rural areas like Rochester, we have only about 70% coverage and the assistance of the county will help the municipalities not have to use all of their funding to try to solve these problems. And finally, I'd like to ask that the legislature consider in some small way funding can be allocated to study EMS in Ulster County. As many of you know, it is a bit of a hodgepodge of services and left to the municipalities to resolve with local either privatize or with local volunteers. And I think it's time that EMS needs to be considered similar to the way fire districts are considered. And I would hope that potentially there could be some added funding in the budget to at least initiate a study of how to better manage and better serve the residents. Thank you very much appreciate your time.

Chairman Donaldson

Thank you, Supervisor Baden.

Chairman Donaldson

We have anyone else signed up.

Clerk Fabella

There is no one else signed up.

Chairman Donaldson

Is anyone else listening in other than us?

Clerk Fabella

There are. There are several people listening in other than us.

Chairman Donaldson

Alright, any of the people that are listening in wish to speak?

Chairman Donaldson

Alright, before I adjourn, I just want to make sure that people know that the next meeting of the on the proposed budget, the next one will be tomorrow, Tuesday, November 9th, and it's also powered by zoom at six o'clock. And then the next regular meeting of the Legislature will be held Tuesday, November 16th at 7pm.

Legislator Litts

Mr. Chairman, I'll make a motion for adjournment.

Legislator Bruno

I'll second that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Donaldson

Alrighty made and seconded. All those in favor.

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Chairman Donaldson

None. We are adjourned.

Legislator Litts

Be safe - stay healthy.