

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 9, 2021

PUBLIC HEARING

6:00 PM

Powered by Zoom. Meeting ID: 854 9239 2298, And By Telephone (646) 558-8656

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY VICE CHAIR: 6:02 PM

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

Led by Legislator Delaune.

ROLL CALL:

Present: 17

Absent: 6 (Legislators Archer, Donaldson, Fabiano,
Heppner, Ronk, Wawro)

Note: Legislator Wawro arrived at 6:05 PM, and Legislator Archer arrived at 6:06 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 was one speaker signed up for public comment. (See transcript).

1. Mr. Hofstetter

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

PUBLIC HEARING ADJOURNED: 6:11 PM

NEXT MEETING:

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

- Wednesday, November 10, 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 9, 2021

Chairwoman Bartels

I'm going to call tonight's meeting to order can you start taping? Thank you. Okay, welcome. We're gonna call tonight's meeting to order. If you would stand for a Pledge of Allegiance, led by Legislator Delaune and remain standing for a moment of silence.

Legislator Delaune

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.

Chairwoman Bartels

Be seated thank you. Turn to the clerk for roll call.

Clerk Fabella

I'm just gonna give it one second well legislator Litts joins us. He's in the process.

Chairwoman Bartels

Thank you.

Clerk Fabella

Jay I'm gonna go ahead and do roll first before we let them in o

Clerk Fabella

Archer.

Clerk Fabella

Bartels.

Chairwoman 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.

Clerk Fabella

Fabiano.

Clerk Fabella

Gavaris.

Legislator Gavaris

Present.

Clerk Fabella

Greene.

Legislator Greene

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Haynes.

Legislator Haynes

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Litts.

Legislator Litts

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Lopez.

Legislator Lopez

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Maio.

Legislator Maio

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Parete.

Legislator Parete

Yes.

Clerk Fabella

Petit.

Legislator Petit

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Roberts.

Legislator Roberts

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Ronk.

Clerk Fabella

Uchitelle.

Legislator Abe Uchitelle

Here.

Clerk Fabella

Walter.

Legislator Walter

Here.

Clerk Fabella

And Wawro.

Clerk Fabella

There are 17 present and six absent.

Clerk Fabella

We're going to go ahead and let our wonderful deputy clerk let a couple more people in from the waiting room and you guys know the drill by now, you know how that works. So, go ahead, Jay.

Jay Mahler

Good evening, Katrina. I see you're still connecting to audio will you be offering public comment this evening? Standing by. Good evening Cheryl. Will you be offering public comment this evening?

Cheryl

No.

Jay Mahler

Okay, that's fine. Thank you.

Cheryl

Possibly tomorrow.

Jay Mahler

Okay.

Jay Mahler

It appears that Katrina is still connecting Madam Clerk and Madam Vice Chair and Legislator Archer is on her way in.

Katrina

Okay, so we'll just allow once Legislator Archer in we will open the public hearing. Just give me a moment if you could just let me know when she's - I see Legislator Archer and Legislator Wawro.

Thank you. Okay, so this is the tonight's public hearing is on the proposed 2022 Ulster County budget and proposed 2022 to 2027 capital program. How many speakers do we have signed up? Is that one definitively?

Jay Mahler

We have one definitive and Miss Katrina who joined us recently. Will you be offering public comment this evening?

Katrina

No, I was just listening in.

Jay Mahler

Very good. Thank you. Then you only have Mr. Hofstetter.

Katrina

Okay, so I will open the floor for Mr. Hofstetter to offer public comment. I believe you're gonna push star six to unmute. And the floor is yours Mr. Hofstetter. Mr. Hofstetter, if you're speaking, we can't hear you, you might want to try to star six one more time.

Mr. Hofstetter

Can you hear me?

Chairwoman Bartels

Yes.

Mr. Hofstetter

Okay, sorry about that.

Chairwoman Bartels

That's quite alright.

Mr. Hofstetter

No, I have several items, that I'd like to touch on. I think in the current environment with everything we've been going on, I think any increase in the county budget is way out of line. The retirement incentives that we used last year to not only handle COVID, but also to streamline costs. We're hiring not only back, we're not only filling all those positions, but we're adding additional positions. It's totally against what I believe the purpose of those cuts were. And it sounds like it's just adding a parachute for buddies of the system. The highlight the number one line of the budget is a 0% tax increase, but we're using almost \$5 million of taxpayer budgets from previous years. And that's also going to be carried over to every year in the future. That's not a 0% tax cost. I mean, that's \$5 million that's just being basically miss worded. I don't understand the math of how a 15.5% increase in revenue exactly matches our increase in expenditures that exactly 15.5%. There's math in that seeing in Saugerties school budget and everything else. It's just, you know, terrible that's even being proposed like that. In the middle of all this, you know, we have a housing crisis. We've - the published lists for the county foreclosures, about two weeks ago,

was 736 properties. These are people these are people that are losing homes and properties, because strictly because of tax. Kingston is another additional 370 properties. That's 1106 properties, just up for taxes, because the taxes are so high, and we're going to go and boost it up some more. On top of this whole county problem and issues, Saugerties wants to throw a 9% increase -9% Instead of going to 2% cap, they want a 9% increase in their tax. Saugerties schools who took the \$20 million work program and said, oh, we don't want to lose that tax income and create another \$20 million worth of work, so that the taxpayers, you know, can keep paying as much as we're asking. And now they're already calling for bankruptcy because they're like, well, we don't have enough money. We're five or \$10 million short in our budget now, even though we just got approval for another 15 or 20 million. People are losing their homes, businesses are being shut down. This isn't the time to be raising taxes is the time to be cutting taxes. We should take a direction from Dutchess County, and work things out a little bit better. I beg our legislators to turn down this budget and start to get real. Thank you.

Chairwoman Bartels

Thank you. Do we have anyone else who is listening who would like to speak and offer public comment?

Chairwoman Bartels

Okay, anyone else, I'll ask one more time. Is there anyone else listening that would like to offer public comment? Hearing none,

Legislator Litts

I will make a motion for adjournment.

Chairwoman Bartels

Thank you Legislator Litts. Is there a second? Legislator Bruno. All those in favor of adjournment?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Chairwoman Bartels

So moved. I do want to make the announcement that the next and final public hearing on the proposed 2022 Ulster County budget and proposed 2022 -2027 capital program is scheduled for tomorrow is that is scheduled the next meeting. The third and final public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday November 9, is scheduled for tomorrow at 6pm. Is that correct? Clerk? Thank you. Looking at a different document scheduled tomorrow at 6pm. Thank you all for your time and enjoy your evenings.

Legislator Litts

Take care be safe, stay healthy.