

# 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, 2020**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**6:00 PM**

**Powered by Zoom. Meeting ID: 993 6322 1082, And By Telephone (646) 558-8656**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN: 6:00 PM**

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

Led by Legislator John Gavaris.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: 20 Absent: 3 (Legislators Bruno, Fabiano & Roberts)

**6:00 PM - CALL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING BY CLERK:** Tonight's Public Hearing is on the Proposed 2021 Ulster County Budget and the Proposed 2021 – 2026 Capital Program

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

1. Karen Schaffel, Rosendale:
2. Steve Turk, Rocking Horse Ranch: Not in attendance when called upon.
3. Andrew Chafatelli, Rocking Horse Ranch: Declined to speak when called upon.
4. Ted Milar: Declined to speak when called upon.

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

**PUBLIC HEARING ADJOURNED: 6:13 PM**

AGENDA

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NOVEMBER 9, 2020

**NEXT MEETING:**

The second Public Hearing on the Proposed 2021 Ulster County Budget and the Proposed 2021 – 2026 Capital Program is scheduled for:

- Tomorrow, Tuesday, November 10, 2020 – Powered by Zoom Meeting, Time 6:00 PM

The next Regular Meeting of the Ulster County Legislature will be held next **Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM**. Further Meeting details shall be forthcoming.

Ulster County Legislature  
**2021 Budget Public Hearing**

Meeting Transcript  
November 9, 2020

**Chairman Donaldson**

All right, I'll call the public hearing to order.

**Chairman Donaldson**

Let's start with the pledge, if you could lead us with a pledge, Mr. Gavaris. Legislator, Gavaris, I mean.

**Legislative Members**

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**

Be seated.

**Clerk Fabella**

Roll call

**Clerk Fabella**

Archer.

**Legislator Archer**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Bartels.

**Legislator Bartels**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Bruno. (absent)

**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. (absent)

**Clerk Fabella**

Gavaris.

**Legislator Gavaris**

Present.

**Clerk Fabella**

Greene.

**Legislator Greene**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Haynes.

**Legislator Haynes**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Heppner.

**Legislator Heppner**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Litts.

**Legislator Litts**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Lopez.

**Legislator Lopez**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Maio.

**Legislator Maio**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Parete.

**Legislator Litts**

He's here but he doesn't... there he is.

**Clerk Fabella**

Petit.

**Legislator Petit**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

Roberts. (absent)

**Clerk Fabella**

Ronk.

**Legislator Ronk**

Present.

**Clerk Fabella**

Uchitelle.

**Legislator Uchitelle**

Present.

**Clerk Fabella**

Walter.

**Legislator Walter**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

And Wawro.

**Legislator Walter**

Here.

**Clerk Fabella**

There are twenty present and three absent.

**Clerk Fabella**

Tonight's public hearing is on the proposed 2021 Ulster County Budget and the proposed 2021 through 2026 Capital Program. For those guests that are joining us tonight, we'll be calling on you one by one to ask if you'd like to speak. And then the Chairman will give you two minutes to speak. And we'll go from there.

**Clerk Fabella**

Go ahead, Jay.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

We have a caller from 845-399-0992. If you could first give us your name. And I believe \*6 to unmute yourself.

**Karen Schaffel**

Hi, thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Karen Schaffel. I live in the Town of Rosendale. And I have worked in this community for many years in Children's Services. And I understand that there are budget cuts and there's lots of constraints. And I want to talk about how Ulster County has been a leader in serving our youth with significant family and or behavioral struggles. And that resulted in Ulster County's relatively low rate of youth placement. And this is in part because we believe that keeping children out of the juvenile justice system is an advantage to everyone.

**Karen Schaffel**

One thing I want to make everyone aware though there are many social reasons for doing this. It is also a financial gain. Each placement can run upward from \$80,000 a year. The ability to minimize placement, also defers the negative outcomes that you often demonstrate after being in placement as they transition to adulthood. And these involve often in becoming offenders and incarcerated. This would be an additional cost to the county.

**Karen Schaffel**

So, right now the county is proposing to cut programs that serve these youth, in particular, through the preventive [inaudible]. These programs such as YAP, Youth Advocate Program, and or Families Now or MST are programs that prevent these youth from going to residential placements. So, therefore would prevent the expenditure of those dollars.

**Karen Schaffel**

These programs are currently up for a 50% cut, which would drastically reduce the number of children and family served. There are no other programs in the county that provide the kind of wraparound services and additional 24/7 crisis hotlines that these programs provide.

**Karen Schaffel**

It is imperative that the Legislature considers the outcomes of cutting these programs that uniquely assist the youth that cannot be served. Is it important to remember that with the minimum investment in these programs, even if just such as three youths would be prevented from placement, that would save an overall \$240,000 a year, and probably more costs in the future.

**Karen Schaffel**

So, the three programs are MST, YAP, and Family Now.

**Karen Schaffel**

I'm sorry, I'm a little nervous. I'm not speaking that well. Does anybody have any questions?

**Legislator Petit**

Chair, are we allowed to ask questions at this point?

**Chairman Donaldson**

Normally, we are not, we don't ask questions. But I believe that, you know, we need to look into that. So, I think that would be a follow up. Not during the public comment.

**Karen Schaffel**

Okay, can I just, you know, I just want to say that I understand that there are budget cuts, and there's going to be budget cuts. And I'm not naive to that. But I just want to make aware that when you cut the programs that prevent these kinds of placements, that work with these families, you're preventing the crisis calls, the hospitalizations, the police having to come out to 911. Your preventing these kids going into a placement, or a system, that is more costly than the preventive programs. So, though it looks good initially that you're saving money, in the end, I think a lot more dollars will be spent.

**Chairman Donaldson**

Thank you.

**Karen Schaffel**

Thank you.

**Chairman Donaldson**

Next.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

Okay, we have a caller from 914-456-4886. If you could give us your name. And \*6 to unmute.



**Clerk Fabella**

You can give everybody a minute to unmute, Jay. And I like that you're telling them how. And what we can always do is circle back at the end because we don't have that many people.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

Okay. Then let's move on to... I saw Lin Sakai, did you drop off?

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

All right, we'll move right along to Andrew. I'm not going to try and pronounce your last name. Did you want to offer public comment tonight?

**Andrew Chafatelli**

Hey, I'm not going to offer comment tonight. But I'll be back on tomorrow.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

Great, thank you.

**Chairman Donaldson**

Thank you, Andrew.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

We have a had a caller from 845-750-1638. Are you still with us?

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

All right. And then we have someone logged in as Ted. Ted, would you like to offer public comment?

**Ted Millar**

No, no, no. This time.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

Would you like to give us your last name, Ted?

**Ted Millar**

It's Millar.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

Great. And then we had, and it looks like we lost, our Ulster County resident.

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

So, then I guess we'll ask again. Chairman Donaldson and Clerk Fabella if the caller from 914-456-4886 would like to \*6, unmute, and offer public comment?

**Deputy Clerk Mahler**

It looks like our caller left, but we have some insider information that that may have been Mr. Steve Turk. Steve Turner? And that's all I have for you, Madam Chair and Chairman Donaldson.

**Clerk Fabella**

I don't see anybody else signed up, Dave. Mr. Chairman, if you just want to ask if there's anyone else?

**Chairman Donaldson**

Yes. Is there anyone out there that wishes to speak that is on the line at this point? You would need to unmute yourself and speak up.

**Chairman Donaldson**

And hearing none, I'd entertain a motion to adjourn the public hearing.

**Legislator Litts**

So, moved.

**Chairman Donaldson**

Second?

**Legislator Ronk**

Second, by Ronk.

**Chairman Donaldson**

Alrighty, very good. The Public Hearing is adjourned.

**Chairman Donaldson**

And tomorrow's public hearing will be the same time and it's a Powered by Zoom meeting again. Attendance by phone is (646)558-8656. And the meeting number is 964 4188 4788. The public comment is by phone again (646)558-8656. And I'll do my best to get here on time. And have a nice evening.

**Legislator Litts**

Take care everybody, stay healthy and safe.

**Chairman Donaldson**

And have an ordinary day tomorrow.