

**Ways &
Means Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: September 14, 2021 – 5:00
LOCATION: Available via vimeo at
<https://livestream.com/accounts/1512750/events/1824203>
PRESIDING OFFICER: John Gavaris, Chairman
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Natalie Kelder, Amber Feaster
PRESENT: Legislators Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr. (arrived at 5:05 PM), Lynn Archer, Tracey Bartels, Heidi Haynes, Mary Beth Maio, John Parete, and Eve Walter; and Legislative Chairman David B. Donaldson (arrived at 5:02 PM)
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Jonathan Heppner, and Abe Uchitelle; Clerk of the Legislature, Victoria Fabella; Deputy County Executives Marc Rider, and John Milgrim; Comptroller March Gallagher; Commissioner of Human Rights Tyrone Wilson

- **Chairman Gavaris called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM**

Motion No. 1: To approve Resolution No. 238 – Adopting Revised Ulster County Fund Balance Policy, as presented

Resolution Summary: This Resolution adopts the County of Ulster Fund Balance Policy as amended and attached.

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Archer

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter

Voting Against: Legislator Ronk

No. of Votes in Favor: 7

No. of Votes Against: 1

Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 2: To approve Resolution No. 239 – Replenishing The Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund Of The County Of Ulster

Resolution Summary: This Resolution authorizes and directs the Commissioner of Finance to make a transfer totaling \$1,450,562.72 from unassigned fund balance to the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund.

Motion Made By: Legislator Archer

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: Legislator Archer confirmed the Reserve Fund is not eligible for reimbursement by the American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Archer, Bartels, and Walter

Voting Against: Legislators Ronk, Haynes, Maio, and Parete; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

No. of Votes in Favor: 4

No. of Votes Against: 5

Disposition: Defeated

Motion No. 3: To approve Resolution No. 377 – Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget – Removing The Position Of Communications Specialist

Resolution Summary: This Resolution eliminates the Communication Specialist position in the 2021 Ulster County Budget for a savings of \$50,502.00.

Motion Made By: Legislator Walter

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: Legislator Walter noted that discussions around this position took place during the most recent budget cycle while an individual was holding the position, which made the removal of the position uncomfortable. Further, Legislator Walter explained the history of multiple positions acting under different titles and performing tasks which varied from their adopted titles, emphasizing that she's uncomfortable with higher salaries for oversight positions while the bulk of work is done at the bottom level where jobs are being cut. Legislator Walter disclosed that the County Executive has provided reasons for why the position is important, that these arguments did not make her comfortable, but that she is giving them the benefit of the doubt and trusting that the position is necessary. Chairman Gavaris said he is not in favor of removing the position, but he does feel the salary is too high, noting the salary level of comparable positions in surrounding areas. Legislator Bartels said she supports the position staying but stressed a similar level of discomfort with the salary and the fact that the position was created outside of the budget cycle,

explaining she did not support the salary increase during the prior budget cycle and if the position is discussed at budget time, she will maintain this stance. Legislator Ronk stated he is not convinced that the position is vital to the County government. Recognizing he has historically taken a stance that conversations related to personnel matters should take place during the budget, Legislator Ronk stated he doesn't have an issue with having this conversation again during the budget cycle, disclosing that he encouraged the County Executive to not fill the position until conversations have completed as a budget amendment is likely. Legislator Archer said she wants to go on record supporting the position but not at the salary proposed so if there is a decision to hire someone between now and the budget cycle, she will still support a proposed salary decrease. Chairman Gavaris vocalized support to continue the conversation during the budget cycle, expressing discontent with reducing the salary of someone in the position but acknowledging that he will be looking to make the salary adjustment during the upcoming budget cycle.

Voting In Favor: None
Voting Against: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson
No. of Votes in Favor: 0
No. of Votes Against: 9
Disposition: Defeated

Motion No. 4: To approve Resolution No. 392 – Approving The Execution Of A Contract For \$600,000.00 Entered Into By The County – RUPCO, Inc. – Department Of Planning

Resolution Summary: This Resolution approves the execution of a contract with RUPCO, Inc. from October 1, 2021 through June 24, 2023 to administer the 2020 CDBG Homeownership program in the amount of \$600,000.00.

Motion Made By: Legislator Archer
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: Legislator Archer confirmed satisfaction with the language.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 9
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 5: To approve Resolution No. 397 – Authorizing Roof Rehabilitation At The Golden Hill Office Building And Restorative Justice Center, In And For The County Of Ulster, New York, At A Maximum Estimated Cost Of \$564,810.00, And Authorizing The Issuance Of \$564,810.00 Bonds Of Said County To Pay The Cost Thereof

Resolution Summary: This Resolution authorizes the issuance of \$564,810.00 Bonds for the establishment of Capital Project No. 605 – Golden Hill Office Building & Restorative Justice Roof Rehabilitation

Motion Made By: Legislator Archer

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Haynes

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 6: To approve Resolution No. 401 – Authorizing Slope Stabilization Of Salem Road, In And For The County Of Ulster, New York, At A Maximum Estimated Cost Of \$80,000.00, And Authorizing The Issuance Of \$80,000.00 Bonds Of Said County To Pay The Cost Thereof

Resolution Summary: This Resolution authorizes the issuance of \$80,000.00 Bonds for the establishment of Capital Project No. 606 – Salem Road Stabilization in the Town of Esopus which has experienced excessive settlement.

Motion Made By: Legislator Donaldson

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 7: To approve Resolution No. 404 – Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Early Voting Expansion Grant Program Agreement With The NYS Board Of Elections, Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget – Ulster County Board Of Elections

Resolution Summary: This Resolution authorizes the Chair of the Legislature to sign a grant agreement in the amount of \$25,490.00, and any amendments thereto, with the NYS Board of Elections to obtain Early Voting Expansion Grant Program funds to offset Early Voting expenses during the 2021 New York State Elections held on June 12, 2021 to June 20, 2021 and October 23, 2021 to October 31, 2021, and amends the 2021 Operating budget accordingly.

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Donaldson

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 8: To approve Resolution No. 405 – Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The NYS Board Of Elections For The Technology Innovation And Election Resource (TIER) Grant Program, Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget – Ulster County Board Of Elections

Resolution Summary: This Resolution authorizes the Chair of the Legislature to sign a grant agreement in the amount of \$196,073.00, and any amendments thereto, with the NYS Board of Elections to obtain Technology Innovation and Election Resource (TIER) Grant Program funds to offset expenses during the 2021 New York State elections held in June 2021/2022 and November 2021/2022, and amends the 2021 Operating Budget accordingly.

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Archer

Discussion: None

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 9: To discuss Resolution No. 429 – Establishing A Hotline To Provide Support And Referral Information For Individuals Who Believe They Have Been Discriminated Against In The Ulster County Criminal Justice System

Resolution Summary: This Resolution establishes a hotline for community members who believe they have been discriminated against in our criminal justice system to call to receive support and referral information as to the appropriate place and method to report the discriminatory treatment, and calls upon the Human Rights Commission to administer and promote the hotline, and that it be dedicated solely for this purpose.

Motion Made By: Legislator Walter
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Archer

Discussion: Legislator Walter introduced Commissioner of Human Rights Tyron Wilson, asking that he speak to some of the concerns vocalized at the last meeting of the Ways & Means Committee. Commissioner Wilson spoke about the Department’s approach to public outreach, the feedback they have received from individuals throughout the community, and the issue between how individuals can get in touch with the Department, feel safe and secure in making that contact, and how the proposed hotline would aid in the Department’s mission. Legislator Haynes asked if the Department was overwhelmed or anticipated being overwhelmed by the quantity of calls coming in. Legislator Walter noted that this proposal came with a position but that the position would be held until the upcoming fiscal year with the start of a new budget. Legislator Ronk vocalized concern about the term “hotline” as it relates to continuous monitoring and accessibility whereas the proposal contains set hours and may result in a return call with a wait period. Discussion pursued on the title of the phone line and a reasonable wait time for response.

Motion No. 10: To amend Resolution No. 429 – Establishing A Hotline To Provide Support And Referral Information For Individuals Who Believe They Have Been Discriminated Against In The Ulster County Criminal Justice System

Resolution Summary: This Resolution establishes a hotline for community members who believe they have been discriminated against in our criminal justice system to call to receive support and referral information as to the appropriate place and method to report the discriminatory treatment, and calls upon the Human Rights Commission to administer and promote the hotline, and that it be dedicated solely for this purpose.

Motion Made By: Legislator Walter
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

Discussion: Legislator Gavaris suggested the term “helpline” be used in place of “hotline”. Legislator Walter motioned to amend the Resolution to change the term “Hotline” to “Helpline”. Committee members vocalized support for this change.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Amended

Motion No. 11: To approve Resolution No. 429 – Establishing A ~~Hotline~~ Helpline To Provide Support And Referral Information For Individuals Who Believe They Have Been Discriminated Against In The Ulster County Criminal Justice System, as Amended

Resolution Summary: This Resolution establishes a ~~hotline~~ Helpline for community members who believe they have been discriminated against in our criminal justice system to call to receive support and referral information as to the appropriate place and method to report the discriminatory treatment, and calls upon the Human Rights Commission to administer and promote the hotline, and that it be dedicated solely for this purpose.

Motion Made By: Legislator Walter

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Archer

Discussion: Deputy County Executive Marc Rider stated concern that the position intended to manage the helpline may not be funded. Discussion pursued on the lead time before a position is created as the planned delay allows for assessment of the amount of help needed in actuality (Full Time versus Part Time). Legislator Bartels stated that she will be in support of the position when it is presented. Commissioner Wilson vocalized appreciation for the helpline, emphasizing that the need for it exists within the community and he is hopeful it will give the Department the resources it needs to make a necessary connection to the community.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Motion No. 12: To approve Resolution No. 432 – Amending The 2021 Ulster County Budget To Accept Public Health Emergency Preparedness Funding From New York State Department Of Health For The Epidemiology And Laboratory Capacity School Reopening Grant, And Creating Position – Department Of Health

Resolution Summary: This Resolution amends the 2021 Operating Budget to create a new position of “Grants Manager” at an annual salary of \$47,405.00, upon the receipt of notification from the New York State Department of Health of supplemental Public Health Emergency Preparedness funding, in the amount of \$4,100,381.00 to establish COVID-19 screening testing programs to support and maintain in-person learning, for the period July 1, 2021 through July 31, 2022 which will support and manage the program’s required activities.

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Walter

Discussion: Legislator Parete confirmed that this Resolution pertains to Federal funding within the schools.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Gavaris, Ronk, Archer, Bartels, Haynes, Maio, Parete, and Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 9

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Approved

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Chairman Gavaris asked the members if there was any other business, and hearing none;

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Bartels

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Walter

No. of Votes in Favor: 6

No. of Votes Against: 0

Time: 5:38 PM

Respectfully submitted: Amber Feaster

Minutes Approved: October 12, 2021

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Chairman Gavaris: I'd like to call the September 14th meeting of Ways & Means to order. Can you hear me? There we go. Okay. All right, resolutions.

Resolution 238: Adopting the revised Ulster County fund balance policy as presented before you. Can I have a motion?

Legislator Bartels: So moved.

Legislator Archer: Second.

Chairman Gavaris: Motion. Second, Legislator Archer. Discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? So carried.

239: Replenishing tax stabilization reserve fund of Ulster County. Can I have a motion?

Legislator Archer: So moved.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Archer. Second, Bartels. Discussion? Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer: Yeah, I just want to make sure everybody is aware that we have checked with the, CMA our budget, as well as Drescher and Malecki, our auditors and ARP money will not be able to used to replenish this. And so I think it's important to replenish, what was taken with an excess of \$11 million. Okay.

Chairman Gavaris: Any other discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? One, two, opposed. [inaudible] We're on 4, I'm sorry, 239, Tax Stabilization Fund.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: Tax Stabilization.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay, let's do this again. Resolution 239. All those in favor? Raise your hand.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: I don't know what it is.

Legislator Bartels: Tax Stabilization.

Chairman Gavaris: It's the refunding the tax Stabilization Fund.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: Oh I'm a no.

Chairman Gavaris: All right, so 4, yes. Looks like 3, no, 4 no. Sorry, 4, no. No 4 to 4. 4 to 4. Dave, Legislator Parete. Yeah, Dave, Legislator Parete, Haynes and Mary Beth.

Legislator Archer: Oh got it.

Chairman Gavaris: Yeah. All right. Resolution 239 Fails.

377: Removing position of Communication Specialist. Can I have a motion? Motion by Walter. Second, Bartels. Discussion, Legislator Walter.

Legislator Walter: Yeah, Thanks. So, you know, this, this came up, because of, and I want to say that I'm really glad this came up at this point. This, this, this position came up during budget time. And we tried to discuss it, but it's hard because there's a lot of things we're discussing during budget time. And, and it was complex. And it was challenging, because there was a person sitting in that position. And so it felt like, we didn't want it to be a personal attack on anybody. But it was a lot of concern, because it felt like a person was moved into, from one position to another position, and then given a salary increase, there were three other positions like this, and it felt very, very uncomfortable. It felt very sneaky. It felt sneaky, I'm not saying it was, I'm saying I felt that way. I also want to say that historically, I've had a big issue with what felt like bloat on an administrative level. I fought against my school board

Legislator Ronk: wait one minute for me to get here

Legislator Walter: administrator. I'm talking here, and and fought against that. I, I fought at SUNY [inaudible], salaries on the top level, I'm very uncomfortable with a lot of load on the upper level, and especially when the really important jobs are happening among the people at the bottom. And I'm going to stand by that I will always stand by being, wanting to be very thoughtful about how much money we're putting into an administration to an upper level when the jobs down at the bottom are being cut all the time. That said, in this particular situation, we offered the Executives Office the opportunity to explain to us why this position is important, and said that if you can make that compelling argument, we will hear you. I will say that in that time, I have heard many arguments about the relevance of this

position and the relevance of this salary. I have to say, it still makes me uncomfortable. It still puts me at dis-ease but I want to give the benefit of the doubt to the Executive's Office in that this is what they feel is important at this point. And so I'm not going to support this resolution that I put forward.

Chairman Gavaris: Thank you. Any other discussion? Okay. Seeing none, I'll just say that the myself, you know, I'm not in favor of removing the position, but I do feel it is over funded. I think the amount, last night, I did a quick search as we were talking at caucus and even in New York City, the average salary for a similar position with the same title was \$57,000, and change. And that's New York City, which usually has higher prices. There was, you know, I know, I've heard that Poughkeepsie is in the same ballpark as we are, again, that was nothing we take into account whether or not that includes longevity, or any other comps to it. So it's hard to know what that position really is, as a comparison. But I'm just not happy about the price.

Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Bartels: Thank you. I, I totally support the position staying but I have a similar, similar level of discomfort with the salary of the position. You know, I did not support the increase of the salary at budget time. That was a it, it was a position that did not prevail. But I believe it didn't prevail by one. And, and that was in part because that because there as Legislator Walter just said there was a, a person in the position. So it's very hard to talk about a significant, what would have been a significant cut to that position with the person in the position, which is why we find ourselves in this moment, with the position currently vacant. And we're not technically having a salary discussion, we're having a discussion about whether or not to remove the position, which I don't support. But I do have to say to be on the record, that I'm, I'm not comfortable with this salary. So headed into a budget cycle. If that's the place where we're going to have the discussion, I just want to be on record saying, I, I'm, I'm really not comfortable with the salary. We were today provided with comps, all of which are significantly lower than the, than the current salary closer to the original salary. And again, this was a position that was essentially created outside of the budget cycle. So it, it put the Legislature in a difficult position in terms of setting the salary and the salary range with a person in that position. So if the place that we have that discussion is the budget cycle, I'm on record, and I'm consistent with my previous view that the salary is too high for this position.

Chairman Gavaris: Any other discussion? Legislator.

Legislator Ronk: Thank you. So I've had conversations with the County Executive. You know, I have not been convinced that this position is vital the county government I understand that a lot of other people have. You know, I, I do recognize that I've said several times that, you know, and this is something that both Deputy County Executives have brought up, that I mentioned a couple of times, I think that these conversations should be happening during the budget. I, I, I respect that. And I, I do agree with that. I sponsored this, I co-sponsored this resolution because there being nobody in the position right now. It, it, it seems like a good, a good time to do so as Legislator Bartels and, and Walter have, I think, both mentioned. I, you know, I don't, don't have a problem with having this conversation again, during the budget, and talking about the necessity of this position. To make the assertion that there is no communication staff in, in the Executives Office that can handle these responsibilities, I, I don't agree with whatsoever. You know, and while I do agree that the Executive can manage his staff in any appropriate way he wants to. It doesn't mean that we have to give them unlimited staff, which which

with which to do that, and we, as the appropriating body have that, you know, have that decision to make coming forward in the 2022 budget process. It's entirely possible that I put an amendment in to remove this position again when there's somebody in it. Which was why I had as a conversation to had with the Executive encouraging him not to fill the position while we have the conversation. But that, I mean with that, I've got I've got no qualms about putting a resolution in to eliminate the position once there's somebody in it, because I believe that the Executive and his office have been put on record that, you know absent a, a due explanation about why this position is vital to county government I'm likely to put in a budget amendment but you know as Legislator Walter said, that even though I'm sponsoring the resolution, you know, given the fact that, you know, I should be consistent, even though my reasons for bringing this up now were I, I thought, you know, you're in I'd rather have the conversation when it's not filled. You know, I have no problem having it when it is filled, so I'll be having this conversation again come budget time.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Archer.

Legislator Archer: I want to go on record as well, as we're heading into a budget cycle that I support having the position. But I do not support the position at the current salary that's proposed. So if there's a decision to hire someone between now and the budget cycle, and the fact that we've had prior conversations, I have no problems, at this juncture, even though I had in the past, when somebody was in the job not wanting to take someone's salary away, I will have no problem, this go around taking the salary away, because that is, we've been all been very clear on this. There has been no compromise on it. And it's unfortunate, but you know, when the budget cycle comes around, I will definitely have an opinion about the salary for this position.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator

Legislator Ronk: I've, I've got something to say after the resolution is done.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay. Anybody else. And I will just echo again, I'm on the same, as you both are, I would prefer to do this during the budget cycle. But this is a position that is currently vacant. That was the reason why we are not following suit with what we normally practice. But I, as was just said, I normally I would hate to reduce or eliminate the salary of a person who's already in a position. But unfortunately, it looks like that's the hand that's being forced here. So when it comes to budget time, for this one position, I will go on record saying I will be looking to reduce the salary for that position. All right. Any other discussion? Alright. All those in favor? All those opposed? Motion fails. Thank you.

Legislator Ronk: Mr. Chairman?

Chairman Gavaris: Yes.

Legislator Ronk: I, I'm a little discouraged and I just feel like I need to voice my discouragement. I got here about four minutes late. And that's partly because I got stuck at the back door. And to come in after having the first two resolutions which I've been the main opponent of for the last what, eight months. I'm a little discouraged by that, that we didn't wait five minutes.

Chairman Gavaris: But Legislator Ronk, we, you were here. You came in and left. So we did start, you were here and then you walked out and left. So

Legislator Ronk: Four, four, four minutes Mr. Chairman. I, I will tell you right now, if that's going to be, if that's gonna be your statement, I will remember that, and I'll remember that for each and every one of you.

Chairman Gavaris: You didn't ask us to wait for you and you were here. You physically came in this room and then you walk back out.

Legislator Haynes: Not for 238, he wasn't.

Chairman Gavaris: He walked in.

Legislator Haynes: No he didn't, 239.

Legislator Ronk: It's, it's, it's fine. I wasn't here for either of them. I, I walked into the Legislative office, and I came back in maybe 45 seconds later and both resolutions had been done.

Legislator Archer: So if I may, we purposely postponed it because you weren't here last week. So you know, I'm, I'm sorry. I mean, because I did want you to be on record. I knew you had a position on this as it related to 238.

Legislator Ronk: It's, it's fine, and it's fine, I, I, I eagerly await the opportunity when somebody from your side of the aisle is late.

Legislator Archer: Which, I, I'm just saying we postponed it last week Ken, so that you would be here.

Legislator Ronk: It's fine.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Ronk: It's a joke, whatever.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Bartels: Well, given that Legislator Ronk's here now, can we open, reopen the discussion? Is that

Chairman Gavaris: Absolutely.

Legislator Bartels: allowable? I'm, I'm fine with that.

Legislator Maio: I'm fine with that.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay, well reopen discussion for

Legislator Ronk: I'm just gonna, I'm, I'm just I'm not going to bother. I'm just going to, you know, for the clerk's I'll lodge my vote as a no on both of them and then I'll just leave it at that.

Legislator Bartels: I'm more than happy to have whatever it is

Legislator Ronk: Its fine.

Legislator Bartels: and reconsider and have a discussion.

Legislator Ronk: Nope.

Legislator Bartels: I didn't know that, I didn't know that you were here. I didn't know whether or not you were coming. But I know that, I know that Chair Gavaris likes to start on time.

Legislator Ronk: Well, I mean, I, I, I you know that's, that's one person's opinion and the other person's opinion is I didn't care enough to be in the room. So it's, it's fine. It's perfectly fine.

Legislator Bartels: I'm happy to, to reconsider if you

Legislator Maio: Well I think we should talk about 239 since it's gonna change the vote of the resolution.

Chairman Gavaris: No, 239

Legislator Ronk: Both of those passed whether I'm here or not.

Chairman Gavaris: No they failed.

Clerk Fabella: ...defeated

[multiple speakers at once]

Legislator Ronk: It was defeated sorry. Neither one matters whether I was here or not.

Clerk Fabella: That is true.

Legislator Ronk: I could be back in Shawangunk.

Legislator Maio: Okay.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay 392: Approving the execution of contract for \$600,000 for RUPCO. Can I have a motion? Legislator Archer. Second, Bartels. Discussion? Want to just.

Legislator Archer: No, I think we we were satisfied with the understanding in the language, which was what held it up last week and so I have no problem.

Chairman Gavaris: Any other discussion. All right, all those in favor? Opposed? So carried.

397: Authorizing roof rehabilitation of Golden Hill and Restorative Justice. Can I have a motion?
Second? Second?

Legislator Haynes: I'll second.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay Haynes, sorry. Any discussion? All those in favor? Opposed? So carried.

401: Authorizing slope stabilization of Salem road. Can I have a motion?

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: Move it.

Chairman Gavaris: Second? Bartels. Discussion? All those, all those in favor? Opposed? So carried.

404: Authorizing Chair of the Legislature to execute an early voting expansion grant program. Can I have a motion.

Legislator Bartels: I'll move it .

Chairman Gavaris: Move it. Second?

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: Second.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay. Chair Donaldson. Any discussion? All those in favor?

Group: Aye.

Chairman Gavaris: Opposed? So carried.

405: Authorizing the Chair of the Legislature to execute an agreement NYS Board of Elections for a technology innovation grant.

Legislator Bartels: I'll move it.

Chairman Gavaris: Second?

Legislator Archer: Second.

Chairman Gavaris: Second Archer. Discussion? All those in favor?

Group: Aye.

Chairman Gavaris: Opposed? So carried.

Resolution 429: Establishing a hotline to provide support. There was

Legislator Bartels: I'll move it.

Chairman Gavaris: supporting. Second, Archer. Okay. Legislator Walter.

Legislator Walter: Thanks, so Legislator Haynes had some questions which I did my best to answer. But I was felt I was not necessarily the best person to answer the question. So I have asked the Commissioner of Human Rights to speak to, from what I understand, and if there's more, please let me know. One, is to really understand how much of a need. And two, how capable is the Human Rights Commission, like knowledgeable on making those kinds of referrals? Is that

Legislator Haynes: Yeah.

Legislator Walter: Is that it? So Tyrone, can I ask you to respond to those two and anything else?

Commissioner Wilson: Sure. Thank you.

One of the things with the hotline, just want to bring forth that our department in the beginning of January, we formed a coalition, as you would say with all of law enforcement agencies which was, consisted of Chief Tinti from City of Kingston. Our Sheriff Juan Figueroa and Captain Mario, who is now the new Captain of the State Troopers. And this was all in response about, you know, when we started out, it was about how do we help the relationships between the community and law enforcement? That, that's what it was targeted for. Not, you know, not knowing [inaudible] we started getting to the talks about the hotline.

All through the, the times that we met, I should say that we met in the parks, we met at churches, we met at the Boys and Girls Club. And this was just to bring over areas to where community people have access to come and speak. So we spent at least six months of the whole year process, just going out to the community and giving them a voice and hearing what they was feeling. Majority of the community as law enforcement heard, right along with myself, was that they, One, they didn't know who to go to, right, when they had situations. A lot of community members was afraid of retaliation, from law enforcement and public entities that, you know, that they had issues with. So I, you know, talking to Legislator Walker and, and, and with Juan Figueroa in the you know in law enforcement, we have, you know, we build such a great relationship now, where I think that, you know, we have an understanding that it's not just about, you know, you know, going after an officer or going after, you know, anybody. We, we want to make sure that we are able to have a decent resolution, right, and it's not just about, okay, you did wrong, and, you know, smacking your hand, it's not about that, right? It's about accountability, and also constantly learning and keeping the training, moving forward on how we deal as you know, as a public officials, and how we deal with our communities, you know, you know, at hand. But also with the team with the Human Rights department. It's very, it's very important that we are able to reach out, you know, to all the folks in the County.

We have, you know, we have two personnel's in my, in my department right now. And this two personnel are, is who are responsible to making sure we reach out to all of Ulster County and, and sometimes a lot of a lot other individuals don't know how to get to us. And we, you know, in with

COVID, you know, one of the plans that we wanted to do, you know, prior to COVID is that we had this tour that we wanted to just go around Ulster County and meet and everybody is setting up, you know, a way that they can really get in contact with us, they know how to get in contact with us. So when we had the discussion about the hotline, I just loved it. You know, I think that it's a, it's a, it's a easy way, and it helps the confidentiality of it also. We heard about a lot of fear of people wanting to talk about what they going through. And I think the hotline helps that, you know, I think that, you know, they're not out there, they don't have to be exposed. They have the confidentiality that they need, to have, to have the issues addressed. And I think with the alliances between the human rights and law enforcement, I think that I, you know, I have established a relationship where if a, if a law enforcement, you know, personnel had a situation that's been claimed, I have the relationship to go directly to the head. And they, they, we have agreed to about, you know, us being a part as much as we can be, in their system, of how to be you know, how to bring a resolution, you know, together. And we talked about using circles, you know, believe it or not, you know, using circle strategy, to bring the law enforcement and the community member, if, if they needed that, you know, to be a part of that whole resolution. So this is about changing the whole look about when you hear human rights, it's not about somebody always did something bad, right? There's always this, we try to change that we try to just become a part of the solution and really be the middle person and really try to bring it together where everybody can, you know, walk away, satisfied. And have peace with it, so the hotline helps us reach out further, and also helps with the confidentiality of it.

Chairman Gavaris: Any discussion? Chair Ronk.

Legislator Haynes: Go ahead Ken, you go first.

Legislator Ronk: You go ahead first, Heidi.

Legislator Haynes: Okay.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Haynes.

Legislator Haynes: So I understand the concept of law enforcement

Chairman Gavaris: Can you use your mic, please. I'm sorry, we have a hard time hearing you over here.

Legislator Haynes: So I understand in respect to the idea, I think it's a great idea, right, we have this hotline that they call in, but are you feeling overwhelmed? Where what I thought he, that the Human Rights Division was feeling overwhelmed by the amount of calls or callers coming in and they needed, basically somebody to handle these calls. And once, once the, once were promoting 'call here for help', then how do we then facilitate? What will, what will, will you be able to handle those calls coming in?

Legislator Walter: And again, this did come with a position. And but I made the commitment to the criminal justice, to Law Enforcement & Public Safety, that all positions, we would wait for budget time. So the request was put that it is in the budget for the position to handle this. And, you know, usually new implementations do are a little slow to get started. So, you know, as soon as those, when those billboards got to get created, you know, assuming this passes, the radio ads has to been done, and the billboards,

you know, by the time it gets to a level of, of higher capacity, ideally, we'll have approved positions that will help handle those excess calls.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Haynes.

Legislator Haynes: So is it safe to say, or am I assuming? Or if you would shed some light on this? Are you currently receiving a lot of a high volume of, of members of your communities coming to you with these issues? Would that be something that you would say, from your perspective, since you've been out in the community?

Commissioner Wilson: Yes, absolutely. I think that one, for me being a person who's in the community, they kind of shed a light to comfortability of people, you know, feeling comfortable to call, right? We get a lot of calls in the office. And then, they rarely, you know, it's just, you know, we just adopted the housing, right. So now housing is a big part of what we deal with. But I think that, you know, the, with the, with the person to be able to manage, you know, the phone line, because I spend a lot of time out going to places. So if I'm out of the office, this call is coming in that needs to be handled, and I am so high on response time. So that's another thing about me too, like I, I try to be really good with response time when we do get the calls. But I think this person will help big time, you know, with the comfortability of us going out to a lot of these cases and actually, you know, talking to the individuals and the calls are still coming in.

Legislator Haynes: Well I thank you, and I appreciate you taking the time to come and explain that to the body. Thank you.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Ronk.

Legislator Ronk: Thank you. I think that the idea of, of phone number to be able to call and leave a message with, you know, that well, I'm sure when we returned either by Tyrone or by one of the, the person that is going to be hired. I've always known the word hotline to mean that somebody is going to be answering the phone when you call. Typically, it's called a tip line. If you're going to have an answering machine take messages. The, the term hotline implies that it's going to be continuously operated. It's something I've dealt with here in the legislature. It's something I've dealt with, I've seen dealt with on the state level. When when is the hotline it is hot, somebody is on the other end of that phone to answer it. The Suicide hotline is an example of that. Domestic Violence hotlines are an example of that. This sounds to me like it's going to be more of a tip line. And I, I feel like we should characterize it as such, personally.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Bartels: Just for clarification isn't the, isn't the idea to actually get coverage on the hotline once we hire a person, during budget cycle?

Legislator Walter: So, you know, it's, it's what's an intention to be 24 hours. And you know, it's some bit of semantics. In my perspective, a hotline is one that is readily available for people. And if you leave a message, there's going to be a return call. I mean, most people would, in this kind of situation, because it's generally not necessarily in the middle of the night, like a suicide hotline, where it could be any time

to need to report this kind of thing, a person can reasonably wait till the working hours. I would not ask someone suicidal to wait for working hours to make their phone call, I would not ask a domestic violence victim to wait to working hours. But I think someone who feels that they've been mistreated, can reasonably wait for working hours. I'm concerned about the word tip line, because tip line, belittles it too far. Tip line is you just anonymously state something and you and there's no follow up, there's no referral, there's no process of, of what you do next. If there's an, if there were another word between the two, that felt more comfortable, tip line does not feel okay. Because tip line really just feels like, hey, by the way, I'm going to just tell you this, I'm not gonna tell you who I am. And just so you know, I don't think that, that would not serve this. But, again, I, I think if we specify that it's a non 24-hour hotline, that we won't have to worry about any kind of confusion in that area. More importantly, is that within a short amount of time, and within reasonable time, and I you know, it, it, it doesn't have to be assumed that it's 24-hour.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Bartels.

Legislator Bartels: Thank you. So, I mean, this hotline is going to be dedicated solely for this purpose and, and advertised as such, that's what the initial financial impact is for right, the advertising. So I mean, I think it's, I'm, I'm totally, I just wanted to get my thing, I'm totally supportive. And I actually love the idea that, to get a little lead time before putting in the position because you'll start to get a sense of how you know how aggressive and how heavy the need is. And that's something I'm sure that it will evolve over time. And certainly, the first year, someone in the position will get a sense of so I'm very supportive of this.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Ronk.

Legislator Ronk: Again, I'm not, I'm not, not supportive of it, but I, I would like the time to be able to work out proper vernacular for it, personally. I, I'm open to a postponement but if it comes forward tonight with this, I, I don't believe that this is a hotline. We can call it a hotline, but you, you can call anything anything. I mean, words aren't just words, they've got meanings. So, you know, I'm, I'm open to I'm definitely open to postponing but if it comes forward tonight, I'm voting no.

Chairman Gavaris: So can I just throw in a suggestion that I was just looking up? Because I actually do agree with Legislator Ronk, that you know to the, the scenarios that you gave, while valid, that's true, they would not be considered emergencies. But consider this scenario; a family member just had somebody arrested, they feel that they've been mistreated during the arrest and now they're being hauled off to jail. I hate to be so blunt about it, but that happens in the middle of the night. Who are they going to call they feel like this is a hotline. What I did look up is this, they call, they call it a helpline. That might be maybe a better name for it that doesn't imply full 24-7 coverage.

Legislator Archer: I like that.

Legislator Walter: I will take the, I, I propose an amendment to this where it's called a helpline. I didn't like tip but I like help.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay.

Legislator Ronk: I'll second that amendment.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay.

Legislator Ronk: Thank you Legislator [inaudible].

Legislator Archer: Thank you.

Chairman Gavaris: Any discussion on that? You want to discuss on that or?

Legislator Bartels: I do. I actually you know, I just I googled the same thing, and I was going to make the exact same suggestion. I think, as a result of Legislator Ronk's concerns, I actually think it's a better name.

Legislator Walter: Oh yeah, I'm happy with it.

Legislator Ronk: Yeah. Yeah, I agree.

Legislator Bartels: I think it's a better name all around. Not just concerns about hot, but the idea of a line that could help people who have been wronged and, and saying that I'm very happy that there's [inaudible].

Chairman Gavaris: All right, any more discussion on helpline? All those in favor?

Group: Aye.

Chairman Gavaris: Opposed? All right. So carried. All right. Any more discussion on?

Deputy Executive Rider: Legislator.

Chairman Gavaris: I'm sorry, yes.

Deputy Executive Rider: When I saw these resolutions linked I, I agree to the fact that there is, you know, if we're going to have this hotline, we need to have the position

Chairman Gavaris: Helpline.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: Helpline.

Deputy Executive Rider: understand what Legislator Bartels had to say about the run up, but I would feel much more comfortable as, as this is the first I'm hearing of it. But this is not a request that came through our budget through the Human Rights Commission. I know this came through the Criminal Justice Reform Task Force, I would feel comfortable knowing that this position at least passed in the budget before creating a hotline that potentially adds many, many calls, or a helpline sorry, a helpline that will add many, many calls, and not necessarily be answered if we don't get the position in the

budget. So just tying the two together, I think makes sense. I think we're supportive of this. I'm just concerned that this passes now, the position doesn't get funded. And then we have the helpline.

Chairman Gavaris: Chair Donaldson.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson: We don't actually know how much this is going to affect the office and how many more calls and may we probably need to, you know, track the calls that we are getting now. So you have an idea, you know, start doing that and then track the calls, once we the new thing happens. And then we may see, you may need a position you may not. I mean, you may be able to handle it with staff you have, or we may be able to use someone else you know, during certain times, I really don't know. So I don't think it necessarily means we're going to add a position we may, we may get half a position, we may not. I mean, I think the, the helpline which I just Googled the same thing, but I didn't get to the resolution yet, you guys were faster with your phones than I am. But so I think we should, you know, move on. And let Tyrone can you know, start tracking those things so we know what the numbers are, you know, know what that really is needed or not.

Legislator Parete: Yeah.

Chairman Gavaris: Leader Ronk.

Legislator Ronk: Thank you. I'd like to echo the comments that Chairman Donaldson just made about, you know, not knowing what the, what the call load is going to be until you do it. You know, I'm committed you know, personally to funding a position at some sort of hours in order to, you know, make sure that we can adequately respond to the phone calls and, and, you know, with our Human Rights Commissioner, do the case work on on and follow up with the Human Rights Commission. You know, but we we've just withdrew a resolution to eliminate a communications position. During the pandemic, there was a lot of helping here helping there. I don't see why the Communication Specialist can't help field calls, in the meantime, personally. I mean, that, you know, even even the person who's I believe likely to be taking the communication position is currently doing a job that the legislature didn't pass in the budget. Because it's been reclassified. So again, I think with all the maneuvering, I think that's a great solution right there.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Walter.

Legislator Walter: Yeah, I will echo that. I think it's the I definitely agree that this gives us an opportunity. Rollout does take time. I also just want to point out that currently, the position is only a half time position, it may very well be, we may find that we are advocating to make it a full-time position if we get enough evidence from the Human Rights Commission by that time. That it actually has to be full time. But yeah, I think that I think this, this serendipitously worked out very well, that we made the decision in our committee to postpone the position.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Bartels and then we'll get

Legislator Bartels: Yeah, I just want to say and be on record, that I will be supporting the position as the evidence shows that it's needed. And certainly, I mean, I can't imagine the Legislature shirking it's duty to put a position behind it. If the Human Rights Commission is getting so many calls, that it needs

to be full time that's what we're going to have to discuss. So we'll see that as it ramps up and as we communicate closely with its director.

Commissioner Wilson: Yeah, I just want to just, just reiterate, too, that this is something, if started is actually given community members the opportunity to start, because, it's there, the concerns are there, the, the, the fear is there. It's just how do we help them get it out? You know, how do we help them feel comfortable with, with COVID? You know, because all through the year of, of meeting with the community, that's all we heard. And it's like, they have nowhere to put it in and, and that's kind of, you know, where what I want to share with you all is that, you know, to me is this actually giving them somewhere to put it. And whether it's with the human rights of whether it's with communication. I just want to leave here letting you all know that we do need to have something for people to have as resources to be comfortable with being able to express what's going on.

Chairman Gavaris: Thank you. All right. Any other discussion? All right, on the resolution as amended? Can I have motion? I'm sorry. All those in favor?

Group: Aye.

Chairman Gavaris: Opposed? So carried. Thank you. Alright, Late Resolution 432: Amending the 21 budget for public emergency preparedness. Can I have a motion?

Legislator Haynes: I'll move it.

Chairman Gavaris: Second? Legislator Walter. Discussion? All those in favor?

Legislator Parete: I'd like to just ask a question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Gavaris: Legislator Parete.

Legislator Parete: This is money coming from the State

Chairman Gavaris: Is it State or?

Legislator Parete: to the schools through the health department for testing?

Chairman Gavaris: Is it State or Federal?

Deputy Executive Rider: This is, this money coming from the Federal Government to the State to the County for testing in the school. So we will be providing contractors that do screening testing at each of the school districts. This money, some of the districts will use in-house nurses and in that case, we will provide them tests. But

Legislator Parete: The reason I bring it up as it was an issue of last night. Will this money only be used for testing kids who were residents of Ulster County or will they be using it, let's say in other neighboring schools whose kids may live over the border.

Chairman Gavaris: Well, school district, so I'm assuming it's the district wide.

Legislator Parete: I'm a yes.

Chairman Gavaris: Okay. All right. Any discussion other than that, all those in favor?

Group: Aye.

Chairman Gavaris: Opposed? So carried.

All right, any other new business? March, do you have anything?

All right, motion to adjourn. Second, all those in favor of adjournment? So carried. Thank you.