

**Ways &
Means Committee
Special Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: November 18, 2020 – 1:00
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by dialing 1-646-558-8656,
Meeting ID 912 0964 7055
PRESIDING OFFICER: Lynn Archer, Chairwoman
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Natalie Kelder, and Amber Feaster
PRESENT: Legislators Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr., Tracey Bartels, John Gavaris, Heidi Haynes, Mary Beth Maio, and Eve Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Cahill, Criswell, Corcoran, Delaune, Greene, and Petit; District Attorney David Clegg; Commissioner of Finance, Burt Gulnick; Deputy Budget Director Christopher Kelly; Clerk of the Legislature Victoria Fabella; Comptroller, March Gallagher; Deputy Comptroller Christopher Quirk; Randy Boughton, Senior Auditor; Beth Weredyk, Senior Auditor; Patricia Doxsey, Daily Freeman

- **Chairwoman Archer called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM**
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District Attorney Clegg spoke from 1:02 PM to 1:11 PM requesting funding for a Receptionist/Typist position, stating the importance of the position as the workload in the District Attorney Office is higher than it's ever been before. Chairwoman Archer asked if this position is a result of the Retirement Incentive. Legislator Bartels requested the caseload numbers, which District Attorney Clegg agreed to supply to the Committee.

District Attorney Clegg spoke from 1:11 PM to 1:17 PM requesting funding for an Administrative Assistant position, stating his Office has had the same number of administrative staffing since the year 2000 with increased attorney staffing and increased caseloads since this time, arguing that reducing administrative staff places a huge burden on current staff. Legislator Bartels noted that although the two budget amendments requested from District Attorney Clegg appear to be an increase to the 2021 Operating Budget, they would still result in a decrease of the District Attorney's overall costs from 2020 to 2021. Commissioner of Finance Burt Gulnick noted that the Retirement Incentive fill/no fill list was created during the budget process and has changed since its submission to the Legislature.

District Attorney Clegg spoke from 1:17 PM to 1:18 PM requesting a technical correction to fund a Paralegal position which is currently filled and to defund a Paralegal position which is currently vacant.

Commissioner of Finance Burt Gulnick spoke from 1:18 PM to 1:31 PM to request three amendments to the Capital Improvement Program for the inclusion of the Pump House Control Unit, the Emergency Management Move, and the DSS Basement Restoration Project, which is already established and has current year expenditures. Commissioner of Finance Gulnick informed Committee members that these Projects were intended to be included in the Program, clarified why changes to the Emergency Management move were made, and explained why the DSS Project is lower than was initially anticipated. Discussion pursued on the timeline and details planned for the Emergency Management Move.

Legislator Bartels spoke from 1:31 PM to 1:35 PM on restoration of the 2019 annual salary for a vacant Assistant County Attorney position which was raised outside of the budget cycle. Commissioner of Finance Burt Gulnick noted that this position is considered the “First County Attorney”, arguing that the County Attorney’s office has the lowest paid attorneys in comparison to the Public Defender’s office and the District Attorney’s office.

Legislator Bartels spoke from 1:35 PM to 2:02 PM to propose removing each of the rate increases recommended for individual personnel by the County Executive, to propose restoring the 2020 adopted standard work week for positions which are recommended to increase in standard work week hours, and to propose restoring the 2020 Adopted Budget titles for positions recommended to change to titles requiring a higher annual salary which are not desk-audit driven. Legislator Bartels emphasized the financial difficulty the County as a whole has incurred. Legislator Ronk cautioned against considering all of these raises as one rather than tackling each individually. Discussion pursued on the ability to discuss each person individually, on the status of Collective Bargaining Agreements, and on the difference between an increase due to a rate change, an increase due to a change in hours, and an increase due to a change in title. Further discussion pursued on the impact of the retirement incentive on departments and individuals.

Legislator Bartels spoke from 2:02 PM to 2:21 PM to propose cutting 2% from the 2021 County Executive Recommended annual salary of all Management, Non-Union positions. Legislator Bartels emphasized cuts incurred in Ulster County in the private sector, program cuts in the 2021 County Executive recommended budget, and a concern for layoffs within Ulster County in upcoming years. Legislator Ronk raised concerns about prior year raises in excess of 2% approved for County Executive staff, employee morale, and financial hardships for employees. Chairman Donaldson emphasized a great deal of reservations regarding taking money away from employees. Discussion pursued on increases greater than 2% awarded to County Executive staff, the ability and desire for Legislators to donate a portion of their annual pay, and the median salary for each employment classification.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 2:22 PM to 2:34 PM to request an allocation of funding for Ulster County Community Action in the amount of \$28,750.00. Legislative Chairman Donaldson explained what the Organization does, how it is composed, and what programs it offers. Discussion pursued on the process behind Legislative Non-County Contract Agencies per the policy adopted earlier in 2020.

The Committee took a brief recess from 2:35 PM to 3:09 PM.

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LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Natalie Kelder, and Amber Feaster
PRESENT: Legislators Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr. (out at 3:26 PM), Tracey Bartels, John Gavaris, Heidi Haynes, Mary Beth Maio (arrived at 3:18 PM), and Eve Walter; and Legislative Chairman Donaldson
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Criswell, Delaune, and Parete; Commissioner of Finance, Burt Gulnick; Comptroller, March Gallagher; Deputy Comptroller Christopher Quirk; Randy Boughton, Senior Auditor; Patricia Doxsey, Daily Freeman

Chairwoman Archer acknowledged information sent by Legislative Financial staff during the break. Legislator Ronk confirmed that discussion on Sawkill Fire Company is scheduled for the next Special Ways & Means meeting because it is being sponsored by Legislator Cahill.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:11 PM to 3:14 PM to request an allocation of funding for Ulster County Library Association in the amount of \$77,700.00, explaining the Library's proposed funding and speaking in favor of the Organization. Discussion pursued on the value of the Non-County Contract Agency budget amendments in comparison to the amounts requested by the entities and the prior year funding values of each.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:14 PM to 3:15 PM to request an allocation of funding for UPAC in the amount of \$25,000.00, stating that the Organization is suffering financially from forced closures due to COVID, and explaining some of the programs offered.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:15 PM to 3:17 PM to request an allocation of funding for Arts Mid-Hudson in the amount of \$80,000.00, explaining that the Organization provides small grants to individual artists within Ulster County.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:17 PM to 3:19 PM to request an allocation of funding for Ulster County Soil & Water Conservation District in the amount of \$61,305.00. Legislator Bartels explained that the value of the proposed budget amendment is equal to the Organization's request in recognition of the County's current financial situation, and emphasized the value of the services the County receives in response to the funding, asking that the Committee consider other ways to partner with and leverage the Organization.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:19 PM to 3:23 PM to request an allocation of funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County in the amount of \$325,800.00, explaining the Organization's programs and services, the changes the Organization has made, and how the Organization leverages the County's funding to achieve funding from the State.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:23 PM to 3:23 PM to request an allocation of funding for Awareness, Inc. in the amount of \$12,500.00.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:24 PM to 3:25 PM to request an allocation of funding for Dispute Resolution Center in the amount of \$26,500.00 which supports the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, explaining how this program works and what it does for children within the community.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:25 PM to 3:32 PM to request an allocation of funding for Family of Woodstock's Supervised Visitation program in the amount of \$30,000.00, raising caution against not supporting the program as the loss of it may result in other costs to the County. Commissioner of Finance Gulnick agreed to research and recommend an appropriate Department and account to house the contract under the County Executive's purview. Legislator Bartels further explained the program offered and the history behind it, emphasizing that it is not a mandated service and stating support for moving the contract under the County Executive's purview. Discussion pursued on the County's liability for the services.

Legislative Chairman Donaldson spoke from 3:32 PM to 3:35 PM to request an allocation of funding for People's Place in the amount of \$10,000.00 to support the Organization's food pantry program. Legislative Chairman Donaldson acknowledged that there are other Organizations within Ulster County which offer similar services, stating that People's Place is located in an inter-city area which is easily accessible for a large number of people, especially those who are in great need.

Old Business: Chairwoman Archer notified Committee Members that the Special Meeting to vote on the Budget Amendments will be held on Tuesday, November 24th at 4:00 PM. Legislator Criswell confirmed that the Special hearing scheduled for Friday, November 20th has been cancelled.

New Business: Legislator Parete questioned the Non-County Contract Agency process as it relates to the solicitation of agencies, the application

of the County's purchasing policy, and the involvement of the Legislative Committee of oversight. Discussion pursued on the involvement of Legislative Committees, the job of the Ways & Means Committee in the budget process, the Legislature's ability to fund grants, and the newly adopted policy on Non-County Contract Agencies.

Chairwoman Archer 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:	3:59 PM
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Respectfully submitted:	Amber Feaster
Minutes Approved:	December 8, 2020