

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Administrative Services Committee

DATE: May 20, 2008

TIME: 4:46 P.M.

PLACE: UCOB, 6th Floor Library

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Jeanette Provenzano, Legislators Frank Felicello, Alan Lomita, Brian Cahill, Ken Ronk, and Paul Hansut

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislator Peter Kraft was excused

OTHERS ATTENDING: Deputy County Auditor, Andrew Slater, Safety Officer, Diane Beitzl, Purchasing Officer, Robin Peruso, Deputy Purchasing Officer, Bob DiBella, Insurance Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Real Property Director, Dorothy Martin, Real Property Supervisor, Susan Tillson, Real Property Supervisor and Tax Map Specialist, Bert Winne and Soni O'Bryan, Deputy Insurance Officer (attending to take minutes of meeting)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Provenzano. A motion to accept the minutes from the April meeting was made by Chairman Provenzano, seconded by Legislator Cahill, all in favor.

Real Property Director Dorothy Martin made a request to introduce two members of her staff before getting down to department reports, which was granted by Chairman Provenzano. Dorothy introduced two supervisors in her department, Susan Tillson and Bert Winne. She wanted the committee to meet them as they may be filling in for her at meetings from time to time.

At the top of the agenda for the meeting were department reports as follows:

County Insurance Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, really had nothing new to report, however, she wanted to thank everyone for passing Resolution #139 to increase the step of three Claims Examiners and one Sr. Claims Examiner in her office. Bonnie also mentioned that she attended a breakfast meeting this morning with about thirteen Town Supervisors at their monthly Town Supervisors Meeting. Bonnie explained that she has twenty towns in the plan and that the meeting was very productive. The Supervisors had questions on volunteers and also wanted a review of the plan. They wanted primarily to keep communication open and be aware of any changes that are or have happened. The press was also in attendance and Bonnie indicated that there might possibly be an article in the Freeman.

Safety Officer, Diane Beitzl, reported that they have been doing allot of training. To date they have put almost all of the Highway Dept. through Flagger Training and requested that they all use the equipment that is available to them. There was an issue of not having enough signs on each truck. Diane explained that there are signs, but they are either being thrown in the back of the dump trucks, tar was thrown on some of the ones she saw and they are being misused. There should be construction series signs set up in each direction at job sites. Highway is working on what they can do to get the signs at each job site. Diane also covered the no smoking and cell phone use policies in County vehicles and while Flagging and the Right to Know. There is also a Supervisory Training coming up, which is required through CSEA. The County must

do this annually for top supervisors in Highway. Overall, Diane felt that they were going in a good direction thanks to DPW commissioner, Dave Sheeley. They still need to do training for the summer employees. She feels that enforcement of the training must be done and followed through. She stressed that Supervisors must be responsible for following through with employees to make certain the County's policies and training are being met. She also stressed the seriousness of these issues and the liability that is placed on the County with Highway employees'. There needs to be uniformity with all work crews. Legislator Ronk next complimented Safety on how well run the drivers training classes are. He attended one recently and was pleasantly surprised at how well it was presented.

Deputy Auditor, Andrew Slater reported that County Auditor, Bob Wenzel, was unable to make the meeting as he was also working on the County Charter Committee group. Andrew advised that they have been having meetings with various departments on how to increase their numbers and what auditing can do to help them out to make the numbers better without sacrificing due diligence. Legislator Cahill questioned the lower numbers in some departments and why there were such differences and was it due to volume or was it political bureaucracy. Andrew explained that allot of the lower numbers was due to volume and that by meeting with the departments they can better understand what each department is up against, what is needed to process the work more easily and quickly, but also warned that they don't want to sacrifice quality by pushing payments through just to get the numbers up. They have to work with each department separately trying to tailor each department to how transactions are entered.

Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt, reported that she needed to add to her agenda as they have suffered the loss of a valuable employee due to a very serious accident. Sylvia advised that there are only two GIS people in her department, one of them just left to take a position with Westchester County and the other was seriously injured over the past weekend and was paralyzed at this time. It will be quite a while before he will, if ever, return to the department. They are posting for the GIS position vacated and also looking to temporarily fill the position of the injured employee. Sylvia would like to see if they can get the employee who resigned and left the County to come back and work on a consultant basis and also to train the new GIS person that they hire. Sylvia understands that she has to go through Personnel as well, especially due to the time constraints, and also to Contract Management for the consultant contract. She is using Planning Director, Dennis Doyle and Highway as they each have a set of GIS skills to help her out with. She has also been given several good leads to use for hiring. The position is a Civil Service Position. Chairman Provenzano suggested Sylvia contact personnel to call for a test as soon as possible so there is a list on hand. Sylvia next brought her list of equipment over \$3,000.00 and Chairman Provenzano advised her to e-mail a copy to her. Sylvia next brought up the IS requirements', needed for their move, that she is to supply to Buildings & Grounds so they can do an RFP. This was to be in conjunction with Purchasing as well, for Central Services. Sylvia questioned the fact that Central Services was not included in the RFP and thought it was important to keep them together with IS. Purchasing Agent, Robin Peruso, indicated that per the Space Committee and C & S study, she was told that Central Services was staying where they were - she got RFP information from Buildings & Grounds. Legislator Ronk serves on the Space Committee and advised that when they were going through the study, priorities were shown as one through five. IS was number one on this list and they did discuss leaving Central Services where it was due to proximity, especially since the Post Office was right there; he indicated that nothing had been finalized. However, the RFP needs to indicate the correct square footage or the vendor who gets the bid could come back at them if it is not accurate to begin with. Legislator Felicello indicated that the Space Committee was supposed to study and report to Buildings and Grounds - he felt there were too many committees and people getting involved, including Vic Works, Buildings & Grounds, Commissioner, in the RFP. Legislator Cahill felt that they should be listening to IS and Purchasing department heads who are affected the most and no one is listening to them. Per Legislator Felicello, he advised that he feels some individuals are bypassing the committees. Chairman Provenzano feels that the two departments involved answer to this committee and that this committee should recommend stopping the RFP; better clarification of the how the RFP process and how the specs were derived is needed. Legislator Ronk advised that his committee never saw the RFP in the final version. A motion was made by Legislator Provenzano to request that the RFP be

stopped until this committee is educated and the RFP is clarified. A letter is to be drafted and sent to Vic Works, B & G Commissioner, Dave Sheeley, DPW Commissioner, Michael Hein, County Administrator, Dave Donaldson, Chairman UC Legislature and Peter Loughran, Chairman Public Works and Capital Projects Committee. Per Robin Peruso, the RFP was advertised two weeks ago and due this week, and as of this date there are three bids in. Robin feels that they should not stop the RFP, but they can accept RFP's and then just re-clarify the specs. Based on Robin's advice, Chairman Provenzano withdrew her motion to stop the RFP. An additional comment by Legislator Cahill is to find out from Legislator Loughran and Vic Work if they have an alternate plan for IS and Central Services. He also indicated that committees should not be by-passed no matter what. Chairman Provenzano will be speaking with the County Administrator and the Legislature Chairman on the process for the RFP. She expressed that Departments should questions RFP's or anything they don't feel is right. Sylvia's last note was that her office is working with IBM to contract for services on the data center and a proposal should be in within a couple of weeks. Purchasing will accept proposals and then make a decision.

Purchasing Agent, Robin Peruso and Deputy Purchasing Agent Bob DiBella passed out copies of the County Vehicle take-home vehicle report. Out of the forty-four take home vehicles, twenty three are from Public Works Department. The report which only runs from 3/21/08 to date may not accurately represent the actual need for a take-home vehicle, however, Robin and Bob will be meeting with the various departments to discern the validity of their request for a take-home vehicle. There are approximately forty eight call-outs per year. Bob explained that the longest distance traveled by anyone with a take home vehicle in Public Works was six miles. A discussion developed on the take home policy and the criteria. Now that they have the criteria will they go over the need for each vehicle being taken home. Call-outs themselves appear to be more seasonal and in order to make an informed decision they need to go through a full year and there may be a need to change the policy. There are many vehicles that fall in the cracks with the new policy and with gas prices going up there should be more diligence placed on the take home use and they need to see what works and what doesn't work. Legislator Felicello expressed safety concerns with possibly taking vehicles home. Chairman Provenzano requested that Robin ask Highway for their mileage data and if they run into resistance with this she should contact the County Administrator. Per Legislator Felicello, Robin should ask for the data from the past five winters in order to make a better determination of the use and need. Robin next indicated that although she wasn't totally aware of the change of contacting Brenda Bartholomew, Personnel Officer, for positions needed, and that because of this meeting, she now knows. She currently needs a temporary services driver from Manpower at a cost of \$600.00 for two weeks. The current employee in this position is going out on disability for two weeks for knee surgery and she would be taking this expense from her temporary line of her budget. She also needs an Expediter position which is already a budgeted position that is open due to a promotion within her office. She needs approval from Chairman Provenzano before going to the Personnel Committee.

Real Property Director, Dorothy Martin, distributed tax sheets for the Sr. Tax Exemption, and advised the changes to the report. On the first page, she added a maximum cap, on the second page she explained that it now tells what is the highest you can go to if you wanted and the third page indicates what surrounding Counties use as their Sr. Citizen Exemption. Legislator Felicello would like to know if there is a way for her to show with each progression what the impact would be on the taxpayers. Dorothy indicated that would be hard to do, but what they could do is look at for instance the amount of \$20,700, and using percentages or doubling, they can determine an amount and that would be a good guideline. This will be in place for 2009 Assessments and put in effect in 2010. Legislator Felicello also wanted to know if there was any way to put a simple poll on line to see how many people would be interested, but that might be hard to do since many seniors do not use a computer. He would like to publicize this now especially with the way the economy is to give seniors a little hope. Since this does not even take effect until 2010, a Public Hearing needs to take place first before any publicity is done on this. Legislator Cahill made a motion to Draft a Resolution to raise the minimum current exemption amount to \$24,000 and for a Public Hearing to be presented at the August 2008 legislature meeting. Legislator Lomita seconded this motion and all were in favor. Dorothy also advised that there is a Cold War Tax Exemption that does not give as much dollars

as the Veterans Exemption does, because the combat portion is missing, but she does get a lot of calls on it and it is being cleaned up by the State Legislature. Legislator Lomita would like to see the research on it and what the impact will have and then also move to have a Public Hearing on it. They will try to have a Public Hearing on this for the September legislature meeting. It must be done timely as the last Public Hearing is in November 2008. Dorothy also advised that the Tentative Equalization Rates are showing a decline in the market which is good for the taxpayer- not the economy. She indicated that the two impending lawsuits have been settled. Although it has not been officially confirmed, the Dynergy-Central Hudson property affects the Marlboro School District. Dynergy paid \$17 million. Of the \$33 million budget the taxpayers will pay \$16 million. The school district now has the option to work on it. It has no effect on reassessment for the Town of Marlboro and will not affect the County budget or Marlboro's budget. The other lawsuit is the Ashokan suit where they will see a loss of \$100 million to the assessed value, but the majority of taxpayers will not see it as much as Olive will. The Town of Olive will get hit and will see an increase in their taxes. This was negotiated with the Town Board as NYC did contribute a large portion and it now takes the large parcel off of the table.

A motion to adjourn was made by Legislator Lomita, seconded by Legislator Cahill at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jeanette Provenzano, Chairman
Administrative Services Committee**