

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON ARTS, EDUCATION,  
TOURISM AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, HELD AT ULSTER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> DAY  
OF APRIL, 2009**

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SUSAN ZIMET, Chairwoman  
WAYNE HARRIS, Deputy Chairman  
THOMAS "TJ" BRIGGS  
CATHERINE TERRIZZI  
DONALD J. GREGORIUS  
FRANK FELICELLO (Late)  
MARY F. SHEELEY (Excused)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

DONALD C. KATT, President of SUNY Ulster County Community College  
MARIANNE COLLINS, Dean of Continuing Education & Advancement, UCCC  
CORNELIA DENVIR, Acting Dean of Administration, UCCC  
ANN CARDINALE, Director, Ulster County Office for the Aging  
MARSHALL BECKMAN, Deputy Ulster County Executive  
ANN GORDON, Ulster County Historian  
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Zimet called the meeting to order at 5:12pm .

Ulster County Community College:

Chairwoman Zimet called the meeting to order at 5:12 pm and gave a brief background on the resolution being presented by the College for the OPAP (Organization of Professional & Administrative Personnel) contract ratification.

She explained that when it was originally approved two months ago by this committee that there were only four Legislators present and, while enough for a quorum, there should have been more input from the others. At last month's meeting the matter was again brought up for discussion and the committee by unanimous resolution, voted to rescind the previously passed resolution and table the matter for further study. Chairwoman Zimet said the CWA contract (for the Sheriff's Department) was also pulled from Committee. She said it would be good to see what happens with that contract which will have some bearing on what happens with this contract. Chairwoman Zimet also reviewed other bargaining groups getting their contracts passed with raises including CSEA.

She also said that, regardless what happens in this Committee she will be putting the contract forward to the full Legislature and they should vote on it. This Committee should not be put in the position of having to decide this issue. Chairwoman Zimet said also that it is very difficult to be put in this position, when we (the Legislators) are the ones who have to determine property taxes. She also doesn't think that it is fair to start with one small group of employees. In the future, said Chairwoman Zimet, she would like to see all contracts negotiated at around the same time.

Chairwoman Zimet asked for comments from the group and John Murphy, President of OPAP, said the main concern is that we (OPAP and the College) negotiated the contract normally, following the faculty contract as has always been the case. He also noted that while the dollar amounts are similar, faculty negotiated a two year contract while OPAP unanimously agreed to accept this one year contract.

President Katt said the newspaper article announcing the county freeze on management salaries was enlightening. While the college was under the impression that county management had not received any raise, it was published that county management did receive a 2% salary increase in 2009. President Katt said that the college had insisted on a one year contract with OPAP and it might well be that we don't have an increase in 2010. He noted that the contract year in question is from September 2008 through August 2009, while the county contracts run from January through December. In addition, said the President, we are not asking for the county to fund anything extra. The \$150,000 is budgeted in our 2008-09 operating budget.

In response to a question from President Katt, Chairwoman Zimet said this resolution will go on to the Ways & Means Committee even if it does not pass this committee. She is going to be asking that it be put on after the CWA contract, which is a \$750,000 hit to this county. Leg. Gregorio said the CWA contract ends in 2009 but the big difference is that the OPAP funds are coming out of the college's budget and the proposed CWA contract goes beyond the Sheriff's budget. Leg. Terrizzi said she felt better knowing the money for OPAP has already been budgeted for and was in the college's budget. This was also the feeling of Leg. Gregorius and Leg. Briggs.

Leg. Harris stated that he was a member of the transition team last year and we had recommended \$115,000 for the County Executive's salary. Then it went to \$125,000 and when it went into the budget the \$125,000 has become \$133,000. He wonders about the top leadership, but he doesn't want to hold this up, and believes the full Legislature should decide. He said he wants it understood that he may not support it on the floor, but will support it in Committee just to get it before the full Legislature. At this time a motion was made by Leg. Briggs to approve the following resolution:

"Recommending Approval of Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County of Ulster and the UCCC Organization of Professional and Administrative Personnel."

Chairwoman Zimet noted that the approval of this Resolution was being voted upon for the purpose of moving the matter to the full Legislature pursuant to the direction of Committee members. The motion was seconded by Leg. Gregorius. Chairwoman Zimet asked for a voice vote on the motion and said resolution was unanimously approved as qualified.

(Recorder's Note: Leg. Felicello was not present for this vote nor for the discussion. At the time of his arrival, he was advised of the Committee's actions and the reasons therefore and when asked for his vote stated that he was completely against it and wished to record his "against" vote, which was so noted, therefore the resolution was approved as follows:

For the Motion:	Chairwoman, Leg. Susan Zimet Leg. Wayne Harris Leg. Katherine Terrizzi Leg. Thomas "TJ" Briggs Leg. Don Gregorius
Against the Motion:	Leg. Frank Felicello

Chairwoman Zimet said the Resolution will now go to Ways & Means and if it gets voted down she will still bring it to the floor.

OPAP member Donna Johnson said even if this does get voted through, OPAP will still bear the brunt of the financial problem because they took a one year contract while faculty got two years. OPAP Member Carol Mason said the last time there was a raise most of it was eaten up by increased health insurance premiums.

The discussion on the OPAP contract being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet requested that President Katt continue with his report.

1. President Katt said that we recently had an audit by the NYS Comptroller's Office for the first time in many years. They were on campus for about four months starting in May, 2008. They reviewed procedures, practices and transactions covering a twenty month period. As background, President Katt said Columbia-Greene Community College had a negative press release when their report was posted on the Comptroller's website and it could also go that way for us. He said that they did not find any discrepancies in cash, no improprieties, no fraud, theft or misconduct. They did cite us as deficient in codifying our practices and procedures. They also found our IT procedures had some holes open they felt we should close. He said a part of their report was our failure to seek and collect late fees. This is incorrect and our records show we do assess a \$35 "late fee" and we actually collected nearly \$51,000 in these fees during the twenty month period examined. We have asked the Comptroller's Office to amend their report to adequately reflect this correction.

The bank reconciliations, said President Katt, were completed through August 31, 2008 and reconciliations were being brought up to date at this time. We are formulating a policy to insure that this is done monthly. There was also a question regarding the signature plate we use for check signatures and we are working on a policy for this also. They also cited that 20% of our purchase orders are issued after the goods and/or services were received. They also questioned travel and meal requests as we do not have a specific policy on those items. We are in the process of remedying all of these questions.

Marshall Beckman, Deputy County Executive and formerly head of Ulster County Mental Health asked to be heard on this matter. He said he has been through many of these types of audits, and he completely agrees with the college. He said that those things cited were not major findings and most are due to short staffing. He said he was sure the college would love to have more money and be able to do everything. He fully agrees with Dr. Katt's assessment.

Marianne Collins, Dean of Continuing Education and Advancement at the college said there was a meeting with the Comptroller's staff and they are considering the requests we made for changes. She said the tenor of the meeting was positive. She said the college has to send them an institutional response letter before April 20<sup>th</sup>. After that submission, said Dean Collins, the Comptroller's Office will release the documents and probably send out a press release.

President Katt said the college will keep the Chairman of the Legislature, this Committee and the County Executive informed of what is happening.

Marshall Beckman said normally the State offices are reluctant to get into a disagreement. They purposefully give out a draft of their report first so that they can get comments and feedback from the institution.

Chairwoman Zimet asked President Katt to keep this Committee up to date with what is going on and would appreciate his getting a letter to us when the final report from the Comptroller is received.

On the subject of the Nursing program, Chairwoman Zimet said it was on the agenda at her request, since SUNY New Paltz is starting to close out their Nursing program. She said the Legislature has consistently supported the Nursing program at the college. Dr. Katt advised that when students finish their Associates Degree Program they also get their R.N.

Chairwoman Zimet asked how the SUNY New Paltz decision will affect the Nursing program here. He said that out of 257 Nursing graduates in the past six years, twenty-eight have gone on to New Paltz. He said there are also bachelor's and master's programs at Russell Sage and Mount St. Mary. He said maybe 15% of our graduates would go right on for their Baccalaureate Degree, but they all do sit for their National Certification and they can work as a Registered Nurse without having a four-year degree.

In reply to a question from Leg. Felicello, President Katt said yes, Ulster County residents do get priority in this program since we have so many applications now we are discouraging out of county residents. He said that Dutchess County Community College has closed their Nursing Program to all but Dutchess County residents.

It was also discussed that a group of Nursing Administrators around the State are pushing that the 2-year R.N. should have ten (10) years to get their Bachelor's Degree or their license will be revoked. Ann Cardinale asked to be heard and she said she is a graduate of UCCC and is the Past President of the Ulster County Nurses Association and she did get her Bachelor's Degree and her Master's Degree from SUNY New Paltz. The thinking is that we will not see any increase in Nursing students continuing on for the four-year degree because of the financial impact. Chairwoman Zimet said she would like for this committee as a Legislative body, to consider a letter or a resolution to convey to SUNY that they are balancing their budget on the backs of the Nurses. Leg. Terrizzi said if we only had 28 students in 6 years go on to SUNY New Paltz, then it seems we would be asking them to keep a program that is not fiscally prudent. Leg. Briggs said they are running it like a business which is what they are supposed to do.

Dr. Katt advised the committee of our Scholarship Awards Presentation & Reception which will be held on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and also our 45<sup>th</sup> Graduation which is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. Our keynote speaker will be Ron Nyswaner nationally known screenwriter of the movie, "Philadelphia".

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Ann Cardinale, Director of Ulster County Office for the Aging.

Ulster County Office for the Aging:

Ms. Cardinale said her office had received notice they were eligible for stimulus funds. She said there is a local contribution which will be absorbed by Office for the Aging, and asks this committee to approve a resolution as follows:

"Authorizing The Office for the Aging to Apply for Grant from the New York State Office For the Aging for 2009 Federal Funding Under the American Recovery and Investment Act for 2009 Federal Funding Under the American Recovery and Investment Act (ARRA) For the Nutrition Program for the Elderly – Office for the Aging."

A motion to approve the resolution as presented was made by Leg. Felicello and seconded by Leg. Harris and upon Chairwoman Zimet asking for a voice vote said resolution was unanimously approved. Ms. Cardinale said she would like the minutes to reflect her thanks to Leg. Felicello and Leg. Harris for all the work they have done over the years as members of this Committee.

The report of Office for the Aging being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Ann Gordon, the newly appointed Ulster County Historian.

Ulster County Historian:

Ms. Gordon told the Committee that she too had been on this Committee when she was a Legislator and when Vinnie Dunn was Chairman. She said she has a lot of ideas and wants to get together with all of the Town Historian and discuss how we are going to weather these terrible budget times. She said more tourists come here from Boston, Mass. or Washington, D.C. then we get from New York City and this is a market which should be looked into. Leg. Wayne Harris gave a brief history of the Pierson House, and arrangements have been made to meet with Ms. Gordon and with Rose LeFevre, the Deputy County Historian at the Kingston Library at 4:00pm next Tuesday. Chairwoman Zimet said it has been shown that when people come to an area for cultural tourism they spend more money and stay longer.

The report of the Ulster County Historian being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Nico Lang, Director of Programs for Dutchess Arts Council, and Nico Lang, Chairman of the Ulster County Cultural Services and Promotion Fund.

Ulster County Cultural Services and Promotion Fund:

Ms. Lang reported that 23 applications were received. There was an application seminar at which there were 24 attendees. After review by an independent volunteer panel who reviewed all 23 applications and made funding recommendations, the panel made recommendations for 11 projects. High Meadow Arts, Historic Huguenot Street, Shadowlands Theatre, the Pine Hill Community Center and Unison Arts & Learning Center. Ms. Lang said they are going to start auditing some of the grants, just to see how things are going. She also mentioned this committee had talked about a reception for the groups who are being funded. Chairwoman Zimet said the purpose of such a reception is to make sure everyone knows that the grant monies are coming from Ulster County. She would like to see such a reception at the end of July. Leg. Terrizzi asked if anything was being done regarding Walkway Over the Hudson. Do we have a presence there? Ms. Lang said we have been involved and Benjamin (Krevolin, Director of DCAC) is on that Committee. Chairwoman Zimet said there is a committee in Ulster that has been meeting.

Returning to the grants program, the committee discussed the "capacity building" nature of these grants that should be used to help the arts organizations become stronger. Ms. Lang distributed a Final Report to the Ulster County Legislature listing applications received and applications funded and not funded with a description of each. She did say that applications are down and some organizations are struggling just to keep their lights on. She thinks it might be worse next year.

The presentation by Dutchess County Arts Council being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet gave a brief report on the Veteran's Service Agency.

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Veterans Service Agency:

Chairwoman Zimet said that there are a lot of problems with the Veterans' Administration in terms of their getting things that people request. She said they are trying to push the state, and she has asked Terry to come in and let the committee know what is going on.

On the veteran's cemetery, Chairwoman Zimet said there have been fifteen military burials since its inception. She said there is Veteran's Cemetery Committee and Kevin Cahill has come up with \$10,000 to use to buy the graves up front. Terry Breitenstein will explain the situation in more detail.

At this time Chairwoman Zimet requested a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Said motion was made by Leg. Terrizzi and seconded by Leg. Harris and the Committee moved into Executive Session at 6:45pm.

Thereafter, a motion to return to regular session was made by Leg. Terrizzi and seconded by Leg. Briggs and the Committee returned to regular session at 6:59pm.

All Legislators having reviewed the previous months' minutes, a motion to approve the minutes of the March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009 was made by Leg. Briggs and seconded by Leg. Gregorius and by voice vote said minutes were unanimously approved.

A motion to approve a resolution instructing the Chairwoman of this Committee, Susan Zimet, to draft a letter to the Ulster County Executive relative to this Committees' concern on the lack of personnel in the Tourism Department. The motion was made by Leg. Felicello and seconded by Leg. Terrizzi, and upon voice vote was unanimously approved.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Briggs and seconded by Leg. Gregorius and Chairwoman Zimet declared the meeting duly adjourned at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

