

**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 20TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2008**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SUSAN ZIMET, Chairwoman
WAYNE HARRIS, Deputy Chairman
SUSAN CUMMINGS
THOMAS "TJ" BRIGGS
DONALD J. GREGORIUS
MARY SHEELEY
CATHERINE TERRIZZI

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

MARIANNE COLLINS, Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education, Ulster
County Community College
TERRY BREITENSTEIN, Director, Ulster County Veterans' Service Agency
LEE REIDY, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
RICK REMSNYDER, Director, Ulster County Tourism
BENJAMIN KREVOLIN, President, Dutchess County Arts Council
JOSEPH EGAN, on behalf of the Veterans' Cemetery proposal
ED MADSEN, representing DAV and VFW for Veterans' Cemetery Committee
BILL WEST, representing VFW
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Zimet called the meeting to order at 5:10pm and recognized Mr. Joseph Egan, appearing before the Committee as an advocate for having a County veterans' cemetery. Mr. Egan said he was a veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam and had been trying for many years to get a cemetery for Ulster County Veterans.

Leg. Harris said that Mr. Egan was a very dedicated citizen and veteran and he has had contact with him numerous times over the years. He said Joe Egan had arranged for an Honor Guard for Leg. Harris' uncle's funeral. Mr. Egan then introduced Mr. West and Mr. Madsen, who were appearing in support of this proposal and who presented the committee with letters of support from various veterans' organizations. The veterans are requesting that land owned by the county be used for a veterans' cemetery. Leg. Sheeley asked if other counties had veterans' cemeteries. Mr. Egan said that both Sullivan and Orange Counties had veterans' cemeteries maintained by the county.

Mr. Breitenstein outlined the history of the veterans coming before the Legislature. He said there has to be facts and figures provided. He also said that everything related to a cemetery of any kind or size, now has to go through the NYS Division of Cemeteries. He also discussed some of the problems associated with this project, such as that it should be centrally located. He also recommended that a feasibility study be made.

At this time Chairwoman Zimet appointed a subcommittee to study the feasibility of this proposal with Leg. Harris as Chairman. She also asked for volunteers and Leg. Cummings and Leg. Briggs will also serve on this subcommittee. The veterans present also asked that both the VFW and the American Legion have some involvement and Chairwoman Zimet asked that an appointment made by each and that two veterans should be suitable. She thanked the veterans for attending.

Ulster County Veterans' Service Agency:

The presentation by the veterans being concluded Chairwoman Zimet recognized Terry Breitenstein, Director of Ulster County Veterans' Service Agency who advised that he was currently working on resolving the problems associated with the wheelchair vans and was close to a workable solution. In response to a question from Leg. Sheeley, he said that his driver was currently taking classes to obtain the required license to drive all kinds of vehicles.

He said his main problem at this time was the continuing prospect of losing both of his counselors because they did not score high enough on the test. He may be able to save one of the counselors who is going through the Vesid program but the other position is very much in jeopardy. He said he had interviewed the highest scorers on the test and they are very nice people, but they are not veterans and it is his position that these counselor positions must be staffed by veterans. He is still working on this matter.

The report of the Veterans' Service Agency being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet advised the committee that on April 11th, SUNY New Paltz is hosting an "Institute for Disaster Mental Health - Healing the Scars of War", recognizing what our veterans are dealing with.

She then advised that Jennifer Schwartz of the Ulster County Arts Council was not able to attend this evening; however, Benjamin Krevolin, President of the Dutchess County Arts Council was present to go through the grant and answer any questions the committee may have. She then introduced Mr. Krevolin.

Ulster County Arts Council:

Benjamin Krevolin, President of the Dutchess County Arts Council, said his would be the office that would be administering the \$50,000 allotted by the Ulster County Legislature for arts organizations in Ulster County. He is working on application language and he assured all of the Committee that it will be made very clear that this is Ulster County money that is being distributed.

He also advised that he had just been informed that JP Moran Chase has allocated grant monies of about \$21,000 to be distributed to arts organizations in Dutchess and Ulster County and that about \$9,000 to \$11,000 would go to Ulster County. He said the guidelines and press release would go out next week. There will be a workshop at SUNY New Paltz on March 15th which is basically for computer training on grant applications.

The formal Grant Application Workshop is scheduled for April 3rd from 5:30 to 7:30pm in the Legislative Library of the County Office Building. He said he hopes representatives from most groups will attend; however, if some are unable to come his office will see that all applications receive guidance and technical assistance. The deadline for 2008 projects is Friday, May 9, 2008 at 5:00pm. He said applicants will receive notice of funding decisions on June 26th.

At the request of Leg. Cummings, Mr. Krevolin will provide a list of organizations and people who will receive notice of the funding. In reply to a question from Leg. Gregorius, Mr. Krevolin advised that there will be several press releases which will include the details of the workshop and the application may be accessed on the web site. The same application can be used for the JP Morgan Chase grant. He advised that the Ulster County applications would also include several questions which are designed for data collection. He also said that Jennifer Schwartz of the Ulster County Arts Council would also be issuing a press release. Chairwoman Zimet said the Legislature would also do so making sure the public knows the Legislature is the driving force behind this.

In reply to a question from Leg. Terrizzi, Mr. Krevolin said that the \$21,000 grant from JP Morgan Chase, there would be \$3,000 held in abeyance to cover any appeals process and the balance would be split between Dutchess and Ulster Counties, with possibly a little heavier weight given to Ulster County.

The presentation by the Dutchess County Arts Council being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Marianne Collins, Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education at Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College:

Dean Collins advised that Dean Burlingham was ill and unable to attend this evening and President Katt, who was also unable to attend, requested her to attend and thank the committee for passing the safety and security measures in November which our college needs to implement as soon as possible.

She said Dean Burlingham has a meeting scheduled with Sheldon Quimby to get these measures in the form to go out for bid. Dean Collins said it is of the utmost importance that this process move quickly. She said there was another incident in Santa Fe and our faculty and students are very nervous. The college is committed to putting these basic security measures in place.

Chairwoman Zimet asked if faculty is getting any training for emergency situations. Dean Collins said the college is moving forward with a campus-wide plan that has had the input of, among others, the President, our Director of Security, and the head of our Criminal Justice program. President Katt has attended many SUNY conferences wherein these matters were discussed and has brought that information back to our campus. The message we have gotten from all of the conferences and other input is not "if" something happens, but "when". The problem is that many of the protective measures in our campus-wide plan rely upon the safety and security infrastructure we are trying to go out for bid on.

Leg. Gregorius asked if there was any movement by the state or federal governments to assist or to give some guidelines. The Dean said she has not heard about anything from the federal government but that SUNY has some information and President Katt has been working with the community colleges in Rockland, Orange and Sullivan Counties.

Leg. Harris said that once any system is put in place it is of the utmost importance that said system be tested to insure that said system is functioning properly. If the system does not work it can only create more problems.

At this time Chairwoman Zimet made a motion that this Committee make the safety, security and protection of students at Ulster County Community College a priority. The motion was seconded by Leg. Gregorius and upon voice vote was unanimously approved.

Leg. Terrizzi asked if the college had a communications plan. She said that she had children in college and that they had some of the safety procedures such as lock-down

in place. Dean Collins said the college does have an Emergency Management Plan in place. Also, the Board of Trustees has just passed a resolution creating Peace Officer status for our campus security officers.

There followed a general discussion of the proposed cell tower or antenna for the library roof and its current status, which was unclear to everyone. Chairwoman Zimet said she would contact Dennis Doyle and see what was happening. The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Cornell Cooperative Extension:

Ms. Reidy said she had been unable to attend January's meeting as its adjourned date was the night of the first board meeting for Cornell Cooperative Extension. She advised that the new Board President was Ray Haberski and Sandy Snyder was the new Vice-President.

She also referred to the one-page Legislative Update distributed to the committee and asked if that was enough information on things that were happening. The Committee seemed satisfied on the whole and Ms. Reidy said each article has a contact telephone number if anyone wanted more information on anything in particular.

Ms. Reidy advised that she will hold an introductory breakfast meeting at Cooperative Extension on March 4th from 7:30am to 9:00am. There will be a tour of the offices so that Legislators can meet the staff and see what Cooperative Extension is doing. She said if anyone can't make the breakfast meeting she will give them a personal tour whenever they can make it.

Cooperative Extension has started a new effort on recycling in its own offices. Leg. Sheeley asked if recycling was mandatory. Ms. Reidy said it was but over the years there have been a lot of changes and new regulations and she believes it is much more reasonable now.

Ms. Reidy advised that one of the ways Cornell Cooperative Extension has continued to function in the face of level funding and budget cuts is by increasing the number of its grants and contract programming. There is a \$32,000 grant to fund the program called "Relatives as Parents" which is targeted to grandparents raising their grandchildren and is mostly in the Wawarsing-Ellenville area. This program is very hard to get people to come too as they are afraid the children will be taken away and really needs to be publicized by word of mouth. The grant comes from the State of New York.

Another New York State grant is on "Eat Smart New York" which is designed to educate people on the use of food stamps. It is an \$188,000 grant and it comes from the State through the Department of Social Services. There is a grant on "Emergency Information" and another on credit card debt. These are small grants but the programs are very informative and well attended.

The after school programs at two Kingston Schools, John Kennedy and George Washington, are back in business and are very successful.

There is a Department of Environmental Protection grant for \$17,000 for program planning. Also, a \$232,000 grant as well as a prospective \$5 million grant from New York City DEP for the Esopus Basin. All EPA grants are for the upper Esopus advised Ms. Reidy, who also explained the Sea Grant (NOAH) working with tidal waters along the Hudson River down to New York City.

Continuing with grants, Ms. Reidy said there is a grant for ATV safety but the course has been rescheduled until a police department can be found that will agree to work with them. Also, Rutgers University has a \$30,000 grant to put up a demonstration garden to show people how to use rainwater for irrigation.

Reporting on the \$600,000 Farm Labor Housing Grant Ms. Reidy said everyone is ready to go for replacing current farm housing with mobile homes. The problem is in getting the contracts through as there appears to be a backlog; however, if it hangs on much longer we won't be able to do it. The grant is from the NYS Office of Small Cities for its Farm Worker Housing Rehabilitation Program and runs through Ulster County.

The report of Cornell Cooperative Extension being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Rick Remsnyder, Director of Ulster County Tourism.

Ulster County Tourism:

Mr. Remsnyder reported that Ulster County Tourism would be participating in the NY Times Travel Show. He said he had been able to purchase some display materials and was looking forward to this three-day show which is being held at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City. Also attending will be Lisa Berger of his office.

He also discussed the proposed replacement of the Tourism Caboose on Washington Avenue in Kingston. Alta Log Homes has offered to install a building on the site for use as a tourism building; however, since questions were raised at the last meeting of this Committee as to the propriety of an out-of-county company doing this, Mr. Remsnyder said he has sent out letters to the Ulster County companies to see if any of them are interested in the same proposal. He said the builder will also install plumbing since there is a water line. We would also like to have an open verandah put on so visitors can sit.

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Mr. Remsnyder also discussed two publications. The first which is going out for bid is a new "Golf Guide"; and the second one going out for bid is a new "Hiking Guide". The big movement now is the "2008 Travel Guide" and he hopes to have that out by Memorial Day which is much earlier than last year and in time for the summer season. He also gave the new members of the Committee a run-down on the Judy Randall conference he had attended and some of her ideas for increasing tourism.

The report of Ulster County Tourism being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet discussed with the committee the proposal of the Ulster County Office for the Aging (Anne Cardinale, Director was unable to attend), to retain monies for a new vehicle from the sale of a surplus vehicle. She said her investigation had shown that it was not possible as a matter of policy, but that it may be done on a case by case basis. She has advised Anne Cardinale that when she has something concrete she should make another application.

At this time a motion to move to Executive Session was made by Leg. Sheeley and seconded by Leg. Briggs and the committee moved to Executive Session at 7:14pm. On a motion to return to regular session made by Leg. Sheeley and seconded by Leg. Briggs the committee returned to regular session at 7:25pm.

There being no further business Chairwoman Zimet moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting was duly adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

