

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 30<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JANUARY, 2008

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

CLAIRE BURLINGHAM, Dean of Administration, SUNY/Ulster  
TERRY BREITENSTEIN, Director, Ulster Co. Veterans' Service Agency  
ANNE CARDINALE, Director, Office for the Aging  
JENNIFER SCHWARTZ, Ulster County Arts Council  
RICK REMSNYDER, Director, Ulster County Tourism  
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Zimet called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and at the request of the Chair, all parties present identified themselves and gave a synopsis of their interests in this committee. Leg. Gregorius said he wanted to see the economy in the county jump-started and believed this would happen through the arts. Leg. Terrizzi and Leg. Briggs both stated they had a great interest in education and Leg. Sheeley said that as well as education she was very much concerned with tourism. Both Leg. Cummings and Leg. Harris detailed their past involvement with this committee. Chairwoman Zimet said she was firmly in support of the arts as a cultural medium, both in and for itself and for economic development. At this point Chairwoman Zimet recognized Rick Remsnyder, Director of Ulster County Tourism.

Ulster County Tourism:

Mr. Remsnyder gave his background, first as a thirty-year journalist and then as Marketing Director at the Nevele Grand Hotel. He also discussed his budgetary problems including the cuts as well as some restoration of funding and the effect both had on his department. He said at all times his office was making the most of whatever funds were available to him. He also discussed the history of The Tourism Advisory Board and its makeup.

Mr. Remsnyder said one of the highlights and goals of 2007 were to come up with a new initiative with their main marketing tool, The Ulster County Travel Guide. The new revised Travel Guide was published to rave reviews he said. Also, the Travel Guide earned Honorable Mention nationally, which was the first time Ulster had ever earned a national award. He said he has a directive from the County Legislature to improve the Tourism website which his office is currently working on.

Goals are to improve communications with all area Chambers of Commerce and do some networking and sharing of ideas and services. Mr. Remsnyder also discussed the outdoor kiosks currently in or planned for Ellenville, and the Towns of Marlboro and Shandaken. These are joint ventures with the municipalities and installation should be complete in the spring. He also said he is working with the Tourism Advisory Board and Ulster Tomorrow on long-term strategic planning and is also getting out to various events and county fairs to promote tourism in the county. He also discussed the up-coming tulip festival.

Chairwoman Zimet asked Mr. Remsnyder to get initiatives out to the members of this committee on the Quadracentennial. She said Gov. Spitzer has put \$7 million into his budget for the Quadracentennial and has also allowed \$7 million for the pedestrian bridge or walkway over the Hudson River. Mr. Remsnyder said the primary goal was to stimulate and increase travel and tourism into Ulster County.

He introduced for discussion the feasibility and legality of replacing the Tourism Caboose on Washington Avenue in Kingston with a small log home donated by Alta Log Homes in cooperation with the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce. He said the only provision from Alta Log Homes was some acknowledgement posted on the building that it had been donated by them. Mr. Remsnyder said the company has also agreed to put in plumbing. Leg. Harris asked if this company was located outside of Ulster County and Mr. Remsnyder will check on that. After further discussion a motion to authorize Mr. Remsnyder to further investigate this matter was made by Leg. Sheeley and seconded by Leg. Harris and upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote was unanimously approved.

Returning to the Tourism Advisory Board, Chairwoman Zimet advised that it was created during the time the hotel/motel tax was proposed. She said the industry was upset because it thought it was being singled out and that was how the Advisory Board came into being. She also further discussed the Travel Guide and the proposed Website both of which have been the work of a professional company. She believes the awards garnered by the Travel Guide more than justify outsourcing to a professional.

The report of Ulster County Tourism being completed, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Claire Burlingham, Dean of Administration at Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College:

Dean Burlingham distributed the college's Spring 2008 Calendar of Special Events and advised that there would be two productions presented in the newly renovated Quimby Theatre over the next several months by the college's Theatre Department. "Dancing at Lughnasa" would be presented in April and "My Fair Lady" in June.

On enrollment, the Dean advised that spring 2008 is looking strong and is just at budget projections. Not included in enrollment at of this time is the Express Semester which begins in early March and runs for seven or eight weeks. The Dean said many of these course offerings have closed, which will have a positive impact on spring enrollment. We have also not yet factored in the Collegian Program. It is the college's feeling that the spring semester will be at or above our budget projections.

On the Governor's proposed budget, Dean Burlingham said what is proposed is to keep some of the ancillary aid, such as contract courses and child care. However, the budget calls for a \$50 per fte cut to our base state aid. She said state aid is presently set at \$2,675 per fte and the cut would bring that down to \$2,625 which would translate to a \$120,000 shortfall in our revenue, all of which comes at a time when all labor contracts are in negotiation.

She explained that the original funding formula for community colleges was one-third from the County, one-third from the State and one-third from tuition. Currently the county is contributing 30%, the state 29%, students 37% and other such as grants 4%. She said SUNY had requested that community colleges receive \$200 increase in base aid. The indications are that SUNY will fight for the restoration of the cuts but she does not think we will see any increase.

At the request of Chairwoman Zimet, Dean Burlingham said that 80% to 85% of our students work either full time or part time while attending, and 65% of students are on some form of financial aid.

Chairwoman Zimet advised that the college and the Legislature have been really trying not to balance the budget on the backs of students. She said a \$50 increase in their tuition is a big deal to these students.

Returning to her report, Dean Burlingham said capital funds are a separate item and that SUNY had budget \$450 million for capital improvements for community colleges. The change, she said, is in the way the money is allocated. Last year we had to do an updated Facilities Master Plan which is in the works so that we could qualify for some of these funds. After the Plan is completed it still has to be approved by our Board of Trustees, the County Legislature and

SUNY. She stressed that the State will not give funding until we have a resolution from our Legislature that they will match funds. All capital projects are on a 50% state and 50% county funding.

Dean Burlingham advised that recent capital projects have been renovation of the Quimby Theatre, renovations of the Student Lounge, the Vanderlyn roof, upgrade of Security radios and the parking lots and roadways, all of which have been completed. Currently under construction are the microbiology labs, which are essential to our nursing program, which are on time and on budget. We hope to have them completed in April or May. She advised that we had received a \$360 grant from the federal government to equip these labs. The renovations to the Senate Gym are also on time and on budget and should be completed by the end of February. She said the Gym is used not only for our programs and intercollegiate athletics, but also by the local schools.

The Dean said that part of the \$1.5 million which was earmarked for the Gym addition and not used will now be used for various safety projects including the installation of a new elevator in Vanderlyn to replace the existing elevator which is a safety hazard, closing at inopportune times. The Dean also advised that she had discussed the cell tower, which is a little more than an antenna on the top of the Library, and he said we might not have to go through the Town of Marletown and for safety and security reasons the county can become the lead agency.

Dean Burlingham also said the college recognizes the financial problems of the county and has tried not to ask for an increase in their support for several years.

At this time Chairwoman Zimet advised the committee that the college had a vacancy on its Board of Trustees due to the resignation of Trustee Mike Moriello who felt he had a conflict of interest at this time because of his family's dealings with SUNY New Paltz. She said Allison Lee Hinchey has asked to be appointed to the Board. After a brief discussion, a motion was made to approve a resolution to appoint Allison Lee Hinchey to the Ulster County Community College Board of Trustees, said motion being made by Leg. Sheeley and seconded by Leg. Gregorius. Upon Chairwoman Zimet asking for a voice vote on the motion, said motion was unanimously approved as follows:

"WHEREAS, THE Board of Trustees of the Ulster County Community College accepted the resignation, with regret, of Trustee Michael Moriello on November 20, 2007, and

WHEREAS Michael Moriello's term would have expired on June 30, 2009, and

[WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature thanks Michael Moriello for his many years of service to the Ulster County Community College.]

RESOLVED, that Allison Lee, 67 Brucken Road, Hurley, New York, 12443 (Term to Expire June 30, 2009) is hereby appointed as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Ulster County Community College,

And moves its adoption."

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Jennifer Schwartz on behalf of the Ulster County Arts Council.

Ulster County Arts Council:

Ms. Schwartz explained to the new committee members the history involved in the decision to have the Dutchess County Arts Council administer of Ulster County arts funding. She explained how the program would be structured and the fact that Dutchess County already administers the NYSCA Decentralization Grants to Ulster County arts groups. For a nominal fee of \$2,500 Dutchess County would administer the \$50,000 authorized by the Ulster County Legislature. She said that Ulster County would be highly represented on the panel to be created to judge applications and make awards.

Ms. Schwartz said she had sat on a panel that was reviewing applications (from Dutchess County) as an observer and she was very impressed with the amount of time and effort involved. She said doing it this way makes the process open and fair and does not differentiate politically.

Chairwoman Zimet informed the new members that the administration of grant funds by the Dutchess County Arts Council had been approved. She also said that we now have to get a contract approved and signed so that we can then get people to make application for the funds. Ms. Schwartz also referred to the 2008 UC Strategic Project Grants Program Proposed Timeline. She also discussed a proposed plan to have a Council member be named to the state council for the arts and in this way Ulster County will have a voice in the State. She will set up a meeting on this for sometime towards the end of February.

Leg. Cummings expressed concern as to who would be issuing the grant checks and suggested that they not be from Dutchess County Arts Council. Her concern is that Ulster County would lose its identity. Ms. Schwartz said Ulster County Arts Council can issue the checks.

Ms. Schwartz ended her report by distributing copies of a paper issued by Transart & Cultural Services outlining the proposed restoration of a historic property on Henry Street in Kingston, that Transart has received grant funding for and which they are planning to renovate and restore as their headquarters.

The report of Ulster County Arts Council being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Terry Breitenstein, Director of the Ulster County Veterans' Service Agency.

Ulster County Veteran's Service Agency:

Mr. Breitenstein discussed the day-to-day operations of his department and said the goal for him is to be able to get out of the office and start to develop additional resources and programs for the veterans.

He distributed his statistics sheet for 2007 and reviewed same with the committee. He explained that Veteran's Services does not have a wheelchair van and has to use UCAT's van if they wanted to provide transportation to the VA for wheelchair vets. He said that under the law we have to provide the same services for wheelchair vets as we do for all other veterans.

Mr. Breitenstein discussed the two new counselors he had hired about one and one-half years ago who were hired provisionally subject to them passing the Civil Service test. He said when they took the test it was not at all related to what their jobs as counselors were and neither of them scored in the top three. The top three were all women who had no idea what the job was about and as one of the women told him, she just took the test to get a job with benefits. He explained that once hired these counselors have to be accredited by several other outside veterans' agencies, including the American Legion. He said the American Legion's criteria for accreditation was that the proposed counselor has to be a veteran.

Mr. Breitenstein said he has tried for years to get the local Personnel Department to add "must be a veteran" to the postings but they have not done same saying it was discriminatory. After further discussion, a motion was made by Leg. Harris for a resolution supporting the concept of including this requirement on the postings and sending same to the Personnel Committee asking them to review the process for making this change. The motion was seconded by Leg. Briggs and after further discussion Leg. Harris withdrew the motion and Leg. Briggs withdrew his second. A brief discussion ensued, after which Chairwomen Zimet made a motion to appoint Leg. Sheeley as a sub-committee to work with Mr. Breitenstein towards a resolution of this matter. The motion was seconded by Leg. Gregorius and unanimously approved.

The committee then returned to the question of the transportation problem for wheelchair vets and how it relates to other departments. There have been some communications problems between Ulster County Rural Transportation and Veteran's Service Agency regarding this matter. Thereupon a sub-committee consisting of Leg. Harris, Leg. Sheeley and Leg. Terrizzi was formed by Chairwoman Zimet and directed to address the issue of transportation of wheelchair veterans as well as the clients of Office for the Aging to determine how we should proceed to meet the existing needs of clients of both agencies.

The report of Ulster County Veterans' Service Agency being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Anne Cardinale, Director of Ulster County Office for the Aging.

Ulster County Office for the Aging:

Ms. Cardinale distributed copies of the OFA report for January, 2008. She requested the committee, by a proposed resolution, to authorize the designation of proceeds of surplus equipment purchased by a designated grant be reallocated for senior programs under the Ulster County Office for the Aging. A motion to approve such a resolution was made by Leg. Briggs and seconded by Leg. Cummings.

In discussing this matter, Leg. Gregorius said it seemed like there is going to be a large amount of time between taking the van off the road and getting another one. Ms. Cardinale said she would look into that question. After discussion it was decided that this resolution be made contingent upon Legs. Harris and Zimet discussing the matter with the County Administrator. At this time Chairwoman Zimet called for a voice vote and the resolution was unanimously approved subject to stated contingency.

Ms. Cardinale thanked the committee and whoever else was responsible, for the quick action in getting a temporary caseworker position filled to fill a medical leave. She also wanted to thank Buildings & Grounds for sending their crew to help us adjust our office space.

On the meal delivery, a van was lent to Prestige to utilize for delivery of meals to the seniors in the Town of Rosendale. The van is no longer operable and Prestige has no other means of getting the meals delivered. She said Leg. Alan Lomita and Supervisor Pat McDonough stepped in and arranged for UCAT to deliver the meals and the town of Rosendale will subsidize payment.

She said there have also been problems in Phoenicia where the meal distribution center had been closed. The town is currently being serviced by an open soup kitchen. Ms. Cardinale is hoping to get an empty store front for Office for the Aging's distribution center. There followed a general discussion of problems in the Phoenicia area which Leg. Gregorius will look into.

Ms. Cardinale advised that they will be opening a soup kitchen for residents in Shokan and are currently in negotiations for meal sites in New Paltz, Highland and the Town of Ulster. She said that Office for the Aging will be collaborating with Jewish Family Services on various programs to identify depression in home-bound seniors, as well as drug and alcohol abuse. Leg. Briggs suggested that there be some outreach to local rescue squads who would also be interested in these programs.

In the matter of additional staff, Ms. Cardinale referred the Committee to the handout showing the data to support the request, including HICAP and meals. The committee will take it under advisement. Ms. Cardinale also said that UC/New York Connects will be reported on at next months' meeting.

The report of Ulster County Office for the Aging being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet presented a proposed resolution as follows:

"RESOLVED, that Karlyn Knaust Elia be and she hereby is reappointed as County Historian for the County of Ulster for a term of one (1) year, said term to expire December 31, 2008, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Rose LeFever be and she hereby is reappointed as Associate County Historian for the County of Ulster for a term of one (1) year, said term to expire December 31, 2008

And moves its adoption."

A motion to approve said resolution as presented was made by Leg. Harris and seconded by Leg. Cummings and upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, said resolution was approved. Legislator Sheeley asked that the minutes reflect that she temporarily left the room and did not vote on the appointment.

#### Cornell Cooperative Extension:

In the absence of Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Leg. Harris distributed copies of Legislative Update and 2007 Annual Report to the Committee and advised that this meeting had conflicted with Cornell's Annual Meeting.

There being no further business, Chairwoman Zimet duly declared the meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder



