

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 18TH DAY OF JUNE, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

CLAIRE BURLINGHAM, Dean of Administration, Ulster Co. Community College
LYDIA REIDY, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
RICK REMSNYDER, Director, Ulster County Tourism
MARK REYNOLDS, Southern Ulster Times
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder.

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Zimet called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm and recognized Claire Burlingham, Dean of Administration of Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College:

Dean Burlingham advised the Committee that she was attending a class at the BRC which is the Citizen's Police Academy. It is made up of couples, single women and anyone interested in protecting their homes and families. There is information about gangs and how to recognize them which is especially important to women with children who live in gang areas.

She also wanted to thank the Committee and the Legislature for their support of the college's 2008-09 budget.

Chairwoman Zimet said she had read in the New York Times that banks were cutting back on giving student loans. Dean Burlingham said that Nellie Mae had pulled out but has reversed their decision and is coming back in. Citibank, which has no local branch, has advised they will no longer be servicing student loans for community colleges. It is going to affect our students but how much we will have to wait and see. Leg. Gregorius asked if there were some other bank which would come in to take up the slack. The Dean said that there used to be a preferred lender list but with all of the problems in the student loan industry that list is no longer available and we are not allowed to do that. Students and their families now have to do this themselves.

On enrollment, Dean Burlingham said spring and summer have been strong. The second summer session begins on July 5th and we are currently about 3% over our summer projections. We are 67 students ahead of last year for the fall. This year we used the number of students who have taken placement tests and are 25% over the number of students who took placement tests last year.

Dean Burlingham said she thinks the economy has a lot to do with the increase what with the price of everything going up. She said we are trying to rearrange our class schedules so students don't have to come out here every day. We are also looking at more blended classes, that is classes that are taken partly on campus and partly on-line. Leg. Sheeley asked if the college had spoken with Cynthia Ruiz of UCAT about a dedicated shuttle, and the Dean said she would look into it. She said the buses are here on a regular schedule.

On the cell tower, Dean Burlingham advised that we had been dealing with Verizon but now they are a part of the initiative with the cell tower proposed for the rear of the Stone Ridge Fire Company property on the corner of Cottekill and Rte. 209. The Zoning Board finally approved it but the Town is refusing to issue a Building Permit because of same dispute. She does not know the exact details but said if that tower goes up we will have cell service here. She said Verizon has no more capital funds to make another investment in this area, but they said if the current deal falls through we are next. She said AT&T is just not interested. Dean Burlingham said our cell service has gotten a little better since they put up a tower in High Falls; however, there are still pockets where no cell service is available on campus. She said we are signing up students for NY Alert not only for cell service but for text messaging and e-mail.

Leg. Sheeley said she would contact Vin Martello, the Supervisor of the Town of Marbletown to see what the problem is. Chairwoman Zimet asked her to stress that this committee is making it a priority to have this accomplished before the students return in September. She also make the suggestion for a joint meeting between the Stone Ridge officials, Legislators and the College.

At this time Dean Burlingham presented a proposed Budget Modification for approval by this Committee. The modification is to move funds within Capital Project #286 to help fund the installation of a campus wide upgraded fire and public address system. She said some of the older buildings do not have any electronic fire system except bells. The matter was handled through County Purchasing and went out for bid and was published. The fire alarm system proposed is very robust with public address systems both inside and outside the buildings. This system also has an intrusion alarm system which can be monitored by Security on campus. The Dean said many of our computer labs, the cafeteria, the bookstore and other areas have intrusion alarms which are monitored by Safeco at a cost of many thousands of dollars per year. She said the cost for the complete and total overhaul of the fire and public address and intrusion alarms system is \$657,000.

Dean Burlingham advised that the money is available in capital project #286; however, it is in other components and would have to be moved into this project.

In reply to a question from Leg. Harris, the Dean advised that there were two bids, one from Pantel and one from Safeco. Safeco was the low bidder; however, Safeco did not have any provision for intrusion alarms and County Purchasing felt the bid of Safeco was inadequate.

A general discussion followed. Dean Burlingham said the bulk of the funds for this project was coming from the deletion of the \$1.5 million addition to the Gym, which came in at over \$2 million on bid and was dropped. Leg. Cummings asked about the reputation of Pantel and the Dean said Purchasing had checked and they have a very good reputation. Leg. Gregorius asked about the funds that were transferred from the elevator money last month and Dean Burlingham said there was \$12,000 transferred from the elevator line to signage but there are still funds available.

Leg. Gregorius said he was concerned about the increase in spending. Chairwoman Zimet explained about the 5-year Capital Plan and how some things which were in the forefront when they were written had lost their priority by the end of the 5 years. The Dean said this phase of the Capital Plan was almost concluded. She said there will be a new Facilities Master Plan, which the County recently funded, and the only carry-over will be the addition to the Senate Gym.

Leg. Terrizzi asked if the project could be re-bid and Dean Burlingham said she would check with Purchasing; however, Purchasing had told her that they had sent the RFPs out to anyone in the area with the capability to do this and we only received two responses. She also said the rebidding takes more time and we will then run the risk of getting even higher bids, what with costs on everything going up.

In reply to a question from Leg. Harris, Dean Burlingham said there was a site inspection by engineers and they found our fire alarm system to be totally and completely inadequate. Under this proposal, she said, the entire alarm system would be up-graded, including improved communication with Security, strobe lights, and upgrading of automatic doors.

Leg. Briggs said it would take 60-90 days to rebid and if he was a contractor he would not bid on this project because the costs are changing every day.

Leg. Sheeley said we learned from 9/11 just how important communication is during an emergency and that it saves lives. She said safety issues are the most important.

Chairwoman Zimet said a year and one-half to two years ago, shootings on college campus were not as they are now. She said everything has changed except the fact that safety of our students comes first.

At this time Leg. Cummings made a motion to approve the proposed budget modification on Capital Project #286 as presented by the college. The motion was seconded by Leg. Sheeley. Upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, the proposed budget modification of Ulster County Community College's Capital Project #286 was unanimously approved.

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 discussed the Esopus Creek Project grant from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. This project is now known as the Ashokan Basin Project. The new grant is for the next five-year phase and is \$1.5 million. This is to do community work in getting all of the principals involved in order to implement the Watershed plan. There is also \$2 million that Cooperative Extension will be administering that is dedicated to this project and which will help determine which projects will be funded. She said the new grant period started on June 6th.

She also advised that they are looking for new space for this project in Boiceville. Soil & Water will also have offices there.

Leg. Sheeley said it seems like Environmental Protection is not just making lip service and is actually listening to what people are saying. Ms. Reidy said DEP has some control and they have some input but they do not control the project. She also advised that Soil & Water will be taking a more active role in these projects.

Turning to the Farm Labor Housing grant a committee has been formed and they are now looking through twenty to thirty applications. She said the grant would be able to fund about sixteen or seventeen. The committee has been looking at the sites and will be making a decision shortly.

There followed a general discussion of the proposed mobile home housing and what they must have. Ms. Reidy said some of the farmers are more interested in double wides, but they would have to pay for the difference. She said this grant brings increased profitability for farmers and better housing for farm workers. The grant pays 75% of the cost and the farmer pays the remaining 25%.

Ms. Reidy and the committee discussed the rising cost of food and Ms. Reidy distributed a brochure on "Plant a Row for the Hungry", a program to assist the hungry in Ulster County sponsored by Cooperative Extension.

Chairwoman Zimet said budget time was coming up and she would like Ms. Reidy to explain to the Committee why CCE charges the county a portion of its rent. Ms. Reidy said the County has provided housing for CCE since its inception in 1913. They were housed in a county owned building at 74 John Street from 1913 to 1999, at which time they were moved to 10 Westbrook Lane in a building shared with Ulster County Tourism.

Ms. Reidy advised that the calculation for space both at 74 John St. and 10 Westbrook Lane shows up in County budget and is used as total county contribution for CCE for State Law 224 funding reimbursement. She said CCE receives about \$60,000 from State based on a formula that takes into account population/county contribution/past three years funding and other factors. State 224 funding is divided between Cooperative Extensions in all counties.

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

Ulster County Tourism:

Mr. Remsnyder distributed copies of a proposed press release detailing a press conference to be held on Friday, June 20th at 3:30pm at the Senate House in Kingston to announce major plans for 2009 Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadracentennial Celebration. Among these are plans for a county-wide tulip bulb giveaway and fall planting day, an international conference featuring Dutch scholars hosted by SUNY New Paltz, and the awarding of a \$20,000 grant for a cultural tourism initiative featuring a Dutch artist-in-residence program.

Mr. Remsnyder said the Hudson River Maritime Museum has offered to host the Tulip Bulb Giveaway Day on Friday, September 19th from 5-7pm and on Saturday, September 20th from 9am to 2pm. There are also plans in the works for a Community Planting Day during October and a large Tulip Festival centered in the Maritime Museum for May, 2009.

Mr. Remsnyder advised that he had hoped to have the Travel Guide out by June 1st but there were some design problems and some printing problems. It seemed that the color would bleed down onto the page from the banner on top. This is being corrected. He said the bids for the Golf Guide and the Hiking Guide both have been finalized and they will be ready to go out shortly.

Copies of an article from Vitality Magazine, by two Cape Cod travel writers were distributed to the committee. It was a very positive article on Ulster County and Mr. Remsnyder said the only way he found out about it, as it is a local magazine in that area, was that a person from this area was vacationing there. He said this is the best form of advertising.

There followed a brief discussion on bus shelters and advertising and who gets the revenue from the ads. Chairwoman Zimet will follow up. Leg. Cummings asked about the proposed visitor's center and Mr. Remsnyder said that was stalled in negotiations. Mr. Remsnyder also distributed press clippings from the Southern Ulster Times on the Southern Ulster Chamber of Commerce's tourism efforts and on the groundbreaking of the Walkway over the Hudson.

Office for the Aging:

The report of Ulster County Tourism being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet brought up the Office for the Aging and that they could not appear because of attendance at a conference. Chairwoman Zimet said she had been advised that, on the Meals on Wheels program, they may start to go to frozen meals because of the problems getting the meals delivered. There followed a general discussion on this matter the pressures on these programs nationwide, with delivery costs and gasoline going higher. Leg. Gregorio said we have a contract and that contract is valid and it is Prestige's responsibility to pay to have these meals delivered. There is still two and one-half years on their contract. There is a lot of pressure at this time as the number of senior citizens looking for this services continues to increase on a daily basis.

Veteran's Affairs:

Leg. Harris reported on the status of the Veterans' Cemetery Committee. So far the only one is in New Paltz. He said there should be a bronze plaque on a flat base of concrete or bluestone so everyone will have the same markers. They will also allow spouses and unemancipated children to also be buried there. The family will be able to pay for and buy a contiguous grave. The veteran's grave will be paid for by the county. Leg. Harris said the correction officers from Walkill and Shawangunk Prisons will pay for the memorial.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Sheeley and seconded by Leg. Briggs, and there being no objection, Chairwoman Zimet declared the meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

