

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, PLANNING & TRANSIT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - March 25, 2009
MEETING HELD AT: UCCC – Stone Ridge, NY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Legislator Hector Rodriguez – Chair Legislator Wayne Harris
 Legislator Gary Bischoff Legislator Joseph P. Roberti Jr.
 Legislator Peter Loughran Legislator Catherine Terrizzi
 Legislator Mary Sheeley

ABSENT OR EXCUSED: NO ONE

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Arthur Smith III, Deputy County Executive (Budget) Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning;
Lydia “Lee” Reidy, Exec. Director of Cornell Co-Op Lance Matteson, President of UCDC;
Nancy E.K. Schaef, Dir of Employment & Training Cynthia Ruiz, Director of UCAT;

Stephen Finkle, Director of Economic Development, City of Kingston
Holly Christiana, Representative of new Kerhonkson “Pay It Forward Center” - providing resources for living

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm and asked for a motion to approve the February 25th minutes. **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Bischoff. All were in favor.**

OLD BUSINESS:

UCDC Performance Agreement - Chairman Rodriguez asked if anyone had additions or further modifications they wished considered; also reviewed modifications that were made: Adjusted retainment incentives to match incentives offered for created positions and kept funding incentive match at 50%

Discussion: UCDC President Lance Matteson spoke at length to address questions posed by Legislators Loughran and Terrizzi, primarily around the issue of the definition of “quality jobs” and the need to have good paying quality jobs. The definition being used is one the IDA uses and is “median wage plus benefits.” Other issues addressed by President Matteson were the need for “middle jobs” as well as “high end positions” because more people in the region qualify and are skilled for “middle jobs” and would benefit from having employment opportunities, especially in the present economy.

Legislator Bischoff raised concern over the level of work being created by the agreement with regard to documentation that must be obtained, kept and submitted by the UCDC. He asked the committee to consider changing the need for a letter from a company CEO, feeling someone could be authorized other than an actual CEO and felt emails should be able to be submitted. The Committee feels “emails” should not be allowed and that a letter doesn’t take an enormous amount of time by a company. They did concur that a regional Executive or a CEO’s designee should be able to provide the letter rather than the actual CEO.

NEW BUSINESS:

Deputy County Executive Arthur Smith III provided update and overview of stimulus monies projected to be coming into the County and reviewed several of the resolutions pending before the committee. The stimulus monies are a “win-win” situation and will allow for numerous projects to be accomplished and in a timely fashion. There will also be a savings of approximately \$140,000 that can go back into contingency since stimulus funds will replace monies that were earmarked for certain projects.

Holly Christiana spoke of a new not-for-profit that is becoming operational in the Kerhonkson/Ellenville area. The “Pay It Forward Center” will provide resources for living: a soup kitchen, food pantry, clothes closet, small home repairs, resume and job readiness assistance, etc. Ms. Christiana wanted the County to be aware of this new center and make some connections which may down the road help them in providing services. (ie with transportation needs) While the Committee all agreed this Center would undoubtedly be appreciated and fill the needs of a number of individuals, it was pointed out that County involvement at this time would be difficult until the Center obtains it’s licensing (not for profit status.)

RESOLUTIONS:

Approving Administrative Guidelines For a Performance Based Economic Development Plan Agreement Between Ulster County Development Corporation and The County of Ulster – Amending the 2009 Ulster County Budget – Ulster County Development Corporation
Motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Roberti.
Ayes (5) Noes (2 – Legislators Loughran and Terrizzi)

Approving 2009 Appropriation Guidelines for Funding Kingston/ Ulster Empire Zone
Motion was made on amended resolution by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor with (1) Abstention (Legislator Sheeley)

Discussion: Steve Finkle, Director of Economic and Community Development, City of Kingston, came to speak about the Kingston/Ulster Empire Zone and the agreement before the committee. He advocated that the requirement for he or his staff to be two days a week at UCDC be removed or modified. He feels that his office and UCDC work closely and routinely enough that this provision isn’t necessary. He also reminded people that the City of Kingston contributes a large amount of funding to the Kingston/Ulster Empire Zone and that the County was approached last fall for the monies being requested and it is really needed at this time as the EZ is in the red. There was also some discussion around the State possibly ending Empire Zones.

Chairman Rodriguez clarified that the requirement for staff to have a presence at UCDC was spoken about with the City on several previous occasions and part of the reasoning for this was the thought that the future may necessitate a merging or consolidation of services offered by UCDC and EZ; however, after committee debate it was agreed upon amending the agreement so that the language would be changed to reflect the requirement would be for EZ staff to have a target of 2 days a month in the UCDC office along with a modification the money would be given to EZ to apply to the 2008-09 fiscal year.

In Support of the Continuation of the NYS Empire Zones Program

Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Harris. All were in favor.

Authorizing The County of Ulster to Submit Applications and Assurances for HUD Community Development Block Grant Funds for the Year 2009 to the NYS Office of Community Renewal (OCR) – Department of Planning **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Discussion: Chairman Rodriguez, joined by Legislator Loughran, questioned Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning, about RUPCO always being awarded the funds to manage the Housing Rehab Program. Their inquiries were relative to how agencies were made aware of these funds in the event there are other organizations that may be interested in participating in Housing Rehab. Director Doyle pointed out that RUPCO is qualified and manages the program successfully. He indicated that public hearings are held, RFPs are done, etc. and no one other than RUPCO comes forward. One year another agency was awarded the contract and it went very poorly. Legislator Terrizzi was going to follow up with someone in her district who may be interested in participating.

Director Doyle indicated this year that \$400,000 would likely be awarded to do Housing Rehab and \$300-350,000 would go to the Farmworker Housing Program. Chairman Rodriguez asked if dividing the monies made sense as opposed to having one large pot of funding for one program or the other and the response was no. Both program areas were in need and would benefit.

Amending the 2009 Ulster County Budget – American Recovery And Reinvestment Act 2009 – Office of Employment and Training **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Sheeley. All were in favor.**

Discussion: Nancy E.K. Schaeff, Director of Employment and Training, joined by Deputy County Executive Art Smith, explained stimulus monies were coming in that would allow for funding of students, dislocated workers and adults to be trained and employed. Selected individuals would be in trained and/or employed for the next 15 months – the funding would arrive in mid-April and programming would need to be established by May 1st. OET must participate or they will lose further funding in other areas of programs in the future.

Legislators were informed that they should direct individuals who may be interested in participating to OET to sign up and be assessed.

Deputy County Executive Smith also addressed that OET may come back to the committee in the future as the funds/programs start and ask for further approvals and assistance from the Legislature. One resolution already in the works, which Chairman Rodriguez agreed to sponsor, would allow OET to enter into a contract with Westchester County.

Establishing Capital Project No. 323 for Purchase of Transit System Buses for Ulster County Area Transit **Motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Loughran. All were in favor.**

Discussion: Will allow for the purchase of (2) Hybrid Busses and (5) Cutaway Busses

Amending the 2009 Ulster County Budget Due to Unavailable State and Federal 5307 Funds – Automatic Vehicle Locator and Scheduling System - Ulster County Area Transit

Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Harris. All were in favor.

Amending the 2009-2014 Ulster County Capital Program and Establishing Capital Project No.324 for Purchase of Automatic Vehicle Locator and Scheduling System – Ulster County Area Transit. **Motion was made by Legislator Sheeley, seconded by Legislator Bischoff. All were in favor.**

Discussion: UCAT is buying the primary equipment, inclusive of the software, but other departments (Public Works, Sheriff,) will participate in the GPS tracking of vehicles by purchasing the equipment needed for their own vehicles.

Amending the 2009 Ulster County Budget Due to Unavailable State and Federal 5311 Funds – Ulster County Area Transit **Motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Loughran. All were in favor.**

Amending Capital Project No. 313 for the Purpose of Construction of a 15,000 Gallon Diesel Fuel Storage Facility for the Ulster County Area Transit Facility – amending the 2009 Ulster County Budget – Public Works Buildings and Grounds **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Bischoff. All were in favor.**

Discussion: Legislator Loughran asked when this will finally begin. Cynthia Ruiz, Director of Public Transportation, indicated the contract will be in place by July 1st to start the project. When done, bids will be for 5, 10, 15, 20 and Bio-Diesel fuel

Amending Capital Project No. 312 for UCAT Building Construction Upgrade and HVAC Controls for the Ulster County Area Transit Facility – Public Works Building and Grounds **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Urging Governor Paterson to Order the Printing and Issuing of Tax Exemption Coupons for Members of Indian Tribes **Motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Spending of Federal Economic Renewal Grants to the County of Ulster **Motion was made by Legislator Sheeley, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Discussion: Legislator Bischoff questioned whether restrictions could be placed on the purchase of goods/services done through the bidding process; Chairman Rodriguez indicated that while difficult to get all American made products any more due to large companies having interests in foreign markets, the manner in which the resolution is written would encourage American products and services being purchased. Also, the bidding process generally allows purchasers to take a low responsible bid – thereby allowing for other factors such as safety standards to be considered.

Appointing Member to the Ulster County Industrial Development Agency **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Sheeley. All were in favor.**

*Discussion: Address listed as the home address was mistakenly a work address
Chairman Rodriguez publically thanked Jennifer Fuentes for her years of service and expressed gratitude for the efforts she put forth on a number of issues.*

Appointing Alternate Member to the Ulster County Planning Board – Town of Esopus **Motion was made by Legislator Bischoff, seconded by Legislator Loughran. All were in favor.**

Appointing Alternate Member to the Ulster County Planning Board – Town of Marlborough **Motion was made by Legislator Bischoff, seconded by Legislator Loughran. All were in favor.**

Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning, closed the meeting informing the Legislators that he can provide any of them with a listing of the County Stimulus projects and that they can go on-line to see projects statewide. The Ulster County Transportation Council will be meeting on April 27th to review what projects were on the TIPS listing that can now be removed since they will be done via stimulus funds. The TIPS listing will be updated.

Legislator Loughran inquired about the Kerhonkson Bridge and Director Doyle indicated the Kerhonkson Bridge along with two bridges in Lloyd will be getting done. Legislator Loughran inquired about the Catskill Railroad Bridge and it was explained Railroad bridges are addressed differently and funding must be sought from a pool of money (Enhancement Funds) other than Transportation Funds.

Legislator Loughran, joined by Chairman Rodriguez, took this time to express the need for the Public Works Department to be able to hire a full time Engineer given the amount of work to be done. However, it was pointed out that due to tight time frames with the stimulus funded projects, consultant engineers would have to be hired. Legislator Loughran is going to address the need for an additional engineer with the County Executive and the Legislature.

Motion to Adjourn:

**Motion was made by Legislator Terrizzi, seconded by Legislator Loughran.
All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at: 8:57 PM**

Submitted by: Mary L. Carey, Clerk of the Legislature