

Meeting Minutes
March 26, 2008
Ulster County Transit Center

Committee Member Attendees: Committee Chair Legislator Hector Rodriguez, Legislator Mary Sheeley, Legislator Peter Loughran, Legislator Catherine Terrizzi, Legislator Gary Bischoff, and Legislator Wayne Harris.

Absent: Legislator Joseph Roberti

Other Attendees: Dennis Doyle, Director of UC Planning, Lance Matteson, President UCDC, Cynthia Ruiz, Director UCAT, Nancy Schaefer, Director OET, Cynthia Baran, Deputy Director OET, Michael Berardi, Chair IDA, Denise Davis, CSEA, Anne Fisher, CSEA, Carla Chance, CSEA, Harry Jameson, CMRR, Greg Vaughn, CMRR, Earl Pardini, CMRR, Mary Ann Pardini, CMRR, Diane Bergquist, UCAT, Tom Jackson, UCAT, Jane Carroll, UCAT, Carol Hargrove, UCAT, Vincent McLoughlin, Andrea Chrisjohn, Joe Aversano, and Marcia Lima, Recording Secretary-OET.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Hector Rodriguez.

Approval of Minutes: Chair Legislator Rodriguez asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the February 27, 2008 meeting. Motion was made by Legislator Mary Sheeley, seconded by Legislator Peter Loughran and carried unanimously.

Public Comment: Chair Legislator Rodriguez stated that personnel issues are undertaken by a specific process set up by the chair of the Legislature and thus all comments relating to those issues must be directed to the County Attorney's office. Chair Rodriguez suggested that any comments during this public session on personnel matters were to be kept at a minimum. He alerted those present that no decisions would be made at this meeting.

Vincent McLaughlin – I have been riding the transit system a long time. Whoever is responsible for pulling the resolution at last month's Legislative session, shame on you. I find it appalling, cruel and rude. Cynthia Ruiz has worked her "butt" off for this county for years. Mr. McLaughlin enthusiastically went on to praise the good work that Cynthia Ruiz has done and the Transit System.

Andrea Chrisjohn – I wrote a letter to the Legislature to voice the opinion of the people who worked at UCAT and to voice an opinion of a situation I witnessed. It was not personal. I was just telling the truth from my perspective. I signed my name to it and I do not take any shame in it. I think things should be just and people should be treated with respect. I deserve to be treated with respect no matter how low or high you are in an organization.

Joe Aversano – As a past employee who worked in this marvelous transit facility. I would like to say that Cynthia Ruiz is a very difficult person to work for.

Diane Bergquist – I work here and I have known Vinnie McLaughlin from riding on the buses, but he only rides the buses he does not work here.

Carla Chance – I am the Second Vice President of Unit 8950, CSEA and I have delivered to Legislator Rodriguez copies of letters from two other former employees of the department stating their viewpoints to be added to the other ones that were in discussion.

Carol Hargrove – The letter that was submitted to you from Andrea Chrisjohn, the first line said, on behalf of the UCAT employees, I just want it known that I am offended by that statement because she did not speak for me and she did not speak for other employees.

Tom Jackson – Agrees with Carol Hargrove. I was also offended by the presumption to speak on behalf of all UCAT employees. I have worked here since 2003 and it is a wonderful place to work. I think the majority of employees feel that way. I have every faith in Cynthia Ruiz. I have seen her work with employees and I don't think she is difficult. It is about following rules and for those who do not follow the rules they suffer consequences.

Diane Bergquist – Commented that what Tom Jackson just said was contradictory.

Jane Carroll – Said she was also offended by the first line of the letter. Maybe some people were told about it ahead of time. I do not agree with it and I do not agree with a lot of the comments that were in the letter. I think Cynthia is a fair person, she is tough but she has a lot of rules to follow. We could lose our funding if the rules are not followed. Hopefully it will be understood that the rules are here for peoples safety.

Chair Legislator Rodriguez thanked everyone for coming. Any questions with regards to the process please direct them to First Deputy County Attorney Peter Resnik.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Planning Department/UCTC: Dennis Doyle brought two action items for approval.

1. Resolution – Authorizing the Chairman to initiate the required actions and establishing the Ulster County Legislature as lead agency under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) for the adoption of a sustainable economic development plan (Ulster Tomorrow) as an element of the county's comprehensive plan.

Motion to adopt was made by Legislator Wayne Harris, seconded by Legislator Mary Sheeley and carried unanimously.

2. Resolution – Authorizing the Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature to Submit Application and Assurances for HUD Community Development Block Grant Funds for the year 2005 to the New York State Office for Small Cities (OSC).

Motion to adopt was made by Legislator Mary Sheeley, seconded by Legislator Peter Loughran and carried unanimously.

Information Items:

1. Ulster County Housing Strategies Study – Public Informational Meetings
2. Ulster County Transportation Council – Unified Planning Work Program – Budget
3. Main Street Program

Presentation: Catskill Mountain Railroad (CMRR) Chairman of the Board, Harry Jameson, President Earl Pardini, Greg Vaughn and Mary Ann Pardini brought the presentation to the Committee in hopes to get support from the Legislature for their application for a Transportation Enhancement Grant to repair the Boiceville Bridge. The deadline for the grant is June of 2008. The amount needed is a projected \$2.5million.

The Catskill Mountain Railroad has been working to expand its active trackage and tourist train service in an effort to help bring about a resurgence in tourism to the Catskill region. The Catskill Mountain Railroad is supported by an all volunteer work crew. In 2004, The Catskill Mountain Railroad's tourist train ride doubled in length, crossing Route 28 in Mount Pleasant and extending its operation nearly to Cold Brook. In 2006 miles of track were cleared of brush, and work began to rehabilitate more track, both in Cold Brook and in Kingston. In 2007 over a mile of track was rehabilitated to Class 1 condition, and the volunteer base increased by 35%. The last major obstacle for CMRR in lengthening its ride is at the Boiceville Bridge. Repairs to the Bridge are needed before further extension of the line east can take place. Rehabilitation of the Boiceville Bridge (C30) and the railroad is consistent with continued growth of Ulster County Tourism and the Ulster Tomorrow Plan. CMRR estimates the Ashokan Extension will provide an annual ridership increase of over 100% within 3 years of implementation of service between Ashokan and Phoenicia. Most riders will be non-residents bringing outside money into the county, providing a substantial increase in CMRR's economic impact on Ulster County.

Discussion followed raising the question that the Public Works Committee may be applying against the same grant for assistance to repair the River Road situation.

Motion was made to move forward supporting a Transportation Enhancement Grant application with an amendment for consultation with the Department of Public Works for review. Motion by Legislator Gary Bischoff, seconded by Legislator Mary Sheeley and carried unanimously.

UC Development Corporation: Lance Matteson, President of UCDC presented Updates for the following:

Gillette Creamery- Moving aggressively to identify a site. Working very close with the Gillette Brothers and Dennis Doyle trying to scope out wetlands and other issues. The time line is severe. There has to be a plausible solution in concept when meeting with the owners within the next couple of weeks.

Vertis is proceeding well. The transportation issue seems to be falling into place, thanks to Mr. Sheeley, Mr. Doyle and others. There is still dialogue with the company about an IDA project. They are looking at prevailing wage issues. It is a beautiful project.

UCDC has had a very busy month in terms of calls, prospects, and medium sized projects. Small to medium size manufacturers are doing well. They are competing, exporting, growing and expanding.

Precision Flow will have a press release out soon on a \$100,000 loan from the IDA Prevailing Loan Committee that was approved for part of a larger expansion in Saugerties that includes solar production equipment.

The **UCDC Business Development Committee** chaired by John Glesco is focusing on shovel ready and move in ready sites. The idea is to get as many locations ready as possible for the kind of companies the county wants to attract. If the county is serious about solar we have to have places to put them. The Hudson Valley Economic and Development Corporation met with TSEC and are on the same page in terms of marketing. There is going to be a solar marketing initiative by the HVEC.

Michael Berardi, IDA Chair gave background information on an RFP the county put out regarding to the usage of the old jail. There was one response, the GEO Group, a private incarceration company. As of Tuesday morning they

were going to send an IDA application in regard to doing work on the jail, estimated cost of \$30 million. At this stage it is tentative.

Internally to UCDC there is a lot of organizing and staffing issues. They will be hiring a Business Developing Director and a part time loan finance person. They are working on revisions of the by-laws and overhauling the website to be more user friendly.

UC Office of Employment and Training: Nancy Schaefer, Director reported on the fluctuating history of funding for the past years for OET. Though there were times that funding was increased, we have primarily been on a downhill spin for funding for our employment and training program. Most dramatically, a rescission was voted by Congress within the last few months against the PY'06 and PY'07 WIA (Workforce Investment Act) federal funds received by the County. To date US DOL has not informed the State (NYSDOL) as to the exact amount of the funds expected to rescind.

Along with the rescission, the PY'08 WIA funding to OET is estimated at a 13% cut. The U.C. Workforce Investment Board's two committees, the Program Planning Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee will explore how best we can continue our training. It is difficult for us at this time, without exact numbers, to determine how we will plan. Hopefully, we will receive more exact numbers from NYSDOL in the days ahead.

When the NYS Legislature passes the state budget, we are hoping it will include funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) which is usually funneled through the Department of Social Service each year for OET to administer. This will bring some administrative funds to the OET budget. It is a critical program that provides summer work experiences to TANF eligible youth. OET is hoping this will be directed our way again this year. These summer jobs are critical to our youth and to our community at this time. OET has administered this program successfully for over 20 years.

UC Area Transit: Cynthia Ruiz, Director of UCAT, brought conference attendance forms for approval. The new Maintenance and Safety Coordinator needs to get his vapor certificate and 19A certification. Jane Carroll needs to go to procurement training since she is getting promoted to the Grants and Procurement Specialist position. Jen has been promoted to Jane's old position, Administrative Assistant and Cynthia will hire off a list for Jen's position.

The Rosendale Street Festival will be held Saturday July 19 and Sunday July 20, 2008. This event is very well attended. They are celebrating 30th anniversary.

Updates: UCAT is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. Cynthia will contact the DOT and see if advertising monies could be used for a campaign to promote the 30th anniversary of UCAT.

UCAT will Host the Empire State Games, 2009. Cynthia has been asked by the state to Chair the Transportation Committee again.

Metro North – The contracts are signed. Two buses arrived this week. Though they are the wrong color with the wrong seats, there is nothing that can be done about it. The hybrid bus which will be used for regular runs and the diesel bus which will be used for the Poughkeepsie run are due in on April 15, 2008. The service is to start on May 1, 2008. Metro North is spending 100% of the advertising including painting the buses (logo's, etc.). The name of the run will be **Ulster-Poughkeepsie Link** and will start at the park n ride in Rosendale, south on 32, left onto Main Street, 299 to 9W and over the bridge into Poughkeepsie. Legislator Gary Bischoff recommended the name Link Up. Cynthia will mention the suggestion to Metro-North.

Cynthia will be bring a resolution to the committee next month for completing unfinished space on the second floor of UCAT. It is estimated to be under \$200,000 and will provide space for a conference room, storage, two single bathrooms, and a small office space. The resolution will require an increase in budget. The county share will be \$20,000.

NYSDOT invited Cynthia to a full day seminar about “511” (real time transportation and transit information). Trips “123” is an online database and UCAT will be getting a free electronic scheduling piece (pilot for this area).

Access will by phone and website. It will involve Highway departments in towns, villages, cities, county, state and all transit providers. Connecticut, New Jersey and New York will all work together. A person with a Bachelors Degree in Computer Sciences will be needed. This position will be funded 90% by “511” with benefits. Cynthia will bring a resolution for this position next month.

DOT Inspection update:

A complaint letter written by a UCAT employee prompted an inspection by DOT. One finding with the system safety plan came back. A problem with the filing format was found. UCAT devised a new form requiring each member’s signature. DOT approved the solution.

The maintenance program that was in place by the prior Maintenance and Safety Coordinator was eliminated. Due to team effort and the new coordinator everything is now running smoothly.

As far as the buses are concerned all of them passed county inspection but none passed DOT inspection. DOT is not required. UCAT has elected to adopt DOT inspection for as many vehicles as they can. Their first official DOT inspection was at the beginning of this month and there were zero findings. The vehicle passed 100%.

Cynthia has started her “Senior Tour”. She goes to senior club meetings and tells them about the services UCAT offers and asks what their needs are.

UCAT is getting a 6% increase in state assistance and an unanticipated clean up check for \$2,004 from last year.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Moved by all present.

The next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, April 23, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at UCAT

Respectfully submitted by Marcia Lima – UC OET