

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Government Operations and Efficiency

DATE: September 1, 2010

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: UCOB, Library Conference Room, 6th Floor

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairperson Bernardo, Legislators Madsen, Maio, Ronk, Shapiro, and Zimet

LEGISLATOR EXCUSED: Legislator Petit

OTHERS ATTENDING: Dexter Fawcett, Sr. Management Analyst, County Exec.; Tom Kadgen, LOWV; Victoria Fabella, Deputy Clerk, Legislature

- The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bernardo at 6:12PM.
- A motion by Legislator Ronk was made to accept the August 5, 2010 Committee Meeting Minutes, Seconded by Legislator Madsen, all were in favor, Carried.
- Joint Meeting of the Government Operations and Efficiency Committee & Public Works & Capital Projects Committee- Monday, September 13, 2010 at 6:00 PM (See informational handout)

-Chairperson Bernardo explained that Tom Kagen will be presenting at this joint meeting. Tom has done an outstanding job of documenting a lot of the issues that happened when the jail construction was taking place. He will discuss a Project Oversight Committee and a Local Law to provide for oversight of major capital projects.

- Nepotism Policy/Personnel Manual (See County of Ulster - Anti- Nepotism Policy handout)
-Chairperson Bernardo distributed a draft copy of the policy she created.

Legislator Ronk: Q./In terms of Civil Service classified positions, if a Department head is a relative, and a person scores a 100% on the exam for a position underneath him/her, is it a problem that we are saying that person can not take that position, or should that be an exemption?

A./ Legislator Shapiro: When I was Chair of the Board of Ethics, that issue came before us and it was determined, as it states in this policy, that the employee can not be directly supervised by a relative. There needs to be a mechanism that is triggered so that the person is not discriminated against as far as his/her standing in Civil Service. This is probably an issue that should be sent to counsel.

Legislator Zimet: Q./ Under the POLICY section, we say that the practice of nepotism is prohibited, but further down it states the County permits members of the same family to work at the County. Aren't they contradicting each other?

A./ Legislator Shapiro: The policy goes on to state the definition of Nepotism as giving preferential treatment to relatives. The practice of Nepotism is not the County just permitting members of the same family to work at the County; it's prohibiting preferential treatment or a direct supervisory relationship between relatives. Chairperson Bernardo: So for example, you can have one person working at the jail and one person working at the DMV and that's not nepotism.

Legislator Ronk recommended that after section #1 PURPOSE, there be an added section of definitions where nepotism would be defined, and then section #3 be the policy. Maybe it would flow better and make more sense.

Legislator Shapiro: Q./ What is the timeline for the updated Personnel Manual? A./Legislator Bernardo: I would like for us to bring a Resolution forward by November.

Legislator Shapiro reminded the Committee that it's an option, if interested, to have the Board of Ethics take a look at the Anti-Nepotism Policy and provide input.

Chairperson Bernardo asked that the Committee Members take the draft policy home for further review and communicate with her any suggested changes or comments. She will then put something together and send it back to the Committee Members. If all are in agreement with that version, the Deputy Clerk will forward it to the Board of Ethics. Hopefully by October this process will be complete.

- Administrative Code Committee
-Resolution No. 211, Creating a Special Committee to Update the UC Administrative Code, was unanimously adopted on August 17, 2010.

Legislator Zimet motioned that the Government Operations and Efficiency Committee recommend Legislators Bernardo, Madsen and Maio to serve on the Special Committee. Seconded by Legislator Ronk, All were in favor, Carried.

- Wi-Fi Update
-IS Director Sylvia Wohlfahrt was invited to this meeting to provide the Committee with further information on this project. Deputy County Executive Bob Sudlow responded to the invitation by saying that the issue of Wi-Fi installation will be considered in the 2011 operational budget but is not on the schedule for consideration this year. As such, Sylvia will not be in attendance.
- New Business/Discussion
-Chairperson Bernardo informed the Committee that she will be presenting Pride of Ulster County Awards at the next Legislative Session to a local film production company who shot the movie *Peace, Love and Understanding*. They filmed at several locations in Ulster County, providing economic benefit to the County and positive impact on our Tourism industry. They have about \$78 million and are on track to make 10 more films, all in Ulster County.

-Chairperson Bernardo initiated discussion regarding the potential role the County can play in dog licensing due to the changes made by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. At the August Gov't Ops & Efficiency Committee meeting, Legislator Shapiro informed the Committee that the NYS Dept. of Ag. and Markets will no longer be responsible for dog licensing and it will become

the responsibility of the towns effective January 1, 2011. The positive aspects are that it can be revenue generating for the towns and there will be more local control, as many people do not get their dogs licensed. The bad aspect is that there will no longer be a state-wide database.

The towns can take this over, or the County can take it over and the towns can opt in. Some expenses to the County would include tags, the database and paperwork. However, it is a source of revenue. There is cost in setting it up, but we do have the infrastructure via the Clerk's office. The Town Clerk's Association would need to be contacted if the County was going to entertain the idea of taking over responsibilities.

After further discussion, the general consensus reached by the Committee was that it would be best left in the hands of the towns.

-Legislator Ronk commented that the Committee needs to begin looking at the Budget to come up with recommended cuts in an effort to prevent an exorbitant tax increase. He suggested that the Committee start by looking at last year's budget, as they don't alter that much year to year. It is a lot of the same spending.

-In an effort to be proactive to the Comptroller's report about the UCRRA, the Committee agreed that it was a good first step to look at creating a Blue Ribbon Panel with experts to seriously examine all aspects of the RRA. Legislator Shapiro commented that Legislator Richard Parete is the most knowledgeable person in the Legislative body on these types of issues. Chairperson Bernardo requested that the Deputy Clerk reach out to Legislator Rich Parete to ask him to provide the Committee with his thoughts on a structure for such a Panel.

- Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Terry Bernardo/vf
Chairperson, Government Operations and Efficiency Committee