

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**NAME OF COMMITTEE:** Human Development and Personnel Committee

**DATE:** January 26, 2009

**TIME:** 4:45 P.M.

**PLACE:** DSS Conference Room, Development Court

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** Chairman Donald J. Gregorius, Legislators Jeanette Provenzano, Peter Loughran, Philip Terpening, Glenn Noonan, Catherine Terrizzi

**LEGISLATORS ABSENT:** Legislators Paul Hansut, excused

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Deputy Co. Executive Marshall Beckman, Commissioner Roberto Rodriguez, DSS Supervising Attorney Michael Iapoce, LWV Rep. Lee Cane, Legislative Employee Nettie Tomshaw

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Gregorius at 4:45PM.

A motion to approve November 24, 2008 Committee meeting minutes and January 26, 2009 minutes will take place during February 23, 2009 meeting.

Chairman Gregorius asked committee members to consider having future committee meetings at the County Office Bldg. Library 6<sup>th</sup> Floor vs. the DSS building. After further discussion the committee ultimately concluded to hold them at the county building.

The Chairman and committee greeted Marshall Beckman who oversees Social Services for the County Executive Office. Everyone looks forward to a productive group effort- relationship. The Chairman added if the committee has questions regarding Social Service matters - they should ask Marshall. Marshall introduced himself to the committee and offered a working relationship with the committee. His department's attitude and goal is to work cooperatively with the Legislature. Although Marshall won't be able to attend all meetings he will support the committee's needs and be available upon request. Chairman Gregorius asked Marshall to please have the Executive Office provide information for the committee's consideration sooner than later if matters are pressing for this committee to review. Chairman Gregorius noted the committee now oversees Personnel - Bea Havranek heads Personnel Department for Executive Office.

Attorneys Salaries: Committee lengthy discussion of inadequacies of pay to hire and maintain attorneys to meet workloads.

- County protocol to proceed - stages to address issue.
- Not only Attorney's but Nurses, Sheriff's Office and others.
- Monies in 2009 Budget?
- Procedure for funding requests during budget process.
- Economy
- Committee Meeting Attendees.
- Questioned Attorney's membership in the teachers union.
- Retention of Attorney's once trained.

- County Executive thoughts on correcting inequities.
- Parity across the board.
- Bring to the attention of the full Legislature.
- Define the problem - understanding the severity - what it consists of.
- Phasing in a program over the next several years.
- \$50K plus = committee involvement.
- Authority to change salary base, Union Involvement
- Surrounding Counties Salary Comparison
- Who is the new "Team" to handle issue now.

Commissioner Rodriguez offered background information:

- Effort started in March 2008.
- Addressed with various committees
- Currently down 2 attorneys
- Urgency needed as family court cases are being postponed.
- (1) Attorney maternity leave - possibly extended leave.
- Utilizing (1) out of county lawyer - soon to be (2) @ \$75 hr.
- DSS salary is 2/3 federal & state funded and 1/3 local.
- If approved total cost would be \$24,000 for the whole unit. Reimbursement is always 2/3 - 1/3.

DSS Supervising Attorney Michael Iapoco offered:

- Can not retain attorneys.
- Other counties salary range between \$15K & \$30K more.
- Staff attorneys make \$25.10 hr vs. \$75 hr for law guardian appointed for family court.
- Would need 2 contract attorneys at \$75 if vacancy not filled.
- B. Bartholomew has surrounding counties salary information.
- Submitted Case Load Report for Committee's Review.
- Applicants feel salary listed is for part time work.
- 6 Attorneys required to handle work load, (4) for family court judges ( 2 per judge), (1) Support Collection Work & Resource Recovery and (1) DSS Supervisor Attorney handles Adult Protective Services, Guardianship Work, Administrative Work in the office.
- Covers Family Court, City Court, Supreme, Surrogate Court and sometimes Town Justice Court.
- Working a lot of extra hours and under a lot of stress.

The committee feels money is a real issue and that's why Marshall is here and to bring it back to Mike. Marshall echoed the committee how severe and how acute the vacancy matter is. The committee feels the problem doesn't lie with this committee and needs to be communicated to the Executives office to address. The committee agree's this needs to be addressed and is supportive however the County Executive has to address this issue. The committee believes the information will be made available for committee review as rapidly as possible in order to make the appropriate decisions.

Who can attend Committee Meetings:

- Adele Reiter, Bea Havranek, Marshall Beckman and Arthur Smith represent the County Executive's Office at committee meetings. Growing pains - how our mtgs. will run and what we will handle.
- Committee meetings are public- anyone can attend - the above employees will represent county departments at Legislative Mtgs. unless otherwise requested by committee.

Resolution:

Resolution: Amending Personnel Policy Manual For Ulster County And Ulster County Employee Handbook To Provide Health Insurance Benefits To Include Heterosexual Domestic Partners Of Employees Of Ulster County Equal To Those Currently Provided To Spouses.

Discussion:

- Discussing Leg. Frank Dart's Resolution - asked to move along rapidly
- Basically same qualifications as Same Sex Law
- Opening Pandora's Box - picking & choosing who will receive benefits
- Handle in Congress and State Level
- Pay income tax
- Benefits only people who do not have insurance
- Policy has been around for 15 years within NYS
- Very small percentage will be eligible to actually use benefits - 1%-2%
- Need better understanding and interpretation
- Need total projected cost
- M. Beckman to request dollar clarification from B. Bartholomew & forward memo to committee
- Moving resolution forward based on the assumption \$70K financial impact annually.

Motion made to move Resolution forward by Legislator Terpening - Seconded by Legislator Provenzano.  
4 in favor - Gregorius, Loughran, Provenzano, Terpening  
2 opposed - Noonan, Terrizzi

A87:

Connie Caruso provided a report to the county but was not available to present to the committee. A final report will be available for the Legislature shortly.

Salient:

- Received Marshall's Mental Health Year in Review report.
- Inspector General to audit service providers to ID billing for excessive services.
- NYS to do audit and not Salient
- Dept. of Health benefited the most
- Benedictine Hospital suit does not effect the county

Case Loads for Social Services:

- Medicaid Load is 850 cases per examiner
- No room to house workers
- 100% reimbursable however workload keeps going up however no one is being hired
- This committee can set policy once we understand better
- Not happy as a committee as it currently stands
- Pressure to do more with less
- Money effects Medicaid Rates
- Discussed culture - cost of doing business

Motion to adjourn meeting: 6:20PM

Motion offered by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi.

All in favor.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Donald J. Gregorius, Chairman**

**Human Development & Personnel Committee**