

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee
DATE & TIME: October 4, 2011 @ 6:30 PM
PLACE: Library Conference Room, 6th Floor, County Office Building

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Jack Hayes, Legislators Carl Belfiglio (Left @ 6:45 PM), Roy Hochberg, Hector Rodriguez, Kenneth Ronk, Michael Sweeney

LEGISLATORS EXCUSED: Deputy Chairman Thomas Briggs

OTHERS ATTENDING: Anthony Solfaro (NYS Union of Police Associations, Inc), James Tiano (PBA), Patricia Doxsey (Daily Freeman)

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER @ 6:35 PM

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2011 COMMITTEE MINUTES:

Motion offered by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Ronk, All in Favor, Carried.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. **Resolution Draft No. 1010, October 18, 2011** - Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The New York State Unified Court System To Fund The Court Attendants Contract (C200397) For The Period April 1, 2011 To March 31, 2012 - Amending The Ulster County Budget - Ulster County Sheriff's Office

Motion offered by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Sweeney, All in Favor, Carried.

Discussion: The Committee discussed the agreement with regard to the contract terms & Funding. This is the third year of a five-year contract.

2. **Resolution Draft No. 1011, October 18, 2011** - Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The New York State Office Of Indigent Legal Services - Public Defender

Motion offered by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Sweeney, All in Favor, Carried.

Discussion: Legislator Sweeney had concerns with the difference of State Revenue Dollars from 2011 to 2012. Chairman Hayes will contact the Public Defender's Office with the Questions/Concerns.

3. **Resolution Draft No. 1014, October 18, 2011** - In Support Of A State Funded Police Service Efficiency Study

No Committee Action / No Vote

Discussion: Chairman Hayes stated that there is funding available from DCJS for this fall. He is looking for a show of interest and has solicited townships to pass similar Resolutions. He would like to see the support to participate in the Grant Study. He believes that if you do not have all the parties pertinent to the study together at the table, then it does not amount to much.

Rodriguez: Q/Is the goal of this to have a County Police Force? A/No it is an Efficiency Study, not a Police Consolidation Study.

Solfaro: He has concerns with some of the wording in the Resolution. He has a concern with the word "efficiency". He asked the following: What is the Mission Statement? What does the Grant say? Who will do the Study? What are their credentials? You'll spend the grant money how? He said the fifth whereas in the Resolution concerns him, where it talks about current economic trends. Does this mean that the police agencies are the ones creating the economic burden? He has objections as to what that means. He said that when you look at the District Attorneys Office in this County, they do not have Criminal Investigators. It is the Police Officers of this County that do the leg work for the DA's Office. This County does not fully fund full-time Criminal Investigators who are Police Officers under the CPLR. He thinks that the Mission Statement and how the grant reads are critical and that both need to be clearly defined before moving forward. Broom County did a similar report two/three years ago. That report was done by the International Association of Chiefs. He's just trying to give an objective point of view.

Hayes: Believes that there is not any intent to indicate that Police Budgets are creating the economic burdens.

Hochberg: Stated that we have many success stories right here in Ulster County. He used the police merge in Saugerties as an example. He said that you hear the word "success" associated with that consolidation.

Solfaro: Commented that it is not a success in Saugerties, the Village is still paying several hundred thousand dollars a year to the Town. He stated that in his opinion, the study was flawed; he said that he was at the Public Hearings. Things were not done in accordance with Civil Service and that there are Officers that are supposed to be on the preferred eligible list and are not.

Ronk: Questioned Mr. Solfaro's example about the DA's Office, he stated that Mr. Weishaupt is an Investigator for the DA's Office.

Hochberg: Believes that the Committee should move ahead with the Resolution. He said that there are a lot of "ifs" "shoulds" and "coulds", but that this Resolution will move them farther in

line and when they get to the front of the line and find that there are a number of concerns and conditions, then that will be a whole other Resolution. There would be another Resolution with regard to the grant money that will need Committee approval and once the Committee finds out the conditions and terms of the grant they can vote yes or no at that point.

Ronk: He does not think that the intent or the actuality of this Resolution is anti Police Officers. This Committee has not yet seen the 2012 Budget and he is concerned about cuts.

Hayes: Reminded the Committee about the Communications Upgrade that will be taking place in the near future. This is part of Police Services, and Police Service Efficiencies.

Ronk: Police Efficiencies could be as small as, all of the Departments in the County ordering equipment with the County piggy backing to get lower prices. That is efficiency and it has nothing to do with man power.

Hayes: Stated that he has no preconceived ideas about man power or what will be looked at with regard to the study. If there is funding money out there, then he would like to pursue that funding.

Rodriguez: Q/Who will be doing the study. A/Hayes/There is not a contractor at this point. The first step is to obtain the Grant. This Resolution only creates eligibility.

Sweeney: Stated that the Resolution reads like a "Memorializing Resolution", and suggests that further language be added to the final resolve and that DCJS should be actively notified of the Committees intentions.

Hayes: Replied that he is open to changes to the Resolution.

Ronk: He would add DCJS to the final resolve, requesting that the Agency be notified of said Resolution.

Solfaro: Stated that when you are dealing with a Resolution that deals with efficiencies, it can be about equipment, to anything, right on down the line. When he looks at the one "whereas", he wants it to be clear, when you are dealing with one subject matter, which could be very broad based, he wants to make sure that everyone understands that it wasn't intended to put pressure on the Law Enforcement Community. Also, no one has mentioned the criteria to apply for this grant; what is their definition for efficiency. He suggested that before this Resolution is passed, that the Committee requests and looks at the criteria of the grant, then makes those modifications on the floor.

Hayes: If the grant comes out and it is not interesting to them, then they will not apply for it.

Rodriguez: Commented to Mr. Solfaro, that the Resolution reads, "current economic trends have placed great stress on budgets of all governments". He does not read it as saying the economic trends are because Law Enforcement is so expensive.

Hayes: Reiterated that his only agenda is to put the Committee in the position to accept or apply for, if they're interested in, for a round of funding grants that was indicated to him to become available for application this fall.

Hochberg: Stated that he will be supporting this Resolution, and asked for his name to be added to sponsorship.

Sweeney: Supports it as well, but would like to tighten up some of the language and to be more specific.

Committee: Agreed that they would take no action at this time. Chairman Hayes will ask for clarity with regard to the grant from DCJS.

LATE RESOLUTION:

1. **Resolution Draft No. 1019, October 18, 2011** - Appointing Member To Fill Vacancy On The Ulster County Fire Advisory Board

Motion offered by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Ronk, All in Favor, Carried.

Discussion: Legislator Ronk was pleased to see the appointment of Charles Karsten. He recently received the Pride of Ulster County Award from the Ulster County Legislature at a Fire Advisory Meeting and the following Friday, County Executive Hein declared the day as "Charles Karsten Day".

UPDATE: The Ulster County Corrections monthly average population, phone commissions, and the daily inmate counts for September were handed out to the Committee.

NEW BUSINESS: (2 Items)

Mitigation Policies Concerning Earthquake and Hurricanes - Chairman Hayes explained his interest in speaking with the different Municipalities to hear input with regard to the recent Earthquakes and Hurricanes. The Committee discussed Earthquake Mitigation Plans. Chairman Hayes would like to take part in after action communications with the Communities. He has also asked for after action critiquing with the County Executive's Office; to date, he has yet to receive a response.

Hochberg: Referred to last month's meeting when they discussed what is called the "War Room" and the fact that apparently the County has "War Rooms", and the confusion that this may cause. He would like to continue to encourage conversations about communications if, in fact, it is an issue. It needs to be discussed and decisions need to be made with regard to, who is the Incident Commander and where is the War Room.

Hayes: Is interested in identifying that himself.

Hayes: Spoke about a letter that he received from Joanne Noone. She is from Lexington, NY. The essence of her letter is that before the DEP and DEC, farmers kept their waters clear by making small annual corrections. The DEP and DEC regulations are now hindering local stream management and flooding is occurring. He said that if we are going to address the hardest hit areas, then this is part of the package. Interagency and levels of political jurisdictions need to come to some sort of common ground. If people need to get into their streams then the DEC & DEP are going to have to make some sort of waiver to perform maintenance. At some point, we have to advocate our responsibilities to the State, with the hope that the problems will be rectified and added that they should have input with regard to mitigation strategies.

Ronk: Suggested that if you want to talk about stream maintenance that the Committee should speak with Gary Capella (Executive Director, Soil and Water Conservation District). He said that he has a great deal of knowledge and expertise with regard to stream and river bed maintenance.

Hayes: Stated that he would write a letter to the DEP & DEC to show their interest and ask for coordination with regard to mitigation strategies in the future.

Rodriguez: Q/Have you spoken to Art Snyder about what the coordination is between DEP, DEC, and the County? A/Hayes/Yes, has requested a mitigation and/or After Actions Report.

Hayes: Stated that he continues to have concerns with regard to the Earthquake that affected the COB. The Earthquake created stress to the building and this has not been addressed yet. He just keeps being told that they will get to that and then there are two Hurricanes.

Sweeney: Stated that if they are going to pursue the DEP & DEC, doing it alone would not be as effective as it would be if joined by neighboring Counties, especially Sullivan and Greene Counties who had tremendous flooding.

Committee: Agreed to invite Bob Sudlow & Art Snyder to next month's meeting to voice their concerns and to possibly set up a date to begin some mitigation studies. The suggestion was also made to ask Art Snyder for a list of damages from the two storms and the Earthquake.

Ronk: Spoke with his Town Supervisor yesterday and it seems the Municipalities are not being placed as a priority with FEMA with regard to public assistance. They can request the public assistance, but are awaiting replies. Chairman Hayes will contact Mr. Valk.

Hochberg: Suggested the Committee look into Grant availability with regard to Mitigation Studies.

Office of Conflict Defender - Legislator Ronk stated that there have been at least two Resolutions establishing the Conflict Defenders Office, the first one creating a PT Conflict Defender, the second one creating a FT Conflict Defender. The thought was to mitigate some of the outside legal fees that the County pays. To his knowledge this has not been done yet. A Conflict Defender has not been hired, nor has an office been set up or funded.

OLD BUSINESS: (7 items)

URGENT MOU - Not yet completed, does not have definitive reason why.

Ulster County Police Service Efficiencies Review - See above, Resolution Draft No. 1014.

2012 Budget Reviews - (Sheriff's Office & DA's Office) Request will be made for the Budget Reviews at the next Committee Meeting, Tuesday, November 1, 2011 at 6:30 PM.

Domestic Violence Month, October - COB Lighting Ceremony was last night, Chairman Hayes attended. He went to the Domestic Violence Council Meeting this week. The Council falls under the Department of Social Services. He will be attending the Dutchess County Council Meeting for this month. Their Council falls under the Legislature.

Inmates Health Insurance - Sheriff VanBlarcum is looking into charging back inmates more stringently than had been done in the past. Update to follow.

Building Security Working Group Update - Dennis Young from the Sheriff's Office submitted two reports with regard to security, (1) Security Assessment Recommendations, (2) County Office Building. Chairman Hayes stated that everyone should have received both reports for review. His intent is to schedule a meeting this month with the Working Group to review the recommendations. Update to follow.

Renaissance Project Alternative to Incarceration Rehab Facility - Received correspondence from the NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Service, Commissioner Arlene Gonzalez-Sanchez, dated September 8, 2011. She has a very cooperative approach and he feels that they are making progress. He will share the information with the Supervisor of Wawarsing. Received additional correspondence from Deputy County Executive Marshall Beckman, dated September 28, 2011. Chairman Hayes had requested information regarding the UC Interagency Council on Domestic Violence (he attended the Sept. 29th Meeting), as well as the UC Crisis Response Team with regard to the Renaissance Project. The Crisis Response Team was activated with regard to the October 6th incident. Individual psychological first aid counseling was given to residents, and on a separate date, to staff.

Motion to adjourn meeting @ 7:50 PM

Motion offered by Chairman Hayes, Seconded by Legislator Sweeney, All in Favor, Carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tammy Wilson, Senior Legislative Employee
