

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES, HELD IN THE LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE ULSTER
COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING, KINGSTON, NY ON AUGUST 3, 2010.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

WAYNE HARRIS, Chairman
DAVID B. DONALDSON, Deputy Chairman
CARL BELFIGLIO
CATHERINE TERRIZZI
MICHAEL MADSEN
DONALD J. GREGORIUS
JACK HAYES (Excused)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

MARK P. KOMDAT, Dean of Administration, Ulster County Community College
LYDIA REIDY, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
EILEEN POLK, RD, Coordinator of Nutrition Program, Cornell Coop. Extension
DENISE DOURDEVILLE, Mastergardeners, Cornell Cooperative Extension
MARY MARSTERS, Director of Programs, Cornell Cooperative Extension
JAMES COSGROVE, Ulster County Library Association
VICTOR MELVILLE, League of Women Voters
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm and requested a motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2010 meeting of this committee. Such motion was made by Leg. Belfiglio, seconded by Leg. Gregorius and upon Chairman Harris calling for a voice vote the minutes of the July 6, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved. Chairman Harris then recognized Mark Komdat, Dean of Administration of Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College

Dean Komdat distributed the Ulster County Community College Financial Update of August 3, 2010. He said we currently are at 101.21% over budgeted revenues and are at almost 90% on the expense side. The college is still working to absorb the first state cut.

On enrollment we are just short of 2,240 or 110.6%. He said about five or six years ago we had a large spike in enrollment but we do not anticipate such a big increase in the future. We have been meeting and/or exceeding our budgeted enrollment projections year to year. However, said Dean Komdat, we are still faced with the Governor's cuts, although the State budget has not yet been signed. The proposed cuts total approximately \$1.2 million compared to last year.

Dean Komdat said the President and the Executive Staff have been faced with a loss of about \$655,000 in our recently approved budget and have been trying to come up with some remedies. There was a Special Board of Trustees meeting authorizing certain reductions to balance the loss of revenue. There was a reduction in part time positions and number of hours, and also leaving one additional full time and one more part time position unfilled. The Dean said there was also a change in the benefit plan for retirees, as well as the elimination of any funding at all for equipment replacement or repair.

On the Water Acquisition Project, Dean Komdat said there would be a kick-off meeting with the principals and advisory committee next week to get that project underway. The Legislature did say they wanted to act as Lead Agency for the SEQUA review. Chairman Harris asked what committee this project would come under. A brief discussion ensued. Leg. Belfiglio said he believed it would be the Governmental Services, Environmental and Administrative Committee which would have an Environmental Subcommittee.

At this time Leg. Terrizzi asked about enrollment in the Nursing Program. Dean Komdat said the college usually accepts about 60-72 students into the program and about seventy is capacity given the number of faculty. He said we did implement competitive testing this year. There is a waiting list; however, it was the recommendation of the Reaccreditation Committee that we implement testing, although we did have to accommodate students already in the program.

Leg. Gregorius asked how the four-year program was going. Dean Komdat said he did not have that information readily available but would make sure to have it for the next meeting.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Cornell Cooperative Extension:

Ms. Reidy said she was still waiting for the formal budget packet to come out. Chairman Harris said he had been talking to Art Smith about that and suggested she speak to Karen Spinozzi. He believes the packet will be e-mailed.

Ms. Reidy reminded the Committee that today was opening day for the Ulster County Fair. She said Wednesday night all Legislators are invited to the Opening Ceremonies. The Fairgrounds are in great shape. There has been a lot of cooperation between the Agricultural Society and Buildings & Grounds. Ms. Reidy said the Youth Building looks excellent but the number of exhibits is down. She suggested anyone interested could come to the desk in the Youth Building and one of the 4-H kids will take you on a tour. She said it is good for the kids to learn about local government and how to get involved.

It has been a great growing year said Ms. Reidy, however, we have just been seeing some evidence of tomato blight. It is a late blight so hopefully most tomato growers will be alright.

On the dark side, the emerald ash borer has been found in Ulster County. This is an Asian ash borer which is believed to have originally come into the country on packing crates. It is an iridescent green beetle and if not stopped we could lose all of our ash trees. We have already lost most of our dutch elms and other species of trees to various insects or tree diseases. This is a very slow spreading insect and various agencies, including Cooperative Extension and Cornell University are working on this but there is no solution at this time. Another serious problem, said Ms. Reidy, is the Asian Longhorn Beetle which has received quite a lot of publicity and about which her office has received quite a lot of calls from loggers. This is going to hurt them a lot. There is a state law, she said, trying to stop this beetle, and the sale and transport of wood and firewood is being regulated.

Leg. Gregorius asked if there was no solution and there was nothing to stop these bugs whats the use of doing anything. Ms. Reidy said we can try and prevent them from spreading. She said the goal now is to at least contain them until we can find some way of eradicating them without damaging anything else.

Ms. Reidy introduced Mary Marsters, Director of Programs at Cooperative Extension who also introduced Eileen Polk, Coordinator of the Nutrition Program and Denise Dourdeville of the Master Gardeners.

Ms. Polk advised that a lot of the nutrition programs are coordinated with the various ethnic populations and with the food stamp programs. Incidentally, she said, they no longer call them food stamps, they are now called "SNAP". This is an acronym for Sustainable Nutrition Assistance Program. Funding from these programs comes from various sources, both federal, state and local. East Smart New York (ESNY) is not a grant but a federally endorsed program. Participants in this program go through a series of lessons designed to develop skills and knowledge to make healthy eating and lifestyle changes. They go through an evaluation process. They are not judged on the knowledge gained but by behavior change. Evaluators want to see people eating whole grains, fruits and vegetables and increasing their physical activity.

Ms. Polk said all nutrition educators go through a very extensive training process themselves. Participants cannot do behavior change with a one-time presentation. In this program they have to complete at least six lessons. We also do a lot of work with people with special needs said Ms. Polk. She also advised that the ethnic side of this program came originally out of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

People who qualify are encouraged to apply for SNAP (food stamps) said Ms. Polk, especially our senior citizens. She said their funding has increased from the federal

government because of the increased need in this area and our ethnic funding has also increased because of increased need.

In the Eat Smart New York program within Ulster County of the 221 participants 142 completed the program. Of that amount, there were 57 ethnic participants, 37 of which completed the classes. In reply to a question from Leg. Terrizzi, Ms. Polk said enrollment in the food stamp program, under any name, has gone up more than 200%

Chairman Harris asked Ms. Polk how it was possible to evaluate the participants. Ms. Polk said they are required to complete a questionnaire at the beginning of the program as to what they did regarding nutrition practices, food resource management and food safety and had to fill out another questionnaire at the end of the program. Both dealt with how they did things not why or how they should. It was directed towards behavioral changes and the differences from beginning to end in how they applied their new knowledge was obvious.

Denise Dourdeville then spoke on the Master Gardener program,, which is a program to recruit and train volunteers to bring the knowledge of Cornell University and Cooperative Extension out into the community. One of the things the Master Gardeners do, said Ms. Dourdeville is to staff the booth at the Ulster County Fair. They also work with people who apply for community projects such as the rain gardens; they consult at schools, churches and hospitals for various landscaping projects; they run the annual Garden Day held at SUNY Ulster and staff booths at various Farmer's Markets.

Ms. Reidy discussed the Plant a Row for the Hungry Program and said they have a list of low income children, families and seniors in other programs which is used to distribute the food. In reply to a question from Chairman Harris, she said everything over and above the families on the list goes to the local area soup kitchens.

The report of Cornell Cooperative Extension being concluded, Chairman Harris told the Committee that Wednesday night the Legislators usually gather at the Administration Building at the south end of the fair across from the horse area. There is also a reception back there after the ceremony.

Other Business:

Chairman Harris then recognized Jim Cosgrove representing the Ulster County Library Association, who stated he was just following up on last months' meeting and did not have anything else.

Chairman Harris told the Committee that Leg. Jack Hayes, who was on vacation, had some interest in an education component that he had brought up at the last meeting but that he had nothing further on it. Leg. Belfiglio said Leg. Hayes had given out some paper work on

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it. It concerns the problems that small family operated trucking outfits have complying with some transportation regulations. Chairman Harris referred the matter to the next meeting.

There being no further business, Chairman Harris requested a motion to adjourn. Said motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Terrizzi and seconded by Leg. Donaldson and upon voice vote Chairman Harris declared the meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri
Recorder