

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS, EDUCATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES, HELD IN THE
LEGISLATURE CHAMBERS, ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING, KINGSTON, NY ON
FEBRUARY 8, 2011.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

MARK KOMDAT, Dean of Administration, SUNY Ulster County Community College
JOHN DWYER, Chairman, Board of Trustees, SUNY Ulster County Community College
LARRY KITHCART, Director of Ulster County Community Action
GRACE THOMPSON, Director, Court Appointed Special Advocates
RICK FLYNN, Ulster Corps.
VICTOR MELVILLE, League of Women Voters
JANET SALANITRI, SUNY Ulster, Recorder

A quorum being present and Deputy Chairman Donaldson called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm and recognized Mark Komdat, Dean of Administration of Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College:

Dean Komdat introduced to the Committee Mr. John Dwyer, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Ulster County Community College who was appearing in support of the proposed resolution to confirm the new county appointment to the Board. Mr. Dwyer is a former Ulster County Legislator himself, having served twenty years in that capacity.

Speaking on enrollment, Dean Komdat said at the present time we are about forty FTEs under our projections for the spring semester once the Collegian program is entered in our records. It is estimated that we will be at about 94% of projections for the semester. On the brighter side we are about ten FTEs ahead of projections on our summer 2011 enrollment. For summer, said the Dean, we are looking to expand our Collegian offerings to prepare students who are entering college for the first time. Hopefully that will help us somewhat and balance out the spring shortfall.

Dean Komdat said there doesn't seem to be any real explanation as to why this is happening. There are a lot of shifts from full time to part time, and some seem to think it is due to the health care reforms. In response to a question from Deputy Chairman Donaldson, Dean Komdat said other area schools are experiencing much the same problems.

Reporting on finances, Dean Komdat advised current revenues were \$16.3 million and were still in line with expenditures. He also reported the state is still somewhat behind in its payments.

Deputy Chairman Donaldson asked about the proposed state cuts. Dean Komdat said there were 10% across the board reductions. This would mean about \$1.5 million or about a 24% reduction over a two-year period. The Dean said we are just beginning our budget cycle and we are not sure how we are going to make this go.

Dean Komdat said we would be looking at about an overall 2% reduction in expenses in order to balance our budget. We are going to have to evaluate low enrollment programs and may have to shift service programs to grant funded if possible. He said it is certainly going to be a challenge and it is also quite possible to have an additional tuition increase.

Leg. Terrizzi asked if the college would be offering any programs or classes anywhere in the southern end of the county. Dean Komdat said we have the Collegian program in many high schools; and, relative to any additional satellite programs, we are undertaking a study to look at just that. Mainly, said the Dean, we are hoping to ascertain whether we are in the right places to provide the proper services to the most number of people. We have to be able to have the numbers in order to get things to work out. He said he will get back to Leg. Terrizzi and this Committee when he has more information.

At this time Mr. John Dwyer, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Ulster County Community College discussed the proposed resolution to confirm the appointment of Mr. Gabriel F. Sottile to the Board of Trustees of Ulster County Community College. This appointment has been made by Michael Hein, Ulster County Executive, pursuant to the provisions of the Ulster County Charter, and is to be confirmed by the Legislature. Mr. Dwyer gave a brief background on Mr. Sottile, who is President, CEO and Trustee of Sawyer Savings Bank. Deputy Chairman Donaldson asked who was leaving the Board and Mr. Dwyer said that Trustee John Wadlin had stepped down after seventeen years and is now somewhat semi-retired.

A motion was made by Leg. Gregorius to approve the proposed resolution to confirm the appointment of Gabriel F. Sottile to the Board of Trustees of Ulster County Community College for a term to run from March 1, 2011 through June 30, 2014. The motion was seconded by Leg. Terrizzi and upon Deputy Chairman Donaldson calling for a voice vote, the proposed resolution as presented was unanimously approved.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Deputy Chairman Donaldson recognized Larry Kithcart of Ulster County Community Action.

Ulster County Community Action:

Mr. Kithcart discussed the way the Meals on Wheels program used to work. He said it started in the Rondout area in the 1960's as a pilot program serving 15-20 meals a day and grew to about 700 throughout the county. At one time there were about twenty drivers delivering the meals and about thirty people working at six different sites. They also put on a picnic every year for the senior citizens. The program, said Mr. Kithcart, was supposed to help senior citizens that were shut-ins and those who were alone and were in need of some socialization. He said he believes it to be a very important program.

Regarding the frozen meals, Mr. Kithcart said not everyone had a microwave. He also said there are many people who cannot even open the packaging by themselves. In reply to a question from Deputy Chairman Donaldson, Mr. Kithcart said all of their meals had to be approved. There was a registered Dietician. He said they had lunches and suppers and Community Action did not make any profit; everything went back into the program.

Leg. Belfiglio asked if Community Action initially instituted the program and where and Mr. Kithcart said they did and initially it was in the Rondout area. Then it went to Rosendale, then the Church in Kingston, then the Lions' Club and other areas throughout the County. He said they were in the old #4 school in Kingston and built the kitchen in that school and were there until about eight years ago. Deputy Chairman Donaldson said it was at that time that the program finally went out for bid and Prestige won the bid by about twenty-five cents a meal.

Mr. Kithcart said that years ago they had also put on special meal for the City of Kingston and there were so many people it was decided to make it a county-wide event and there are up to 700 people attending. He said the program was about people helping other people and was not just about making money. A general discussion regarding Department of Agriculture rules, food quantity and quality and volunteers followed.

Leg. Belfiglio said the new sub-committee consisting of himself and Legs. Terrizzi and Madsen would be looking into this matter further. Leg. Hayes said he would be interested in the RFP. It is believed the current contract runs until December 2011 and Leg. Hayes wanted to know if the Legislature would have some input in any new negotiations. Leg. Belfiglio said the people in need of this service should be getting what they need. Mr. Kithcart said he would be more than glad to sit down and help in any way he could.

Leg. Madsen said we are always trying to cut the process down to the minimum requirements. He asked Mr. Kithcart how he would compare the meals of years ago to the ones now. Mr. Kithcart said they do not compare, the portions were much larger then. In reply to a question from Leg. Terrizzi, he said he last dealt with the program about seven years ago and still had a lot of the same rules and regulations to abide by. Leg. Belfiglio said they also get federal money and there are a lot of rules and reporting requirements for them.

The report of Ulster County Community Action being concluded, Deputy Chairman Donaldson recognized Grace Thompson of CASA.

CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates:

Prior to Ms. Thompson delivering her report, Deputy Chairman Donaldson said the Ulster County Youth Bureau had donated \$1500 to CASA to help them, which brought them back up to the level of their former funding.

Grace Thompson, in response to several questions from Deputy Chairman Donaldson, said that this donation has enabled CASA to now have twenty-two volunteers who are working with thirty-nine children. At the moment we have a backlog of thirteen or fourteen children which will be cleared up as soon as the paperwork is completed.

Ms. Thompson said CASA has locations in thirty two counties in New York State, has been in Ulster County since 1987 and belongs to both the State and National Associations. As well as the Court rules, there are a lot of state and federal rules and guidelines which have to be followed. In Florida, CASA is a part of the State Court System. The idea is to get children out of the foster care system quickly. She said in Florida CASA has attorneys on staff but here in New York State the children are assigned an attorney or Law Guardian. CASA is assigned to a child by the Family Court Judge, and everything is done to promote the best interests of the child.

Leg. Belfiglio asked what the guidelines were for CASA getting involved. Ms. Thompson said it is at the discretion of the Family Court Judge, but there needs to be neglect or abuse involved.

In reply to several questions from Deputy Chairman Donaldson, Ms. Thompson said that the job of the CASA volunteer is to get any and all information that the Court would normally not have. She also advised that the qualifications for a volunteer were that they must be over twenty-one years of age, go through a criminal background check, have day-time availability, have a strong commitment to children and have the ability to go through a forty-hour training program.

Leg. Hayes asked if the volunteers document what the children say to them. Ms. Thompson clarified and said the volunteers do not develop a personal relationship with the children, but we do meet with them. In response to a question from Leg. Terrizzi she said the best place to meet is usually in the school where you can have privacy but not isolation and where they are not with either parent. Sometimes the meetings are in a foster home.

The report of Court Appointed Special Advocates being concluded, Deputy Chairman Donaldson presented a proposed Resolution No. 25 for the Committee's review.

Resolution No. 25 – Confirming Appointment of Members to U.C. Youth Board:

Deputy Chairman Donaldson presented a proposed Resolution to the Committee to confirming the appointment of four members to the Ulster County Youth Board. He advised that these appointments had been made by the County Executive pursuant to the Ulster County Charter and, pursuant to the Ulster County Charter, are subject to confirmation by the County Legislature. The individuals appointed and to be confirmed and their terms are as follows:

Juliette Graham-Hayes (Reappointment)	Term: Jan. 1, 2011 thru Dec. 31, 2013
Patricia A. Gibbons	Term: Feb. 16, 2011 thru Feb. 15, 2014
Vanessa Shelmandine	Term: Feb. 16, 2011 thru Feb. 15, 2014
Mark Pisano	Term: Feb. 16, 2011 thru Feb. 15, 2014

A motion to approve the resolution as presented was made by Leg. Belfiglio and seconded by Leg. Madsen and upon Deputy Chairman Donaldson calling for a voice vote the resolution confirming the appointment of the above four individuals as members of the Ulster County Youth Board was unanimously approved.

Ulster Corps.

At this time Deputy Chairman Donaldson introduced Rick Flynn who had been invited to this meeting by Chairman Harris to give a brief presentation on Ulster Corps.

Ulster Corps., said Mr. Flynn is an organization that works with service agencies to encourage the use of volunteers, facilitate successful volunteer placements, and nurture collaborations among service organizations throughout the county. This includes schools, religious and civic organizations, other non profit agencies and business volunteer programs and are looking to engage high school and college age students. Ulster Corps is currently looking at the problem of hunger in Ulster County. The Ulster County BOCES New Visions Health Class has committed itself to the task of developing a plan showing there is adequate, nutritious food accessible every day for every person in Ulster County.

Mr. Flynn also described several other projects currently being worked on and listed some of the organizations being partnered with. He handed out a Factsheet and a Brochure and said he would like to return and discuss the program with the Committee at more length.

There being no further business, Deputy Chairman Donaldson asked for a motion to adjourn. Such motion was made by Leg. Terrizzi and seconded by Leg. Madsen and Deputy Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder
Administrative Assistant
SUNY, Ulster Co. Community College