

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Public Works & Capital Projects Committee

DATE: October 19, 2009

TIME: 5:30 PM

PLACE: Library Conference Room, 6th Floor
County Office Building

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Peter Loughran, Deputy Chairman Dean Fabiano, Legislative Chairman David B. Donaldson, Legislator Roy Hochberg, Legislator Frank Felicello (arrived 5:40), Legislator Kevin Roberts (arrived 5:45)

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislator Jon Decker

OTHERS ATTENDING: Deputy County Executive Robert Sudlow, Deputy Budget Director Sue Ronga, Administrative Manager Brian Cunningham, Commissioner of Public Works David Sheeley, Stephanie Whidden, Esq., Department of the Environment Coordinator Amanda Lavalle

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER @ 5:36 PM

APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2009 MINUTES: All in favor

CAPITAL PROJECTS

- 1) **Draft Resolution Request / Highways & Bridges** - Establishing Capital Project No. 326 For Permits, Construction, And Implementation Of Stormwater Best Management Practices For The Glenford-Wittenberg Road Stormwater Retrofit Project - Amending The Capital Project Fund

Motion offered by Legislator Fabiano, Seconded by Legislator Hochberg, All in Favor

Discussion: None

- 2) **Draft Resolution Request / Department of the Environment** - Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Assistance Agreement To Accept United States Department Of Energy, Energy Efficiency And Conservation Block Grant (EECGB) Program Funds - Amending The 2009-2014 Capital Program, And Establishing Capital Project No. 327 - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Project

Motion offered by Legislative Chairman Donaldson, Seconded by Legislator Fabiano, All in Favor

Discussion: There was no discussion on the above Resolution. Department of the Environment Coordinator Amanda Lavalle updated the Committee as to the status of her Budget. One person will be transferring from the Engineering Department of DPW, and one person is being laid off, an Administrative Aide position.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1) Richard Tomasetti Property / Stephanie Whidden, Esq. explained to the Committee that her client is seeking to buy a .483 acre parcel of vacant land located on Lost Cove Road, Town of Shandaken. This property was formerly owned by Big Indian Water Works. Ms. Whidden has submitted the survey of the Tomasetti property, a tax map, the 1979 Deed from Penn Central Corp. and the Owasko River Railway, and the 1907 Deed from Big Indian Water Company. This property is a non buildable, wooded, rural, undeveloped piece of property. It appraised for \$550. Ms. Whidden will forward appraisal.

After deliberation the Committee agreed to sell the property to Mr. Tomasetti for the appraised value of \$550. The motion was offered by Legislator Felicello, Seconded by Legislative Chairman Donaldson, (Approved 5-1, Legislator Roberts was a no). The Committee has agreed to proceed with setting a Public Hearing on the required Introductory Local Law in order for the County of Ulster to sell this property to Richard Tomasetti. Dan Heppner Esq. will prepare what is necessary to move forward.

- 2) Possible Easement / License for logger in Big Indian / Dan Heppner explained to the Committee that John Follender, Esq. is representing a client (Logger) that has a contract to harvest trees and is requesting to access the land across the railroad right-of-way for which the Catskill Mountain Railroad has a lease through the IDA.

- The Committee would like the following questions addressed:
 - Has the land already been logged?
 - Are the logs going to be physically moved across the RR crossing with a skidder, which could cause potential damage to the tracks?

Legislator Hochberg asked that the Supervisor of Shandaken be copied on all details pertaining to this project as we move forward. Mr. Heppner agreed and will be contacting Mr. Follender and will update the Committee as soon as he receives the information.

Budget Review / Questions or Concerns

Discussion: The Committee started with the question, what are the changes for the Department of Public Work & Buildings and Grounds in the 2010 Budget?

Deputy County Executive Robert Sudlow stated the following as changes:

- Reduction in the workforce through the Early Retirement Incentives
- Reduction in numbers by about 12 positions from Highways & Bridges, achieved through early retirement and by not filling certain vacancies, 2 positions in Buildings and Grounds
- One Employee is targeted for lay-off, a clerical position

How will you get the work completed with a reduction in the workforce?

- A grant for shared municipal services will be implemented
- Working with the towns to become more efficient
- Focusing on scheduling to maximize efficiency throughout the County
- Looking for more administrative efficiency, to restore administration to one singular department, each department is still staffed independently, an example would be payroll

Legislator Felicello stated that it was his understanding that when Dave Sheeley became the Commissioner and the departments were to merge, that this was already implemented. Mr. Sudlow replied that it is absolutely one department; they are focusing on functions that are not separate administratively.

Legislator Felicello additionally stated that he would not support any lay-offs in the budget. The Committee further discussed with Mr. Sudlow what the implications of these lay-offs will signify for Ulster County. The Committee is hopeful that other positions will be found for these individuals. Legislator Felicello feels that they are sending the wrong message with these lay-offs. He stated that by laying-off this individual at 9 1/2 years and not giving 6 more months towards a solid 10 year retirement would be the wrong thing to do; he feels the difference could be quite a lot of money. Mr. Sudlow stated that they are working diligently to place all of these individuals in new positions and Legislator Loughran added that in some cases they may end up being better grade level positions.

Commissioner Sheeley stated that he is not replacing the individuals (3) on the surveying department that they have all taken the early retirement. He feels that the County does not need a surveying department. They will outsource any needed surveying on an as needed basis.

Brian Cunningham stated that from Buildings and Grounds he is losing (2) positions (Grade Eleven Titles / Building Maintenance Specialists); they are both Carpenters that are retiring. Staff has been back filled from different locations to compensate the changes.

Legislator Fabiano added that as a municipality worker for 30 years he does not support the lay-offs. His opinion on lay-offs in municipalities especially, is that you will lose services and in the end the taxpayer is not seeing a savings because sooner or later you will have to help these people with benefits, whether it is unemployment insurance, social services benefits, or HEAP.

OLD BUSINESS: None

Motion to adjourn @ 6:38 PM

Motion offered by Legislator Fabiano, Seconded by Legislator Hochberg, All in Favor

**Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Wilson
Senior Legislative Employee**