

Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: July 6, 2023 – 1:00 PM
LOCATION: Karen L. Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building, Kingston
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chair Gina Hansut
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Chelsea Villalba, Legislative Employee
PRESENT: Deputy Chair Chris Hewitt, Legislators Dean Fabiano and Abe Uchitelle, Legislature
Chair Tracey Bartels,
ABSENT: Legislator Tricia Bowen
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: District Attorney Dave Clegg and Investigator Eric Paulding, Office of the District Attorney; Sheriff Juan Figueroa, Ulster County Sheriff’s Office; Director Valerie Naccarato and Dana Ryan, Probation Department; Supervisor Darlene Higley, Crime Victims Assistance Program; Director Everett Erichsen, Emergency Services; Assistant Deputy Executive Rebecca Rojer; Legislators Phil Erner and Eric Stewart; Deputy Clerk/Financial Analyst Amber Feaster, Donna Schachman, Member of the Public

Chair Hansut called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM and Legislative Chair Bartels led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion No. 1: MOTION to APPROVE the Minutes of the May 4, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Law Enforcement & Public Safety Committee

Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Uchitelle

Discussion: None

Hearing none, Chair Hansut called the question.

Voting In Favor: Chair Hansut, Deputy Chair Hewitt, Legislators Fabiano and Uchitelle, Legislature
Chair Bartels

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: **MINUTES APPROVED**

Resolutions for the July 18, 2023 Session of the Legislature:

Resolution No. 299 – Amending The 2023 Ulster County Budget - Authorizing Payment Of Retroactive COVID Pay – Ulster County

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes a one-time premium to 33 eligible employees who performed essential work during the COVID- public health emergency from March 15, 2020 to June 6, 2020, as per Resolution No. 604 of 2021, funded by the American Rescue Plan.

Discussion:

Legislative Chair Bartels stated that she appreciated the resolution's novel approach to initiating an early conversation about how to keep the project on budget. She also highlighted that the Legislature has the spending power and, even if a cap were adopted, it could exceed that cap by passing a resolution authorizing more spending. However, the Chair emphasized that setting a cap would clearly establish the Legislature's spending limit, which could be especially beneficial in reining in costs during the design and development stage of the project.

The resolution sponsor, Legislator Stewart, clarified that he presented the resolution to start a discussion and identify measures to prevent the facility's spending from spiraling out of control. He said that he did not have the expertise to determine the cap amount and intentionally left it blank for the committees with jurisdiction over the project to decide. Chair Bartels proposed organizing a meeting with the Executive and relevant departments to receive a project update, assess the current status vis-à-vis the original budget, and how the Legislature's expressed concerns have, or have not, been addressed.

Legislator Hewitt asked Chair Bartels what advice she has to offer new legislators to help them avoid the mistakes made in building the Law Enforcement Center. Chair Bartels emphasized the importance of having conversations early in the project to avoid cost overruns and shared her experience with the jail construction, where project changes occurred behind closed doors, leading to significant cost overruns. Chair Bartels stressed the need to address potential changes promptly and implement better project management protections for the construction of the Government Operations Center.

Hearing no further discussion, Chair Hansut called for a motion to postpone.

Motion No. 3: MOTION TO POSTPONE Resolutions No. 309

Motion By: Legislator Uchitelle
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Voting In Favor: Chair Hansut, Deputy Chair Hewitt, Legislators Fabiano and Uchitelle, Legislature
Chair Bartels

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: RESOLUTION POSTPONED

Resolution No. 364 – Establishing A Restricted Capital Reserve Fund For The Government Operations Center Of The County Of Ulster Under Section 6-C Of The New York State General Municipal Law

Resolution Summary: This resolution allocates \$29,000,000 from the unassigned fund balance to establish a Restricted Capital Reserve Fund for Capital Project No. 607 – Government Operations Center.

Discussion:

Chair Hansut recognized Legislative Chair Bartels, the sponsor and author of the Resolution, to speak about the proposed Restricted Capital Reserve Fund for the Government Operations Center.

Legislative Chair Bartels proposed a postponement to facilitate additional discussions with the Executive Branch to determine the appropriate amount to allocate to the fund. She highlighted that creating a Restricted Capital Reserve Fund has very specific requirements and limits its monies to a designated project. The county currently possesses surplus funds in its unallocated and unrestricted fund balances. Establishing a Restricted Capital Reserve Fund would provide a responsible approach to funding the Government Operations Center with cash rather than relying on bonds and greatly reduce debt service fees for the project. Chair Bartels also added that because ARPA money has not been used to fund

emergency services projects, utilizing fund surpluses to the Government Operations Center is a highly responsible use of those monies.

Chair Bartels also clarified that the resolution, regardless of the final dollar amount designated, does not impose a cap on the project. She emphasized that if the final amount falls short of the project's total cost, it will not hinder the project's progress; instead, it establishes a method of payment with cash up to the allocated amount.

Legislator Uchitelle expressed strong support for establishing a Restricted Capital Reserve Fund for the Government Operations Center and said that he would like to see a policy developed that clearly outlines projects should be financed and which should be paid in cash with reserve funds.

Legislator Uchitelle added that there are multiple state and federal funding mechanisms and reimbursements for a complex project like the Government Operations Center and noted that it is important to understand the implications that establishing this type of fund may have on this and other public safety projects. Chair Bartels agreed, stating that feedback from the Executive Branch is crucial to identify any limitations and will be considered when determining the final amount for the fund. Chair Bartels also added that utilizing fund surpluses to finance the Government Operations Center is a responsible use of surplus monies, especially since ARPA funds have not been used for emergency services projects.

Hearing no further discussion, Chair Hansut called the question.

Motion No. 4: MOTION TO POSTPONE Resolutions No. 364

Motion By: Legislator Uchitelle
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hewitt

Voting In Favor: Chair Hansut, Deputy Chair Hewitt, Legislators Fabiano and Uchitelle, Legislature
Chair Bartels

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: RESOLUTION POSTPONED

Resolution No. 376 – Confirming Reappointment Of Member To The Traffic Safety Board

Resolution Summary: This resolution appoints Robert Lucchesi to the Ulster County Traffic Safety Board.

Discussion: None

Hearing no discussion, Chair Hansut called the question.

Motion No. 5: MOTION TO ADOPT Resolution No. 376

Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Hewitt

Voting In Favor: Chair Hansut, Deputy Chair Hewitt, Legislators Fabiano and Uchitelle, Legislature
Chair Bartels

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: RESOLUTION ADOPTED

Motion No. 7: MOTION TO ADOPT

Motion By: Legislator Fabiano
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Uchitelle

Voting In Favor: Chair Hansut, Deputy Chair Hewitt, Legislators Fabiano and Uchitelle, Legislature Chair Bartels

Voting Against: Legislative Chair Tracey Bartels

Votes in Favor: 4

Votes Against: 1

Disposition: RESOLUTION ADOPTED

Resolution No. 388 – Authorizing The Chair Of The Ulster County Legislature To Execute An Agreement With The New York State Division Of Criminal Justice Services For Participation In Project GIVE Program – District Attorney, Sheriff, And Probation

Resolution Summary: This resolution authorizes an agreement with the Department of Justice for participation in the Gun Involved Violence Elimination Initiative to provide the Ulster County District Attorney’s Office, Sheriff’s Office, and Probation Department with a total of \$232,934.00 grant funding from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Discussion:

Chair Hansut recognized District Attorney Clegg to give background on the GIVE Program. District Attorney Clegg stated that the GIVE Program's primary focus is to reduce gun violence. The District Attorney Office is partnering with Kingston City Police and maintains a Kids Zone with monitored statistics. He reported a significant decrease in violent crimes and shootings since 2022. Additionally, the District Attorney mentioned a recent conference with representatives from the Governor's Office, where increased funding for discovery grants and additional funding to help District Attorney's Offices address retention and recruitment challenges was announced. The Governor's Office has promised additional funding for the next five years. The District Attorney expects the details of the funding to be announced in July. He also shared that he plans to create a GIVE position which will focus on guns and violent crime.

Chair Bartels asked of the GIVE position will be a new position or someone who is currently working in the District Attorney's Office. District Attorney Clegg said the position has been in place for long time and is currently filled by a person hired last year and has primarily been used for the Intimate Partner Violence Initiative (IPI).

Chair Hansut requested the District Attorney's Office, Department of Probation, and Sheriff's Office forward copies of their GIVE grant award to her.

Hearing no further discussion, Chair Hansut called the question.

Motion No. 8: MOTION TO ADOPT Resolution No. 388

Motion By: Legislator Uchitelle
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Fabiano

Voting In Favor: Chair Hansut, Deputy Chair Hewitt, Legislators Fabiano and Uchitelle, Legislature Chair Bartels

Voting Against: None

Votes in Favor: 5

Votes Against: 0

Disposition: RESOLUTION ADOPTED

