

Establishing The Ulster County Arts And Culture Advisory Council

Referred to: The Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture Committee (Chairwoman Sperry and Legislators Clinton, Corcoran, Hewitt, Litts, Stewart and Walls)

Chair of Legislature, Peter J. Criswell, offers the following:

WHEREAS, arts and culture are woven into the fabric of Ulster County, serving residents and visitors alike; and

WHEREAS, arts and culture are a major economic engine for Ulster County, generating a total economic impact of approximately \$814 million per year; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Legislature deems it essential to strengthen collaboration, communication, and coordination among artists, cultural organizations, and community partners in Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, on April 18, 2023, the Ulster County Legislature unanimously adopted Resolution 129, which initiated the funding and development of an Ulster County Arts and Culture Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, in April 2024, a Project Planning Team, Project Advisory Committee and Implementation Task Force Groups were formed to begin the development of a comprehensive arts and culture plan for Ulster County in conjunction with Lord Cultural Resources; and

WHEREAS, in April 2025, following a year of robust community engagement, public input, economic impact analysis, and research and substantive collaboration with stakeholders including the hosting of four community Town Halls and the undertaking of arts and culture-related site tours throughout Ulster County, *IMAGINE* Ulster: The Ulster County Arts and Culture Plan was completed; and

WHEREAS, *IMAGINE* Ulster is the first ever arts and culture plan for Ulster County, designed to establish strategic priorities for supporting artists and the arts economy and to articulate the appropriate role of county government in advancing arts and culture throughout Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, *IMAGINE* Ulster sets forth four priorities and multiple strategies to achieve these priorities, including the establishment of an Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Commission, which the Ulster County Legislature deems necessary and appropriate to facilitate implementation of the plan; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Ulster County Charter Section C-16 and the Administrative Code Section A2-11: “*Advisory committees, commissions and boards. Members of all citizens' committees, commissions and boards appointed pursuant to*

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§ C-11K of the Charter shall serve at the pleasure of the County Legislature. They shall serve without compensation other than for actual and necessary expenses within appropriations made therefor, unless otherwise provided by resolution of the County Legislature. The Chairman of the County Legislature shall be a member ex-officio of all such committees, commissions and boards;” now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council is hereby established to advise the County Executive, the County Legislature, and the Director of Arts, Culture, and Open Spaces on the implementation of *IMAGINE* Ulster; and, be it further

RESOLVED, the objectives of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council are as follows:

- a. Advocate for the continued arts and cultural enrichment of Ulster County.
- b. Serve as an advisory body to the County Executive, the County Legislature, Tourism Department, and Director of Arts, Culture, and Open Spaces in connection with resident needs and concerns related to arts and culture in Ulster County.
- c. Support the work of the Director of Arts, Culture and Open Spaces and other County staff engaged in the implementation of *IMAGINE* Ulster, including researching opportunities and available resources necessary to support implementation of the plan.
- d. Provide input regarding activities to be undertaken to implement the priorities, goals, and objectives as set forth in *IMAGINE* Ulster.
- e. Serve as ambassadors to and advocate for arts and cultural activities and programs taking place in the County.
- f. Support public outreach and education about the value of the arts to municipalities and to the general public; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall not have any oversight or managerial authority over the work of the Ulster County Director of Arts, Culture, and Open Spaces; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Council will not initiate arts and culture programs and activities under their role on this Advisory Council; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council will consist of seven (7) qualified members with accomplishments in one or more areas of the arts, including artists, writers, musicians, arts and culture professionals, art fabricators, arts and culture supporters, and arts-related business owners. All members shall be residents of Ulster County and should represent a diverse cross-section of the

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County's residents in terms of age, race, ethnicity, and geographic location. No County Legislator or employee may be a member of the Council; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall consist of four (4) members appointed by the County Executive and three (3) members appointed by the Chair of the Legislature; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of Arts, Culture and Open Spaces and the Chair of the Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture Committee of the Ulster County legislature shall be non-voting ex officio members of the Council; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that to establish a pool from which Council members will be appointed, the County will solicit applications for the Council through: its website, Ulster County Legislators, and advertising broadly to community members; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that all Council members will be required to submit applications for review prior to their appointment by either the County Executive or Chair of the Legislature respectively; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Council shall seek to have at least one representative from each of the five areas of the County: Northwest, Northeast, Central (East and West), Southeast, and Southwest; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that each member of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall serve for a term of three (3) years running from January 1 through December 31 each calendar year; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the terms for the initial members of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall be staggered so that there will be an overlap between the members' terms, with 3 of the members appointed for two years and 4 appointed for three years; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that if the initial Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council is formed after January 1st 2026, then the calculation of a given member's term shall commence on January 1, 2027; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the County Executive and the Chair of the Legislature shall collectively determine the length of terms of the individual Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council members, whether 2 or 3 years; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that members of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall serve no more than two consecutive full three-year terms on the Council, but may be reappointed to the Council, following no less than a one-year absence following the end of their last term on the Council; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the initial appointments to the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall be made by the respective appointing authorities as set forth herein on or before December 31, 2025; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Director of Arts, Culture and Open Spaces, as *ex officio* member of the Council, shall call the first organizational meeting of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council to order by no later than January 31, 2026; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that in the event a member of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council wishes to resign from the Council, such resignation must be submitted, in writing, to the Council Chair, and promptly forwarded to the Clerk of the Legislature and County Executive prior to the effective date of said resignation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that if a member of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council fails to attend three (3) consecutive regular council meetings, and/or, four (4) meetings in any one calendar year they will be deemed to have resigned from the Council; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that any member of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council may be removed at any time by the affirmative vote of a majority of the seated Council members; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that vacancies created by resignation or removal shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by appointment of the individual who made the original appointment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the officers of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Recording Secretary. The officers shall be elected annually by a majority vote. The nomination of the officers shall be made by the members of the Council at their regular December meeting. The election shall follow immediately, with the nominees receiving the majority vote of the Council members present shall be declared elected; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, that frequency of meetings of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall be determined by the Council - place and time to be designated by the County. Meetings may be held in a hybrid fashion where Council members may attend in person or virtually, in accordance with Open Government laws, and with the public being invited to attend all meetings whether in person or virtually; and, be it further

RESOLVED, Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council members shall serve at the pleasure of the County appointing authorities and shall serve without compensation other than for actual and necessary expenses within appropriations made therefor, unless otherwise provided by resolution of the County Legislature; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall create bylaws for the Council. The Council may establish standing or *ad hoc* committees as needed to advance its mission and the goals of the Arts and Culture Plan; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that each member of the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall be subject to the Ulster County Ethics Law; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Arts and Culture Advisory Council shall draft and deliver a written report to the County Executive and the Ulster County Legislature at the end of each fiscal year to provide an update the County on the Council's activities,

and moves its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Economic Development, Planning, Education, Employment, Arts and Agriculture on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
NONE