

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/  
EDUCATION, TOURISM AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF  
THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE, HELD AT THE ULSTER  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JULY, 2004.**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**WAYNE HARRIS, Chairman  
FRANK FELICELLO, Deputy Chairman  
PETER LOUGHRAN  
SUSAN CUMMINGS  
TRACEY BARTELS**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

**JOSEPH ROBERTI  
SUSAN ZIMET**

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

**GORDON H. HOWATT (Dean of Administration of Ulster County  
Community College)  
CHESTER STRAUB (Executive Director of Ulster County Development  
Corporation)  
CYNTHIA RUIZ (Director of UCAT)  
JANE CARROLL (Admin Asst. UCAT)  
DENNIS DOYLE (Director of Ulster County Planning Department  
ROBERT LIEBOWITZ (Senior Planner from Ulster County Planning  
Department)  
LEE REIDY (Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension)  
NANCY LYNCH (Ulster County School-to-Work)  
HALLIE ARNOLD (Report from "The Daily Freeman")  
JANET CRISPINO (Recorder)**

**NOT REPORTING:**

**PETER CARAFANO, Ulster County Tourism**

**A quorum being present, Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and introduced Ms. Nancy Lynch of the Ulster County School-to-Work program who made a presentation to the Committee. Ms. Lynch said this was the ten-year Anniversary of the program, and the grant was continued in 1999 through the**

efforts of Daniel Alfonso, then Chairman of the Legislature. She discussed the funding for this program and the make-up of the Board of Directors.

Ms. Lynch advised that this year all grant funding is gone and they have also lost funding through other areas. She urged the Committee to support the application for continued funding. She explained the mission of this program and said it was important students learn organizational skills in order to find suitable jobs. Ms. Lynch said Ulster County lost 5% of its work force between 1990 and 2000. It is projected that we will lose another 6% between 2000 and 2010. One of this program's notable accomplishments is the Career Conference held each year at Ulster County Community College. In reply to a question from Chairman Harris, Ms. Lynch stated that the fiscal office was at BOCES but the actual program is run from space donated by UCCC at the Business Resource Center. She then gave a background on the fiscal history of this program

Leg. Felicello said this is an outstanding program and he would like to see it continue. Shadowing and other programs help students decide what they want to do in their future. It is one of the most important programs in the County. Leg. Cummings said that at the last Board meeting there were students from Saugerties in attendance. These students had observed actual professionals and they all had great experiences with the program. Leg. Cummings said this is an excellent achievement for these students.

Chairman Harris said the program is not just educational; it also goes to economic development and is very important. Leg. Felicello said this program should be part of the Ulster County budget and urged the Committee to lobby their fellow Legislators. In response to Leg. Felicello's question, Ms. Lynch said this program is in dire need of a support person. Their budget is about \$120,000 but they can get by with less.

Leg. Felicello then suggested that the Committee send a letter to the Chairman of the Legislature and the County Administrator recommending \$100,000 for this program. Leg. Loughran asked how much they received from the school districts. Ms. Lynch said they receive about \$28,000 from six school districts. No money is received from Highland, New Paltz or Marlboro, and no funding is received at all from SUNY New Paltz.

At this time Leg. Felicello asked if this Committee would support this program for \$90,000. Leg. Cummings said School-to-Work is a contract Agency. Last year, instead of going through contract agencies one by one, they were cut across the board. Leg. Felicello said he does not feel the other contract agencies are not important, but felt that this program affects the future of students. Leg. Cummings suggested sending a letter to Ways and Means recommending that the School-to-Work program be funded to the extent of \$90,000.

**A motion to confirm the foregoing was made by Leg. Felicello and seconded by Leg. Loughran. In seconding the motion, Leg. Loughran said School-to-Work should utilize the county resources in attempting to find sources of funding. Leg. Felicello suggested they work with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Chairman Harris said the letter should include the percentage of County funding. This program is mostly funded through the County and any reduction would make a much deeper impact.**

**Leg. Felicello also suggested the letter should go to all school districts urging them to increase their contribution to this program. Leg. Loughran said this is a resource for the school districts and \$28,000 from six school districts is not enough. Leg. Felicello said we have to sell this program to the school districts and urged personal involvement from the Legislators. Ms. Lynch said the school districts are billed by BOCES and they set the rate.**

**There being a motion on the floor to send a letter to Ways and Means Committee recommending this program be funded to the extent of \$90,000, a voice vote was taken by Chairman Harris. Upon voice vote the motion was unanimously approved and Chairman Harris will write the letter with Ms. Lynch.**

**The presentation of School-to-Work being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Gordon Howatt, Dean of Administration of Ulster County Community College who advised that the booklet he had distributed was the college's Six Year Capital Plan covering the years 2005-2010. This was due to be filed with the County Administrator several days ago.**

**Dean Howatt said the figures for final enrollment for the current fiscal year and for summer students are in, and it looks like the college will be about 75 FTEs over projections for the year.**

**Leg. Cummings asked about the RFPs for the architect, and Dean Howatt said it has gone to County Purchasing, and we hope to have it by the August meeting. He said the college has the specifications for some projects already out, and others will go out shortly. He said all the college needs is assurance that the architect will be approved. Leg. Cummings asked if there was a time problem and Chairman Harris said he would call a special meeting if necessary.**

**There followed a general discussion of the condition of the College's roadways and parking lots. Leg. Felicello will discuss with Bridges and Highways to see if County equipment and personnel could be used with the College paying for the product.**

**The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Dennis Doyle, Director of Ulster County Planning Department. Mr. Doyle introduced Robert Lefkowitz, Senior Planner, who is charged with doing an update on the Planning Department's web page.**

**Mr. Lefkowitz gave a presentation on the new web page, including Planning Department Directory of Towns, demographic profiles, housing and aerial maps. In reply to a question from Leg. Loughran, Mr. Lefkowitz said this is on the web and anyone can get access to it. Mr. Doyle explained the referral policies and recommendations and Mr. Lefkowitz said it also includes the Ulster County Transportation Council and documents, maps and ongoing projects. The new web page also includes the minutes of Planning Board meetings, as well as budget information on the Washington Avenue Sewer District. He said there is even a section explaining the many acronyms used by the Planning Department.**

**Mr. Doyle then gave a Transportation Council update. This current project, a long-range transportation plan, must be completed and certified by October, 2005 in order to receive Federal funding. They have selected Edwards & Kelsey as the consultant and their contract is for \$80,000 which is 95% federally funded.**

**His office is continuing to work on the Washington Avenue/Town of Ulster Project and thanked the Legislature for the amendment to the budget to do an Access Management Study for \$20,000. His department is also involved in an inter-modal study for transit which is a \$40,000 study for transportation improvement guidelines and how to choose projects which would be eligible for Federal funding. Bill Tobin will be handling these projects.**

**Continuing with his report, Mr. Doyle said the Housing Strategy Report RFP was due back on June 29<sup>th</sup>. He has met with the Proposal Committee. The list is narrowed to three consultants and they will be looking at and reviewing their presentations either August 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**The report of the Ulster County Planning Department being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Cynthia Ruiz, Director of Ulster County Area Transit who introduced her Administrative Assistant, Jane Carroll. Ms. Carroll gave her educational background and an overview of her duties in the position of Administrative Assistant.**

**Continuing with her report Ms. Ruiz reported the new New Paltz/Newburgh service began on July 1st. She said they got the bus back and put the UCAT logo on it. People in the lower part of the County are really happy with the schedule.**

**She also reported on the numbers for this quarter. Ridership is up 14.25% and fares went up \$5,751. She said UCAT still gets State operating assistance which is 40.5 cents for every passenger. In response to a question by Leg. Loughran, Ms. Ruiz said her department is audited every year. She explained the system used by UCAT and how reports are generated. They are audited by both Federal and State and the County also does an independent audit every year. In reply to a question by Chairman Harris, Ms. Ruiz said State auditors actually get on a bus and pay the fare and ride as passengers.**

**Federal applications are in and she has answered all of their comments. We are getting \$49,110 for a Transit Support Vehicle to be used for bus breakdowns. She also reported that UCAT has received its 5307 money and its TMA money and will be using \$566,896 for administrative and preventative maintenance this year. On the new Transit Center, Ms. Ruiz said the contractors were asked to take their contingency out of their contracts. She said it is better for all parties and the County will have a tighter rein.**

**UCAT is doing a web page. Included will be photos of the Transit Center, the budget and the actual construction schedule. The project is currently on budget and on time. She said UCAT is being allowed \$126,000 by the Federal Government to put in a bus elevator.**

**Ms. Ruiz reported that she will be testifying for the NY Transit Association on transit in this state on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Dennis Doyle will also be testifying on the State Transportation Plan. She said they will be testifying on the subject of technology and gave several examples.**

**In response to Leg. Cummings' question on the status of the bus washing portion of the project, Ms. Ruiz explained why it was taken out and how she is trying to get in back in.**

**The report of Ulster County Area Transit being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Chester Straub, Executive Director of Ulster County Development Corporation who advised that he will be bring several Industrial Development Agency projects before the Committee in September.**

**He is also in the process of preparing six-month Highlight Reports on activities in the County from January to June, 2004.**

**His office is also working with local businesses to help them get grants from the state, and is also preparing an application for another business to acquire additional manufacturing machinery. He said these things have only been done sporadically in the past and are important because the loan fund has decreasing levels of capital.**

**He also reported that there is a lot of public relations activity, mainly through trade shows and web sites. He said they get about 250 hits a day, particularly with regard to real estate. He is also working with the Hudson Valley Economic Development Commission whose resources allow us to participate in these trade shows which we ordinarily wouldn't be able to do.**

**Mr. Straub reported they will be doing a brokers' tour in the fall for New York City/Metropolitan area brokers. UCDC has completed a Virtual Brokers Tour. It is difficult to get brokers interested and the best way to bring information to them is via the Web Site virtual tour of properties up and down the Hudson Valley, which features six properties in Ulster County.**

**On the Housing Consortium, his office is working to complete the Continuing Care application due at the end of this month. We have become more involved in working with residential real estate developers. A particular one is looking to build a development aimed at people over 55, and another for a mixed use project in the town of Lloyd. There is also an affordable housing project in the City of Kingston. He said this is an IDA matter.**

**Mr. Straub said he is doing a Work Force Study with the Office of Employment and Training. This study will be specifically geared to employers to determine the type of workers they need and what is available.**

**There is a handful of existing businesses we are working with to facilitate financing for expansion. There are also three businesses looking to relocate to the County; however they are still in the discussion phase. Mr. Straub said a detailed six-month highlight report should be ready shortly.**

**Chairman Harris said he did not know too much about what UCDC was doing. If people have any ideas they should get them to him. He said he has been attending Empire Zone monthly meetings, is the Chairman of the Shovel Ready Committee and is on the IDA Board, the UCDC Board and the UCDC Marketing Committee. There is a lot of energy and planning about what we should do, and they are really reaching out to attract business and industry.**

**Leg. Loughran asked how many jobs had been created in Ulster County within the last six months, and Mr. Straub said probably between 600-700. The Department of Labor tracks this on a monthly basis and has a rough correlation to various types of workers. UCDC has been working mostly with the precision manufacturing companies and innovative design companies. In reply to a question on salaries by Leg. Loughran, Mr. Straub said these firms pay anywhere from \$25,000 to \$75,000 and most are technical in nature.**

**Leg. Loughran asked why it is so difficult for Ulster County to have good, decent jobs. Mr. Straub said that prospective employers look for certain things. A high tech company looks to locate near a research institution. He said businesses today are looking for information technology and public service infrastructure and there are gaps in both of those in Ulster County. They are also looking for facilities into which they can move quickly. Those are at a premium in Ulster County. He said there have been no buildings built in the county in the last 3-5 years which are suitable for technology or manufacturing. In addition, the two biggest obstacles anywhere in New York State are the tax structure and the Home Rule structure.**

**The report of Ulster County Development Corporation being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Education, who advised that the CCE Board will be meeting tomorrow and is working on the**

**budget which will be submitted by August 1<sup>st</sup>. The budget will be sent to all members. Her department is trying to be as fiscally conservative as possible.**

**Ms. Reidy said her office is working on educational programs for the Ulster County Fair which will be held August 3-8, which is later than usual. Invitations will go out for Opening Day as well as from the 4-H youth working at the Fair to tour the Fair.**

**Cornell Cooperative is planning a big gathering at the Ulster County Fairgrounds. It is a Small Farms and Rural Living Expo. This is a tri-state expo involving New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. This is the first time here in New York. They are trying to attract new home buyers to educate them on how rural living is different from city living. This will be held on September 18 and 19. Governor Pataki has been invited but they do not know if he will attend. There will also be representatives from Penn State, Cornell and Rutgers University. There will also be programs for local officials who do not understand the complexities of Ag. Districts.**

**Leg. Felicello asked where in the County were most of the Agricultural Districts located and Dennis Doyle said he believed it to be the Town of Shawangunk. He also wanted to know what areas produce what. Ms. Reidy said Ulster County leads the State in apples and sweet corn.**

**Leg. Felicello asked if agriculture was on the rise in Ulster County. Ms. Reidy said a study was done by the US Dept. Agriculture on a national basis. She said the last census showed an increase from 1998 and prior in the amount of farmland. She does think agricultural land had always been under-reported. Mr. Doyle said he believed the 1997-2002 USDA report shows more acreage in farms in Ulster County.**

**The report of Cornell Cooperative Education being concluded, Chairman Harris recognized Leg. Cummings who stated that there are two other agencies besides School-to-Work, (i.e. Ulster County Development Corporation and Cornell Cooperative Extension) that also depend upon the County for the majority of their funding. A general discussion followed on contract agencies and their funding formulas and funding needs.**

**Ms. Reidy said that in some counties they have put agencies such as UCDC and Cornell Cooperative into what they called “authorized agencies”. These were designed to be funded between the County, State and Federal governments. She believes UCDC was created by Ulster County and the County should look at what it is they were designed to do, i.e., augment county services, bring in dollars, etc. Mr. Straub said UCDC was not created by Ulster County. It grew out of a need for an agency to administer the IDA. UCDC receives its funding from multiple areas.**

**Leg. Felicello asked Ms. Reidy to get some information on how CCE is funded in other counties. Mr. Straub said the budget of UCDC is approximately \$600,000. The County contributes \$285,000 and the remainder of the money comes one-half from administrative fees from the IDA and one-half from private industry.**

**A general discussion followed regarding changing the designation of School-to-Work, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Ulster County Development Corporation from “contract” agencies to “authorized” agencies. A motion to have Chairman Harris bring this matter up before the Efficiency and Reforms Committee, and advise them that this committee favors their looking into this change of designation was made by Leg. Felicello and seconded by Leg. Cummings. The following is the result of the vote:**

**For the motion: Leg. Harris, Felicello, Cummings, Bartels**

**Against the motion: Leg. Loughran**

**At this time Chairman Harris advised that Ulster County Tourism would be meeting tomorrow with Jim Hammond on the 2005 Empire State Games.**

**Chairman Harris placed before the committee the subject of the RFPs for the Persen House. He said he had contacted Transart about using part of the premises and they said no, that their plan is that they would need the whole building. Chairman Harris also spoke with Lowell Thing and the plan to bring them together is workable. Transart is looking at other venues. Both groups are interested in having some reaction from this Committee.**

**Leg. Felicello said too much money has been spent on that building already. He feels we should not go with anyone outside and that the County should make use of the building. Leg. Loughran asked how much more money is the County willing to spend on this building. A general discussion of the Persen House finances followed.**

**Leg. Bartels said we still have to get a feeling from the full Legislature on what is happening with the proposed Visitors Center.**

**Leg. Cummings said she would personally like to see the County utilize the Person House, and we should find out what restrictions, if any, are on some of the grant money. She questioned if the County would have to return some of those funds if the \$1 million grant for the visitor’s Center site specific or could it be applied to the Persen House. Mr. Doyle said he believes the money is directly related to a visitor’s center located near an interstate highway. These funds are not transferable from site to site. In addition, there is a provision, according to Mr. Doyle, that the site be connected to the City of Kingston, which means installation of a sidewalk. A general discussion of the proposed Tourism Center followed.**

**At this time a motion to explore spending the \$1.5 million allocated to the Tourism Center in house and, if possible, begin to build a Tourism Center at its original site, contingent upon not exceeding \$1.5 million, was made by Leg. Loughran. The motion was seconded by Leg. Felicello and the matter opened to further discussion.**

**Leg. Bartels asked if matching funds are needed with these grants. Dennis Doyle said on some of the grant money there are some matching funds required. Leg. Felicello said the County should be able to build a nice building for \$1 million. Leg. Loughran said that if we go ahead with this, there should be a penalty clause in any contracts. Mr. Doyle said there have been changes since the original plans, and you have to look at unexpected costs as well as unexpected windfalls such as the Heritage Trail. You may also be eligible to develop the site with grant money from Greenway.**

**In reply to a statement from Leg. Felicello, Mr. Doyle said it progressed to the extent that we have all of the work in place for agreements with the Department of Transportation. The agreements have maintenance provisions. The project now has to go to Albany Central which may involve additional costs. He said he was then told not to advance any funds. There were a number of people who said to hold it. Leg. Felicello said he was Chair of this Committee at that time and he heard nothing about it being stopped. This was during Ward Todd's tenure as Chair.**

**Leg. Bartels said she does not support the concept at all. A lengthy discussion followed. Leg. Felicello said we are not working through our committee systems. Chairman Harris asked if the Committee would want an informational meeting on the Tourism Center. Leg. Felicello said he would, through Buildings & Grounds, and requested Harvey Sleight to come up with a plan to build a Tourism Center at its original location for an amount not to exceed \$1.5 million total.**

**After further discussion and a motion being on the table as aforesaid, Chairman Harris asked for a vote and the results of said vote are:**

**For the motion: Leg. Harris, Leg. Felicello, Leg. Loughran, Leg. Cummings.  
Against the motion: Leg. Bartels.**

**There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Felicello and seconded by Leg. Loughran. Chairman Harris thereupon declared the meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.**

**Respectfully submitted:**

**Janet Crispino, Recorder**