

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Administrative Services Committee

DATE: March 26, 2007

TIME: 6:15 P.M.

PLACE: Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Brian Cahill, Legislators Robert Parete, Robert Aiello, Joan Every, and Gary Bischoff (excused at 7 P.M.)

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislators Kraft, Stoeckler

OTHERS ATTENDING: Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Director Information Services, Robin Peruso, Purchasing Agent, Dorothy Martin, Director Real Property, Diane Beitzl, Safety Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, Insurance Officer, and Soni O'Bryan, Deputy Insurance Officer (attending to take minutes for meeting).

The meeting was called to order with the first order of business being a review and vote on several Resolutions. The first Resolution is to amend Capital Project 276, the purchase of vehicles for various County Departments for 2007. The primary issue was how to fund these vehicles, using contingency funds or serial bonds. After a lengthy discussion and further review of the Resolution Draft the committee found that Ways & Means had already amended the draft and reviewed the financial impact changing the purchase method of the vehicle from serial bonds to contingency funds that will be transferred into a Purchasing account. Legislator Bischoff moved to accept the Resolution Draft, seconded by Legislator Parete - motion carried. The next Resolution was to repeal the Real Property Law Section 339-y and vote yes on NYS Assembly Bill No. A1574 and NYS Senate Bill No S1058. This Resolution is asking for any condominiums established as of January 2008 be valued for taxes based on the same way residential dwellings are based, which is market value, rather than using the current method of income as the base. So far the City of Kingston is the only one that is acting on this based on the Homestead/Non-Homestead Act. There is strong opposition by big politicians who own condos. The law doesn't affect Ulster County as much as it would Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, Putnam and other southern counties. Chairman Cahill's opinion is that he'd rather wait until the State acts on this before doing anything. The committee also felt that it was not fair because it does not deal with existing condos therefore making the law inequitable. Due to the lack of any motion or a second, this Resolution died in committee and will go back to the proposed owner. The next Resolution was to set a Public Hearing on Introductory Local Law Number #9 of 2007 which is a local law to allow enrolled Volunteer Firefighters' and Volunteer Ambulance workers to be eligible for a Real Property Tax Exemption under Real Property Tax Law (RPTL & 466-h) to be held on May 2, 2007 at 6:15 P.M. There is concern by the EMT/Volunteer Firefighters on what this means to them. **Real Property** Director Dorothy Martin explained that the maximum exemption is \$3,000; for County purposes it amounts to a savings of a little more than \$12.00. Anyone taking this exemption would lose the State exemption of \$250.00. Chairman Cahill expressed concern that the EMT's/Firefighters may not understand this and although they have the option of this Resolution they must be aware that they cannot take both exemptions offered. He feels that this should be solicited to the area Volunteers and EMT's and to see what they think and allow the option - if we adopt this Resolution - they take either this option or the State Tax option. He asked Dorothy to reach out to them on the general consensus on this Resolution.

The Resolution was tabled at this time until the next meeting when hopefully the committee will have more feedback from the Volunteer Firefighter's and EMT's. The last Resolution is the Flood Relief Act of 2007 that has passed in both houses of the State. This law doesn't really affect Ulster County as much as other NY Counties and so far there have been no responses from the Towns or the Assessor's on eligibility. They have until May 1, 2007 to endorse or respond or there will be no one to be a sponsor for them. Since the Committee does not want anyone to lose out on this it was suggested that Dorothy Martin re-address this with the Towns/Assessors to see if there are any responses and they can have this put on the agenda for the April Legislative Meeting for a vote and still meet the May 1, 2007 deadline. A motion was made to do this by Legislator Bischoff, seconded by Legislator Parete - motion carried.

As Department updates were to be started Legislator Parete brought up an issue that he would like this Committee to think about in respects to requests for equipment. Legislator Parete explained the equipment approval requests have taken up a great deal of time in Committee meetings and they feel as if they are making more Administrative decisions in their meetings, rather than Legislative ones and it tends to bog down the meetings. He and Legislator Berardi, Chairman of Public Works, are both trying to raise the cap on equipment needed to be brought to their committees for line by line approval. The way they would like it to work is that the department heads be allowed to make a purchase on the authority of the Committee Chair, but still provide a detailed sheet that would come through their Committee for review and any questions by Committee members. All members of this committee were okay with this, however, Robin Peruso, Purchasing Agent, stressed that if this is done, it must be done across the board and everyone must be on board in doing this. Since this needs to be addressed with the County Administrator, Brian will recommend a letter be sent to same recommending that they raise the amount for approval to a higher level than \$500.00 so that it relieves Committee pressure to approve and gives authority to the Chairman. This will also need to be placed on the Legislative agenda. All were in agreement to pursue this issue as suggested.

Information Services Director Sylvia Wohlfahrt, reviewed financial system software they are looking at through Sun Guard. There are questions on whether this system would meet our needs and Sylvia explained that a group did an analysis to assert our needs. This was brought about by Contract Management who wants to negotiate quarterly payments with Sun Guard, but Sun Guard was only willing to do this by adding a fee each quarter which is not acceptable. Sylvia pursued further negotiations with Sun Guard and politely reminded them that there many other companies out there; Sun Guard has agreed to drop the quarterly fee. Sylvia next presented a Request to Fill for an *Assistant Director of Application Development*, which is Sylvia's old job. The vacancy date for this was 2/17/07 and she is currently still filling in on this position as well as handling the Director's position and is not able to do this for much longer. She has delegated a lot, but needs someone to organize staff to do future development of projects. Legislator Parete made a motion to approve; seconded by Legislator Every - motion carried. Sylvia also put in a request for conference attendance to the NYS Local Government Information Technology Director's Assn. Legislator Aiello made a motion to approve this request, seconded by Legislator Every - motion carried. The next item was the equipment over \$500.00 which was reviewed by the Committee. Legislator Parete made a motion to accept the list as presented, seconded by Legislator Every - motion carried. Chairman Cahill then brought up a subject that had been presented to him by Legislator Liepman. Legislator Liepman would like to set up a Google Calendar for calendaring functions. Chairman Cahill indicated that he would prefer not to put the County on a public domain and most especially since we have an e-calendar in Lotus Notes. One of Legislator Liepman's thoughts about this was the possibility of better notification to the public of County meetings. **IS** is currently looking into another calendaring function for County Use. The majority of Committee truly feels all the information we need is on the County website and intranet system and everyone should encourage more use of these systems. Sylvia next reviewed the NewCoLab web casting for County meetings. She indicated that they will permanently mount cameras so they can film committee meetings and Legislative meetings or any other meetings or they can also set them up to broadcast a meeting live over the internet. Sylvia felt that the technology was needed but the County would need to have the right

expectations of what it will do. Chairman Cahill would like to experiment with this starting with Legislature meetings. Sylvia was unsure of the costs and is more concerned on current projects being finished before incorporating this project. They may need to consider hiring a webmaster in the future either contracted for a reasonable price or as a County employee.

Next, Chairman Cahill brought up a phone complaint from an extremely irate citizen who came to the County Office Building earlier in this day complaining about Central Auto with respect to the condition of the building and all of the cars that have been located over there. He expressed that this site does not fit the County's needs and we would be vigorously looking for a new site for a new location. There was some discussion about the buildings available to house Central Auto and the vehicles. Purchasing Agent, Robin Peruso advised that there could be a short term solution by doing a surplus sale on vehicles at Central Auto. They should also ask Fleet Manager, Tony Gallo, his suggestions for cleaning up the yard. Some ideas suggested were to utilize the impound yard at the old jail for some of the vehicles. No other action was taken on this at this time. Robin again brought up a request by the Fleet Manager and Fleet Mechanic with regards for the need for each person to have a car to take home. Chairman Cahill is still unsure of the need and would like to know why they feel they need a vehicle to take home. He asked that Fleet Manager Gallo come to a meeting and explain his reasons. The purchase of the flat-bed truck in the Capital Project No. 276 may alleviate some of the need for a vehicle. Robin will have either Tony or Deputy Purchasing Agent Bob DiBella attend next month's meeting. Robin also has a Request to Fill for an *Asst. Mechanic Helper*. This is currently a vacant and budgeted position that was downgraded from *Auto Mechanic I*. A motion to approve was made by Legislator Aiello, seconded by Legislator Every - motion carried. Robin's next request was for a copier for Central Auto as they currently have no working copier. She has a State bid price of \$3,170.00 to purchase it. They could lease this, but it really is not as feasible. Some of the Committee thought that the price was very high for a copier, however, Legislator Parete did make a motion to approve this purchase, seconded by Legislator Aiello - motion carried. Robin also presented a request to purchase a vinyl sign cutter at a cost of \$2,500.00. This was presented by Fleet Manager Gallo at last month's meeting and rather than outsourcing this function they will be able to save the County money. The current cost for per car is \$500.00 and once we purchase the cutter and materials it will cost about \$100.00 by doing it in-house. A motion to approve this purchase was made by Legislator Every, seconded by Legislator Aiello - motion carried. Robin also requested approval for her to attend a SAMPO Conference in May, 2007 at a cost a little more than \$400.00. A motion to approve was made by Legislator Parete, seconded by Legislator Aiello - motion carried. Robin received a request from DSS to do an assessment for copiers, in their department, at a cost of \$5,000.00. Robin was hesitant to approve this request since the County has indicated that it wants to do an assessment of the County as a whole and she was unsure of what to do. Committee discussed this in length and agreed that since DSS makes up a third of the budget it might make sense to use DSS as a "pilot" for the assessment. They can probably evaluate the needs as there are so many copiers over there. Before entering into any contract, however, both Robin and Sylvia would like to review the contract. Robin advised that she didn't approve the \$5,000 because of the Countywide assessment, but indicated that the money would be coming out of the DSS budget and they would be willing to do this as long as the impact on IS and Purchasing isn't too great. This has been discussed in the past for the County but nothing was ever done. Robin and Sylvia will work together on this. In the end, document preparation of multi-purpose machines will have to be controlled by IS. Everyone on Committee was in agreement. Legislator Parete brought up the subject of Vending Machine RFP's as the Health Committee has embarked on an obesity prevention project. He would like to know who our current contract is with and what could be done to stock the vending machines with healthier food and drink products. The current vendor is Pepsi and they would need 30-days notice to cancel our contract and would come and take away their machines. Pepsi would be willing to stock the machines with some of their healthier products but the cost is \$4.00 each. A lengthy discussion took place by those in attendance on the pros and cons of replacing the products in the machine. Some felt that this may offend most employees and they could be opening up a can of worms. It was decided in the end to re-visit this issue in the future.

Safety Officer Diane Beiti really had nothing on her agenda other than needing an approval for conference attendance for two employees for Building Code Enforcement Courses to be held at the Holiday Inn, Kingston, NY. A motion to approve this conference was made by Legislator Parete, seconded by legislator Aiello - motion carried.

Insurance Officer Bonnie Szpulecki also had nothing on her agenda other than needing approval for a Spring NYSASIC conference for two persons to be held in May at Alexandria Bay. Bonnie indicated that she inquired to NYSASIC if there was a possibility of getting a scholarship to attend this conference since we have two people to pay for. The President of the group looked into this and advised Bonnie that she would be able to give a scholarship to her. Since this scholarship pays for a person's entire stay for the conference Bonnie will only need to pay for one person which pleased the Committee. It was also decided that in lieu of a loaner vehicle that one of the employees should use their own vehicle and put in for mileage. Bonnie pointed out from a liability standpoint this is more practical. A motion to approve this conference was made by Legislator Parete and seconded by Legislator Aiello - motion carried.

Chairman Cahill opened the floor up to all in attendance for any other questions or issues, however no one had any additional business to discuss and this Committee meeting was concluded. A motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. was made by Legislator Parete, seconded by Legislator Aiello - motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

**Brian Cahill, Chairman
Administrative Services Committee**