

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**NAME OF COMMITTEE:** Administrative Services Committee

**DATE:** April 23, 2007

**TIME:** 6:01 P.M.

**PLACE:** Legislative Chambers, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** Chairman Brian Cahill, Legislators Robert Parete, Joseph Stoeckeler, and Gary Bischoff

**LEGISLATORS ABSENT:** Legislators Kraft (excused), Aiello (excused), Every

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Director Information Services, Robin Peruso, Purchasing Agent, Dorothy Martin, Director Real Property, Diane Beitel, Safety Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, Insurance Officer, Vic Works, Interim commissioner of Buildings and Grounds, Tony Gallo, Fleet Manager, and Soni O'Bryan, Deputy Insurance Officer (attending to take minutes for meeting).

The meeting was called to order. The minutes to the meeting were not approved as the Clerk of the Legislator advised they did not have a copy, however, Chairman Cahill indicated not to worry as they can be done at the May meeting.

Chairman Cahill spoke briefly on the Flood Relief Act and advised that to date no municipalities appeared to be eligible. Real Property Director, Dorothy Martin, contacted each town and advised that no one was filing for this; therefore Chairman Cahill advised that they were not going forward with this.

In anticipation of the start of Department business, Chairman Cahill brought up the subject of changing the cap for approval of purchases. This has been discussed in the past and Chairman Cahill and County Administrator Mike Hein met and the Administrator felt that this should really be left to the committee on how they wish to handle it. Purchasing Agent, Robin Peruso would like to make certain there is consistency among all committees and departments. Right now it is documented that anything over \$500.00 must be approved for purchase and would only need the Administrators signature. After discussion a motion was made by Legislator Stoeckeler to increase the approval limit of purchases to \$3,000.00, seconded by Legislator Parete; all were in favor and motion passed. At this point any Requests to Fill and Conferences would still go through Committee. Anything else that is coming from the Administrative Services Committee under \$3,000.00 should first be run past the Committee Chairman. With this, **Information Services**, Director Sylvia Wohlfahrt, presented her conference approval request and list of equipment over \$3,000.00 for approval. The conference request is to send two people for GIS training for an editing project so that the County can fully take over the editing the data for parcels and property boundaries. This also involves Emergency 911 dispatching - now edits can be done in-house so roads are kept up to date. This is usually done every quarter. We currently contract this out to a vendor and with this training we will no longer have to pay a vendor and they can make up the cost of what the vendor was being paid, in about a year. The next item for approval was the purchase of a Blackberry Enterprise Server. This server would be mostly be for the Sheriff's to check their e-mail, phone messages, and internet while out on the road. They would also have access to Lotus Notes Calendar and Instant Messaging

from the car. By having Blackberries it would allow their communication to be real time rather than the current delay. There is a monthly charge for each Blackberry we have. Director of UC Mental Health, Marshall Beckman has also requested some of these for his psychiatrists. Legislator Bischoff would like to know if we can get something back from the State. Currently all the Sheriff's units have computers in their cars and Chairman Cahill really feels these Blackberries are more of a luxury item. If they have a computer, why would they need a Blackberry? Legislator Stoeckeler made a motion to accept the purchase however, not all of the committee was comfortable with this and would like some research done to justify the need for these Blackberries. Legislator Stoeckeler withdrew his motion and this item was tabled. Legislator Parete would like to bring this to the UC Mental Health Committee and research who really warrants having one of these, and also who has cell phones, and the costs for these - some of the services would be redundant; employees should only need one or the other. The next item is Trackstar AVL Software. Sylvia explained that this is really just a subscription and not a service agreement and doesn't have to go through Contract Management; item was approved. The next item was a system for e-mail archiving which brought up a very lengthy discussion among the committee. Sylvia explained that in some instances we are not complying with law in respects to e-mail archiving. Right now we are dumping data onto a server, including e-mails that are duplicated to people over and over, really bogging down the system. The e-mail archive system would eliminate duplicate attachments. If the system is in place you can go back at least ten (10) years for retrieval or dump what we want to. Legislator Parete reiterated that this really is law and also good government. He feels we need to "bite the bullet" and do this. From a historical point of view we need to implement this; this is merely an electronic form of our hall of records. Sylvia did advise that this would definitely be an RFP process and put out for bid. Because of the cost for this system, Chairman Cahill requested Legislative Chairman Donaldson participate in the Committee's discussions. Chairman Donaldson is concerned because the Contingency Fund is depleted and he does not want to go into it for this as it is really a matter of dealing with policy. Chairman Cahill feels very strongly about moving forward with this system and it is very important to do this. Legislator Parete feels we are in violation of a records keeping law. Since this is part of County Clerk functions, the Committee Chairman feels we should ask the County Clerk's Office for some of the money as this is part of records retentions. Legislator Stoeckeler made a motion for a 10-day window to research monies for a grant application for something that looks promising - it was advised that our grant writer was already looking into this. Sylvia advised that there was already a record archiving grant that was awarded for \$22,000 and they currently have a person doing a needs assessment for an Electronic Records Management System. The final report of that needs assessment will be the input to the application for the 2008 grant cycle of the NYS Archive's Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. **IS** plans to apply for a complex grant for \$125,000.00. Legislator Parete seconded the motion for a 10-day research. Since this must first go through Ways and Means Committee, Chairman Cahill feels that everyone should solicit support for this. Legislator Bischoff also expressed that he would like a grant writer to look at this and to help reduce the costs for archiving. All were in favor of the motion and it was passed. The next item is a DSS Mobile Data Terminal. Sylvia explained that this would increase access to information in remote areas. The focus was on Child Protections Services Investigation Unit and would be a pilot program. There are two parts to this—one is for CPS to have secure access to the state's internet applications and the second part would enable them to communicate with the Sheriff's office. The system is comprised of GPS components--a Panasonic unit, laptop mount in car, software to communicate with Sheriff and a \$50.00 monthly access fee to the internet, and this is all reimbursable. The reason for this is mainly to overhaul DSS and this would make them much more efficient. Legislator Bischoff made a motion to purchase this equipment, seconded by Legislator Stoeckeler - all were in favor and this motion passed. The last item is an ACS 20/20 Perfect Vision Clients for DSS - they are looking for two copies. What this would do is to allow DSS to access records at the County Clerk office, from their own offices. Currently they have to make a trip to UCOB to get this information. This would again make them more efficient. Chairman Cahill asked for a motion to approve this item as well as all other equipment under \$3,000.00 (since this was the first meeting that the amount was increased). A motion was made by Legislator Bischoff to approve the ACS item and all equipment, seconded by Legislator Parete. All were in favor and this motion was passed. The last thing Sylvia addressed was a position she needs to fill for an Asst. Director of Application Development. She

advised that she received three applications and has interviewed all three, and is waiting for one more application and has an interview set up for Wednesday for the fourth person. All four applicants are from within her department and she will be selecting one of them and have a request to fill at next month's meeting.

Next on the agenda was the **Purchasing Department**. Purchasing Officer, Robin Peruso reported that they have purchased a vinyl sign maker, however, it came in about a \$1,000.00 more than approved for and the reason for this was that the supplies needed for this came is higher. Fleet Manager, Tony Gallo, advised that it is working well and works best with Adobe Illustrator. Robin advised that the Vending Machine RFP's are due back on May 4, 2007. She requested information from vendors to give us their offers of products. Robin also has a Request to Fill for a non-benefited part-time position in Central Services - this is a back-fill position for sick, vacation or leaves. The person she had in this position was hired full-time in Buildings and Grounds. A motion to approve this request to fill was made by Legislator Parete and seconded by Legislator Stoeckeler; motion was approved by all. Tony Gallo, Fleet Manager, gave a report on how this new division was doing. Tony advised that he believes that he had seen all of the County cars at this point and is currently working on getting all the data entered so that he has better maintenance records on and this will also include mileage logs. He advised that they are currently working on getting a Flatbed Truck at a cost of \$15,000 plus \$2,000 initial costs to install tool boxes and necessary equipment. The cost of towing County vehicles is quite high and Tony believes that this will surely save the County money in the long run and should see this in about two (2) years out. He still would like the Committee to consider taking the vehicle home; however, this was not acted on. Committee members felt that most of the calls were during the day and did not see the need to have the Flatbed overnight. Tony reported that biggest amount of their time is spent on Sheriff and DSS vehicles and the Sheriff's vehicles seem to cost more than most. Chairman Cahill feels there will be a trend for reduced maintenance, but they are probably looking at least a year to see this. Tony recommends collecting data on usage by departments and how much is spent from month to month. In a 3-4 month period of time he should be able to pull cars from individuals in departments and put these vehicles back into the County pool of vehicles. There was some discussion on using a Pool Car versus the use of a person's own vehicle and which was cheaper since the State does not reimburse. Legislator Bischoff also wondered if there was any progress at looking at the purchase of Hybrid vehicles, based on prior discussions. Tony feels this is ten (10) years out in order to financially recoup the costs, but agreed that maintenance on them is lower and they will be considered. As he indicated previously DSS and Sheriff have the largest amount of vehicles. The last thing Tony wanted to mention is that have a lot of vehicles that are off the road for various reasons, wrecked, no engines, and some are without titles. They have a junkyard (Tyler's) who has agreed to come and get the old vehicles from us which will clean up yard a bit.

Dorothy Martin, Director for **Real Property** was next on the agenda. Dorothy reiterated what Chairman Cahill previously addressed in regards to the Flood Relief Act of 2007 and no further action would be taken by her or this Committee. Dorothy spoke also in reference to the Resolution for Volunteer Firemen and Ambulance Workers. She advised that letters went out to every Volunteer Fire Department and EMT advising them on the Resolution. She has had only two (2) responses from any of the letters she sent and they are Saxton and Lomontville. Most of the others were not interested as they would need to have a very, very expensive piece of property for them to see any benefit from the property tax and it is not beneficial whatsoever to anyone who does not own property. Most everyone in the fire departments and EMT's feel the income tax is more beneficial at this time and since they can only have one or the other they will probably not opt into this. Since this issue is not time sensitive we will give the fire departments and EMT's time to meet and make a decision, as it really is their decision to make. Chairman Cahill indicated that the income tax is by far the more beneficial than any kind of property tax at this time. He indicates that we will apply for both at this time and wait and see if we hear back from the fire departments.

**Safety Office** really had nothing to bring to the meeting. Safety Officer Diane Beitzl did however thank them for the new ID system that has been ordered and at a very good price.

Bonnie Szpulecki, Insurance Officer, next spoke from the **Insurance Department**. Bonnie passed out information with regards to Workers Compensation Reforms that has been passed in the NYS Assembly. Benefits will be increased in 2007, 2008 and 2009 with the 4<sup>th</sup> year wage to be set at 2/3 of the average weekly wage. This still needs to be addressed by the Department of Labor. Also included is better fraud law and a cap of ten (10) years to those that are classified Permanently Partial Disabled, as they are doing away with the second injury fund which previously gave relief to insurance carriers. This should also lower assessments and put more control on the costs. There will be more financial burdens placed on the carriers, however, and overall there are more pluses for self-insured carriers than the conventional carriers. Bonnie's next item was a request to re-classify an employee in her office, Dorraine Whitney, from Accountant to Deputy Insurance Officer. The salary would be paid out of the self-insurance fund; Bonnie explained the three divisions in her office and loss of a part-time position and need to take on more dairying for reserves, additional auditing/accounting procedures put in place and also an increase in processing contracts, as the need to have this additional position. Chairman Cahill advised Bonnie that as a Department Head he placed his trust in her and was okay with this request. Bonnie explained that this would be effective 6/1/07 and is involves no county dollars to do this. A motion was made by Legislator Parete to approve this reclassification and seconded by Legislator Stoeckeler, all were in favor and motion was approved. Bonnie will now need to take this to the Personnel Committee Meeting on Thursday April 26, 2007, and Chairman Cahill advised her to let them know this Committee's support for the re-classification was unanimous.

Purchasing Agent Robin Peruso requested time to speak about one more item. She advised that there has been an increase in the number of change orders coming to her department and creating an enormous amount of work for her and her employees. This is because the Audit Department is changing the appropriation numbers once they receive the voucher for payment. Robin pointed out that the money was has already been encumbered and budgeted from one line and now auditing is changing this once it gets to their office. Although Robin expressed that some of the changes in appropriations made sense, many of them did not and the vendors were complaining about this because it was holding up payments to them and they were starting to not want to do business with the County. Other departments present also expressed similar views and most especially the vendor concerns regarding overdue payments and the cost of doing business with the County; vendors are increasing their contract prices due to some of the delays in getting paid. Many of our vendors have employees to pay and when they are not paid it make's it hard for them. Chairman Cahill was in agreement with the concerns and advised he could write a letter to complain about Auditing procedures and Vendor concerns. Robin advised that there was a Work Group made up of several departments to work on these problems and she was to report on problems after two weeks, but she reported changes and there are still problems. A motion was made by Legislator Parete, seconded by Legislator Stoeckeler, for Chairman Cahill to write a letter addressing the above concerns. All were in favor, motion was passed.

A motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. was made by Legislator Stoeckeler, seconded by Legislator Parete. All were in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Brian Cahill, Chairman  
Administrative Services Committee**