

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Administrative Services Committee

DATE: April 15, 2008

TIME: 4:49 P.M.

PLACE: UCOB, 6th Floor Library

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Jeanette Provenzano, Legislators Frank Felicello, Alan Lomita, Brian Cahill, and Ken Ronk

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislator Peter Kraft, Legislator Paul Hansut (new committee member)

OTHERS ATTENDING: County Auditor, Bob Wenzel, Deputy County Auditor, Andrew Slater, UC Sheriff Capt. Mike Freer, Personnel Officer Brenda Bartholomew, Safety Officer, Diane Beitel, Purchasing Officer, Robin Peruso, Central Auto Fleet Manager, Tony Gallo, Insurance Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt and Soni O'Bryan, Deputy Insurance Officer (attending to take minutes of meeting)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Provenzano who started the meeting by thanking Vice Chairman Felicello for filling in for her last month while she was on vacation, followed by County Department reports.

County Insurance Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, presented a request to upgrade four positions in her office, three (3) claims examiners and one (1) Sr. Claims Examiner. Bonnie explained that in 2001 a desk audit was done on these positions and the result was probably more than a step increase, but when it was presented to Tom Costello, the previous Personnel Officer, he explained that the original grade came from the Social Welfare Examiner (SWE) positions in DSS and that if he increased their grade it would cause a domino effect and they would all want an increase. In 2002 after the Hay Study was done, local CSEA President Kevin Dumond put in for all the SWE'S to get a step increase but he forgot the WC Claims examiners. Bonnie has been working to fix this mistake in the step increases since 2002. She advised them she does have the money within her budget and had wanted to do this retro to 1/1/08, but since the Resolution will be going to the Ways and Means Committee and would not normally be subject to retro pay she is not requesting retro pay. She explained that she is not looking at a re-classification or reallocation, but just to upgrade the WC Claims examiners since they are comparable positions to the DSS SWE'S, and the claims examiners' were overlooked during the negotiations. She is looking at approximately a little over \$6,000 with benefits to the end of the year and would like this effective 5/1/08. Personnel Officer Brenda Bartholomew confirmed with the committee what Bonnie had just explained to them and was in agreement with her. Legislator Felicello moved to accept this upgrade, seconded by Legislator Cahill, all in favor. Chairman Provenzano advised that the Resolution will be drawn up the Committee and submitted.

Safety Officer, Diane Beitel really had nothing new to report. She did advise that she is just doing training and has sent a letter out to DPW Commissioner Sheeley regarding Flagger training that is needed, as she would like to get them all certified. At this time all new employees must have the training done, however, she is trying to get current employees on board and that is not always easy. Legislator Felicello asked

Diane about the Drug and Alcohol testing and is it mandatory or how do they decide who is tested. Diane explained that anyone with a CDL license is required to have drug testing done and it is done by computer. The tests are done randomly and employees are drawn by number; as soon as a number is drawn it is put back into the pool. Not everyone gets their numbers drawn and yet some may be tested two to three times a month. Legislator Lomita then asked Diane whether Safety Equipment is being worn by DPW employees. He wanted to know if Safety infractions are brought to the department heads attention. He has received numerous complaints about County employees being on cell phones while they are working and also while driving a vehicle. Diane advised that no one driving a County vehicle is supposed to be on their cell phone and also with regards to smoking in vehicles; she does not believe it is allowed. However, since this is really a health issue any directive on this as should come from Health Department Director, Dean Palen. They will ask that Dean send a reminder notice out Countywide regarding the smoking and cell policy when in a County vehicle. Legislator Felicello will also discuss this matter at the Health Services Committee meeting on Thursday of this week. Legislator Cahill wanted to go over the Drug and Alcohol program policy again and asked if any other County employees are tested. Diane advised that they are not as they can only test those in the program and cannot force them. The County has a Drug Free Work Place, but employees cannot even under reasonable suspicion be required to drug test.

Robin Peruso, Purchasing Officer next presented a request to fill for a vacant position. They had to terminate an employee due to poor attendance - the employee never even called in. She would like to fill the position, however, she would like to fill it as an upgraded position, to a MECH I. The vacant position was paid at \$13.56 an hour and the only thing they were allowed to do per the job description was to change oil in the vehicles. They really need to have someone who can do more things other than changing oil and by upgrading the position, which starts at \$15.42 an hour, they should be able to attract more qualified candidates for the position. The only difference now between the MECH I and the MECH II positions is that the MECH II can do vehicle inspections. Legislator Felicello made a motion to approve the upgrade, seconded by legislator Cahill. All were in favor. The committee will do a Resolution for the May meeting to upgrade the position. Legislator Felicello wanted to know if the job descriptions for Central Auto should be changed to include having a CDL license also and the committee agreed the requirements should be increased and also should include CDL. Since this is a Civil Service Position this should not present any problems with the union. Next, Fleet Manager Tony Gallo along with Capt. Freer from the Sheriff's Department wanted to discuss the issue of towing vehicles. The Sheriff's department currently pays outside tow companies to tow cars that need to be impounded, from either motor vehicle fatalities, accidents or a narcotics/DWI arrest. They have had Central Auto tow these vehicles for them a few times but due to liability issues that were brought to his attention, they stopped towing for the Sheriff's Department. Both Tony and Capt. Freer feel they could save money by having this done in-house. The additional costs to the County would be for Central Auto employees being on call and the cost would be absorbed through the UC Sheriff budget. If they were not on call, but were called to do a tow then they would get paid for a call out which is time and a half. Robin advised that the current going rate for towing is about \$200-\$300 for out of town and \$75-\$100 in town. At this point Legislator questioned the policy for take home vehicles' and whether or not the report was ready as promised by Deputy Robert DiBella at last month's meeting. He knows that Safety and all Emergency vehicles are exempt from the take home policy including Emergency Management and some highway vehicles, but the policy still states that they have to ask permission to take vehicles home. This policy renews June of each year. Currently under the old policy every employee taking a vehicle home must complete a form and have the Legislature approve it. Under the new policy the approval authority is given to Purchasing and this was just put into effect this month. Chairman Provenzano would like an official report that tells who exactly is exempt. A Resolution was written to give Fleet Manager Tony Gallo the authority to approve take home vehicles; however, since he is not management they needed to give the authority to someone else. That was only last month and now the Resolution has to be rewritten to give Deputy DiBella authority. They are still waiting to hear from Commissioner Dave Sheeley to get a determination on who needs to take vehicles home in DPW—such as the Section Supervisors. Robin wanted to get back to the question of whether Central Auto has permission to do towing and Legislator Cahill asked if there was any reimbursement to the County from the impounded

vehicles. Capt. Freer advised that with accidents and anything involving an insurance company they may get reimbursement, but it is very difficult to get this from the narcotics impounds. So far this year Capt. Freer reported that they have taken possession of seven vehicles. Capt. Freer additionally explained that the costs are higher in the outlying areas of the County and they have had impounds anywhere from Shandaken and then as far away as Wallkill. Some vehicles also become a crime scene so they also must be impounded. After discussion among committee they did not feel there was enough to worry about with regards to liability and were willing to give Central Auto towing privileges. Central Auto currently goes out for other County Departments, but it is normally done during work hours. As of 1/1/08 they have towed 80 cars. Robin will work on the overtime costs with the Sheriff and other details. The on-call pay would include two people; she needs to assess how this will affect her budget and also establish a call-out policy. Robin advised that this year there is no money budgeted, but she does have an overtime budget. She also estimated a 75% savings to the County but understands that this needs to be evaluated. Robin next explained that due to the Charter, the Purchasing Officer duties were changing as well as authorities and because of that she would like to wait until the end of the year to update her procedures' manual and also the codes book. She has been working on it, but would like to wait and see how things proceed with the new Charter Form of Government first. Robin also advised that she received notification from NYS that the WICK'S Law is being overhauled and there is new legislation effective 7/08 that increases the level for projects a municipality enters into from \$50,000 to \$500,000.00. Robin was very pleased with this change as it will make it much easier for Purchasing and DPW to only have to go to one contractor instead of several for a project.

Jeanette next introduced County Auditor Bob Wenzel and his Deputy, Andrew Slater. She wanted to know how things were going for them. Bob Wenzel advised that things were going pretty smoothly and the transition between prior and current auditors was going fine. He indicated that the vendor payment summary reports are still coming out and noted that he has been able to make a big improvement with the Sheriff's office on compliance and Sheriff Van Blarcum was very happy. He has had few complaints and wants everyone on the same playing field throughout the County. Bob thanked everyone for doing a great job. Both Chairman Provenzano and Legislator Cahill were very impressed at the decrease in transactions and felt the County was making progress.

Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt, reported that all meetings are now on a web page along with the agendas. Sylvia also advised that she previously went over her equipment purchases were with the Committee Chairman. The equipment is for new vehicles that the Sheriff's Department got unexpectedly. Sylvia explained that this project was not requested by the Sheriff for the 2008 Information Services budget so they canceled one project that the Sheriff's had put in for, a port replicator replacement for \$19,200, and that money was then allocated to purchase the technology components and equipment needed for new Sheriff vehicles. Sylvia also advised that she has three (3) projects going on for DPW, however, before she could explain those one of the Legislators brought up the IS move so Sylvia explained that she is looking for a server to do data center planning and would like a central center to be designed so things are set up efficiently. Legislator Lomita advised that a presentation was done on a study for the IS move, which is a priority, the same day as this committee meeting, in fact he and Legislator Ronk left that meeting to attend this one. Sylvia said she is looking at doing a contract with IBM. The Space Committee is reviewing the C & S study done for the IS move. Chairman Provenzano advised that both Sylvia and the Space Committee need to keep this committee updated on how the IS move is going - she wants to be sure they know what is going on. Legislator Ronk advised that when he was at today's meeting there was a problem with the application and whether it can be loaded on to the County hardware so it can be accessed at another server and in other than a read-only access base. It was discussed and agreed that the committee would like to have it loaded to have better access with it and should be done with at least two computers. Legislator Felicello then questioned whether committee meetings could every be done through computer - for example if a Legislator was sick or laid up at home and Sylvia advised that it could be done. Sylvia briefly got back to DPW projects and

advised there is a desktop contract that is at the vendors waiting to be signed since 4/11/08. This is for a Facilities Manager at Public Works/Building and Grounds.

One of her pending projects is for when they are overbooked at IS they have purchased and Alteris Program which is able to manage computers all over the County from an IS computer. This means the Customer Help Desk can fix a problem by actually taking over an employee's computer from IS. This saves a tremendous amount of time and travel. Chairman Provenzano questioned Sylvia how she handles her priorities' with so many required projects on her list. Sylvia advised that she has Big Projects on one track, then Daily Routine items on another track and she balances out the small projects between the big projects and the routine projects. Legislator Felicello brought up the fact that one of Sylvia's biggest projects coming up is Election Day and how they will avoid a repeat of last year when the computers went down on Election night. Sylvia advised that she has increase the service and re-designed the application to handle the load, and purchased a product known as Capacity on Demand. She also advised there is another project going on for EDMS (Electronic Document Management System) and they are currently waiting to hear about a grant for this at the end of June. IS is working on policies with the County Clerk's Office and Purchasing on how to handle the County Record's.

Since Real Property Director Dorothy Martin was excused for this meeting there was no other business.

A motion to adjourn was made by Legislator Lomita, seconded by Legislator Cahill at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jeanette Provenzano, Chairman
Administrative Services Committee**