

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Administrative Services Committee

DATE: August 19, 2008

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: UCOB, 6th Floor Library

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Jeanette Provenzano, Legislators Alan Lomita, Ken Ronk, and Paul Hansut

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislators Peter Kraft, Frank Felicello, and Brian Cahill were excused

OTHERS ATTENDING: Deputy County Auditor, Andrew Slate, Purchasing Officer, Robin Peruso, Insurance Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Safety Officer, Diane Beitel, Real Property Director, Dorothy Martin, and Soni O'Bryan, Deputy Insurance Officer (attending to take minutes of meeting)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Provenzano; due to another committee meeting in progress at the same time involving Administrative Services Committee members, acceptance of the minutes was put on hold until the other members arrived.

The meeting started off with Deputy County Auditor Andrew Slate's report on vendor payment efficiency. Andrew reported that the all vendor payments were up to date and their department turn around time is within 2-3 days. Andrew indicated that auditing is still helping departments out with the 45-day report to help them meet County goals and get on track. He was happy to report that all is going well and they are at 91% County wide with vendor payments which is the highest ever. They have changed the way mileage was being done in the Self Insurance Workers Compensation area and that has cut down on paperwork for their payouts and increased productivity. Deputy Bob Wenzel and Andrew paid a visit to UCAT to help verify how the money counting is going. Andrew explained that previously money was counted by outside vendors, however, due to State regulations they must be bonded and the vendors were unable to get the proper bonding in place. Andrew explained that the previous money counters would verify the money from the drivers' sheets to what is in the money bags; money is now being counted in-house by the drivers and Andrew indicated that the process looks good and is hopeful that it will get easier for UCAT.

Insurance Officer, Bonnie Szpulecki, indicated that she really did not have much to report. She did advise that we had just recently placed our Medical Malpractice coverage's with two area agents and were able to negotiate for better defense coverage's and a policy for the clinics and health department with no deductible and with an admitted A+ New York State carrier which we did not have last year. She also advised that vendor payments within Self Insurance are better partly because they now have a part-time person helping out, who is very good. Bonnie asked the Committee if the freeze on conferences would be applicable to her since the NYSASIC conference that she and her Deputy usually attend is budgeted in and funded by the UC Self Insurance Plan. Chairman Provenzano advised Bonnie to submit her request and give a detailed explanation on the need for the conference and how it is funded and paid so the Chairman will understand.

Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt, next spoke about their move. They are still looking at difference options. One of the options discussed at her meeting with the Space Committee was to tear down the section of the current building and build an addition, however, it was decided that this was not a feasible way to go. They are looking at the old jail and if it was feasible to renovate and the cost for IS. Chairman Provenzano advised that she understood that when the City of Kingston was going to be renting space for City Court, the idea of renovation was discussed and the cost would be in the millions. Buildings and Grounds Project manager Brian Cunningham advised that it would cost about \$300 per square foot to renovate. Chairman Donaldson contested that number, but Commissioner Vic Works had also said that \$300 a square foot would be what it would cost to build new. Sylvia indicated that they would only renovate was office space and she would like to bring in some people from IBM as well as Buildings & Grounds personnel, and the Space Committee to go and look at the jail to see if it would at least be feasible to renovate. Sylvia advised the C & S looked at the building structurally, but IBM will look at it from a data center view point and the feasibility of the wiring. Chairman Provenzano expressed here concerns' that not all of the Space Committee members have even gone to IS and looked at the building to see the condition it is in. Robin did indicate that she has gotten calls from vendors responding from the RFP's and she needs to give them some information. It was suggested she advise them for future calls that no decision has been made yet. C & S has been back to look at all three of the buildings and speak with the owners to help make a recommendation. Chairman Provenzano indicated that she felt that ideally IS, Central Purchasing and Purchasing should all located in the same building together and that is also what Purchasing Agent, Robin Peruso, would like, however, she was not aware that this was an option when the RFP was done so it was not included. Legislator Lomita stated that he was under the impression that Administration wanted Purchasing to be relocated to the sixth floor. Robin indicated that the problem with that idea is that there is no parking uptown and they must have ample parking for the bidders dropping off time sensitive bids and also there could be undertones with a political department located by Purchasing, who are awarding bids. Legislator Lomita feels there needs to be more open communication and that they should really look into getting the RFP to include Purchasing. This ended the discussion regarding the move. Sylvia next handed out reports that she has developed to show the Committee the IS projects that are in development. Sylvia listed projects for 2008 which are already budgeted and projects for 2009 which are included in her 2009 budget. Since some of the projects started in 2008 will carry over into 2009 she has adjusted her 2009 budget for what is needed to complete the project. She indicated that the key columns are the date and the number of hours and she is still working on the report to include finish dates. She is also working on a five year plan on the direction her department should go (this is her vision) of how the County should grow to meet needs and not necessarily projects. She indicated that she has already met with Administration on her budget and they are still working on it. Sylvia next advised that IS was able to secure the full amount of an EDMS grant they applied for in the amount of \$123,000. This grant is for an Electronic Document Management System and the pilot for the project is the Contract Management System. The program addresses state mandated retentions, workflow and will also include forms on the internet for Public use. The online forms will enable the Public to apply for permits, especially the Health Department Permits, and speed up that process. The pilot program needs to be done by June 2009 and a Resolution does need to be done to accept the grant. Sylvia feels she will be able to submit this at the next meeting once she receives an actual award letter for the grant. One last item Sylvia brought up was her employee who was seriously injured in an accident in May would be coming back to work on October 25 on a part-time basis to ease back into the work force.

Robin Peruso, Purchasing Agent, next handed out the vehicle use count report and indicated that they have now taken five (5) vehicles away from Highways and Bridges, three (3) from Buildings and Grounds and one (1) from UCAT. Robin advised the roadblocks she is running with her attempts to limit the take home vehicles. She indicated that there are twenty one (21) vehicles in Highways and Bridges that they have suggested be taken away and no matter what suggestions are made, no one is happy. They cite call-outs and that their vehicles are needed for emergency response as the reasoning. DPW commissioners Dave Sheeley advised that all road and section supervisors fall under emergency response. Robin feels that this is more of a seasonal issue rather than year round call-out issue and they could possible give the vehicles

back for take home purposes, in the winter. Chairman Provenzano advised that the Public Works Committee and Administrative Committee need to go over the justification of take home vehicles. Currently they have three (3) mechanics who take vehicles home. It was suggested that not all these mechanics need to be on call at the same time and possibly have only three (3) section supervisors on call on a rotating basis rather than all six (6) at the same time. Robin advised that there are a few Counties in our area - Dutchess being one- who have just taken all take home vehicles away; due to liability issues neither Robin nor the Committee felt this was a wise thing to do, however they really feel there needs to be more justification in why a vehicle needs to be taken home and it was suggested that a committee be formed to review the reasons for taking a vehicle home. Chairman Provenzano had thought that Purchasing was given the authority to just take vehicles away, but Robin stated that is easier said than done; both she and Bob DiBella have met with all departments and although 48 was the call out number in the take home vehicle policy, they are using 20 as their target and so far only three vehicles have met the criteria. Again it was expressed that the County needs to be very careful about pulling emergency call out vehicles off the road from the liability standpoint. Chairman Provenzano suggested that full authority be given to Robin and Bob to make the call about pulling vehicles and then if there are any grievances they can appeal it with the Administration Services Committee. It was suggested that they may need to re-examine the vehicle take home policy so that it meets the needs of the County. The policy was passed in September 2006; departments have not complied with completing and filing the vehicle justification sheets which must be in writing. Simply stated, Chairman Provenzano indicated that if they do not comply with the justification sheets then the vehicles should be pulled. After discussion it was agreed to have Purchasing take eleven (11) vehicles away that have not been out on call and let the department appeal the decision if they choose to. Robin still made the argument about the seasonal vehicles, but Legislator Ronk advised that since the current policy does not state anything about seasonal that this probably could not be enforced. Chairman Provenzano advised that at this time the Administrative Services Committee is forming a sub-committee to address grievances on vehicle policy of which Legislator Ken Ronk is the chairman. Robin then handed out her reports showing current Bid Board updates along with a list of the larger Commercial bids and Capital Projects. She mentioned that with regards to the RFP for the new financial system, they started out with five (5) vendors and have now narrowed it down to two (2) vendors. The Treasurers Office was to look into funding before making a decision and the project might need to be delayed until 2009. Robin reviewed the RFP's and projects and also the procurement process in use.

Chairman Provenzano then asked for a motion to accept the minutes from last month's meeting. A motion to accept the July minutes was made by Legislator Ronk, seconded by Legislator Hansut.

Dorothy Martin, Director of Real Property, handed in three Resolutions for a Public Hearing to be held for the Senior Tax Exemption, Veterans Tax Exemption and Cold War Exemption. Legislator Ronk wanted to know if she knew the financial impact of these exemptions and Dorothy indicated they were all shown on the last page of the Resolution with the exception of the Cold War exemption which Dorothy advised will result in \$83,040 in revenue lost. Dorothy's only other item of interest is that there is currently some more discussion on the fire and ambulance exemptions. Current legislation allows either property tax exemption or income tax, but not both. There is new legislation that has been passed in both the House and Senate to remove the "either or" restriction, but it has not been signed yet by Governor Patterson.

Information Services Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt, then stated she had one more item of interest to mention and that was she received a notice that IS was going to be audited by NYS Office of General Services. The specific topic of the audit is the disposal of their equipment. Sylvia advised that IS has a company that buys our equipment and takes care of the disposal. She indicated that she knows she is in compliance and is not too concerned, it's just a little time consuming.

Safety Officer, Diane Beitzl, advised that they are in the middle of trying to hire an employee, but due to the low pay they are not getting the people who have the qualifications needed for the job. She is looking in her budget to increase the salary for this position by two grades so that they are more in-line with the

outside salaries. The position is being advertised in HudsonValley.com. Diane advised she has run into those with too little qualifications that would need training and she does not have the manpower or time to train someone. She needs a person that understands Accident Code Investigations and Building violations. They also need to understand OSHA and able to stand up in a classroom setting to do training. With the right qualifications the person she hires can do on the job training to get the Code Enforcement License. She has one very good candidate that has four years of college in this field, but did not have the necessary number of years doing this type of work so Personnel would not approve him since he did not meet the specific qualifications and she is very frustrated about this. Chairman Provenzano understood that in order to fill a vacancy it had to go through Personnel, but Personnel told Diane that they don't do a list for this. She also suggested that Diane speak with Personnel and re-evaluate the job specs and Diane indicated she and Personnel are going to do. She also advised that she has put in for a salary increase in her budget for her Deputy Safety Officer due to increased job duties and also for a new car as his is very old. Diane also advised she has requested a new copier as the one they have is on its last legs. She indicated that in an effort to save on gas they are trying to minimize and consolidate the trips they take for inspections and also emergency call-outs. Diane again advised the urgency in hiring someone soon as they have County employee training starting up in September.

A motion to adjourn at 6:10 p.m. was made by Legislator Lomita, seconded by Legislator Ronk.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jeanette Provenzano, Chairman
Administrative Services Committee**