

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON ARTS,
EDUCATION, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS, HELD AT ULSTER COUNTY COMMUNITY
COLLEGE ON THE 25TH DAY OF MARCH, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SUSAN ZIMET, Chairwoman
WAYNE HARRIS, Deputy Chairman
THOMAS "TJ" BRIGGS
MARY F. SHEELEY
FRANK FELICELLO
DONALD J. GREGORIUS
CATHERINE TERRIZZI

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

DR. DONALD C. KATT, President, Ulster County Community College
MARIANNE COLLINS, Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education, Ulster County
Community College
CORNELIA DENVIR, Acting Dean of Administration, Ulster County Community College
RICK REMSNYDER, Director of Ulster County Tourism
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Zimet called the meeting to order at 5:12pm and said she wished to talk about the resolutions approved at the last meeting. These resolutions were for funds to be transferred from the gym capital project to renovations to the Nursing Department lab and for approval by the committee to the contract between the college and members of the professional administrative staff union, OPAP. The purpose of discussing it at this time is because Legs. Sheeley, Briggs and Felicello were not present at the last meeting. She then recognized Dr. Donald C. Katt, President of Ulster County Community College:

Ulster County Community College:

Dr. Katt advised that OPAP was an organization of middle level managers and included librarians, counselors, and various administrators. He said the County negotiates with CSEA which includes most of the college's support staff and the college lives under that contract. Chairwoman Zimet said it did not seem fair that this one group of employees are singled out when everyone else got similar raises.

Legislator Sheeley said she was uncomfortable with this taking into consideration the current economic climate and the fact that many people are losing their jobs. She also said if you did not belong to a union you did not get a raise.

In reply to a question from Leg. Felicello, President Katt said that there are fifty-eight full time and about twenty part time employees in OPAP. The raises negotiated are 3-1/2% plus \$300 for full-time and 4% for part time. This is the same as the faculty contract, which was approved in

November, 2008 and similar to the CSEA contract effective January 1, 2008. Chairwoman Zimet said the money to cover this is already included in the Community College's budget.

Leg. Felicello said with the climate right now, with people losing their jobs, it is very hard for him to support this. Chairwoman Zimet said we all feel that way and stated that the county has not had

any callbacks for any other union increases. Leg. Harris said none of us feel good about it, but also said it is not right to single out one group. He also said he doesn't want to bring it back to the floor if he thinks it will be defeated. Leg. Felicello reiterated that he just can't support it.

Chairwoman Zimet said she would like to hear from Leg. Terrizzi and Leg. Gregorius on this matter. Leg. Terrizzi said she had some opposition at last month's meeting and has misgivings about it. She said when it comes to pay raises we have to take a stand and say it has to stop. Leg. Gregorius said Leg. Felicello is right – at some point we have to draw a line in the sand; however, we did go with the CSEA contract which included similar raises.

Leg. Gregorius said that another meeting, representatives for the Communications Workers of America which represents the Sheriff's Department, came forward to ratify the contract that was negotiated and agreed to. This will be coming up at the next meeting and it is his understanding that the Sheriff's Department is looking at over \$700,000 in increases. He said the rationale should be the same. Leg. Felicello said he is not voting for any increase for anyone at this time. Chairwoman Zimet said that if the OPAP increase is voted down, she is not voting for any increase for any other department. She said for many years the Community College has held the line and has not looked for any increases in its budgets. She also requested a motion by the Committee to table the resolution until next month. Leg. Briggs said that to bring a raise up at this time makes him look like an A.I.G. executive. Leg. Terrizzi said it was really a tough time to sell raises.

At this time Leg. Harris made a motion to rescind the resolution to approve the OPAP contract which was passed at the meeting of this Committee on February 18th, and to table the motion until the April meeting. The motion was seconded by Leg. Terrizzi. After brief further discussion and upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote the motion to rescind was unanimously approved. Chairwoman Zimet said we all agree we don't want to do raises in this economic climate, as the motion to rescind was unanimously approved.

In the matter of the Nursing program, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Marianne Collins, Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education who spoke on the reduction in number of students for the fall semester. She said one of the causes for the reduction is the on-going renovations and construction at both Kingston Hospital and Benedictine Hospital.

Dean Collins also advised that President Katt had met with the Dean of Academic Affairs John Ganio and Jody Mesches, Director of Nursing and brought the number to sixty –four. She said the college will begin advertising for a new faculty member. There was a cut-off date of December 15th for students to get their applications in. The Dean said we started with one hundred twenty-six; ninety qualified; and fifty have been accepted to date. Based upon responses, letters will go out for an additional ten students.

Dean Collins also advised that in order to improve the retention rate, the college will be starting to give a pre-nursing test to help determine who we will admit. Leg. Terrizzi asked if the college will be able to do these things with only one new faculty member. President Katt said that a new faculty salary would be \$45,000-\$50,000 and we would do the first year as a grant-funded position, and hopefully it would turn into a permanent position. Leg. Felicello asked if the academic majors have changed over the last five years, more specifically, what academic majors have decreased in enrollment, and have we had a decrease in faculty for that major. President Katt said that, for example, the Secretarial Program had a decrease in enrollment, but other business programs increased their enrollment and faculty were adjusted accordingly.

Chairwoman Zimet wanted to know if, by the committee asking you to increase the nursing program, we are creating a budgetary problem. President Katt said that without the assistance of Nancy Scheaf, Director of the Office of Employment and Training, we would not have been able to do this. He also advised, with relation to the number of full-time faculty, that in the late 1970's there were one hundred six full-time faculty and at the present time we are down to sixty-three full-time faculty.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, and it being time for the next Committee meeting Chairwoman Zimet suggested this Committee move into joint session. The minutes for the Joint Meeting of the Ulster County Legislature Committee on Arts, Education, Tourism and Community Relations and the Committee for Economic Development, Housing, Planning and Transit are attached hereto and made a part hereof.

The joint meeting of the Committees being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet returned to the regular meeting of the Arts, Education, Tourism and Community Relations Committee, apologized to Mr. Remsnyder and requested that he deliver his report at next month's meeting.

At this time a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Briggs and seconded by Leg. Sheeley and approved by voice vote, and Chairwoman Zimet declared the meeting adjourned at 7:08pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE ON ARTS,
EDUCATION, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS –and- THE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, PLANNING & TRANSIT, HELD AT ULSTER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ON THE 25TH DAY OF MARCH, 2009 AT 6:00PM

JOINT COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

HECTOR S. RODRIGUEZ, Chairman, Economic Development
JOSEPH P. ROBERTI, JR., Deputy Chairman, Economic Development
GARY BISCHOFF, Economic Development
WAYNE HARRIS, Arts and Economic Development
PETER M. LOUGHRAN, Economic Development
MARY F. SHEELEY, Arts and Economic Development
CATHERINE TERRIZZI, Arts and Economic Development
THOMAS “TJ” BRIGGS, Arts
FRANK FELICELLO, Arts
SUSAN ZIMET, Chairwoman, Arts
DONALD J. GREGORIUS, Arts

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

RICK REMSNYDER, Tourism
CYNTHIA RUIZ, UCATransit
LANCE MATTESON, Ulster County Development
VICTOR MELVILLE, League of Women Voters
NANCY SCHAEF, Employment & Training
DENNIS DOYLE, Planning
STEVE FINKLE, City of Kingston
LYDIA REEDY, Cornell Cooperative Extension
MARY CAREY, Recorder for Economic Development

Chairwoman Zimet said that since the New Year the role of the committees has become that of a policy making body as opposed to administrative. She said one of the things that are very important to the Arts, Education, Tourism and Community Relations Committee is how important the Arts are to the county in terms of economic development. Chairwoman Zimet said that one year ago we had discussed the possibility of one full weekend devoted to the Arts, county-wide. The question is how can we move forward with this on different levels.

Chairman Rodriguez, noting that half of the Economic Development Committee is also on the Arts, Education, etc. Committee, said that years ago Ulster County Development Corporation had touched on this somewhat. He said the Arts fit into and are very important to the overall economy of the County.

The joint Committee then discussed several venues of the Arts, such as The Women’s Studio Workshop, Mohonk’s 40th Anniversary and Shadowland Theatre’s 20th Anniversary. Leg. Bischoff said there is a website for the State of Connecticut devoted to the state’s agricultural resources and

attractions. If one clicks on an icon one can get information, directions, costs and other information about that particular farm, winery, etc. Mr. Remsnyder said this topic has been discussed within several departments especially about having an RFP for branding the county's website.

The joint committee then discussed what the role of the county website should be with particular regard to the Tourism Department. Leg. Gregorius suggested that whatever is decided upon is going to require approval, implementation and spending. Chairwoman Zimet said there is a lack of communication with the new governing structure. She said if there is some work being done on this matter by another department or committee, this committee would like to have some input into what is being done. Ms. Reidy, relating to the agricultural portion of any initiative, would be is the necessity to gather as much information as possible on all of the farming operating within the county.

Mr. Matteson said this illustrates that there are a lot of organizations and groups working within related areas. He would like to see what we are talking about used to make the work done under the Ulster Tomorrow initiative more specific. They had a lot of input idea wise on Ulster's creativity, economic development, agriculture and renewable energy.

Chairwoman Zimet said the Arts will be quicker than other things as far as generating interest and revenue. Legislator Gregorius said he is very interested in how the Arts can benefit Tourism and vice versa. Leg. Terrizzi said if we try to make the website too big it will have no sense of direction. She said we should start small and build from there. She reiterated that if it gets too big it is not going to go anywhere.

A general discussion was had regarding whether the committees wanted an Arts specific page of advertising, either stand alone or through Legislative initiative. Leg. Gregorius said we should have a vehicle for getting all this out to the public. The questions are what do we want, how do we make it happen and who should be involved. Leg. Harris said it should be made small enough to make it successful.

At this time the joint meeting was concluded and the Arts, Education committee returned to its regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder for Arts Committee