

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARTS, EDUCATION, TOURISM AND
COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
HELD AT ULSTER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE ON THE
17TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2007**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*SUSAN ZIMET, Chairwoman
WAYNE HARRIS, Deputy Chairman
FRANK FELICELLO
ALAN LOMITA
MARY SHEELEY
GARY BISCHOFF
BRIAN CAHILL*

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

*CLAIRE BURLINGHAM, Dean of Administration, Ulster County Community College
MARIANNE COLLINS, Director of Institutional Advancement, UC Community College
SHERRI BRITAIN, Executive Director, Ulster Arts Alliance
RICK REMSNYDER, Director of Ulster County Tourism
LEE REIDY, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
ANNE CARDINALE, Director, Office for the Aging
DONNA DAVIS, Office for the Aging
TERRY BREITENSTEIN, Director, Veteran's Service Agency,
JANET SALANITRI, Recorder*

A quorum being present and Chairwoman Zimet having not yet arrived, Deputy Chairman Wayne Harris called the meeting to order at 5:15pm and as the first order of business introduced Anne Cardinale, the new Director of the Office for the Aging. Members of the Committee and others introduced themselves. Deputy Chairman Harris then recognized Claire Burlingham, Dean of Administration of Ulster County Community College.

Ulster County Community College:

Dean Burlingham distributed "Save the Date" cards for the opening of the newly renovated Quimby Theatre with a performance by the Hudson Valley String Quartet, on March 10, 2007 at 8:00pm. She advised that the theatre renovations were extensive and it is now a beautiful performing arts center and a wonderful academic environment for our students.

Marianne Collins, Director of Institutional Advancement at Ulster County Community College also gave a "Save the Date" reminder. She said that on March 20th the college will host the 2nd Annual Hudson Valley Regional Economic Summit which began last year in Orange County. The Keynote Speaker will be Richard Florida a leading Social Economist and the Author of The Rise of the Creative Class and The Flight of the Creative Class. This event is being held in cooperation with Ulster County Development Corporation and the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce. The event will also feature the results of the Ulster County Economic Development Strategic Plan study and eight panel discussions.

Dean Burlingham advised that enrollment for the Spring semester is 2% above budgeted FTEs. The college was also up 2% for the Fall 2006 semester and were pleased to maintain the increase for the Spring.

The Dean also gave an update on the Capital Projects. The upgrades to Vanderlyn roof, Quimby Theatre and the Student Lounge have been completed and the Voice Over Internet system is in the works. In connection with the Science Labs and the Gymnasium, the college has been working with the Architect and with County Purchasing to get the bids out. It is hoped that we can go through the bid process and obtain the necessary committee approvals to be able to commence construction in May 2007 right after Graduation. Construction should go through the Summer and into the Fall.

In reply to a question from Leg. Felicello, Dean Burlingham said that Dutchess Community does have the lowest full time tuition in New York State; however, she said, Ulster County Community College has the lowest part-time tuition rate in the State of New York. She said the ratio was two-thirds full time and one-third part time students. The Dean also advised that Dutchess County Community College makes a conscious effort to maintain its full-time tuition rate. She also said that while Dutchess gets students from the Southern part of the County, Ulster gets many students from the Northern Dutchess area, such as Red Hook and Rhinebeck.

Leg. Felicello said he had heard there was a long waiting list for the Nursing program. Ms. Collins said that might be a misconception because of the way admission to the program is structured. Nursing is an occupation of choice for returning students. The college has to triage students to make sure they have all of the required courses in place before they are formally admitted to the six-semester Nursing Program.

Ulster County Tourism:

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Rick Remsnyder, Director of Ulster County Tourism who presented a Conference Attendance Approval request. The request is for Kathy Ellis, Group Sales person, to attend the

AAA County Travel Odyssey in Reading, Pa. on February 18-19 at a cost of \$806.50 which includes registration and booth fee.

Leg. Cahill referred to previous discussions regarding some sort of tracking to try and gauge how successful our attendance at these shows are in getting tourists to come to Ulster. A general discussion of tracking methods followed and Mr. Remsnyder said his office is going to utilize some of them at this show. A motion was made by Leg. Lomita to approve the request as presented. The motion was seconded by Leg. Cahill, and upon voice vote the request was unanimously approved.

Regarding the Tourism Caboose in Kingston, Mr. Remsnyder said in prior years there was always \$12,000 to \$15,000 the budget to pay RSVP volunteers expenses for staffing same. This year there is no money for staffing. One option would be to close the caboose. A second option would be for Tourism to do the structuring and scheduling for fifty-nine volunteers. Coordination was always done by RSVP according to Cathy Canzian. He said his office would also have to do some training as well as track and enter data the volunteers compile. Mr. Remsnyder said roughly 5,000 people came to the caboose last year and it takes approximately twenty hours per week to administer the program. The third option would be for Tourism to staff the caboose which is something he does not want to do.

Leg. Harris did not think Tourism should staff the caboose and doesn't think it should be closed. Leg. Lomita thinks RSVP would be great but there is no contract. Mr. Remsnyder said Ms. Canzian would be willing to provide a list of volunteers but we would still need a new or transferred line item as we still have to pay expenses and mileage.

Leg. Felicello said 5,000 people in six months was a lot of people but Mr. Remsnyder said he was surprised it was so low. Leg. Cahill questioned if there is going to be major construction across the street and how that would impact the caboose. He will look into that further. Leg. Sheeley suggested we look for involvement from the Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Remsnyder will follow up with Ward Todd.

Mr. Remsnyder gave an up-date on the monthly meeting of the Tourism Advisory Board. Mr. Remsnyder will be meeting with a firm in Westchester County that is very involved with the Internet and will report back on that meeting.

The Travel Guide advertising was discussed. There are ads in the Travel Guide and the Tourism Advisory Board asked where the money from the ads went. Mr. Remsnyder says it goes into the General Fund and asked if there was any way this money could come back to Tourism. If that is possible he could sell full-page ads and try to make Tourism more self-sufficient. Chairwoman Zimet said we talked about that regarding the Ulster County Fair. She will talk with Mike Hein

and see why it could not go back to Tourism. A discussion followed on the General Fund – where it comes from and where it goes. Terry Breitenstein said he had raised that question in previous meetings. He said all reimbursement goes back to the County into the General Fund and believes it is County Policy

Mr. Remsnyder said the Tourism Advisory Board was going to send a letter in support of retaining the office position scheduled for March 30th elimination. He said it would cost another \$20,000 to retain it. He believes it is a very valuable position and Tourism will be very short-handed when it is vacant. Leg. Lomita said he was not surprised by the amount of support but he is concerned about “budget creep” and there is a money issue right now.

Leg. Felicello said Tourism is the only Department in the County that brings in money and suggested that some of the money in Public Works allocated to snow plowing could be transferred to Tourism. Chairwoman Zimet said she did not think the Tourism budget was put together without any regard to need and believes we are hurting the Department. Leg. Cahill suggested we talk with Mike Hein and see if something can be worked out to fund that position. Leg. Felicello said he did not think a County agency should have to raise its own funds to pay for a position. Leg. Sheeley said if we are going to lobby for the position then the funding for that position should come from somewhere else.

Chairwoman Zimet said that she did not realize at the time but on the subject of the counties search for affordable health care, most of the work was passed on to the Tourism department. She also advised that Tourism also used to be Public Information but even though those duties were assigned elsewhere, Tourism is still getting calls regarding various public events.

Chairwoman Zimet asked who on this Committee would like to advocate for this position regardless of where the money comes from and Legs. Cahill, Felicello, Zimet and Harris replied in the affirmative. Leg. Cahill said it is the responsibility of this Committee to make sure that a Department has what it needs to go forward and funding for that position should be restored. Chairwoman Zimet said this Committee should have advocated a little stronger to keep a little more in the Tourism budget.

At this time a motion was made by Leg. Cahill to change the Legislature’s directive to the Tourism Department to move towards Internet advertising. That the position of the person in that Department charged with implementing that directive is scheduled for March 30th elimination due to inadequate funding. The position should be funded and retained for the rest of the year based upon the directive the County chose to give that Department. The motion was seconded by Leg. Harris and carried by the following:

FOR THE MOTION: Legs. Harris, Zimet, Cahill and Felicello

AGAINST THE MOTION: Legs. Sheeley, Bischoff and Lomita.

Leg. Lomita reminded the committee that the position was on the lay-off list and since we are now looking to fund it we should bring it before the full Legislature. Chairwoman Zimet said the Committee would work on a formal printed Resolution.

Ulster County Veteran's Service Agency:

The report of Ulster County Tourism being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Terry Breitenstein, Director of Ulster County Veteran's Service Agency who brought two items to the attention of the Committee which may in the near future have great impact on his Department.

Mr. Breitenstein advised that the State mandates burials for indigents. If they are veterans it is the responsibility of his Department. Those not veterans go to Social Services. The problems are arising because Veteran's Services pay one amount and Social Services pays another. Both departments pay \$1800 for an indigent's funeral, which fee has not changed in more than twelve years. The Veteran's Service fee of \$1800 covers the whole funeral (limited and subject to funeral home's restrictions) while the fee allowed by Social Service is also \$1800 but includes additional amounts for other services.

Mr. Breitenstein said a veteran in the Nursing Home died and his family plot is in Westchester County. Westchester County wanted \$1200 just for opening the grave and our total allowance is \$1800. He wants to take a closer look at these discrepancies and others like them before next year. He believes we will have to change the amount of allowance for an indigent burial or we will not be able to get funeral homes to do the work.

In reply to a question from Leg. Bischoff, Mr. Breitenstein said there were approximately 20-25 indigent burials each year. He has \$45,000 in a line item in his budget; however, given the cost of a very basic funeral, he said we were going to have to look into their funding before the next budget year. He said veterans cannot be buried in Potters Field or in an unmarked grave. He also said he would bring in a resolution when it is time for next years budget. Also, until that time, if there are extenuating circumstances he will have to transfer funds.

On the matter of veteran's transportation Mr. Breitenstein said they used 12 and 15 passenger vans. The NYS Dept. of Transportation is looking at this and not considering the 15 passenger vans as the way to go. The vans cost about \$24,000 whereas a mini-bus type vehicle is in excess of \$60,000. He said it is not so much the cost as it is the amount of service that is rendered. With one mini-bus there is no backup to allow for maintenance, repairs, etc. In 2005 there were 2,563 veterans's transported, primarily to the VA Hospital in Albany, and in 2006 there were 2,980 not counting walk-ins. Also in 2005 we had 67 veterans in wheelchairs and 87 in 2006. Mr. Breitenstein also believes that drivers of the mini-bus have to have a CDL license.

Leg. Lomita said we should get in touch with our State Legislators as to the burden these changes would place on the various Veteran's Service Agencies.

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As a point of interest, Lee Reidy of Cornell Cooperative Extension said that their insurance company does not allow them to use 15 passenger vans.

Mr. Breitenstein then distributed copies of his offices Statistics for 2006 v 2005. All services were increased, most notably the number of new files created, going from 191 in 2005 to 330 in 2006. This will have to be addressed in the next budget.

Ulster County Office for the Aging:

The report of Veteran's Service Agency being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized and welcomed Anne Cardinale, the new Director of the Office for Aging, who said she was very excited to be in her new position. She also introduced Donna Davis of her office who presented the following resolutions:

The first Resolution is to amend the 2007 county budget by \$16,000 to purchase a motor vehicle for case manager use. The purchase is covered by \$16,000 in State aid and there is no financial impact to the County and the Resolution is to accept the State grant. A motion to approve the Resolution as presented was made by Leg. Lomita and seconded by Leg. Harris. Upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote the Resolution was unanimously approved.

The second Resolution is to amend the 2007 county budget to include \$2,700 of State Contract #TM04157 to extend the Eye Care Ulster Seniors Program. The funds are from State Aid and there is no financial impact to the county and the Resolution is to accept said funds. A motion to approve the Resolution as presented was made by Leg. Lomita and seconded by Leg. Harris and upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, the Resolution was unanimously approved.

The third Resolution is to accept \$34,226 for the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and State adjustments to the budget for the 2006/07 program year. The increase in the 2007 budget is \$9,526 to the Homemaker Service Program, \$12,000 to Kingston Hospital Program and \$12,700 to the Nutrition Program. The funds are to come from \$21,526 from State Aid and \$12,700 from State Aid SNAP. Financial impact to the State is \$34,226 and there is no financial impact to the County. A motion to approve the Resolution as presented was made by Leg. Lomita and seconded by Leg. Harris and upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, the Resolution was unanimously approved.

A Conference Request Approval was also presented by Ms. Davis for attendance at a Farmers Market Training program for expenses of \$31.78. A motion to approve the request was made by Leg. Lomita and seconded by Leg. Bischoff. Upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, the Request was unanimously approved.

Ms. Cardinale then made a request to update the telephone lines for a cost of \$5.00 per month. This is to move to a more automated system which would be used when there is no one available to answer the phones. The system is designed to give seniors a clearer understanding of how they can be helped by telephone and also will work with the Point of Entry Program. A motion to approve the request was made by Chairwoman Zimet and seconded by Leg. Harris and upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, the request was unanimously approved.

Continuing with her report, Ms. Cardinale said she is meeting tomorrow with new Commissioner of Social Services Rodriguez. She stressed that this is a relocation and not a consolidation. She displayed drawings of the new offices and said her area needs to have a bathroom in the front of the building. As it stands now, customers have to go all the way to the far back of the building to find a bathroom, going by various offices and meeting rooms. The cost to install a bathroom in the front of the building is \$27,000.

Ms. Cardinale said the biggest obstacle to the move is the lack of parking. Leg. Cahill said this move was discussed in the Public Works Committee and the square footage (about 5000 square feet) is the same in their current quarters as it is in the new area; however, it is configured differently. He agreed that parking is a very big concern. Ms. Davis advised that the City Bus does not go right up to the building. Leg. Lomita suggested that Ms. Cardinale send this Committee and Public Works Committee a memorandum outlining the advantages and disadvantages of this move. Ms. Cardinale said one of the advantages is that we will be working closely with the Department of Social Services and there are several things that can be rectified by a close association.

Chairwoman Zimet said if we are looking to integrate Office for the Aging with Department of Social Services, maybe we need to take a bigger step back and start to reconfigure the entire space. Now would be the time to do it. Leg. Cahill said the Point of Entry program would be an overriding factor. Also, the current offices are in a building carrying the most expensive commercial lease the county has. He also advised that there is going to be an Overall Space Review for the entire County which may result in another move; however, we will not see the results of that Review until the end of the year. If we do complete this move there would still be a savings just to get out of the current lease.

Leg. Felicello said he believes that the Committee system is being by-passed and the Committee is not getting to have any input into any of the various moves.

Leg. Lomita said he has heard the advantages and disadvantages and believes we should have a lot more information before making a decision. Leg. Felicello suggested a combined meeting of this Committee and Public Works. Leg. Bischoff said it was not a bad idea to have a meeting.

Ms. Cardinale, returning to her regular report, said she would like to hold the annual Public Hearing in New Paltz and in Ellenville, as well as in Kingston so that more people could attend. She will see that they have everything they need.

On the budget cuts, Ms. Cardinale said it would be very difficult to lose a Deputy Director and another staff person. She said today there were only four people and herself in the office and it was very difficult. Also, she is concerned about when she is not available and there is nobody authorized to make a decision. Leg. Bischoff said he would like to see an Organizational Chart. When asked by Leg. Cahill what is to prevent her from putting someone in charge Ms. Cardinale said she advised that there were union questions. She will contact Personnel. Leg. Harris suggested that she use some of the other administrators in the County and try to get some help with some of the procedural questions she has.

The report of the Office for the Aging being concluded, Chairwoman Zimet recognized Sherri Brittain, Executive Director of the Ulster Arts Council who advised that in view of the hour, she would forego her report this month and carry it over to February. Chairwoman Zimet thanked her for the courtesy and recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Cornell Cooperative Extension:

Ms. Reidy handed out various pamphlets and brochures and discussed the 2007 Nursery and Greenhouse Growers School which included ornamental crops including perennials, shrubs and bedding plants, as well as sections on greenhouse diseases, insect and mite control and marketing. This was held on January 8, 2007 at BOCES Conference Center and had very good attendance.

Farmers Market Information Days 2007 will be held on various dates around the State. There will be one on Wednesday, February 7th at Hillside Manor. There are quite a few Farmers Markets in Ulster County and the information at this seminar should be very helpful to them. They will learn about new farm markets plus statewide promotion efforts, voucher programs and the WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Ms. Reidy also distributed literature on the Bus Trip to Railex Facility in Rotterdam, NY on January 30th. Railex is bring in from Washington State potatoes, onions, apples and pears and the topic is what challenges and opportunities the facility presents for the local produce industry. Ms. Reidy said she will bring Mike Fargione with her to the next meeting to explain this concept in more detail.

She also discussed the Farm Market/Stand Employee Training program given by Cooperative Extension last June. The growers ask that certain things be stressed, such as dress, money and change making and general agricultural knowledge. This program went over so well, said Ms. Reidy, that it will be held again in the Spring and is being picked up all over the State.

The 2007 Hudson Valley Commercial Fruit Growers School will be held on February 26-28 and March 2nd at Holiday Inn in Kingston. She said New York State has many business dedicated to grapes. Also, Cornell University is doing a lot of research into cold climate grapes. The apple industry is still struggling and will continue to struggle so the alternative is grapes. A general discussion on grape growing and wineries followed.

On the Purchase of Development Rights Program, Ms. Reidy reported that they are close to a closing on the Davenport Farm and have already closed on the Paul Farm. She wanted to do a big press conference but the farmer did not want the publicity. The Open Space Institute wanted to wait for a press release but have not done it yet. For this year the County put in the Davis Farm on Route 209. The problem with PDR is that it takes a long time. Also, there is a great deal of competition and also the cost of land is steadily going up.

On the Environmental Management Corp., she said the County is currently looking for other ways of addressing environmental need. She advised that Cooperative Extension has the capability of doing environmental work and is currently doing a stream management plan with the Department of Environmental Conservation. Ms Reidy said Dutchess County EM worked well up until five years ago. The County environmental work is being done by Dutchess Cooperative Extension. The Board meets next week and she will discuss it then. Leg. Cahill asked if after the meeting Ms. Reidy could put a proposal together and send it to the Chairman if Cooperative Extension wants to do it. He said the work and reputation of Cooperative Extension has always been of the highest caliber over the years. Chairwoman Zimet said Cooperative Education is more educational and EMC is more management.

In reply to a question, Ms. Reidy said the YCMA and Cooperative Education agreed to have an appraisal done of the YMCA camp property on the Esopus Town Line. The YMCA filled in the pool and Extension took down the trailer and they are looking at all options.

The report of Cornell Cooperative Extension being concluded, and there being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Cahill and seconded by Leg. Sheeley. Upon Chairwoman Zimet calling for a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved and Chairwoman Zimet declared the meeting adjourned at 9:01pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Salanitri, Recorder

