

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION, CULTURE AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY
LEGISLATURE, HELD AT ULSTER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FEBRUARY 23RD, 2000**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

VINCENT DUNN, Chairman
FRANK FELICELLO
JOAN EVERY
DAVID B. DONALDSON
SAM MAGARELLI

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

EDWARD JENNINGS
WILLIAM BEESMER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

NONE

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

BARBARA A. ADAMS, President of Ulster County Community College,
GORDON H. HOWATT, Dean of Administration of Ulster County Community
College; GERALD DAVIDSON, Executive Director of The Ulster County
Development Corporation; LEE REIDY, Executive Director of Cornell
Cooperative Extension; PETER CAROFANO, Director of Ulster County
Tourism; and JANET CRISPINO, Recorder.

A quorum being present, Chairman Dunn called the meeting to order at 5:13pm and recognized Peter Carofano, Director of Ulster County Tourism, who introduced a proposed resolution authorizing the Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature to submit a letter of commitment to New York State Senator John J. Bonacic for the Catskill Mountain Railroad.

A general discussion was had regarding this Resolution which involves a grant of \$250,000, with a two to one match or \$250,000 from the State of \$125,000 from the County. This would be for the expansion and rehabilitation of the Railroad and would be payable over a five-year period, as necessary. Also read and discussed with a letter of support and explanation from Bart Guglielmetti, Chairman of the Catskill Mountain Railroad Co., Inc., setting forth the details of the proposed project, which includes five miles of track. A copy of the Resolution as proposed, and the letter referred to above, is attached to these minutes and made a part of same.

After discussion, a motion to approve the Resolution as presented was made by Leg. Magarelli and seconded by Leg. Felicello. Leg. Felicello also commended Mr. Carofano for the job he had done since taking over the office upon Joe Munster's retirement. At this time, Chairman Dunn called for a voice vote on the motion, and the motion to approve the Resolution as presented was unanimously passed.

At this time Mr. Carofano advised the Committee that he would give his report in full at the conclusion of the meeting.

Chairman Dunn then recognized President Barbara Adams and Dean Gordon Howatt of Ulster County Community College. President Adams reported that Spring enrollment has increased and the College is looking to also have very good enrollment in the Summer sessions. She said there was a high demand for all technology programs, and plans on adding additional sections of Cisco and Web Design as soon as faculty could be found.

President Adams advised that the College is currently in a strategic planning process, which involves the entire College Community and the Board of Trustees, as well as the County Legislature and business leaders. On March 20th and 21st planning sessions will be held with various campus groups and committees. At the present time the session with this Committee, the Minority and Majority Leaders and the Chairman is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, March 21st at 10:00am at the Conference Room in the County Office Building; however, the time can be flexible. A session with business leaders is being held prior to the meeting with the Legislators. She said her office would be sending out letters to everyone giving them a choice of which meeting they would like to attend.

The President advised that the planning process is being coordinated by Jan Balzer, a professional Planner specializing in Community Colleges, will involve both a strategic and a technological plan. These will pinpoint where the College wants to be in the next three to five years.

Dean Howatt advised that construction on Phase I of the Master Plan, as outlined at the previous meeting, is scheduled to begin right after Graduation.

Leg. Felicello asked if anyone had tried to come up with some creative ideas to try and get the people from the Marlboro-Milton area to come to Ulster, rather than Dutchess Community. President Adams said she had been talking with some people on that subject recently. She also said the High School Bridge Program is bringing in quite a few students. She also explained the Bridge Program to the Committee. There followed a general discussion of the various methods of trying to increase enrollment at Ulster from the Southern part of the County.

Chairman Dunn said he believed that when the Master Plan is completed, and with the addition of new technology and new programs, Ulster County Community College will attract more students from all areas.

President Adams reported that the on-line courses are drawing 27% of students from outside the area. These courses are being structured and priced competitively and Dutchess County students are now taking courses here. The Cisco programs are being taken by students from the Bronx, Westchester County, and even from Connecticut, due to the fact that it is the only program in the area.

There followed a general discussion of the demographics involved with students in Ellenville and Highland. The President also said that the clientele who attend classes at the Business Resource Center run more towards the non-traditional students taking evening classes.

Leg. Donaldson asked Mr. Carofano if any marketing was done jointly by the College and Tourism and felt it may be reasonable to explore marketing from that angle. Mr. Carofano said he could bring college brochures to some of the shows he goes to.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Gerald Davidson, Executive Director of Ulster County Development Corporation who discussed the current problems facing the Zumtobel/Staff Lighting project in Highland. He explained about the grant application which fell through and also that the Town of Lloyd does not have the funds to assist this company. If the water district is not extended, the company will not be able to expand. It will not have sufficient water pressure in the event of fire; therefore, they will be unable to obtain insurance. This will probably mean the end of any expansion plans and the company may even look to relocate its main office to another area. Mr. Davidson said they did secure a grant from the State of New York for a sewer system and the Town has worked with the company on this.

Mr. Davidson said it may fall to the County to come up with some funds to make this proposed expansion work. It has been a three-year process and the owners are getting very discouraged. This expansion could mean an additional 300 jobs. A general discussion of this project and its problems followed.

Mr. Davidson also discussed the Hudson River Institute. He has had several meetings with the Aquarium people. If the Aquarium does not get enough funds to make it a reality, the Institute, if still tied with the Aquarium, will also not go forward. They have been separated into two different projects. He will be looking for letters of support from agencies such as the Watershed Project, the College, and businesses located on the Hudson River, as well as from the Cities.

President Adams said that Governor Pataki's original proposal included teachers and professors from many colleges and universities. She does not believe it will go to just one college. She also said Marist College does not have a strong program in that area; however, Bard College does.

On Empire Newsprint, Mr. Davidson said it had filed its papers with the Town of Ulster and that are already groups forming in opposition to the project. He thinks a public meeting will be held within the next few weeks.

Mr. Davidson, reporting on Tech City, said he is still working with Alan Ginsberg, but there is nothing definite at this time.

The Trauma Center figures on the amount of patients and employees are good; however, the reimbursement rate from Medicare and Medicaid is very slow. The Trauma Center people came to the IDA to borrow additional monies to help them until their receivables get caught up. Leg. Magarelli asked if any of the previously borrowed money has been paid back, and Mr. Davidson said the Trauma Center has been making its payments. He said eventually the lag time will become static and the problems will be alleviated.

At this time, Chairman Dunn discussed a proposed Resolution from Legislator Loughran authorizing the Chairman of the Ulster County Legislature to put in place an ad hoc committee for the purpose of organizing and implementation of an economic seminar. The proposed Resolution also calls for authorizing ".the Chairman to set aside from contingency \$150,000.00 for the purpose of promoting economic development...". Chairman Dunn said the Resolution is in good faith and perhaps Leg. Loughran is not aware of the work being done by the Ulster County Development Corp.

Mr. Davidson, in response, explained the advertising that is done by UCDC in trying to reach people, such as Web Pages, brochures, periodicals, etc. With reference to the suggestion that CEOs be invited, Mr. Davidson said UCDC does not believe that the CEOs of companies are the ones who do the groundwork for new areas. This is done by site selection people and all groundwork is done before the CEOs even get involved.

A general discussion of the Resolution and proposed alternatives to marketing the County, such as marketbaskets of Ulster County products, was had. The consensus of the Committee is that Leg. Loughran should be given more information about the current marketing practices and procedures of the County.

Leg. Donaldson suggested that this Committee invite Leg. Loughran to its next meeting, where the Development Corporation could inform him of the work done by them. Mr. Davidson suggested that Leg. Loughran should first spend some time with Irene McPherson, UCDC's Marketing Director. Chairman Dunn thought that was a very good suggestion and Leg. Magarelli said that would be useful in giving Leg. Loughran a better feel as to exactly what UCDC does. Leg. Donaldson agreed.

Ms. Reidy advised she had given out market baskets of agricultural products at Cooperative Extension's Golf Tournament and they had gone over very well.

Chairman Dunn thought the discussion was productive and suggested that Mr. Carofano speak to Leg. Loughran about the Committee's discussion and its suggestions.

The report of the Ulster County Development Corporation, and the discussion of Leg. Loughran's Resolution being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, who read to the Committee a thank you letter from Sue Matson for their approval of the Resolution to support the Early Childhood Community Library in the Accord-Kerhonkson area. She said they have received donations from the Happy Christmas Fund and from Stewarts. Renovations are being done by Ulster County Buildings and Grounds, including meeting rooms and the handicapped accessible bathroom.

Ms. Reidy said her office is scheduling a Volunteer Recognition and Open House at 10 Westbrook Lane on Wednesday, April 10th and all Legislators will be invited. Value added products from the Hudson Valley would be featured.

She also advised that the satellite dish has not yet been installed, given the recent weather conditions. She expects that the dish will be put up by the end of the current week.

On up-coming events, Ms. Reidy advised that there will be an information session on March 3 at the Central Hudson Meeting Room on household pesticide education. On April 6 the subject will be organic farming and on May 4th breast cancer and environmental factors will be discussed. Cooperative Extension would like to educate people around the County on these issues. Formal notices will be put in Legislators' mailboxes shortly. She also said Cooperative Extension does not keep lists of specifically what farmers are using on their crops. That is the job of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Her office^{is} still working on the Farm Labor Housing Grant for the purchase of development rights. She explained what this grant was intended to do and reviewed the history behind this grant, which this Committee is familiar with.

The report of Cornell Cooperative Extension being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Peter Carofano, Director of Tourism, who gave the balance of his report.

Returning to the subject of the Catskill Mountain Railroad, Leg. Donaldson asked if there was any thought being given to continuing the railroad all the way to the Rondout. Mr. Carofano said there was so much track repair between the areas covered by the Resolution and that they are basically working their way down the line. Also, the area they are working on is one of the most scenic and they want to use the most marketable area. In reply to a question from Leg. Donaldson, Mr. Carofano said a lot of the materials were being donated by other railroads.

Returning to his report, Mr. Carofano said he attended Government Action Day on February 1st. This was held in the State Capital, where different regions throughout the State put up displays and the State Representatives came down to see what the various counties and regions are doing.

He also said the The Ulster County Development Corporation, the Office of Tourism and the Kingston Enterprise Development Zone will have a three-way split involving illuminated tourism kiosks at Stewart Airport. Ulster County Tourism hopes to have a big presence at the airport.

Mr. Carofano reported the golf brochure is scheduled to go to print by the end of the week. He hopes to create an Ulster County Golf Association, and the owners of various courses have begun to do just that. This would be good marketing strategy and he will be able to do some generic as well as specific advertising. He will also be attending some golf shows with Ulster County's golf brochure.

The Travel Guide should be out by May 1st. Also, the local Regional Travel Expo, a consumer show, will be held on March 18th at Anthony's Pier 9 in Newburgh. He will be attending that event. In March he will be upstate and may not be able to come to the next Committee meeting.

Mr. Carofano informed the Committee that he had been speaking with someone at the State level and it appears that there is another county looking for dual County/Regional recognition. Ulster County is being recommended as the County to talk to about how to do this, which is quite an honor.

The report of Ulster County Tourism being concluded, and their being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Donaldson and seconded by Leg. Magarelli, and Chairman Dunn declared the meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Respectfully submitted:


Janet Crispino, Recorder