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ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Education, Culture and Economic Affairs Committee

DATE: November 16, 1994

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: Ulster County Community College,
Stone Ridge, New York

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Dunn and Legislators Contini,
Jennings, Felicello, Wadnola, Bertone
and Provenzano

LEGISLATORS EXCUSED: Legislator Naccarato

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislator O'Reilly

OTHERS ATTENDING: Robert T. Brown, President, UCCC;
Lee Reidy, Director, Cornell Cooperative
Extension;
Bruce Whyte, Ulster Arts Alliance;
Charles Shanok, Ulster Arts Alliance;
Tom Rowland, Coordinator, Wildlife
Festival;
Richard Mathews, C.E.O., Ulster County
Development Corp.;
Tamara Katzowitz, U.C. Library Associatio
George Allen, Acting Director, Kingston
Library;
Joseph Munster, U.C. Public Information
Officer

A quorum being present, Chairman Dunn called the meeting to order at 5:00pm, and recognized Tamara Katzowitz of the Ulster County Library Association and George Allen, representing Kingston Library.

Mrs. Katzowitz advised the Committee that she appears before them annually on behalf of the twenty-one member Library Association.

She discussed the growing technology in the Library field and the necessity of maintaining and upgrading computer systems in both the Mid-Hudson Library and the Catskill-Ramapo Library systems. She said using updated technology makes turn-around time much faster, which is important because demand and circulation is up throughout the County.

Leg. Jennings asked about the formula used to allocate funds and also if there were any additional funds available. Mrs. Katzowitz said the By-Laws of the Ulster County Library Association govern the funding formula. There is a Committee that suggests allocations and Board membership according to these By-Laws. She said trying to make it a democratic process is never easy, but they try. There is also a lot of questions about the distribution of funding which, traditionally is \$1 per capita, based upon the census figures for the 165,000 population. Last year the Committee distributed \$25,000 off the top to the Kingston Area Library because they are the reference center and service the bulk of the County.

Leg. Jennings asked if everyone gets to use that Library. Mrs. Katzowitz and Mr. Allen gave a breakdown of funding originally planned for next year which will only allocate \$10,000 to Kingston Library, since there are no different ways to access reference and it was felt those funds should be cut. Of the remaining funds, 60% goes to each member on a per capita basis, with 40% paid as equal flat grants. Mr. Allen said problems occur because of overlapping districts. They discussed a proposed new funding formula whereby if a library doesn't develop more technology, then there would be a cutting of funds, but that idea only made more problems and they are going back to the old formula. The change in funding of \$10,000 to the Kingston Area Library will definitely have an impact on them; however the Association felt it was justifiable.

Mr. Allen said the remaining 40% of the funds are given as flat grants to individual libraries so each gets an equal amount, as in the previous formula.

Leg. Jennings asked if any money is set aside for special requests, specifically, he mentioned that the Cragmoor computer is down. Mrs. Katzowitz said there was no money for this. She said those computers originally came through a State grant years earmarked for inter-library loans. They are in the Ramapo Library system and they may have had money allocated for that years ago. She also said IBM has grants that can be applied for.

There followed a general discussion by Mr. Allen of computerization of library systems and upgrading, and how to get money through grants, gifts from patrons, etc. In reply to a question by Leg. Bertone, as to how estate bequests figure into the funding after the allocation process, Mrs. Katzowitz said money does not come to the Ulster County Library Association directly. Bequests, if any, are usually made to individual libraries.

Chairman Dunn asked if the Mid-Hudson Library has any say in the division of funds, and Mrs. Katzowitz said no, the division is made by the Committee. Then the County Administrator is notified of the allocation, which would then have to be approved by the Legislature.

Mr. Munster advised that there would be a budget meeting on Thursday, November 17th at 3:00pm on contract agencies, and the should have that information at that time.

Leg. Contini asked if the system that houses the data is owned by the City of Kingston Library, and if that was where most of the information is stored. Mrs. Katzowitz said that only seven of the twenty-one libraries are hooked up to a network through Mid-Hudson. The majority of libraries are not, as it is very expensive. The only way those libraries can access information is by telephone. If the information is needed immediately, requests go by delivery or fax. Mrs. Katzowitz also said that Putnam County libraries went to their Legislature and explained the necessity for computerization, and they were given the money to do it; however, there are only six or eight libraries in that area.

Chairman Dunn said Mrs. Matzen, who was unable to attend, had sent a telephone number where she can be reached (339-4260) if there were any questions by Committee members. He also said that the County Legislature has the authority to approve the granting of funds but not the allocation of them. He thanked Mrs. Katzowitz and Mr. Allen for attending.

The Library reports being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Robert T. Brown, President of Ulster County Community College, who presented four Resolutions to the Committee for approval. He said the first Resolution must be approved in order to get State Aid.

A motion was made by Leg. Provenzano to approve Resolution #94-11-170 Amending the 1993-94 Budget, which motion was seconded by Leg. Felicello. There was no discussion, and upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Leg. Jennings to approve a Resolution modifying that portion of a Capital Project relating to the grading and the retaining wall outside of Vanderlyn Hall, which motion was seconded by Leg. Bertone. There was no discussion, and upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Leg. Felicello to approve Resolution #94-11-168 for the approval of the Architect for the wall renovation, which motion was seconded by Leg. Wadnola. There was no discussion, and upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Leg. Provenzano to approve Resolution #94-11-169 for the approval of low bidder on the modifications to grading and retaining wall outside Vanderlyn Hall, which motion was seconded by Leg. Felicello. There was no discussion, and upon voice vote the motion passed unanimously.

Having concluded the Resolution process, President Brown discussed the Business Resource Center. He told the Committee that the time for the bid opening for reconstruction had been extended to give more contractors time to pick up plans and specifications. The new bid opening date is December 1st.

Leg. Contini asked how bidders find out information about the project, and President Brown said they are informed by telephone, fax and Federal Express.

Leg. Felicello asked President Brown, if, given the amount of time he must now spend with the Incubator project, whether there had been a search started to replace John Dunn. President Brown advised the Committee that in addition to the vacancy of John Dunn's position he also had to handle the resignation of Jean Morris as Director of the Small Business Development Center. The President said there was a search last Summer for a Coordinator of the Business Incubator, and that position has been filled. Once the Director of the Business Resource Center is filled, he will start on the search for a new Dean of Administration.

Leg. Provenzano asked who had been hired as Coordinator of the Business Incubator. President Brown said the new Director was Michael Sekerak, who is from Dutchess County, and who formerly worked at IBM, Kingston. He advised the Committee that the Coordinator's position is a half-time position and that he was now able to appoint him using funds from the Urban Development Grant.

Leg. Felicello asked who was filling in for John Dunn, and the President said he is personally doing most of the work involving the Incubator, and that Charlie Schenck is acting Dean of Administration. The President said that with the potential of a \$4 billion State deficit and potential State Aid budget cuts, he is trying to create some savings. He advised the Committee, in reply to a question, that John Dunn's job description will remain the same.

Leg. Provenzano asked who was the low bidder on the wall renovations and grading and President Brown said it was Sun Up Enterprises, Inc. from Wappingers Falls.

On the Prison Education Program, Leg. Jennings asked if there were any statistics on the recidivism rate of those students that were enrolled in classes. President Brown said there are statistics,

and they are very good. Many of those who graduate and are paroled are not repeat violators. He told the Committee that Sen. Cooke's legislation is that if you are sentenced for life you should not get financial assistance for education; however, that has never passed the State Legislature. President Brown said he doesn't have the exact percentages, but he will get them for Leg. Jennings.

The report of Ulster County Community College being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Lee Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, who reminded the Committee that here was also a contract agency awaiting determination of its budget funding.

Mrs. Reidy advised that in January her agency will start a Budget Counselling Program for families experiencing difficulties making ends meet. This program is already in place in Dutchess, Sullivan and Orange Counties. Cornell Cooperative has already made some arrangements to go to financial institutions to train volunteers to work directly with families. The training manuals alone are \$50 each she said. The volunteer costs are minimal, and the Board has decided there is a need for this program.

Leg. Felicello asked about the shopping program, and Mrs. Reidy said there is an income limitation on that program, where Cornell trains nutrition counselors on how to show and what to shop for. There is also a certain amount of budgeting involved in that program, which reaches over three hundred families per year.

Leg. Felicello said this program should be a requirement for people on welfare, and Mrs. Reidy said she has had some conversations with Social Services. She also said Cornell University also has a grant to work with families.

There followed a general discussion on the food stamp program and school lunches, as well as the steps necessary to rectify problems in both areas. Mrs. Reidy said the U.S. Department of Agriculture has new regulations effective in 1995, which schools will need a lot of help interpreting. There is also the reality that in some schools, school lunch programs have to make money. They are run by outside contractors and in order to make money they have to sell what kids will eat, not necessarily what they should eat.

Mrs. Reidy advised the Committee that the Annual Meeting of Cornell Cooperative Extension will be held on December 6th at Ulster County Community College. She said that date had been set in April, and she was unaware that the County would hold its annual budget meeting on the same date. She did say Dr. Jim Gaborino, a child development expert, will be the guest speaker and that further information will be sent out.

Mrs. Reidy told the Committee that her Board is asking all enrollees of Cornell Cooperative to suspend parts of their Constitutions for the next two years to allow Cornell Cooperative Extension to function in a different manner to correct inefficiencies and better utilize the time of Board Members. They intend to focus on programs and policies of the organization. There were two staff resignations this year, and she is now trying to identify special needs areas. Ulster County may share with Dutchess County a Cooperative Extension agent to work with both counties, dependent upon their budgets.

She also discussed the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. They are working on a \$50,000 grant proposal for the protection of agricultural and farmland in Ulster County. Leg. Felicello told the Committee that Stanley Orchards in Modena has filed for bankruptcy. Mrs. Reidy said agriculture in Ulster County is a \$100 million industry.

There followed a general discussion of agricultural areas, including apple farmers, the dairy industry, etc. Mrs. Reidy said there may be some things to do within the State to get New York City to support upstate farmers such as utilizing prisons, hospitals and schools to get more markets for upstate products.

Regarding the satellite dish, Mrs. Reidy said it is now on Flatbush Avenue ready to go back; however, she is still working with Kingston Schools to try and put it on the roof of the Board of Education offices, but she has had a difficult time contacting the school officials.

The report of Cornell Cooperative Extension being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Joseph Munster, Ulster County Public Information Officer who passed around a final color rendering of the publicity brochure for the Catskill Interpretive Center. He advised that a biddable document for construction will soon be produced and some progress is being made.

Mr. Munster then introduced Mr. Tom Rowland, Coordinator of the Wildlife Festival, who announced that the festival will be held May 4th through May 7th, 1995 at multiple sites throughout Kingston. The theme is Wildlife Art and participants will be various artists, sculptors, etc. of the highest reputation and quality. Mr. Rowland discussed the various artists and the type of work they have done. He said it is intended that this Wildlife Festival be the best in the nation. He said the population within a one-hundred radius of New York City is one of the biggest in the country and that is quite a drawing card. The Shad Festival will also be incorporated into the same time frame.

Mr. Munster then introduced Bruce Whyte of the Ulster Arts Alliance who discussed the cooperative effort between the Alliance and the Public Information Office in producing a color calendar of events. Mr. Munster passed around the final mock-up.

Mr. White also discussed the marketing of the posters and ways to promote the County.

Regarding the budget request, he said that if the Legislature allocates the same amount as last year (\$2,500), Ulster Arts Alliance will have to turn town the larger of the two matching funds grants of New York State Council of the Arts and the Community Initiative Program. The problem, he said, is if the County gives approval for a minimum of \$4,900 of the \$6,000 budget request, the Alliance can accept both grants and also get other funding. The worst possible case is to receive no funding at all, in which case the Ulster Arts Alliance will cease to exist.

His report being concluded, Mr. Whyte introduced to the Committee Mr. Charles Shanok, the newest member of the Board.

The reports of the Ulster County Public Information Office and the Ulster Arts Alliance being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Richard Mathews, Chief Executive Officer of the Ulster County Development Corporation, who passed out both a written report of operations to date, and also a report of the marketing implementation team. He then reviewed both reports with the Committee.

Mr. Mathews informed the Committee that Rylance Printing had moved into a portion of the IBM buildings, and also that Besicorp had taken over 25,000 square feet. Ironically, he said, both already are Ulster County companies.

Regarding the position of Executive Director, recently vacated by Alice Cocalas, Mr. Mathews said there were almost one hundred applicants for the position. He advised that a decision should be made by the first of the year.

Leg. Felicello said people are asking if they should stay in Ulster County. He asked Mr. Mathews what the main theme was in the attraction of business to the area. Mr. Mathews said the main theme was the quality of life in Ulster County as well as its work force. He said taxes are not on the top of the list; however, there has to be some State incentives. He said we must compete and can compete with surrounding states; however, we cannot compete with the southern part of the country. Incentives such as wage and tax credits help to make up competitive. Jobs created in one area will help the whole area. Mr. Matthews also stressed that besides the quality of life and work force in the Hudson Valley, another major seller is the educational availability of this area.

The report of the Ulster County Development Corporation being concluded, Chairman Dunn presented a proposed Resolution brought forth by Leg. Jennings on behalf of the Coalition of Watershed Towns. Leg. Jennings gave a brief rundown of the New York City Watershed and its intentions. He said that New York City has to control land around the Watershed area, which amounts to one hundred twenty-five square miles of land. Leg. Jennings said they are taking the best lands, which leaves these communities with no areas in which to develop economic plans. This would be a memorializing Resolution which has already been approved by the Legislatures of Dutchess and Orange Counties.

Chairman Dunn thought it appropriate to add an addendum that it be sent to the appropriate State representatives. He asked the Committee if they wanted it put in proper Resolution form and presented to the full Legislature at the December meeting. A motion to that effect was made by Leg. Jennings and seconded by Leg. Contini. There was no further discussion and upon voice vote, no opposition, and the motion passed unanimously.

Following this a general discussion was had between the members regarding gambling in the Hudson Valley and the Catskills.

There followed a discussion between Leg. Provenzano and Leg. Contini regarding the Resource Recovery Agency and its future plans. Chairman Dunn said, as a point of information, that there could be some kind of solution worked out at the Environmental and Consumer Affairs Committee Meeting, and that Charles Shaw of the Resource Recovery Agency will be reporting to that Committee.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Leg. Wadnola and seconded by Leg. Jennings, and Chairman Dunn called the meeting adjourned at 7:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Vincent Dunn, Chairman
Education, Culture and Economic Affairs Committee