

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Education, Culture and Economic Affairs Committee

DATE: August 19, 1993

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: Ulster County Community College

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Acting Chairman Sfregola; and Legislators Irwin, Contini, Felicello and O'Reilly

LEGISLATORS EXCUSED: Legislators Dunn and Schneller

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: Legislators Every and Bertone

OTHERS ATTENDING: Robert T. Brown, President, UCCC; W. John Dunn, Dean of Administration UCCC; Alice Cocalas, Executive Director, U.C.D.C.; Peter Gallaghe U.C.D.C.; Lee Reidy, Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Joseph Munster, Ulster County Information Officer; Bruce Whyte and Peter Schlime

At 5:00pm, a quorum not yet being present, it was decided by the Committee to conduct an informal meeting. At this time Acting Chairman Dominick Sfregola recognized Robert T. Brown, President of Ulster County Community College, who reported that the college is still trying to complete all construction prior to school opening the following week. The contractor is still working on getting the tiles replaced but it is going slowly. John Dunn said that on-going renovations are being done with operating money. Mr. Sfregola asked how many rooms were being renovated and President Brown said there would be several new classrooms, since the college gained a lot of space with the primary construction. He will give the committee a final report when everything is completed. Rooms are being used as they are freed up.

The college is still pressing on the punch list and has the retainages over their heads: \$90,000 on the general contractor; \$80,000 on the HVAC contractor; about \$15,000 on the electrician and \$13,000 on the plumber. President Brown hopes to have everything completed before the dedication on September 23rd, which will be held at 4:00pm and he invited all committee members to attend. He informed the Committee that it will also be thirty years from the day of the first classes. The 30th Anniversary and dedication are being combined. He would like all summer projects and punch list items completed by that time. The Chairman of the Legislature has been invited to speak and also several alumni. The Governor has also been invited, or, if not him, the Lt. Governor. Regarding an alumni speaker, President Brown said that radio personality Ward Todd was the student leader at the time of the original dedication. President Brown also reported that generally the campus is in good shape, on time and within budget. There are no major problems with the work done.

Mr. Sfregola asked if there was a point where the plumber and electrical contractors could be released before the general contractor. John Dunn said the electrical contractor has been very good; however, the buttons for the handicapped doors were never installed and the school had to order them. The cost would be deducted from the retainage.

President Brown said he would be meeting with the Board of Trustees on Tuesday, at which time he would recommend an engineer for design of the roofs, and that matter will come before this Committee in September.

At this point, Legislator Felicello arrived making a quorum, and the meeting was declared official.

John Dunn then informed the Committee that the college was going to the next lighting retrofit stage, and the contract had brought some concern to several parties in the County. He said that Frank Felicello had brought it to his attention. This stage involves retrofitting 2-bulb fixtures. There will be an Ulster County contractor (Ulster Precision), making the reflectors and covers and most of the fixtures. They will be installed by an Ulster County firm. Mr. Sfregola remarked that it amounts to a lot of money saved, and that the County had been outstanding in all energy savings. Mr. Dunn said that the 4-lamp and 2x2 hallway fixtures were funded by Central Hudson. This last phase has a Central Hudson grant of \$48,000 and a New York State Energy Grant of \$98,000 so the college will only have to put in a minimal amount, which would come from previous rebates. President Brown said that the contractor is from Chatham and unfortunately we had to go out of the County because in-County firms could not front the money.

Regarding budgets, President Brown said the 1992-93 budget is being closed and is being prepared for the Board on Tuesday. The college is on a tight budget but will make it; however, he is now struggling for the \$124,000 necessary fund balance.

The 1993-94 budget will be approved by the State University in September. UCCC has been running light on applications over the summer; however, as of late, the actual enrollment is keeping pace with last year. It appears the whole economic uncertainty of the area is reflecting on the college and part-time enrollment is still a worry.

The 1994-95 tentative budget has to be in to the State by the end of August. They have requested as a balancing figure, an increase in tuition to the level needed to balance the budget, which would be an enormous increase. John Dunn said it would bring tuition to over \$1,100 per semester. While we still can't go over \$2,100 per year, the State said to ignore the cap for purposes of this calculation.

Speaking on the UCCC Business Resource Center Incubator, President Brown said UCCC was requested by Herb Heckler to submit a proposal for the incubator project. It is not going to cost the college or the County any money. It is broken into two separate components - the Incubator portion and the Extension Center. Plans are to move the Miller School programs to Building 941 and teach classes fourteen hours a day, just as we do on campus, and pay rent. The state will come up with one-half of the rental. About 8,000 square feet would be used for classes. Mr. Sfregola asked how many enrollees there would be and the level of participation. John Dunn said there are currently about 200-300 at Miller, which would be carried over and hopefully expanded, and that there is a real potential for growth. It would be very convenient for the people from Saugerties and Woodstock and affords easier access.

President Brown said the Incubator would be 16,000 square feet: 8,000 core services and 8,000 to be rented out. He has approached IBM and Edgewater that we can't afford any rent. Any money obtained from renting would have to go into operations. We will put in for State and Federal funds, and are asking for corporate donations on a very reduced rent for the two years IBM still has and for the three years after that.

By year three, continued President Brown, we think it will be up to 50,000 square feet total, including classes, Incubator and core. Currently, only the first floor is being looked at and there has been a lot of interest. A mailing produced twenty-four replies solidly interested in starting a business. He said he is learning a lot about Incubators very quickly. It makes sense to have an Extension Center which would be an anchor to attract jobs.

Mr. Sfregola asked how the rental factor would work and President Brown said he had met twice with IBM and once with Edgewater. The firm of Coopers & Lybrand is being engaged to help in the start-up process. Other sites are also being looked at. He said we are not tied to these buildings, but are hoping to get some jobs going in there. John Dunn said it would include the Extension Center, Small Business Development Center, SCORE and will also offer graduate courses. It would be a rear resource center and would make

the Incubator program more successful. President Brown said that Coopers & Lybrand agree that ties to the college will give it the right attraction to bring in SUNY New Paltz, RPI, BOCES, etc. It is an on-going daily activity. In reply to Mr. Sfregola's question, the President said that the proposed starting date is October 1st. John Dunn said Edgewater's funding company has to be involved in any decision because of the size of the building, all of which is leased to IBM until October 1995. They are willing to co-habitate the building until their lease is up. They are still in the buildings and if there was a real lease charge we could not afford it.

Mr. Contini asked if IBM was taking the cafeteria out, and President Brown said no, they are leaving it there. Eventually it may be a very important site. Statistically, according to President Brown, Incubators reverse the percent of success and failure: 20% succeed and 80% fail vs. 80% succeed and 20% fail. There are not a lot of Incubators around the County. There followed a general discussion of Incubators.

There being no further questions, President Brown concluded his report and Acting Chairman Sfregola recognized Joseph Munster, Ulster County Public Information Officer.

Mr. Munster reported that the contract for the groundbreaking of the Catskill Interpretive Center had been awarded. Site preparation would be about \$700,000 and he is hoping to have Governor Cuomo at the groundbreaking which is tentatively scheduled for September 17th and would like this Committee to meet on the site for its regular meeting. Legislator Contini asked if the UCCC dedication at 4:00pm was scheduled for prior to the Committee meeting and President Brown said no. Dominick Sfregola that the regular meeting would be the week before. He said that he would have to get the calendar and get a firm date and questioned whether the College would have to participate. President Brown said the college will have to participate due to the roofing resolution and other matters. Acting Chairman Sfregola said the Committee may be able to convene a special meeting for September 23rd if necessary.

Mr. Munster said that DEC is putting in for money to build a bridge across the creek to connect the Interpretive Center with the Catskill Mountain Railroad. It will cost \$125,000 but he did not know what money is due the County. He said the State has additional funding they can use, so there has been progress.

He then gave a report of his trip to the Adirondack Interpretive Center and noted the similarities to Catskill. It was operated by the Adirondack Park Agency. It did not have any effect on the local economy at all. Last year only 15,000 people went there. The site is not well published. It is staffed by RSVP.

Speaking on the proposed Jazz Festival, Mr. Munster advised the Committee that he will ask for a budget increase of \$45,000; about \$15,000 for each of the several festivals. He would increase postage by \$2,000, matching funds postage by \$3,000, non-matching

advertising by \$39,000, travel and mileage by \$1,000 each. He would decrease his matching funds generic U.C. funds by about \$7,000. He needs approximately \$15,000 to promote each of the three festivals, including postage and travel time.

He gave an overview of the festivals, i.e., Bethel, Saugerties, Jazz Festival and Film Festival, and the advantages for the Hudson Valley. Total attendance is expected to be about two million. He did not think that will hall happen, but if one-quarter of those people do come, it will be great for the County. Mr. Sfregola feels Mr. Munster should put his requests in so that they can be worked with and also to bring in the local forces, such as the Sheriff, to work with them.

Mr. O'Reilly said he didn't think there would be that many people involved and Mr. Munster said that they were early figures. Mr. O'Reilly said that he thinks the festivals may be overly ambitious, but that they are thinking big and that is good.

Mr. Sfregola said that if any of those things happen, it would make sense to push the area and its attractions, both before and after the event.

Mr. Munster told the Committee that Ulster and three other counties have been designated as the official "I Love New York" area.

He also discussed the letter from the County Attorney regarding Boice Brothers Dairy's wish to purchase a piece of the Catskill Valley Railroad in Kingston, and that will not happen.

Mr. Contini wanted to know if the fact that various films are made in the Hudson Valley is publicized and Mr. Munster said it was. The County mentions it and the State does it also and at greater length.

The report of the Ulster County Public Information Office being concluded, Acting Chairman Sfregola recognized Lee Reidy of Cornell Cooperative Extension who brought the Committee up to date on several matters.

She reported that in the first week of August, during the County Fair, Cornell Cooperative, jointly with Orange and Sullivan, sponsored a tour of the area which began at the U.C. Fairgrounds in New Paltz, traveled to Dressel's Farm, Blue Chip Farm, Watchtower, an onion farm, the Trotter's Hall of Fame in Goshen, and the Duck Farm in Sullivan County, which is the pilot farm for the New York State Watershed. The DePuy Canal House in High Falls concluded the tour. She also had handouts showing current agricultural markets and the standing of Ulster County within the State. She also had information on New York City Water Supply and Catskill Delaware Watershed. At issue are farmers' problems, such as Workmens' Compensation Insurance rates, state forms and laws, and nuisance lawsuits. There are different types of farms, but the same issues

are important to all of them.

Frank Felicello questioned Governor Cuomo's signing of the Emergency Relief Bill without including Ulster County and Ms. Reidy said it was an oversight and that steps have been taken to correct it. Ulster will be added to the list. It will be funded by Federal loans, but she is not exactly sure of the funding process at this time. Papers have been filed but not on time, therefore the oversight.

Mr. Felicello wanted to know how long it would take and she said she, or Dave Squires, would try and get that information to him. She knows it is a low-cost loan, somewhere in the vicinity of 3%, but she is not positive.

Ms. Reedy said she is trying to set up a tour for Congressman Hinchey for Integrated Pest Management and the New York City Watershed and also that plans have been completed for the initial phase of the test farm, which should be completed in October.

Ms. Reedy explained the amount of Cornell Cooperative resources which come through the Ulster County office. They are currently housing Water Resources Specialists who will work with Cooperative Extension to develop water quality strategy. She is also using a "C" grant which is federally sponsored. Her staff has increased from sixteen to twenty-one. She said it is definitely beneficial to Ulster County because programs have been increased without doing in with County dollars.

She reported that nothing further had been done on the community tour because there is no time now. Her budget is being worked on and needs to be in by September 1 to the County Administrator. A copy will be sent to every Committee member. She noted that she will be looking for about a 5% increase. Ms. Reedy also said that the satellite dish is still at the Highway garage. She wants to get permission to put in by the Family Court building.

Mr. Sfregola questioned the assignment of additional staff, and wanted to know if any of the grant had been part of a state allocation. He advised her to be careful how it is done, because Cornell Cooperative is located in a County facility.

Ms. Reedy also reported that \$20,000 was realized from the sale of the cars and they cannot replace the vehicles. They are currently operating on mileage. This concluded her report.

Acting Chairman Sfregola then recognized Bruce Whyte and Peter Schlime, who are setting up a private Incubator program which will cater primarily to former IBM people for starting and developing businesses, as well as providing initial funding. They would like to work with the County to get economic development into the County.

Mr. Sfregola asked how their company will take care of these people; what happens if there is not production. Mr. Schlime said it is primarily an entrepreneurial plan to generate ideas and to

determine what is a marketable idea. This is not as broadbased as a government program would be, it is more a process which would come before the larger Incubator plan currently proposed. Their group is a venture capitalist business for profit.

There followed a general discussion of IBM lay-offs and some of the things being done to help and to hurt them. Mr. Whyte and Mr. Schlime will send out some literature to the Committee. Mrs. Cocalas commented that there are groups of former IBM workers who might be looking for just that sort of thing. Mr. Sfregola suggested they might do well to discuss it with President Brown. Mrs. Cocalas also noted that there will also be an Electronic Incubator at SUNY New Paltz.

This discussion being concluded, Acting Chairman Sfregola recognized Alice Cocalas of the Ulster County Development Corporation who stated that the current focus in her office and with the Board of Directors, is to meet as often as possible. They have been very active and she would like to emphasize how important it is to try and raise money at this time.

The UCDC workshop held on August 12 attracted fifty business leaders. They separated into groups for interaction and brainstorming and follow-up meetings have been scheduled. These are the people in the front line who are facing the problems every day. She is putting together a post-conference report.

TEAM Hudson Valley has applied for a grant to begin a regional revolving loan fund, and has applied for 501C3 Not For Profit Corporation status. An executive committee has already been formed.

Mr. Sfregola asked if the conference was well attended and said he thought they made the right judgment not to establish industrial parks, but rather to take care of vacant space first. He remarked that communities are going through revaluation on property taxes, and industrial and commercial make up a higher share of the tax burden. Mr. Sfregola further said that we have to sell the beauty of the area and describe who and what we are and what we have to offer, including the quality of life. People who live here have to know what is needed, and why they are asked for money.

Ron Irwin asked if TEAM Hudson Valley does the same thing as the Regional Meetings and Mrs. Cocalas said yes, but now that the Counties are competing with each other, this type of talking is very beneficial. Peter Whyte wanted to know in what ways do the Counties compete and Mrs. Cocalas said they are all looking to fill their empty space as soon as possible.

A general discussion was held regarding Chelsea Homes in the Town of Marlboro which is thinking of leaving the area, and the reasons why companies are leaving the area. There was also a discussion of the type of workforce in the County, and the particular need for unskilled workers.

Mrs. Cocalas reported that Schrade Cutlery is expanding. They currently employ 450 people and hope to add 40 new jobs.

She also advised the Committee that there are times her agency sends out twenty to thirty informational packages per week. There are a lot of people looking for help but just don't qualify.. They want to know if there is a specific marketing program to get buildings rented and if so, who is doing it. Mrs. Cocalas said they are still looking for a Marketing Consultant and have several viable candidates.

The report of the UCDC being concluded, a motion to adjourn was made by Ron Irwin and seconded by Attilio Contini and Acting Chairman Sfregola adjourned the meeting at 7:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Dominick Sfregola, Acting Chairman
Education, Culture and Economic Affairs Committee