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ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Education, Culture and Economic Development Committee

DATE: February 20, 1992

TIME: 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: Ulster County Community College

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Dunn and Legislators Felicello, Sfregola, Every, Irwin, Schneller and O'Reilly

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: None

OTHERS ATTENDING: Alice Cocalas, Director, Ulster Co. Development Corporation; Lee Reidy, Director, Cornell Cooperative Ext.; Kathryn Puglisi, Director, RSVP; John Dunn, Dean of Administration, UCCC; David Rylance, Vice-Chairman, Board of Trustees, UCCC; Charles Schenck, Dean of Institutional Planning & Information Services, UCCC

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dunn at 5:15pm.

The report of Ulster County Community College was given first. John Dunn reviewed the information material sent to members, i.e., catalog, history of construction project, analysis of budget, etc. and asked if the committee had any questions. There being no questions he proceeded to the 91-92 budget.

Enrollment was below budget for Fall but is starting to come down slightly for Spring. Revenues were up on credit free and contract courses, but there is a \$56,000 shortfall from Fall tuition. There were savings in salaries and overexpenditures in health insurance. Contractual expenses show savings on insurance. Mr. Dunn gave statistics on accounts receivable, electric and water consumption, etc. Main item was the letter from Bill Darwak received yesterday. He then turned the meeting over to David Rylance.

Mr. Rylance informed the Committee that there was an emergency meeting of the Board of Trustees scheduled for Tuesday, February 25th to discuss the matter. He stated that this was the third year in a row that the college has not asked for an increase in the County share of its funding. The college has cut programs and reduced faculty to the core. With reference to para.4 (Darwak letter)

he informed the Committee that the reduction of 11% by the County becomes \$483,000 from County, plus \$156,000 cut from state aid or a total of \$639,000 mid-year. The college could try to effect cuts but it is extremely difficult. In addition, he stated that he was not sure how much thought was given to this cut at the County level, especially in the percentage. The Board of Trustees must work with Pres. Brown and college officials and needs time; however, hopes to be able to respond by February 27th.

Mr. Rylance stressed that the Board of Trustees did not want the college put into the political arena. The ability to make cuts at this time will be extremely difficult. It is mid-term. The Board of Trustees prefers to negotiate rather than politicize.

Chairman Dunn replied that he did not know of this until mid-day (20th) and was alarmed. He would like the County Administrator to try and work as close as possible with the Committee and Ways and Means. All may not realize they are not talking same calendar year.

John Dunn stated that the County Administrator did not take into consideration that the college was on a different fiscal year when he drafted the letter. We have not been given payments regularly and have been trying to help the county in cash flow.

Rick Schneller asked how much tuition would increase and John Dunn responded \$100 per year. Dave Rylance said we are at \$1650 and there is a \$1750 cap. John Dunn said that we can not raise it now and will have to go to September. A general discussion was held concerning comparative county tuition costs. Charles Schenck said that charge-backs to the county are higher this year than 2-3 prior years due to change in tuition schedule. Dominick Sfregola requested information on Dutchess tuition and wanted to know why Ulster County residents go to out-of-County community colleges. Mr. Schenck responded that it was usually geographical.

Chairman Dunn wanted to know if the college sees an increase in the number of out-of-county enrollees. Mr. Schenck stated about 300 out of 1800. John Dunn stated that Dutchess Co. had a record year for enrollment. The college is looking at that more carefully and whether it should have a Southern Extension Center. Mr. Schenck also said that UCCC has under 5% out-of-county enrollees (mostly inmates) and we are almost exclusively a local college.

Replying to the question of Frank Felicello as to the law on not paying other counties for Ulster County students, John Dunn said that the law says a student can go to any community college in the state and the sending county must pay the charge-back, and the student pays the same tuition as the in-county student. Mr. Schenck said that UCCC finds it difficult to go out of county for students, mainly due to the housing problem. Ron Irwin discussed Sullivan County's recruitment of Ellenville High School students and questioned this practice. There followed a discussion of the

different tuitions charged by different schools and chargebacks. Chargebacks for inmates are also received, but we collect \$2,450 from every inmates home county. This amounts to \$600,000-\$800,000 per year.

Chairman Dunn then said that with reference to the budget letter, that the Board of Trustees after review, can make their presentation to the Ways & Means Committee and asked if UCCC had any requests from the Committee.

Frank Felicello said that he felt it was detrimental and the Committee should make a strong stand tonight. He said it would be a big mistake to cut the educational benefits of UCCC.

Dominick Sfregola stated that every department in the County has the same problem. Resolution 52 is bringing to the forefront the type of problems the County is faced with. There are \$4.2 million in cuts. He agrees that UCCC is in a unique position because it is in its second semester and has a different fiscal year.

Dave Rylance reiterated that the college is willing to work with the County. He understands the problem. The college is asking for time to negotiate with the County and will try to work something out when the Board of Trustees meets. John Dunn added that a freeze is in effect on hiring and spending and that the college wants to be part of the solution.

Rick Schneller was concerned with the "spiraling down" effect and knows that students are looking around more. It is important the college maintain its curriculum and should be looking to improve to attract more students. John Dunn said the college is looking to improve its summer session and trying to put together courses, and it is the wrong time to cut summer budget. Mr. Schenck added that the college and the County need to be talking about this year and next year and not in a political arena; however, Dominick Sfregola said that he did not see this issue becoming a political animal.

Chairman Dunn asked the Committee if they would be willing to send a memo to Ways & Means supporting strong reconsideration and re-evaluation of the college cuts, citing what could happen. Ron Irwin said the Committee should take care in drafting any letter stating that the Committee does not support cuts. Should be talked about a little more. Chairman Dunn suggested that each member of the Committee submit individual letters to the County in support of the college.

Joan Every asked if matters would be improved if more students were recruited and John Dunn answered that the college would benefit in three ways: first, in chargebacks if they were out-of-County or in lieu of attending another community college; second in tuition; and third, in state aid. Also, the state law would have to be changed in order to limit students to their own county, rather than going out-of-County.

Jim O'Reilly said that the percentage of cuts does not represent the view of the Legislature, and believes the percentage is complete arbitrary. He was also told by Dave Rylance, in response to his question on football funding, that the football funding did not come out of the college itself but rather than out of the College Association funds.

A general discussion was had regarding the possibility and feasibility of a southern campus. John Dunn replied that the college was not looking at that possibility. Charlie Schenck said that statistics show that 44% of first time students from Ulster County chose UCCC as their college. That figure does not consider part time or returning students. This is a constant figure over time.

John Dunn said the college would get back to the Committee after the Board meets; however, the college cannot get \$639,000 by August. Mr. Felicello said perhaps the County did not realize the time constraints at the time the letter was sent out. John Dunn said we only have five months left in the college's fiscal year. Mr. O'Reilly wanted to know how much the college could cut. Mr. Rylance said there was no way to tell until the Board meets. The Board will go to this Committee and to Ways & Means at the same time. At this time Rick Schneller said that he believes the Committee should wait before doing anything on the budget cut matter.

Chairman Dunn rescinded his suggestion that the Committee send a letter to Ways & Means and would wait until further information is available.

In other matter, John Dunn reported on the construction and stated that union manpower and vendors are being used. Not all vendors are in yet. Will keep Committee updated on vendors.

Regarding PCBs, John Dunn stated that the transformers were tested and a letter from Central Hudson received stating that all transformers were "non-PCB classified by EPA". The college has contracted with the electrical engineers to do a study of rooms, safety equipment, etc. The college is looking for information to require replacement, since all transformers are owned by CHG&E. Mr. Sfregola questioned the cleaning process. John Dunn said cleaning would lower concentration and the transformers would have to be tested again. They were added to oil to control temperatures and are also in switches. Central Hudson said they meet EPA standards.

John Dunn further advised the Committee that a rabid raccoon had bitten one of the college employees and the employee had to have the shots. A warning letter was issued to faculty, students, etc.

Also, Mr. Dunn said that several water fountains on campus were found to have concentrations of lead in excess of guidelines. All Halsey-Taylor fountains were being replaced. We will get credit from manufacturer. The lead was in the internal piping.

Regarding the gym air quality, a report was received from Clayton Environmental. The college had the air handlers vacuumed and balanced. Fresh air is being brought into several rooms and that job is half complete. The college hopefully has the problem under control. There have been no complaints as yet.

The college report being completed John Dunn turned the floor over to Kathryn Puglise of R.S.V.P., who reported on the success of locating volunteers to man the cabooses. The volunteers will be trained in May and the cabooses will be manned from May 15 to Columbus Day. Chairman Dunn asked if the volunteers would be paid for transportation, and Mrs. Puglisi said they would be reimbursed. Chairman Dunn suggested that Mrs. Puglisi contact Joe Munster, Public Information officer who would bring her up to date on county events. Dominick Sfregola asked if there was any new information on putting a caboose in Saugerties and Chairman Dunn said that Joe Munster was looking into the availability of another caboose. Mrs. Puglisi informed the Committee that RSVP workers volunteered 86,000 hours of service in 1990/91, and that RSVP was currently working with a new group of volunteer seniors who were developmentally disabled.

Chairman Dunn then recognized Alice Cocalas, Director of the Ulster County Development Corporation, who requested a resolution from the Committee which is the standard procedure to get funds from the County. She pointed out the new payment schedule. Dominick Sfregola moved to make payment on March 1st. The motion was seconded by Ron Irwin. A discussion was had among the Committee about the possible questions arising on the motion due to the budget cut-backs. Joan Every felt that since UCDC was on a schedule, there should be no problem approving the first payment in the event of a cut. Mr. O'Reilly did not want to endorse an approximate amount. Dominick Sfregola informed the Committee that any changes in this department's budget would have to be by Legislative resolution. Following the discussion, a vote was taken. Six in favor, one (Mr. O'Reilly) opposed. The resolution was approved by Committee.

Mrs. Cocalas presented her monthly report to the Committee. NYS Dept. of Economic Development has requested names and number of all county projects throughout the state. There are now 7-8 projects being considered throughout the county totalling \$30 million. Most of them are infrastructure. All counties in the state are being contacted in connection with the State's proposed \$800,000 million bond issue. A discussion of the various projects proposed throughout the County was had including the New Paltz water storage facility, and the Wawarsing/Ellenville canal. List is being continued.

Mr. O'Reilly questioned the legality of applicants for UCDC funds. Mrs. Cocalas replied that all permits must be in place and applicants are investigated. Mrs. Cocalas also reported that plans for Ulster County Day were continuing.

Frank Felicello wanted to know if there are any county banks

currently offering reverse mortgages. A discussion of reverse mortgages was had and it appears there are no county banks presently offering this service.

Mrs. Cocalas reported that the Russian contingent was a success and also that UCDC currently had a student intern from UCCC which was proving a great success.

Regarding the Industrial Development Agency Mrs. Cocalas explained the procedures involved in issuing bonds. She briefly described current applications as set forth in the report. In addition, she stated she had a call from a manufacturer who wanted to build a \$15 million plant which would supply more than 200 jobs.

In discussing Tire Recycling, Mrs. Cocalas said they had a valid DEC operating permit until March 1st. She does not know what they will do after that. Mr. O'Reilly said that Saugerties had numerous problems regarding Tire Recycling and wanted to make sure they complied with all regulations. He suggested that UCDC look into that business more closely. Dominick Sfregola said the Committee had gone to Saugerties last fall and looked at the site, which was operational. The members of the Committee were fully apprised of the situation. Mrs. Cocalas continued her report and explained the other financing situations set forth therein.

Rick Schneller said that Dutchess and Orange Counties are both actively seeking new business. How much time does our agency devote to recruiting. Mrs. Cocalas said that we do not have the budget of other counties. Chairman Dunn said that UCDC was not topheavy as some other counties are; however, we do just as well as other counties with higher budgets. He also stated that the County depends a great deal on this agency and commended Mrs. Cocalas for the positive results for minimal amount of money. Further, the new Committee members should acquaint themselves on the rules and procedures involved in the revolving loan fund.

Mr. O'Reilly said he did not understand why certain types of businesses were funded and Mrs. Cocalas said it is not the job of her agency to discriminate but to see that all applications are treated equally. Her first priority was job creation and retention.

Mr. Felicello said that he thought the agency was understaffed and that the County should take a long hard look at it in order to bring more business into the County.

At this time Chairman Dunn recognized Lee Reidy of Cornell Cooperative Extension who gave her monthly report to the Committee starting with the Spring programs planned, including the annual Fruit Growers School at Holiday Inn at which approximately 200 people attend.

Ms. Reidy is also concerned over funding cuts although she had received no information. She asked that the agency be taken out of

contract agency status because they are linked to government financing. Rick Schneller said he would have to read the contract with the County. Ms. Reidy outlined funding by the state and the cuts made. Mr. Schneller said the contract reads that the agency can combine services with other counties. Ms. Reidy said this was already being done; it is an on-going thing.

In other matters, the up-coming workshop at Cornell University was discussed. It will be held the third week of March and members were urged to attend. The April 14th population workshop would be looking at growth and decline of population of the Mid-Hudson Valley. Ms. Reidy is still looking for grant money from NYS Energy & Research and Waste Management. Still being worked on was the grant from Resource Recovery Agency involving Wakefern Foods and Shop Rite's Price Plus program.

Ms. Reidy also advised the Committee that two years ago the agency took a \$100,000 cut, and they have retrenched as much as possible. She also invited the committee to hold a meeting at her office. Chairman Dunn suggested that a special meeting be held at Cornell Cooperative Extension specifically to study that agency.

At this time Chairman Dunn, on behalf of Joe Munster, Public Information Officer stated that the Catskill Interpretive Center was being included in the campground directory; a proposal would be made for an advertising agency, as the present agency's term expires on April 1, 1992; and he had 10 tickets to Rockland Community College Field House to be held 2/26 through 3/1.

At this time Rick Schneller discussed the fact that Ulster County materials and labor cannot be stipulated unless the material is unique to Ulster County. He would like to see a directory of local artisans and local materialmen, that would be available to encourage out-of-area contractors, to utilize local talents. Mrs. Cocalas said the South East Council of Industry is trying to put something like that together. Chairman Dunn said Herb Heckler had some of that information in his computers. Mrs. Cocalas informed the Committee that Marist College, through a grant, is working on a master business list. Perhaps UCCC could do the same and should look into grants for that purpose.

Rick Schneller made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Dominick Sfregola. There being no objections, the motion was passed and the meeting was adjourned at 7:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Vincent Dunn, Chairman
Education, Culture and Economic Development Committee