

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Education, Culture & Economic
Development Committee

DATE: January 16, 1992

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: Ulster County Community College

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

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: None

OTHERS ATTENDING: Joseph Munster, Director, U.C. Public
Information Office; Alice H. Cocalas,
Director, U.C. Development Corp.; Ann
Machung, R.S.V.P.; Lee Reedy, Director,
Cornell Cooperative Extension; Gloria
Bonalli; Ulster Arts Alliance; Robert T
Brown, President, UCCC: John Dunn, Dean
of Administration, UCCC

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dunn at 7:30 p.m.

A report was given by Robert Brown and John Dunn. Pres. Brown stated that the college is bringing the committee up to date monthly on the current year budget and the projected budget. With regards to the on-going construction project, the college will answer any questions and consider any suggestions made by the committee members, and welcomes the opportunity to work with this Committee. Pres. Brown and his staff will respond to any questions or suggestions and provide any available answers. Reference was made to the monthly report of the Board of Trustees.

John Dunn discussed expenditures through the end of November. The college is currently firming up December. Enrollment 29.8 below budget; expect it to be above 30 (32-35). The shortfall is in full time enrollees. It is still early for the Spring semester. A shortfall in tuition of \$42,976 for Fall. Revenues in credit fee and contract courses will be over budget.

Pres. Brown stated that the state formerly provided funding for non-credit and credit courses. State cut non-credit funding and the college is now charging more for some courses. The numbers are just not there.

John Dunn said there were projected savings in temporary services line, offset by benefits, i.e., health insurance. \$100,000 more than budget. General insurance came in below budget. Total savings of \$22,448. Unappropriated fund balance of \$86,271 pending review of figures.

Pres. Brown reminded the committee that the college had made a commitment never to accumulate large fund balances; They are being applied to next year's budget for reduction to County; however, the college needs to have a fund balance because of cash flow problems. Cash flow is a very urgent matter today. The college is going to reduction of purchases and being careful of spending. Utilities have to be paid. Pres. Brown also stated he did not know when state aid will come in. The college made it through last payroll before beginning of fiscal year. UCCC has a different fiscal year than the County (Sept.-Dec. before County budget comes it). During that time, the college lives on tuition. Fortunately, after audit, NYS Audit & Control is going to only take back \$46,000. Also, there will be no more Community College audits. Audits will be done locally and by SUNY.

Dominick Sfregola stated that the difficulty with auditors is that they need to justify their presence. Pres. Brown said that once Audit & Control specified their demands, Community Colleges are complying with their regulations.

Dominick Sfregola asked if the decline in full time enrollment is significant. Pres. Brown said that in the future it will be, mainly in the Prison Education Program. However, the College made a decision to reduce the size of that program. The transfer program is very strong, especially with the problems the SUNY system is having. The college may lose more state aid next year, and has to prepare for it now; both in planning and in budgeting.

Community Colleges generally grow during bad times, but are pressured to increase tuition, which creates problems for many students. UCCC expects to increase tuition again next year if the County can't come up with more money, and if there are further state cutbacks. There are no new sources of revenue. Tuition increases should be in the area of 16-17%. The limit a Community College can charge is \$1750 annually. UCCC is currently at \$1620 and will increase to \$1720.

Dominick Sfregola asked if that would be an additional \$100 per year or \$50.00 per semester. Pres. Brown replied affirmatively; however, he stated that part-time tuition would not be as high.

He also stated that the college would continue to cut where possible and reminded the committee that UCCC has eliminated many programs and staff, and has not asked for an increase for four years and will also be making more changes in academic programs. In 1985 there were 105 full-time faculty; in 1992 there are 72. We are using more adjunct instructors. The college budget will be submitted to the Legislature in June. If approved over the summer, UCCC will get its first state aid check in October.

A discussion was had regarding PCBs. UCCC distributed a map of all transformers on campus. All transformers are owned by Central Hudson and the college has no access to transformer rooms. John Dunn stated that all transformers were tested in the early 1980s and the college assured that they did not have PCBs. They were not tagged at that time, and Central Hudson cannot find the results of their tests. Transformers are being retested by Central Hudson on Saturday and/or Monday. All transformers are enclosed in rooms and are curbed.

Chairman Dunn asked if all transformers were in vaults. John Dunn answered yes, but they were installed in the early 1970s. Rick Schneller said they may have PCBs and should have been flushed and changed. John Dunn stated that if tests show PCBs the college will take proper precautions. Rick Schneller said that SUNY New Paltz was also in the process of flushing transformers. John Dunn said that the new project calls for replacing and upgrading. Pres. Brown said that because of the construction, the college has an electrical engineer to advise us. The transformers do not belong to UCCC and UCCC does not want to buy them. The new additions will utilize fossil fuel.

Pres. Brown and Dean Dunn highlighted the current construction. Footings for the addition on the science building and Vanderlyn and retaining walls have been poured; they are pulling cable for electric and plumbing. Steel should be delivered about January 27th.

Frank Felicello requested more details on the proposed construction.

Pres. Brown advised that we were adding student life wing on this building, a cafeteria, kitchen, classrooms, bookstore, student lounges. Also, we will be able to move delivery vehicles away from student traffic.

Chairman Dunn referred the Committee to the model of the construction in the President's Conference Room.

The library will be connected to the science building as a learning resource center, and will bring all educational support services together. The Burroughs Building chemistry labs will be added. Renovation of the existing labs would be too costly, so they will also be in the new addition. Burroughs and Hardenburgh will be connected by a science wing, including nursing, environmental control, two chem labs and a lounge. There will also be an elevator which will make Hardenburgh handicapped accessible, which it presently is not.

Frank Felicello questioned the cost of the project, and Pres. Brown stated \$9.8 million, together with paying builder's risk and site supervisor out of our budget. Dean Dunn advised that the present cafeteria would become 4-5 classrooms and a student counselling center. The Algonquin Building, built in 1967 will no longer be used for classes, but will be used for maintenance, central services and warehousing. The contractors are hiring local workers and appear to be buying locally.

Pres. Brown discussed the summer 1991 problems with the Operating Engineers Union wherein the non-union sitework contractor was picketed, and that the contractor was paying union scale. There have been no problems since. Other unions will be involved as construction progresses.

When questioned by Rick Schneller as to whether there were any records of the number of local people hired, Dean Dunn replied that he could get that information from the owner's rep., John Hill. Current contractors are hiring out of the union hall.

Chairman Dunn thanked Pres. Brown and Dean Dunn for a very comprehensive report and requested his committee members to contact the college for any further information. With regard to this, Pres. Brown stated that he is having an information packet prepared for each member of the committee.

Frank Fellicello questioned why the college was all electric and Dominick Sfregola said that at the time the college was originally built electric heat was the way to go. Mr. Fellicello asked about conversion and Pres. Brown informed him that conversion is not feasible except now that the new project is in the works which will allow for conversion.

Ron Irwin asked if the wall is still moving and John Dunn said the blasting has appeared to move the wall back a little.

Frank Fellicello wanted to know the acreage and Dean Dunn replied 165 acres, including property on Cottekill Road which is not contiguous.

After thanking Pres. Brown and Dean Dunn, Chairman Dunn moved to the next order of business, which was a discussion of the dates and places of regularly scheduled meetings of this committee. After discussion it was decided by the members that the Committee would meet on the third Thursday of each month at 5:00pm in the President's Conference Room at Ulster County Community College. Use of the premises was approved by President Brown. A memo will be sent to members.

The Chairman recognized Alice Cocalas, Executive Director of Ulster County Development Corporation, who presented her monthly report and newsletter. She reviewed her funding from the county, which has been cut back for the last two years, and is currently using reserves to complete this year. There is currently a wage and hiring freeze in effect and the agency has changed benefit plans and carriers. UCDC is currently selling advertising in its newsletter which may or may not continue. There has been a good response from attorneys, realtors, banks and accountants. They are also looking for contributions as a source of funds. She reported that the agency is currently working on: (1) Visiting each town supervisor or mayor for ways to cooperate to reach common goals; (2) Ulster County Day which will be sponsored by Norstar Bank geared towards the county and business and for which no date has yet been set; (3) Meeting of area business and development personnel sponsored by Middletown Times Herald Record which was very helpful. Mid-Hudson Patterns for Progress has also hosted a seminar on economic development. If there are any questions on industrial development the committee was urged to contact her.

Ms. Cocalas also stated that she has attended public hearings in Albany on what Industrial Development agencies are doing. Illegal activities have caused the State Legislature to look into Industrial Development agencies to eliminate graft, impose stricter controls and require more documentation.

In response to Mr. O'Reilly's question as to whose money is at risk, Ms. Cocalas replied "the lender". UCDC can issue explanations of how bonding works; tax benefits; sales tax exemption; mortgage recording tax exemption and tax assessment abatement. There is a pilot plan in lieu of tax abatement but borrowers still have to pay some taxes.

Dominick Sfregola asked about the abatement schedule. Ms. Cocalas stated that it is pursuant to General Municipal Law Schedule (485(b)) and described the schedule briefly. Mr. O'Reilly requested a description of the tax abatement program, particularly regarding Adams Fairacre Farms which Ms. Cocalas will furnish.

Rick Schneller wanted to know the limits. Ms. Cocalas informed him that they run from \$500,000 to \$10 million on both tax exempt and taxable bonds. Dominick Sfregola wanted to know to whom a taxable bond was granted. The answer was Augustines and IBM Credit Union.

The report also included the current status of prospects who may or may not qualify for a bond issue. Specifically cited was a prospective purchaser of Hudson Valley Apple Products. She also discussed the revolving loan fund and will provide further information and listings, as well as information on community block grants. The revolving loan fund was set aside by the County Legislature and the UCDC for people not covered by other programs, and are made in conjunction with bank financing.

A general discussion was had regarding various projects, rate of payment schedules and whether new businesses are using full time or part time area workers. (Full time workers being hired). Rick Schneller asked if there was any liason between UCCC and UCDC. Ms. Cocalas said that proposed business owners were counselled by the Development Center for Business and those services were also available through the Small Business Development Center. This concluded her report.

Chairman Dunn recognized Lee Reedy of Cornell Cooperative Extension who gave a brief presentation, and said she would furnish members of the committee with copies of her annual report, newsletters, etc. Ms. Reedy invited the committee to tour CCE's facility. CCE is seeking grants and contracts from other organizations for more funding. They are level funded this year but have been cut 10% by the state. CCE is the largest funded contract agency. Chairman Dunn remarked that CCE worked closely with the UC Fair.

Chairman Dunn then recognized Joe Munster, U.C. Public Information Officer. Mr. Munster turned the floor over to Ann Machung of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program who gave a brief description of that organization. RSVP is in dire need of volunteers in the Ellenville/Highland area. RSVP volunteers are only paid mileage and \$3.50 lunch.

Dominick Sfregola stated that he had served on the committee for 8 years and said that RSVP was typical of UC volunteers and deserved the committee's support.

A motion to fund RSVP was made by Dominick Sfregola and seconded by Joan Every. The motion passed unanimously and the Chairman ordered that the minutes reflect that the motion to fund RSVP was unanimously approved by the Committee.

The floor was again turned over to Joe Munster, UC Public Information Office who reported on the following:

1) Catskill Interpretive Center Update - Drilling test wells, etc. on site; Joe Munster will continue in his position; plans have been drawn but not released.

2) Adirondack Center should bring in 250,000 new visitors to UC each year. There is a new bond act for infrastructure improvement of \$800 million. NYS requesting information updating. Catskill Mountain Railroad from Interpretive Center across bridge to railroad car to tour Catskills. There are three bridges, track bed and washouts to be fixed. Photos of track bed and washouts submitted to Committee. (A.Cocalas in-

terjected that the \$800 million bond act is to be voted upon in November and many agencies have been asked to fill out forms regarding infrastructure. The money is not definite and if passed, will be for the whole state.) Ron Irwin asked if the CM Railroad would tie into Arkville. J. Munster said that Arkville is out of business, funding has been cut off. They are tearing up track and selling it for scrap. Vincent Dunn wanted to know if the bond act tied in with Greenway and was told no.

3) RSVP was covered previously.

4) Regarding trolley proposal J. Munster presented his tentative "wish list". Each trolley costs \$94,000. We could try to obtain matching federal grants from various foundations. Trolley Museum has no money.

5) Travel Expo update - 1,200 people are coming to UC Armory. These are the people who plan bus trips, etc. Ulster County will pay one-half price for its booth. This group promotes tourism in the entire Hudson Valley. Funding is \$2,347.50 plus \$300 (½ cost of booth) for a total of \$2,647.50. Upon request of Rich Schneller, Joe Munster provided background information on the Travel Expo.

6) Travel Expo operators operate NYS Thruway Information Centers. Ulster County pays them to distribute our brochure and calendar of events. The cost is \$3,495.00 annually with a price increase of \$500.00. This includes the wall display and the price is non-negotiable. Rick Schneller questioned that the committee consider distribution of brochures with a view towards obtaining bargaining position. This will be looked into. Joe Munster advised the Committee that the Thruway display is changed seasonally.

The Chairman at this time recognized Gloria Bonalli of Catskill Ballet who stated she was there as an observer. On questioning by the Committee, however, she described her affiliation with the Arts Alliance and their current attempts to purchase Saxe Lodge for use as a music, dance and cultural center.

Returning to Joe Munster, Rich Schneller asked the cost of the promotional signs on the Thruway. The cost is \$750.00 each sign per year. Also, Thruway has offered a parcel of land in Saugerties for a caboose; however, access is difficult.

At this time Dominick Sfregola moved to adjourn, which motion was seconded by Ron Irwin and Chairman Dunn adjourned the meeting at 10:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Vincent Dunn, Chairman
Education, Culture & Economic
Development Committee