



Commentator

December 2016-January 2017

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not support or oppose candidates for public office but does encourage its members as individuals to participate actively in the political process. The League acts on those issues the membership chooses for study and action. The LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region covers the Ulster County area and the Dutchess County area. We belong to the LWV of New York State and the LWV of the US.

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WE WELCOME THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT ALL EVENTS!		
2016	Check our online calendar (http://lwvmidhudson.org/calendar.html) for updates.	
December		
2	12:00 PM	Naturalization Ceremony, Ulster County Court House, 285 Wall St., Kingston. Volunteers should arrive at 10:45.
6	5:30 PM	Materials Management (Solid Waste) Study Committee at the Main Course Restaurant (175 Main Street, New Paltz, NY 12561). For more information, contact Kathy OConnor at (845) 757-2247 or occonnor.kraye@gmail.com .
19	8:30-9:00 AM	Kingston Community Radio, WGHQ 920 AM LWV On Air. Go to http://www.mykcr.org to listen on your computer. Call 845-331-9255 to ask a question or make a comment.
January		
12	4:00-6:00 PM	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Rd, Hurley, NY 12443.
17	1:45-3:30 PM	Book Club Meeting Club at Enzo's Pizzeria, Boices Lane, Lake Katrine – <i>The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference</i> , by Malcom Gladwell For more information, contact Jacki Moriarty at 331-3418 or jackim@hvc.rr.com .



What May Come To Be

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Prez Says

For most of us the outcome of the November 8 election was a surprise. Like the pundits and the pollsters, we imagined electing the first woman President. A fitting accomplishment as we approach the 100th anniversary of Woman Suffrage in New York State one year from now.

At the Board meeting two days after the election we asked ourselves, "What do we as a local league want to do differently?" One of the things we agreed on was to read Ralph Nader's book "Breaking Through Power: It's Easier Than We Think." Many of us had heard Joe Donahue interview him that morning as we were driving around listening to WAMC. In his book Ralph Nader highlights the success stories of fellow Americans who organize change and work together to derail the many ways in which wealth manipulates politics, labor, media, the environment, and the quality of national life today. Nader makes an inspired case about how the nation can and must – be democratically managed by communities guided by the U.S. Constitution, not by the dictates of big businesses and the wealthy few."

Ten days later many of you joined us at Deising's as we ate together, thankful for the people with whom we have fought shoulder to shoulder for decades, registering voters every year, bringing young people to Albany to learn about the political process, seeing some of our members gain strength and run for political office, and lobbying for our agenda with local politicians, in Albany and in Washington D.C.

The next day a group of women, once active in the League in Dutchess County, met to recall the history of an earlier League, once separate, now part of the Mid-Hudson League that encompasses both Ulster and Dutchess Counties. They recalled how their members became the Dutchess County Executive, Town Supervisor, County Legislators, how they founded important organizations such as the "Child Development Council," and the "Task Force for Child Protection."

We will go on. We will have a woman President of the United States. We will gain equal pay for equal work. We will eliminate harassment based on gender. We will advance our positions on Voting, the Environment, Money in Politics, Governance, Health Care, Gun Safety, and Immigration until they become the law of the land

Jolanda

Monthly Board meeting minutes and more can be found at: <http://lwvmidhudson.org/Committees.html>

A Note from our State League President

With recounts going on and who knows what else coming next, this year's presidential election may never end, but there is a silver lining to the turmoil and the concerns: We all have the League of Women Voters as a calm and civilizing tool!

My local league had a Saturday morning meeting a week ago simply to talk about League issues and generate activities, and we were startled to have to turn people away! There were even some parents with young children in tow who were determined to be there even though it was in a cafe with no babysitting. I hear we're getting ten new or returning members from that event along - a big leap for us.

Your league may be experiencing the same thing. Now we really need to engage these new people (and ourselves) in ways that satisfy the yearning for positive and effective action.

/Let's try new things!/

Most leagues have stopped having babysitting at meetings. Do you know young families we could work with to establish a good time and place and re-institute the practice?

Might you help us establish meetings at a supportive local business that has a lunchroom we could use? Maybe a business you own or work for?

What about offering a gathering at a cafe or pizza place for a quick bite before a town or county board meeting to fill in one another about who the players are and what to listen for?

*Share with your fellow League members any ideas YOU have on how to capture this renewed interest in government. *The presidential election has us all talking, but a new state legislature will be going into session in January, and our local bodies are going all year round. We need different strategies for all three levels.

As for me, while I lobby at all levels, I especially love how quickly I can make a difference locally. I'm renewing my own commitment to get to local meetings more often - and to offer rides! Next year most local offices will be up for grabs. Think how much better we'd be as voters if we all actually knew what these offices are about and what we think of the people who currently hold them.

Dave

**Membership
News****Goodbye to a Faithful Member**

Farewell and best wishes to Anne Needham as she moves this month to Saratoga Springs to live nearer to her son. Anne has served as our current vice-president and has been a "mover and changer" in our league. She has been responsible for our Public Relations and scheduling our monthly appearance on Kingston Community Radio. Often she served as guest host when no other league members were available. Her greatest contribution has been her keen intelligence and steady hand as she has guided us and contributed to so many of our endeavors ranging from voter service, advocacy, league studies, and Book Club.

Well done, Anne. Thank you for your friendship and inspiration, No doubt our loss will be the League of Saratoga's gain.

Harvest Breakfast November 19, 2016

I guess there is a first time for everything. Twice as many members and interested individuals than expected came to Deisings's for good food and discussion. Whether it was the delicious breakfast buffet or the camaraderie felt by those in attendance, or just an opportunity to express emotions and concerns after a tumultuous campaign season, what ensued was a spirited and thoughtful conversation. Front and center were the Electoral College and the restrictive voting laws in New York State. Safeguarding the environment, immigration policy, affordable health care, and women's reproductive rights continue to be on the minds of many of those in attendance. In short, there was concern about carrying out the agenda the league has fought long and hard for, sometimes with success, sometimes coming up short.

Jacki Moriarty led the discussion reminding us that when women began to fight for the right to vote, it was considered the impossible dream. And so our lively discussion took off on a positive note with some members offering to lead particular focus areas. Dare Thompson, past president of the Mid- Hudson League and current president of the LWV New York State, told us the most powerful way to be heard is to organize meetings with elective officials to express our concerns and enlist them for their support. Dare would be willing to work with any advocacy group interested in a grassroots effort to get around or get rid of the Electoral College. In addition, Jean McGarry who heads up Voter Service spoke about the need to change our rigid voting laws in New York State that require citizens to "plan" ahead if they are going to be away or sick on Election Day or "plan" months ahead if an individual wants to make a change in his/her party affiliation.

Daisy Tyler, as a naturalized citizen, spoke about her concern for the treatment of immigrants while praising the league for all that she has learned about good government since joining the league three years ago. Kathy OConnor shared the success of Materials Management (formerly known as the Solid Waste Committee). Currently they are focusing on paint stewardship in New York State which will ensure the proper disposal of paint. Last but not least, Merrill Sunderland, an active member who is currently attending Marist College, spoke about the importance of making younger people aware of the work of the League of Women Voters and how its goals are important in their lives. To this end, she will head up a group to engage this population.

Many others offered their suggestions or shared their ideals for the betterment of all three levels of government. But back to Jacki, she offers HOPE and along with that, we offer an opportunity to join with like-minded individuals and work together to effect change. None of us can do it alone. Please consider getting involved with one of the groups above. Relax and enjoy the holidays and let's get to work in 2017. Check the future editions of the Commentator for follow-up information to get involved. There were over 45 of us at this meeting. Ten of you said you were interested in joining. Two of you said you wanted to rejoin. Let's keep the momentum going and work together to change the impossible.

Jean McGarry

Please note that at this general meeting, the amended by-laws were presented and passed with one dissenting vote. They take immediate effect.

Editor's note: For an extensive list of studies and research conducted by League members throughout the nation, take a look at the League of Women Voters Education Fund Clearinghouse, at

<https://sites.google.com/a/leagueofwomensvoters.org/clearinghouse/>

and give some thought to what issue(s) you would be interested in.

Dutchess-Ulster League of Women Voters Meeting on League History November 20, 2016 Ellie Charwat's home

Present: Ellie Charwat, Joan Eisenhut, Susan Fink, Jolanda Jansen, Regina Klein, Shirley Kobran, Marianna Martin, Barbara Mindel, Sally Taylor, Dare Thompson

Purpose of Meeting

To share personal stories of League membership as part of state League centennial celebration in 2017 (the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New York State) and 2019 (the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters of New York State)

Why People Joined the League

Most of those present joined the League as young mothers who wanted "grown-up activities" out of the house with like-minded women. Babysitting at daytime meetings was a big draw. Several had moved into the Hudson Valley during the IBM heydays of the 1960s and 1970s and didn't know anyone in the area, but had heard about the League in their prior homes. One member heard about the League from her maternity ward roommate! Shirley joined in 1959 the year before the Kingston League was officially formed! One member's daughter had a school assignment to complete the sentence "My mother always...." And wrote in "is always going to meetings". !!

What Members Got from the League

- Knowledge about issues on the national, state and local levels
- New skills in public speaking, how to run a meeting, how to moderate a candidates' forum, lobbying elected representatives, organizing the community
- Awareness of the political process from voter registration drives, candidates' forums, lobbying, testifying at public hearings, sparking citizen involvement in issues, creating and/or tracking legislation
- Pathways to jobs/ careers either in politics or fields the League opened to them
(League members in elective office: Lucille Pattison – Dutchess County Executive; Anna Buchholz – Town of Poughkeepsie Supervisor; Sandra Goldberg, Dutchess County Legislature; Eileen Hickey, NY State Assemblywoman; Sheila Newman, City of Poughkeepsie Mayor; Peggy Kelland, President of Wappingers School Board; Ellie Charwat, Town of Poughkeepsie Councilwoman)

Local Issues in which Members remember involvement

- The environment – recycling, wastewater treatment, water and air quality, resource recovery plants, environmental protection of wildlife. Shirley started a recycling drive in Ulster County in 1971 that began with collecting 7 tons of paper and grew to 100 tons of paper, 80 tons of glass and smashing thousands of cans. She was called "the garbage lady" or as she preferred, "Queen of Recycling." She became the first chair of the Ulster County Environmental Management Council, and served as the "token woman" on the resource recovery agency.
- Child welfare – League members were instrumental in creating the Dutchess County Child Development Council that is concerned with quality day care agencies and the Child Protective agency (now the Center against Child Abuse)
- The tax system – State League studies on the property tax system and the funding formulas for education
- Shared municipal services was studied in the 1970s and the 2010-15 periods
- Improving access to the public library in Poughkeepsie
- County charter creation and revisions
- Challenging the apportionment of the Dutchess County legislature

What the League means to members

"It is so rewarding that there is a thing like the League of Women Voters. We are important and we are there and I hope we will go on"

"The League has a ripple effect on so many issues and on members as change agents. There is no other organization like the League that studies and acts on a wide variety of issues on the national, state and local levels."

"Making life-long friendships with bright, thoughtful and involved women"

Collecting League History

Shirley shared one of her 12 scrapbooks of League history that members helped compile in Ulster County

Next Steps

Ellie will go through her League materials that consist of annual reports from the Dutchess League for 1976, 1978-84 and 1986 and Ballot Box newsletters from 1976-1985.

Someone needs to scan the Poughkeepsie Journal on-line archives for League-related articles, especially from the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s
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Someone needs to contact the State League for any boxes of materials the Dutchess League sent them

VOTER SERVICE

Moderating Guidelines

Guidelines for moderating and sponsorship of candidates' events by the League are on our website at <http://lwvmidhudson.org/Moderating.html> or from the [Home](#) page and the [Elections](#) page.

What Voter Service has done and What We're Doing

If you have ever read our league's mission statement, you know that education is the key to having individuals be informed and actively participate in government. When our league was asked to speak on November 7th to a group of Girl Scouts who were trying to earn a merit badge in voting, Nora Scherer and Jean McGarry looked forward to speaking with this youthful group who will be eligible to cast their vote in the not too distant future. As retired teachers, we enjoyed the intelligent and thoughtful questions along with the challenge of trying to engage a couple of "doodlers" who seemed to be saying, "this really has nothing to do with me." Sound familiar? Disaffection for voting and lack of interest in the political process are at all levels. Many people think their vote doesn't count; their voice cannot be heard. This was evident in this year's presidential election where only 55% of eligible voters participated nationally and only 52% of eligible voters in New York State cast their vote. How to get more people engaged in the political process is an on-going challenge for the league.

Perhaps a first step toward accomplishing this is for us to focus more on youth, encompassing all levels of education, from those attending elementary school to those attending college. Wouldn't it be great if we had a standing committee whose sole purpose was to educate and engage this young population? Think about it. Maybe this is the path that will turn the tide on the dismal voting record, especially in New York State. I know Merrill Sunderland is on board. Anyone else?

Jean McGarry

Fix Albany Now

As one of the newest members of the LWVMH, I was asked to share my thoughts of the recent Fix Albany Now meeting. The meeting was held in Kingston on October 18th at Deisings's Restaurant. The meeting was set in order to potentially update the Consensus that was reached in June regarding Legislative Procedures. The League's current Position for Action was presented and while this meeting was a "concurrence" and not the same as a "consensus", a minimum of fifteen members was required for a vote. I participated in the "phone tree" to get the word out about this important meeting. As a result of our concerted efforts, precisely fifteen members were in attendance. The assembled members heard several talks on the topic of corruption in state government and later voted on potential solutions.

I learned a great deal about current state of affairs of New York politics at the state and local level in Dutchess County. According to published reports, New York is rated as the most politically corrupt state in the nation. Far too many NYS elected officials have been arrested or resigned in disgrace. The good news is that there are several possible remedies to reform state government.

The first idea is to limit the amount of outside income that elected officials can make. The current salary for a NYS Senator is around \$70 K. This is considered a part-time job, as approximately six months are spent in Albany. There are some individuals serving in New York state who are able to live on this salary because the cost of living in their home communities is much lower. However, those who serve in state government who hail from NYC, Westchester, Rockland and the Hudson Valley have a much higher cost of living and may not be able to live on the existing salary offered to an elected official.

Who is it that generally runs for office and gets elected? Lawyers and real estate professionals are the two most common livelihoods for politicians. Those working in these two professions are used to making big bucks. In these professions, many may earn upwards of \$250,000 per year. Is it realistic to expect an elected official to take such a dramatic pay cut in order to serve in politics? A possible solution would be to make the salary higher and thus less of a step down financially. However, raising the salary would likely involve making it a full-time position.

The second way to address corruption focuses on the length of a time one serves. Should we change the length of time that a senator or other elected official serves? Currently the length of service is four years. During shorter terms the person in office may immediately have to begin campaigning and fund raising as soon as they enter office. Keeping the length of time in the position as a four year stint has several pluses. It allows one to get to know the jobs and constituents better. The length of time gives them a chance to learn the job, get to know their constituents and not devote so much of their time in office to raising funds for reelection.

The final issue that we discussed related to political corruption was the length of time an elected official can remain in a leadership position within state government. The person who serves as Chair of a Committee or in another leadership role wields a tremendous amount of power. Over time, that power and influence continues to grow without any checks unlike the ones we have set up in the Executive Branch. To make matters worse, there is no lifetime limit as to how many years a politician can serve as a head of a committee. For example, in the current system, he or she could serve as Chair of Widget Allocation for twenty years, step down for one year and then serve again as the Chair of Widget Allocation for another

twenty years. This unbridled power and sweeping influence will eventually lead to all manner of abuses that we have no system in place to address.

League members were presented with forms that addressed the above issues. We were asked to vote as to whether there should income limit and if so, by what amount. We were also able vote if we thought there should be a limit on terms and then reviewed the various options for term lengths. The issue of term lengths is especially important for Committee Chairs and we got to weigh in as to whether they should have limits and if so, how much .There will always be a way to get around any set of rules. There will always be those who abuse the system. The best thing we can do to stem the tide of abuse is to make things as clear as we can in writing like the length of term and income limits as abuses of power tend to be fostered by the current system. I am so proud to be a member of the League of Women Voters, doing our part to improve the governance of our great state.

Ajamu Ajinde

STUDY AND ADVOCACY

Materials Management Com11mittee

The Committee met November 1st at The Main Course Restaurant in New Paltz. Kimiko Link shared information on recycling/composting decorative pumpkins. Several members left the meeting to go to a showing at SUNY New Paltz of the film "Reuse — Because You Can't Recycle the Planet."

Kimiko plans to meet with an elementary school in New Paltz, to discuss possible improvements in recycle and composting activities. Kathy OConnor expressed interest in joining her at this meeting.

Kathy O. reported that she heard from both the Executive Director of PaintCare Inc, as well as the Governmental Counsel of the American

Coatings Association, with regard to progress on Paint Stewardship legislation in New York State. The wheels are in motion, and we hope to have good news on this issue in the coming year.

The Committee is re-evaluating its targets and focus for the near future. So many issues; so little time. We're trying to pare our concerns down, to more effectively make positive change.

We're watching and supporting Tracy Bartels' activities pertaining to the reduction of plastic bag usage in Ulster County, as well as what's happening with the UC Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission.

Next meeting of the Committee is Tuesday December 6th, 5:30 p.m. at the Main Course Restaurant in New Paltz.

(Submitted by *Kathy O'Connor*)

Book Club

We met on Tuesday November 15th at Enzo's Restaurant. We discussed the book: We Gon' Be Alright by Jeff Chang. Drawing on present events on race relations in our country, the author presents us with the idea of re-segregation. He proposes that our present society is again entangled in a web of racism which we thought had been conquered by all the gains of the Civil Rights Movement. He argues that re-segregation is the unexamined condition of our time and an obstacle to justice and cultural equality in our society. A very provocative book which attempts an honest look at the present political situation in our time.

The next book chosen to explore is: The Tipping Point; How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference by Malcom Gladwell. In this book Gladwell takes from all fields of knowledge in this our modern world and combines them in an explanation of how human beings influence each other in spite of our technological world.

If you are looking for explanations for the quagmire that we are living in, perhaps this book will bring some light and hope in all the mess. Come and join us, bring and get new ideas in the process, you'll have a good lunch.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, January 17th. There is plenty of time to have read the book.

Join us.

Daisy Tyler

ULSTER COUNTY OBSERVER CORP

Audio recordings, addenda and minutes of Legislative Committee meetings can be found at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/legislature/committeesinfo/index.html>

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**Laws and Rules,
Governmental
Services Committee**

Nov. 21, 2016, 6:30 PM – 8:22 PM

Committee Members:

Kevin A. Roberts, Chairman, David B. Donaldson, Deputy Chairman, Richard A. Parete (absent), Hector S. Rodriguez, Carl Belfiglio

Other Legislators: **Ken Ronk, Legislature Chairman (voting), Jennifer Schwartz Berky, Chris Allen**

Other: **Nicholas Pascale, Esq., Legislative Counsel**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Kevin Roberts.

Minutes from Oct. 17 and Oct. 18, 2016 meeting approved.

These observer notes focus on proposed resolutions:

Proposed **Resolution No. 391** regarding a public hearing of a proposed local law for the regulation of pet sellers *approved, as amended*, following a discussion of issues. Local pet sellers, the Delaney's, is concerned about more regulation but he complimented Legislator Ken Ronk and the committee for crafting a compromise resolution.

Proposed **Resolution No. 425** condemning violence and hate speech and expressing solidarity with Muslims and all those targeted for their ethnicity, race or religion was extensively revised to change the title and content to be more general in title and content. Legislator Jennifer Schwartz Berky, one of the sponsors, participated in the discussion and agreed to the revisions. As the revised resolution needed to be in documented final language for vote, a Special Meeting was set for Nov. 22, 2016, to review the revised resolution and vote. [see below]

Proposed **Resolution No. 450** regarding a proposed law to limit gifts that county officers and employees may receive. *Approved.*

Proposed **Resolution No. 458** setting a public hearing on a proposed local law amending the Charter and Administrative Code to modify the terms of the Chairman and Clerk of the Legislature was *approved, as amended*, following an extended discussion and differences of opinion on the intent of the resolution and if there should be two resolutions (one for Chairman and one for the Clerk) and should require a mandatory referendum.

Proposed **Resolution No. 459** amending the Rules of Order to ensure standing committee assignments correspond to the term of the Legislature. *Approved.*

Proposed **Resolution No. 465** approving a contract pertaining to the Insurance Department was *approved* following a discussion with Dorraine Whitney, Insurance Officer, about doing the insurance in house, she said that would be difficult and require new systems and skills.

Proposed **Resolution No. 411, Resolution No. 412 and Resolution No.448** regarding public hearings on proposed local laws for the Ulster County Human Rights Commission and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity were *referred* to a newly formed sub-committee, of Legislators Hector Rodriguez, David Donaldson and Carl Belfiglio.

Under **New Business**, Evan Gallo, Deputy Comptroller, addressed the committee about the Ulster County Comptroller's 2017 Audit Plan to discuss considerations and concerns of the committee: Legislator Belfiglio is concerned about the biggest cost centers, e.g. Family and Institutionalized Foster Care (already under consideration), Legislator Donaldson is concerned about Mental Health, Legislator Rodriguez is concerned about unfilled positions, under hired lines in the budget (called carried vacancies), Legislator Ronk is concerned about Foster Care costs across the region due to heroin use. Legislator Allen is concerned about niche services such as health care plans in correctional institutions.

Special Meeting

Nov. 22, 2016, 6:50 PM – 7:05 PM (approx.)

Committee Members:

Kevin A. Roberts, Chairman, David B. Donaldson, Deputy Chairman, Richard A. Parete, Hector S. Rodriguez, Carl Belfiglio

Other Legislators: **Ken Ronk, Legislature Chairman (voting), Jennifer Schwartz Berky**

Revised proposed **Resolution No. 425** – Condemning Violence and Hate Speech and Expressing Solidarity with (omit: Muslims and) All Those Targeted for Their Ethnicity, Race, Religion, (added: Gender, Gender identification, or Political Views)

Legislator Ronk recommended a motion to postpone vote until next month. Several Legislators mentioned topics that need further consideration, clarification or specificity, including: Legislator Berke – First Amendment rights, political views, Legislator Ronk – free speech, policy or a memorializing resolution, Legislator Donaldson – wants a policy resolution, Legislator Parete – what relation to current laws, Legislator Rodriguez – clarify targeted language.

Motion to *postpone approved*.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer Corps, 11-25-16

Nov. 9, 2016, 6:03 PM – 6:28 PM

Committee Members:

James F. Maloney, Chairman, Hector S. Rodriguez, Deputy Chairman, Ron G. Lapp (absent), Herbert Litts III, Mary Beth Maio, Jennifer Schwartz Berky, James Delaune (absent)

Meeting called to Order by Chairman James Maloney.

Minutes of Oct. 3 and Oct. 13, 2016 meetings were approved.

Proposed resolutions included **Resolution No. 478** approving the deviation of the Ulster County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) relating to a PILOT agreement between the Ulster County IDA and UPAC LLC in connection with Bardavon 1869 Opera House, Inc. Project. Chris Silva, executive director, and Ruth Ann Frank, Development Director, of the Bardavon discussed the project and financing. The Bardavon needs approval from Ulster County, the City of Kingston, and the Kingston school district before the IDA can offer tax exemption. This project is for reconstruction and renovations of facilities and equipment at UPAC. The financial arrangement would include tax exemptions but not financial obligations by the county, city and school district. *Approved*.

Proposed **Resolution No. 326** establishing a policy for Ulster County bus advertising was *approved*.

Proposed **Resolution No. 466** pertaining to the Dept. of Planning for the Hudson Valley Rail Trail West project was *approved*.

Other proposed resolutions pertaining to the Dept. of Planning were *approved*.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer Corps, 11-28-16

Nov. 14, 2016, 6:29 PM - 7:17 PM

Committee Members:

Richard A. Parete, Chairman, Tracey A. Bartels, Deputy Chairman, Jonathan Heppner, Ron G. Lapp, Jr., Mary Wawro

Other Legislator: **Manna Jo Greene**

Chairman Richard Parete called the meeting to order. Minutes from the Oct. 12, 2016 meeting were approved.

These observer notes focus on two resolutions, new business and old business:

Proposed **Resolution No. 453** authorizing an additional six month extension for reporting to the Ulster County Legislature the findings of the Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission was *approved*, following comments by Legislator Tracey Bartels that the extension will allow for a document by the end of the year and time for public input and hearings.

Proposed **Resolution No. 479** amending the electric vehicle charging station policy to exclude personal use by county employees was introduced for *discussion*.

Under **New Business**, Legislator Bartels addressed several items including: a request the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency provide a monthly agency report to the committee, a request the committee receives reports from Soil and Water Conservation District, appointments are needed to recycling oversight committee (it has not been meeting), appointments are needed to Soil and Water needs appointments, and

**Economic
Development,
Tourism, Housing,
Planning & Transit
Committee**

**Energy and
Environment
Committee**

appointments will coming to the UCRRA.

Under **Old Business**, Plastic Bag Legislation, a *draft for discussion* proposed resolution of a local law regulating the use of plastic carryout bags and recyclable paper carryout bags and promoting the use of reusable bags was provided. Legislator Tracey Bartels reported changes are being considered and a proposed resolution is expected in Jan. – Feb. 2017.

Climate Smart Committee – Legislator Manna Jo Greene discussed understanding energy efficiency activities related to a county press release announcing the National Geographic magazine features Ulster County and highlights environmental initiatives in its Dec. 2016 issue. The Family Court project was discussed.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer Corps, 11-25-16

Ulster County Legislative Committee on Public Health and Social Services

The UC Legislative Committee on Public Health and Social Services was convened by Chairman, Legislator Craig Lopez on 11-7-16 at 6:04 and adjourned at 6:29.

Present: Lopez, Belfiglio, Heppner, Allen - Absent: Roberts

Others: Nettie Tomshaw, secretary to the committee

Following the call to order the first item on the agenda was approval of the October 3, 2016 meeting.

The committee had three resolutions to address:

Resolution # 455 dealt with a request, following passage by the UC Legislature that the governor and state legislature promote and support health and safety standards in sober homes and/or residential recovery residences that are consistent with National Association of Recovery Residences (NARR) Standards.

During discussion it was noted that the resolution is modeled after the one that the state of Florida has. Apparently those who drafted this resolution felt it was something that could be adopted by the state legislature. Further it was noted that this is a beginning. Also, it asks that the sober homes voluntarily participate in the certification. Two of the participants, Liz Berardi and Tom Kadgen, were cited as spearheading this resolution. Passed

Resolution # 470: dealt with amending the 2016 UC budget to reflect the fact the the UC Department of Mental Health has received notification from the NYS Office of Mental Health of a 0.2% cost of living adjustment as per letter dated September 9, 2016. There would be no additional cost to the county. Passed.

Resolution # 474: dealt with the lease agreement that the UC Department of Health wishes to have continued for the space located at Willow Park for an additional three years: November 1, 2016-October 31, 2019, where the Department of Health operates the WIC Program (Women, Infants and Children) and STD (sexually transmitted disease) clinic. Passage of the resolution will allow the Chairman of the County Legislature to execute the lease agreement. Utilities and taxes are included in the lease. Passed

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

UC Board of Health

The November 14, 2016 meeting of the UC Board of Health was convened at 6:32 by Secretary Marianne Hilderbrandt and adjourned at 7:30.

Present: Hilderbrandt, Kelly, Graham, Cardinale, Woodley

Absent; Tack, Delma

Others: Commissioner Smith, Neredia Veytia, Deputy; Shelley Mertens, Environmental Health Director, Katrina Kouhout, Secretary to the Commissioner and the Board.

Following the call to order, the minutes for June and September, 2016 were approved. It was noted that the proposed 2016-2017 Flu Rate e-vote was taken and passed.

There were a variety of parts to the Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Smith updated the group on the Medical Examiner's office situation:

-Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Catanes, has been hired and has been working for some days performing these functions at Kingston Hospital;

-Dr. Heller and Dr. Grovenburg, medical examiner and deputy medical examiner have agreed to stay on, not permanently, for awhile, provided their salaries were doubled and there was a change in the number of days each would be available;

-Dr. Stut will be coming on board as deputy medical examiner. Note: In Ulster County the medical examiner

must be a doctor, a resident of Ulster County, is appointed by the County Executive for 4 years.

The position of medical death scene investigator has not yet been filled, this has created an on-going daily problem for the Commissioner, as under NYS County Law the county must have a medical examiner and the position must be filled. The Commissioner noted that EMT individuals could fill this position but Ulster County wants someone who had a medical background of some kind; she also noted that this position is a new one. She indicated that she would keep the Board apprised of her on-going efforts to secure an appropriate candidate.

Note: While the above was the first item on the agenda under the Commissioner's Report, it was the last report actually given.

Deputy Veytia then reported on the following items:

-updated the work related to the outbreak of mumps on the SUNY New Paltz campus. Initially the Department of Health was advised by the authorities at the college on October 7 of the outbreak the previous day and how matters have gone as of November 3. Apparently, it was generally related to the students in the swimming program; as the local Board does not have jurisdiction over SUNY (a state facility), the former did have considerable work involvement. Over the period of time, about one month, the number of students involved went from 2 to about 15 and is now down to 8; those with medical exemptions from 37 down to 5; the present situation is being viewed as round #3. Note: from the beginning that those who were diagnosed with mumps were appropriately isolated. Those who did not get the vaccine were required to leave the campus for 25 days.

-the schedule for NYS Influenza Surveillance and Clinic Schedule was provided. Covers the period 10-26-16 through 11-28-16; there are clinics throughout the county where residents can go to obtain the flu vaccine;

-the county is involved in public health preparedness drills. These are drills that towns are participating in to show how quickly and effectively they can deal with emergencies involving selected problems. Ellenville was cited positively for the way it handled the drill it was involved in which included the police, the Ellenville Hospital and various help groups. The next group which will participate in this program is Ten Broeck Commons.

-Ms Mertens reported on the status of determining lead in water particularly as it applies to the 9 school districts located in Ulster County. The work has been completed in some districts but not all and is being worked on to do so.

-Ms. Mertens then reported on Polystyrene and tobacco leaves: apparently the checks on this have moved ahead, dealing with any complaints which are brought to the attention of her office; as well as the ongoing procedure that the environmental group handles.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

