



Commentator

March 2011

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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2011		
MARCH		
1	5:00 pm	Enjoy Dutch treat dinner at Rosendale Café! Call Café to join LWV reservation: 658-9048
1	7:00 pm	Film "Gerrymandering" at <i>The Rosendale Theatre</i> , Rosendale. Free admission
7	TBA	A meeting for those interested in improving solid waste management in Dutchess and Ulster Counties. Location TBA
8	1:00 pm	Observer Corps meeting at Margaret Sellers's, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
8	7:15-9:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker's, 106 Park St., Hurley
23	8:00 am-12:30 pm	"Justice and our Justice Courts" at SUNY New Paltz Student Union (SUNY's CRREO, LWV Mid-Hudson, Ulster County Bar Assn. sponsoring). Speakers include Sydney Cresswell of the Rockefeller College and Ulster County officials: DA Holley Carnright, Public Defender Andy Kossover, Sheriff Paul Van Blarcum, Town Justices Jim Baker, Tim Cox (head of UC magistrates), Kevin Hunt, & Wayne Lonstein
29	1:30 pm	Shared Services meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Rd, Hurley
APRIL		
5	7:15-9:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker's, 106 Park St., Hurley
12	1:00 pm	Observer Corps meeting at Margaret Sellers's, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
TBA	TBA	Membership meeting (topic, speakers TBA)
MAY		
3	7:15-9:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker's, 106 Park St., Hurley
10	1:00 pm	Observer Corps meeting at Margaret Sellers's, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
18	6:00-8:30 pm	Annual Meeting at Esopus Town Library, Port Ewen (starts with potluck supper)

Check our Calendar on-line at
<http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/calendar.html>
 for updated information

Commentator archives, State and National League newsletters are
 at <http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/Newsletters.html>

Interested in one of our committees? Just show up at a meeting.
 Our members are always welcome.

Prez Sez...

Ah, March - it may not be balmy, but let's hope we'll see fewer weather-related postponements and cancellations.

The conference on **local courts** that we are co-sponsoring with SUNY New Paltz could not be held in January. It will now take place on Wed., March 23 (see description elsewhere and sign up!) Our board had to meet in both January and February via freeconferencecall.com. It's harder to make good decisions when we can't see one another's faces, but at least we were able to keep our work going.

Golden Hill Health Care Center and Redistricting are keeping us particularly busy.

Re **Golden Hill**, we are attending the Legislature's hearings throughout the county and putting in our two cents - particularly our belief that the wisest course is for the County to sell the facility to a private (for-profit or non-profit) entity. Since many of the hearing attendees so far have family members at Golden Hill or work there, the discussion is pretty one-sided, but we keep reminding citizens that things can't continue as they are.

We are excited that Gov. Cuomo is pushing legislation that will make NY's **redistricting** process non-partisan and encourage you to make sure your state Assemblyperson and Senator knows that you want this legislation passed. Gerrymandering = non-competitive elections = dysfunctional and polarized government. It has to stop.

Here at home, I am glad to be one of 7 people making Ulster's elections fairer through the newly established non-partisan **Commission on Reapportionment**. As soon as the census data arrives, we'll be rushing to draw up 23 single-member districts (quite a change from our current system of multi-member districts with a total of 33 legislators). You can watch our doings at <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/reapportionment/index.html> and tell us what you think.

If you live in Dutchess, keep the pressure on your legislators to make your redistricting process fair and non-partisan.

As I keep saying, we get the government we insist upon.

Dave

PROGRAM NEWS

Concerned about the Resource Recovery Agency - and solid waste management in general - in your county (either Dutchess or Ulster)? Join others of like mind at noon, Monday, March 7, to assess next steps. Location is still being determined. Contact Cindy Lanzetta at packback56@yahoo.com or 236-7288 for details.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Our Annual Luncheon will be held at the Wiltwyck Golf Club on June 5th. More details will come in future issues

VOTER SERVICE**Reapportionment**

There have been five meetings of the Reapportionment Commission. Two have been covered by this member of the League Observer Corp.

The commission meets weekly on Wednesday's from 3PM to 5PM generally in the library conference room on the 6th floor of the UCOB. At the March 2 meeting the Commissioners' training will begin, it will be held at IS at 25 South Manor Avenue.

There are seven members of the Commission: Vernon Benjamin, Paul Benkert, Michael Catalinotto, Cynthia Lowe, Richard Messina, Dare Thompson, and William West. Victoria Fabella, deputy clerk of the county legislature acts as secretary. All the Commissioners are county residents, eligible to register to vote, and are not public officers or employees per Article II, Sec. C-10 of the Charter.

Other attendees at the two meetings observed have included County Attorney Havranek, Dennis Doyle, Planning Director, Robert Leibowitz, Senior Planner, Tom Kadgen of the League of Women Voters, Victor Work, Democratic Elections Commissioner, and members of the public.

The Commission is required under Article II, Section C-10 of the Charter. The major responsibility of this Commission at this time is to create 23 single member districts for the UC Legislature.

A brochure has been developed that states the legal basis for the creation for the Commission, lists the basic principles the Commission subscribes to and introduces the Commission members.

The Commission has been budgeted with \$50,000 in order to accomplish its work. Initially, that sum was "placed" in the Planning Department's budget. This resulted in one of the many discussions in the two meetings observed. Eventually, the group adopted a motion requesting the funds be allocated specifically to the Commission so that no one would think that the result of the Commission's work was a product of the legislature or the county executive.

The Commission meetings are conducted by a member who serves as a facilitator. After considerable discussion at the fourth meeting the group approved a motion to have this position alternate alphabetically among the Commissioners, with a new facilitator weekly. Mr. Messina indicated he will not serve as a facilitator even though he will be attending the meetings.

Considerable time appears to have been spent at the meetings dealing with the technology to be used by the Commission in doing its work as noted in these two meetings. Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Director of Information Services (IS) explained in detail what the Commission web site will look like, which at that point was not yet available to the public. The matter of the type of soft ware program to be used was discussed extensively. The software program, Autobound, was recommended by IS as various items like actual geographic area involved, election district, etc. can be determined. Additionally, for the Commissioners to have such available on their home computers and when was another major point of discussion at both meetings observed. Ms. Fabella advised that, after the Commissioners had spoken to the legislature, some of the legislators had expressed the idea that the Commissioners should have access to this software on their home computers.

A motion was adopted to order the program and also to have sufficient number of it to enable the Commissioners to have access on their home computers as soon as the soft ware can be ordered and obtained.

During the lengthy discussion two other points were emphasized: that the training the Commissioners would need in order to be able to use the soft ware: Mr. West was most specific about not having the public and the press present while they received their training. Eventually, after consulting County Attorney Havranek, the group was advised that since training is not a meeting of the body at which it will make decisions, the training could be closed to the public and the press.

The second point concerned involvement of IS and the Planning Board and who would have the oversight of the software installation. The group engaged in some intense discussion with rather pointed comments being made. The result of this portion of the discussion led to the direction that the Legislature would purchase the software and IS would install it and the clerk of the Legislature would not be involved in any over site of this.

There was also the concern about the Planning Department being involved. Mr. Doyle was concerned, could not understand what the problem was given that the department had been involved in reapportionment in each decade since 1960. Mrs. Havranek confirmed this point and that IS had also been involved in previous decades. Mr. West said the County Legislature had done it previously and Mr. Catalinotto stated that a consultant had been hired. Mrs. Havranek noted that she had found no evidence of such and she had very carefully examined Frank Murray's records (former county attorney for many years)

During the February 23 meeting time was spent discussing the material that Mr. Leibowitz from Planning had brought for the Commissioners to begin orienting themselves to the work to be done. He showed what the legislative and election districts looked like using the 2000 census data.

It was then noted that voting districts can't cross legislative districts. The latter are developed first and then the former. Election districts can't be greater than 1,050 voters and need to be contiguous (Mr. Work, Democratic Elections Commissioner)

When the software would be available to the Commissioners on their home computers was the question. It appeared that the Commissioners needed to send information re their home computers to Mr. Leibowitz who would get it to the Director of IS. There was definitive date for availability, but it did not appear to be long as there were some copies of the software and a motion to order more was passed.

The goal of the Commission is not to divide up the towns. Mrs. Havranek will examine the law to determine case law on this point.

The number of residents per legislative district once established may vary one from the other but the point is to keep such with a certain ranged, plus or minus five percent.

The concern about transparency was mentioned and discussed. Mr. Benjamin was very specific about wanting the Commission to be independent of everyone: Legislature and the County Executive. He had also expressed the view that any e-mails received by the Commission should be placed on the web site for public to access. This aspect resulted in another discussion and numerous comments.

There did not seem to be any reason not to post unless there was some form of vulgarity in them. The decision, after consulting with the County Attorney: any e-mails received would not be posted until the county attorney had reviewed and okayed.

In order to advise the public as well as to learn what the public thinks, there is a work station with computer that will be available on the 6th floor of the UCOB for the public to input its thinking.

Further, the Commissioners are attending town board meetings to explain what the Commission is doing and elicit comment on such as well. The brochure mentioned above is another means of contacting the public. At each meeting public comment is called for whenever there are members of the public present. For example, at the February 16 meeting Ms. Tantillo inquired whether there would be an acknowledgement made to anyone sending e-mails or letters to the Commission and hoped that there would be.

Recently a law suit was filed against the UC Legislature and Reapportionment Commission claiming that there is too little time remaining for the number of legislative seat to be reduced from 33 to 23. At the February 23 meeting the Commission voted to have County Attorney Havranek represent it during the law suit.

The general tenor of the meetings appeared to have become more even. Commissioners Thompson and Lowe and Benjamin each noted that outcomes of the discussion should have been clearer; where the dollars for the Commission's work noted in the budget should be in the Commission's report.

Mrs. Lowe will serve as facilitator for the next meeting. The initial part of the next meeting will be open to the public; then the commission will move to executive session for the purpose of training on the software.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ulster County Shared Services Study

DOCUMENTS ONLINE: <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/municipal.html>.

- [Ulster Intergovernmental Summary Report](#)
- [Economic Study](#)
- [Judicial Study](#)
- [Highway Study](#)
- [Action Plan](#)

Additional links of interest include

- The Draft Report can be found on the County Website at www.co.ulster.ny.us/municipalities/FINAL%20DRAFT%20Highway%20DOC%20with%20charts%20and%20maps.pdf
- Frank Cassetta's concise summary is at our website at lwvmidhudson.org/files/Highway_Service_Cooperation_-_Summary.pdf
- the Shared Services Program within the NYS Department of State Division of Local Government Services <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/sharedservices/index.html>

Best Practices page of the NYS Association of Counties. www.nysac.org/County_Corner.php

LWV GHHC Study Group 2

League Consensus Report to the Ulster County Legislature.

Summary: http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Consensus_Summary.pdf

Statement: http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Consensus_Statement.pdf

Pros & Cons: http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Study-Pros_and_Cons_10-19-10.pdf

Materials and resources used by the League in formulating its consensus
http://lwvmidhudson.org/Action_Study.html.

ULSTER COUNTY OBSERVER CORPS

Golden Hill Health Care Center – Legislature Public Hearings

At this writing there have been four public hearings held by the county legislature on the future of the Golden Hill Health Care Center (the Center).

The purpose of the sessions has been to provide the public with an opportunity to tell the legislators how it felt about the Center's future and for the legislative panel to listen and answer such questions as might arise.

These four sessions and the number of people who attended (estimate):

Ellenville (69), Onteora (31), Woodstock (70), Ulster BOCES, New Paltz (45) (Note: While the session at Onteora had been arranged well in advance, at the last minute the sectional wrestling championships were moved to Onteora from Kingston. This resulted in a parking crunch. Whether this effected the

number of people who attended the public session cannot be ascertained.

The sessions followed a process: initially a welcome and introduction of the panel (Frey, Provenzano, Maio, Hockberg, Lomita and Wadnola) and any task force members in the audience, as well as other government personnel.

The co-chair Legislator Frey and Legislator Provenzano briefly reviewed the nine options that the task force had developed (Chairman Wadnola when Mr. Frey was ill), and Deputy County Executive Beckman provided the financial commentary. Mr. Beckman pointed out that taxes can be expected to rise, there are no new revenues on the horizon, nothing more that can be cut from the budget, and that Center costs will rise \$14 million to \$38 million in the next five years, which excludes the capital costs that might be needed.

He then noted that while County Executive Michael Hein had no position per se on the Center's future, he has said the beds must stay in UC; county will need such. The question is that of affordability, whatever decision is made will increase the amount of money that will be spent....how to pay for it.

The nine options: Continue the Status Quo, Partnerships, Renovate the center, Build a New Center, Privatize the License and Lease the Center, Public Benefit Corporation, Sell the Bed License and the Buildings and Grounds, Sell the Bed License but keep the land and close the Center, Surrender the License and discharge the residents and close the Center.

Those who signed up to speak were then called to do so. The majority of the time in the two hour sessions was devoted to the public speakers. No limit was placed on the amount of time a speaker could use. Generally, about 5 minutes or so and in some cases as long as 10-15 minutes. It is important at the outset to note that not only was the majority of session time spent listening to the public commentary, but the general tenor of the atmosphere was civil, as well as quiet in so far as listening on everyone's part was concerned.

At the Woodstock session many of the speakers were applauded and Ken Hyatt, a resident and president of the resident council at the Center was applauded extensively.

Terrie Rosenbloom of the Woodstock Town Board in thanking everyone for coming noted that she had lived there for over 40 years and never had a legislative panel come to Woodstock in that time until now specifically to hear what the public had to say, for which she thanked the panel.

Considering the emotional nature of the subject all the participants are to be commended for how matters were dealt with.

Handouts referencing the nine options and the fiscal considerations were made available at the outset of the session, and the item from the League of Women Voters after the latter's comment.

The Legislative panel sat at a table in front of the audience. During break time in Ellenville the panelists either stood and talked with the attendees or sat in the audience and chatted with them, which also was the case at the other three meetings as well. They also stayed for some time after the formal session was adjourned. Additionally questions from the floor were addressed once the speakers had finished.

The formal meetings were scheduled for two hours, but were usually over earlier; but there was no rush to leave on the part of the panelists or the public.

There were certain concepts expressed at these first four sessions.

In Ellenville it was emphasized that the surrounding area did not have any nursing home. The hope was that such could be sited in Ellenville. Having one close by rather than 25 miles away enabled family and friends to stay connected with a resident which was important to both. The speakers and Supervisor Distel and Steven Kelley, President and CEO of the Ellenville Regional Hospital all spoke to these points, as well as Howard Ball of CSEA.

In response to the suggestion that some of the beds be moved to Ellenville, Legislator Provenzano advised the group the idea of selling some of the Center beds, possibly 80, and locating such in Ellenville had been discussed by the task force. The task force was advised by the NYS DOH that beds could not be sold, only decertified.

At the other sessions, the idea of all UC residents in general having access to a nursing home that would be closer to potential residents was the comment. Generally the southwestern area was named as not having such access as the "river areas" did.

With the exception of the speakers from the LWV, all the speakers supported the concept of the Center remaining open and operated by the county. The LWV, following its second study, has recommended that the Center be sold. Supervisor Leifeld of the T/Olive noted that the town board was supportive of the county continuing to operate the Center; and noted that if the county could find the dollars to build a new jail, it could/should find the dollars to take care of the Center.

The care of the residents was viewed as of the highest quality and invariably so acknowledged by the speakers. It was commented by some that care at other facilities was not at the same high level as at the Center. Throughout the sessions, each speaker noted family, friends who had been fortunate to be

a resident at the Center and receive such fine care. At the New Paltz session one speaker pointed out to the group that her mother, who had recently died, had been at a private nursing home and received the same type of dedicated care as offered at the Center.

The observation about jobs was made given that the Ellenville area had face the loss of hundreds of jobs in the last several years. Having a nursing home there would help to create much needed jobs in the general southern area of the county. It would also help to overcome in the minds of some of the residents of that general area the feeling that it was fore gotten or ignored (Supervisor Chipman, T/Rochester). The concern about the 380 jobs at the Center and how the loss of such would impact the economy generally was referenced at all the sessions whether by union representatives or the public speakers generally.

More than one speaker asked the question why wasn't the Center regularly maintained as to the pipes and electrical equipment. There were years when the Center did not need a county subsidy, even had money over. Where had this money gone? The suggestion was made that the county had exhibited poor stewardship. The senior citizens should not have to pay for UC's neglect of the Center by having the Center closed. These points were made at the Woodstock session.

The need for beds was also noted. Why? The Baby Boomers. Not everyone will be able to stay at home; those who do may also eventually need to go to a nursing home. Where dollars are spent reflects what the people of UC are....the quality of care provided should not be based only on financial considerations.

Given the size of the resident population at the Center, approximately 280, the question raised Where would they be placed if the Center was to be closed? The speaker suggested that non-county run entities have a tendency to "cherry pick", i.e., those with long term problems, mental health, Alzheimer's are ignored in order to take short term rehab or those who will not be residents for long. The number of beds that would be needed are just not available in UC as the other nursing homes are all equally full.

Later in the session in Woodstock a question was raised regarding how do the residents feel regarding the possibility of having to leave the Center. Ken Hyatt, a resident, and president of the Center's resident council, was asked to respond. He stated that moving would be a traumatic experience. Residents feel terrible. The Center is their home. They feel everyone against them. He also said that UCCC received \$6 million and dollars are provided for other organizations, which, while such may be correct.....but.....

More than one speaker at the Woodstock session made reference to the fact that apparently only one architect's figures had been considered in determining the projected costs for renovation and for building new. The panel was urged to consult additional architects...might find that the costs would be less.

Chairman Wadnola advised that if the decision of the legislature was made to build a new facility then another RFP process would have to be initiated and those who responded would all have to be considered.

With respects to the RFP process that had been utilized question on when would the responses be made available, was answered by DCE Beckman that such would be made available to the Legislature prior to the decision making process

While the League of Women Voters (LWV) recommended that the Center be privatized, it did suggest that such be to a group which would be able to provide the level of care presently afforded the residents. The League does not believe the county can continue to operate the Center given the costs involved and that the taxpayers cannot pay any more in taxes.

At the New Paltz session Mrs. Thompson noted that the League is well aware of the concerns of the residents, families and friends; and also the care that is provided to the residents is of the highest quality. These are hard times. Difficult for all. Further, she noted that even if the Center was privatized, there is nothing to prevent the holder of the license from selling the license after a few years. The League recognizes that the legislature has a difficult decision to make.

A question that had been raised at other sessions regarding the number of people involved in the League consensus and study was asked again. It was noted that the League's second study had involved about 8 members, took about 6 months during the latter part of 2010 and that there were about 30 people involved in the consensus process. As Mrs. Thompson noted that process involves the "sense of the members present"; if there is a definite division of opinion then there is a yes or no vote taken. She noted that those members present were in agreement regarding privatization.

It was further noted by Lee Cane, co-chair with Jacki Moriarty of the first study that that one had taken 22 months, July, 2007-April, 2009. In that instance with 30 people present, only 20 of whom were members (only members may vote during the consensus) the consensus was that if the Center was to remain open, "UC citizens must be willing to accept increased taxation or a reduction of other county services or a combination of both....".

Ulster County Legislature Meeting

Mr. Gilbert of CSEA Union noted that while the League's position may be an unpopular one, he commended the League for having done the study and that each was entitled to a viewpoint.

The following people were present at different sessions, but not necessarily all of them:

Members of the task force: Cane, Cassel, Hyatt

Legislators: Bernardo, Rob Parete, Madsen, Rodriquez, Bellifiglio, Haynes, Roberts

Comptroller Auerbach, CSEA representatives Howard Ball and Terry Gilbert

Director of the Center Sheree Cross

Lee Cane, Observer Corps

The following people were present at sessions, but not necessarily all:

Members of the task force: Cane, Cassel, Hyatt

Legislators: Bernardo, Rob Parete, Madsen, Rodriquez, Bellifiglio

Comptroller Auerbach, CSEA representative Terry Gilbert

Lee Cane Observer Corps

The meeting of the Legislature on February 15th can be viewed at <http://www.totalwebcasting.com/live/ulster/> and the legislation considered is at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/resolutions/index.html>

The bulk of the resolutions involved appointing & confirming appointments to various boards and authorizing execution of contracts with several community agencies as authorized in the 2011 budget.

An effort by Legislators Zimet, Madsen and Petit to split Government Operations And Environmental Services Committee into two and modify mandates responsibilities was defeated 7-23.

A seven member Special Joint Advisory Committee was created to study viable solutions and improve the oversight of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency to be known as the Special Joint Committee to Study the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency by a vote of 27-3.

Two resolutions that would have authorized litigation regarding the waterways and estuaries of Ulster County were withdrawn. (*This relates to the recent discharging of polluted turbid wastewater from the Ashokan Reservoir into the Esopus Creek by the New York City DEP.*)

Legislators Zimet and Bernardo offered a home-rule request resolution requesting the State to modify state law to provide that the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency board member appointments be made by the Executive with Legislature confirmation. It further provides for termination of existing appointments and provides for a sequence of limited terms in a manner that will, ultimately, provide 5 staggered 5 year terms. The matter was referred to committee.

County Executive Mike Hein's State of the County address to the legislature is at

<http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/pressreleases/state%20of%20county.pdf>

and Legislature Chairman Frederick Wadnola's message is at

<http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/downloads/Cover%20&%20Chairman%27s%20Message%202010.pdf>

SPECIAL NOTE: The Ulster County Legislature will accept requests from March 1 through March 30, 2011 from landowners wanting to have their agricultural lands included within a NYS Certified Agricultural District.. For more information download

http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/legislative_press/022220111.pdf

Jim McGarry

Governmental Services & Administrative Committee

Date: February 14, 2011 Start Time: 6:00 p.m. Finish Time: 7:09 p.m.

Chairman Kevin Roberts called the meeting to order, followed by approval of the January 24, 2011, meeting minutes.

Proposed resolutions on "Lloyd Garage" and the Ulster County Planning Board appointments (Town of Saugerties, Town of Marbletown, Town of Plattekill) were approved. A resolution supporting a grant application regarding the Hudson River Greenway developing a map of trails and parks was approved. A resolution amending the rules of order regarding labor agreements was approved.

The majority of the meeting time was devoted to the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency. Mr. Tom Rose, P.E., UCRRRA acting Executive Director and UCRRRA Controller Mr. Tim DeGraff, CPA, presented an extensive update on operations, DEC compliance, NY Dept of Labor review (OK), and financial items and audits.

Central Hudson is providing \$45,000 worth of lighting at no cost to the county, saving the county \$15,000 per year. It's paid by the monthly surcharge fees.

DEC compliance is improving. A meeting will be held with DEC next Wednesday.

**Governmental
Operations &
Environmental
Services
Committee**

The issue about tonnage limits is being resolved.

The projects for a new scale, tipping floor repair and a containment system are going forward. Secondary containment is on hold. The grinder has been repaired, not sold, and Deputy Chairman Hector Rodriguez wants some action on this.

A \$2.5 M payment by UCRRA is due soon, and a \$1 M payment to UCRRA is expected from the Ulster County Comptroller.

The contracts with the towns will be expiring in late 2011 and early 2012, with the exceptions of town of Ulster and New Paltz at different dates.

Some enforcement activity is on hold while Ms. Michelle Leggett is on leave until mid March.

The UC Comptroller's second report on the UCRRA is highly anticipated and the committee would like to be notified as soon as the report is done. There followed a discussion by the committee about the authority and say of the Ulster County Legislature has in understanding and directing the UCRRA.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 2/25/11

Date: February 3, 2011 Start Time: 7:00 p.m. Finish Time: 8:10 p.m.

Mr. Brian Shapiro, Chairperson, called the meeting to order. The Dec. 8, 2010, meeting minutes were approved.

Mr. Shapiro led a discussion focusing on state mandates. Mr. Marshall Beckman, Deputy County Executive, discussed the state funded mandates: What is and what isn't mandated. A careful reading of "mandates" is needed to distinguish "mandates" vs. "conditional" and "optional" to determine what is actually mandated and county funded. (The recent Governor's message ways-in on the issue.)

Data is to be reported at the next Ulster County Ways and Means Committee to allow for a "What if?" evaluation of alternatives. For example, Health is full service with the county funding at 40%. The county could "op out" of full share but that could lead to effects on quality of life because of less services and the cutting of jobs. The legislators expressed much concern (it's "depressing and sobering") about resolving the issues of mandate reform.

Ms. Amanda LaValle, Coordinator of the UC Department of the Environment, discussed the issue the NYC DEP having sent water down the lower Esopus. The DEP has stopped sending the water but the NY DEC may take enforcement action. She distrusted a report on the characteristics and effects of the turbid water as it flows the 32-35 miles to Saugerties. There have been no permits or reviews of the damage caused to the environment by the volume of water and turbidity levels. The County Executive and the department are continuing to take action.

The Draft Resolutions No. 0229 & No. 0230 authorizing the county attorney to commence litigation and authorizing funds on matters affecting the waterways and estuaries of Ulster County were approved.

The Draft Resolution regarding an appropriation of the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District was approved.

Hydraulic Fracturing was discussed. A proposed public forum with a seminar and a panel was discussed and supported by the committee. A report from Legislator Susan Zimet was submitted to the committee by Deputy Chair Laura Petit.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 2/25/11

**Health and
Human
Services**

The Legislative Health and Human Services Committee was convened by Chairman Frey at 6PM on February 3, 2011 and adjourned at 6:52. Members of the committee: Frey, Parete, Maio, Petit, Ronk, Briggs, Loughran, Stoeckeler were present; Harris absent. Other attendees DCE Beckman and Commissioner of Mental Health Ed Brown.

Following the approval of December 2010 minutes, the committee addressed five resolutions dealing with appointments to the UC Community Services Board and Mental Health Subcommittee, amending the 2011 county budget (no county dollars were involved), a memorandum of understanding with the state Office of Children and Family Services and the continued provision of services by UC under the Home Health Agency and LTHH Care Program. All approved. In the latter matter DCE Beckman noted the problem is that the NYS DOH has a very slow approval process. Will Care therefore has not been able to provide services; UC has continued to do so. Legislator Parete inquired about the status of the Meals on Wheels program. Chairman Frey responded that not meals will continue. Apparently the funding is available (the number of meals increase and the costs went down). There are over 10,000 meals being provided. Further, if the weather is bad, both hot meal and a frozen meal will be delivered to ensure that the recipient would have a meal.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to two presentations.

The first one dealt with an explanation of Direct Connect. This is an initiative developed in UC which

has received both state and national attention. It is "an on-line resource directory that provides the Hudson Valley Region with the ability to map, manage, and mobilize large amounts of information" and is available as resources locally. Primarily developed to link youth and families to an extensive array of services in UC. There is an on-line resource directory which can be expanded to include a variety of available services, i.e., food pantries, day care, disaster related services, etc. The number of users, as well as the services most frequently used can be tracked. (<http://www.hvdirectconnect.org>)

The second presentation dealt with Ulster Corps (www.ulstercorps.org) and was handled by Rik Flynn. This is a 501 3c not for profit organization. Started about three years ago to assist those people in UC who wanted to volunteer get to the right group/organization to do so. While initially it was set up to match people and the organization to result in a successful partnership, more recently they have begun to work on bringing organizations together.

A major initiative at this time deals with the food agencies in UC. Mr. Flynn observed that in the course of their investigation they determined there was a definite resource of food in UC to feed everyone, but there are omissions and problems to do this.

To address this matter Ulster Corps approached Ulster BOCES. The latter offers a program, New Visions, which requires the students enrolled in it to participate in a course dealing with government. As the student, who spoke about this noted, rather than reading about such, the students are participating: to look at what the problems are that the food programs are facing in trying to feed everyone. The students developed a questionnaire and met with the soup kitchens to determine how to transport the food to the area food kitchens to use. The results of the findings will be presented by the students at the Second Services Summit. Mr. Flynn gave a variety of examples, a major one: can the transportation system in UC be used to move food as well as people.

Lee Cane, Observer Corps

Board of Health

The meeting of the UC Board of Health was convened at 7:01 on 2-14-11 by Chairman Dr. Thomas Stellato and adjourned at 7:56.

Members present: Drs. Stellato, Tack, Godfrey and Delma; and Joan Authenreith. Other attendees: Dr. Hasbrouck, Mrs. Veytia, Kevin DuMond, Dr. Heller (Medical Examiner) and Katrina Kouhout, secretary to Dr. Hasbrouck

Following the approval of the January, 2011 minutes, Dr. Stellato advised the group that Dr. Tack had recommended sending a letter to County Executive Hein acknowledging the positive comments that have been made by the NYS DOH re Dr. Hasbrouck, the work of the environmental division and the overall assessment of the local staff. Dr. Stellato read the letter to the group which then indicated its support to having it sent.

Next Dr. Stellato reminded the group that officers of the Board of Health are to be selected annually; Dr. Hasbrouck had advised Dr. Stellato that this procedure should be adhered to. Dr. Tack was elected the new Board chairman, Joan Authenreith, Vice-Chairman, and Dr. Delma, secretary. The elections are effective as of the March, 2011 Board meeting.

Dr. Stellato then announced that the two Board vacancies had been filled by appointment by County Executive Michael Hein and have been sent to the County Legislature for approval:

Mary Ann Hilderbrandt, Chief Quality and Compliance Officer of Gateway Community Industries, Inc. and Virna Little, Senior Vice-President of Psychosocial Services/Community Affairs for Institute for Family Health.

Dr. Hasbrouck presented his report which had been distributed. He noted that the heart health assessment, MYLifeCheck, was available www.myheartcheck.heart.org and was worth while taking. Additional items may be found on www.ulstercounty.gov/health.

Dr. Heller, Medical Examiner, noted that there had been a total of 11 cases: 5 autopsies, 1 suicide, no homicides.

Mrs. Veytia provided the Patient Service Report: During January, 2011 Kingston experienced a break in some gas mains near city hall, which required that the city do its lines over and there had been a period of extreme cold. Art Snyder, the county emergency management director asked the DOH to be prepared for its nursing division to help the emergency Red Cross shelter....expected 800-1000 people could possibly be impacted by the gas disruption and the severe cold. The nursing division prepared and did as asked. Additionally, the local DOH activated its preparedness plan for home care and called those who are the clients of DOH to determine what they would do for housing in the event that the situation called for such. The AIDS Resource Center has lost some of its funding. Local DOH was contacted to provide testing starting in March at the Law Enforcement Center.

The last item on the agenda was a review by Kevin DuMond of the Environmental Division's work on the UC Sanitary Code.

The UC Sanitary Code has been under review for about 15 months. This is the first review since

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1980. As a model the DOH group that is working on the revision is using the Rockland County code as a temp plate while reviewing the old code. The revision is labor intensive, as they go over the code line by line: as new ideas are raised the DOH goes back to the office and reviews and then reviews at the weekly meetings held every Tuesday at the County Attorney's office.

The first six articles are set for the revision and the process of approving such is now underway: Board of Health, Dr. Hasbrouck and the County Executive will get the revision...must review and sign off on. Once the other six articles are done they too will need to be reviewed and approved. Eventually, the code must then be put on file with the NYS DOH for its review and approval.

The last 6 articles are almost done. Mr. DuMond noted he did not see any reason why the code could not be reviewed in the future on an as needed basis. Rockland County apparently reviews its annually.

Mr. DuMond used a power point presentation to show the first 6 articles:

1. General Definitions and provisions; powers of the local board of health and commissioner/director; fees, permits, inspections and enforcement
2. Drinking water supplies: to protect public and private supply for UC residents and whatever is necessary to keep it safe
3. Offensive materials: anything put in garbage and septic trucks; all such trucks are permitted and inspected except for the city of Kingston haulers.
4. Waste facilities and disposal: ensure proper treatment of sanitary waster water in UC; regulate, approve and inspect water treatment facilities in UC
5. Realty Subdivisions: make sure all in accordance with state rules re design of water and waste water systems
6. Food service subdivisions: to insure proper transport, storage and preparation of food in regulated facilities. Seasonal temporary food service permit is a key revision. Also noted that there has to be a separate sink in the kitchens for food preparation.

Lee Cane, Observer Corps

The meeting of the UC T/Supervisor Association was convened by President John Valk, Supervisor T/Shawangunk at 8:40 on 2-15-11 and adjourned at 9:35.

Ten of the T/Supervisors were present. Other attendees: DCE Marshall Beckman, Dr. La Mar Hasbrouck, Ellen Reinhard, TFAC, Vince Martello.

Initially the supervisors dealt with minutes of December meeting (January meeting cancelled due to inclement weather) and the financial report.

The first speaker was Marshall Beckman, Deputy County Executive of UC (Legislator Fry was ill). Mr. Beckman distributed 2 handouts on the Golden Hill Health Care Center: the background material dealing with policy consideration; and the 9 options developed by the task force.

Note: these documents were available at the public hearings for those who attended.

Some of the points made: due to the legionella problem in early 2010 it was recognized that there were problems at the Center that would have to be corrected sooner rather than later.

Legislator Fry, chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee had noted need to develop a policy decision on what the future of the Center would be so a task force was created to work on the matter. The policy decision: what should UC do: renovate, build new, sell or close?

To correct existing immediate problems \$2.5 million to \$18.6 million dollars was the amount given to the cost. UC will need the beds (280) as the number of seniors is expected to double in the next 20 years.

While substantial number of seniors wish to stay in their homes, they cannot afford mores taxes.

Mr. Hein, the County Executive, is not advocating for anyone option, but whatever decision is made, how it will be paid for must be part of the decision.

The major financial increases that the effect the Center's budget and will continue to so: possible loss of IGT revenues, Medicaid rates, salary, social security, pension increases, required capitol repairs and improvements.

The county is working on having Dr. Hasbrouck of the UCDOH be involved to monitor nursing home admissions to stop "cherry picking" (which is illegal).

County Personnel has spoken with Mark Kissinger, Deputy Commissioner of the NYS Department of Health regarding what would happen to residents if Center is sold: can't displace the residents.

No, the Center has not been closed; months yet to go before any decision, whatever it is, is made; once decision made would be about 2 years before matters completed. (Note: NYSDOH must approve any such decision; welfare of residents of paramount consideration)

Mr. Fairbairn was concerned re the number of out of county/state residents. Mr. Quigley suggested that such more than likely have adult children living in UC; therefore, latter have been able to arrange

residence at the Center.

The second speaker was Dr. Hasbrouck, Director of the UCDOH. His topic tobacco and smoking: particularly as it involved sale of such products to UC youth. He introduced Ellen Reinhard, Director of the Tobacco Free Action Coalition, who explained how matters had been handled in Dutchess County.

The object of the talk was to enlist the support of the supervisor to the county initiative re policy to keep outside areas generally smoke free including those in parks, recreational and related residential areas as well as to arrange to monitor the actual sale of such products to youth.

Such rules regarding this topic Dr. Hasbrouck hopes to have included in the UC Sanitary Code which is under revision right now.

The latter part of the meeting involved discussion among the members about how insurance agreements are written, how matters had been handled during winter re getting fuel to residents in emergencies, and when the Kerhonkson Bridge would open (question put by Supervisor Distel to Mr. Martello)

Lee Cane Observer Corps

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Our deepest sympathy to Rhoda Gellen and her family on the loss of her husband Irwin. Both of them had a long time family membership as League members. Irwin, a 25 year plus IBM engineer, also conducted his own consulting practice after his retirement. He also held a number of leadership roles in the greater Kingston community. We shall miss his quiet wit, his devotion to honest dialogue and his insatiable inquisitive mind.