



Commentator

SEPTEMBER 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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CALENDAR 2011

CALENDAR 2011		
SEPTEMBER		
15	Thurs. 7 pm	Ulster Co. Reapportionment Commission presentation for the Saugerties and Mid-Hudson LWVs, Saugerties Public Library, 91 Washington Ave., Saugerties. Free
21	Wed. 5 pm	Gerald Benjamin talk on "College and Community in New Paltz and America," SUNY New Paltz, Coykendall Science Bldg Aud. Free
24	Sat. 10 – Noon	Get Moving Hudson Valley: a 350.org event at Walkway over the Hudson between Poughkeepsie and Highland (exhibits 9 am – 3 pm)
27	Tues. 1 pm	Resource Development Meeting at Margaret Sellers', 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
27	Tues. 5:30 pm	Solid Waste Study Committee, Gateway Diner, Highland (near Mid-Hudson Bridge)
OCTOBER		
3	Mon. 8–2:30	"Tax Cap Challenge" conference, SUNY New Paltz Student Union, presented by CRREO and Pattern for Progress. \$60 (\$30 for LWV members!) Call 845-565-4900 to register.
4	Tues. 7:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker's, 106 Park St, Hurley
11	Tues. 2 pm	Shared Services in Dutchess Study Committee at Eleanor Charwat's, 7 Creek Bend Rd, POK
12	Wed. 6-9 pm	"Green Drinks" at Aroma Thyme Bistro, Ellenville. An opportunity to socialize with others concerned about the environment. Dutch treat. \$8 admission. RSVP appreciated: mce@hvgreendrinks.org or 845-454-6410.
15	Sat. 5–7 pm	Wine Tasting Party at 21 Norman Drive Rye, NY to support our wonderful state LWV. \$75 pp (or \$250 for 2 people plus recognition)
19	Wed. 5-7 pm	"Hot Topics" Dutch treat cocktails and free treats, 11 Main Street Bistro, Kingston. "Why is this election so important?"
25	Tues. 5:30 pm	Solid Waste Study Committee, Gateway Diner, Highland (near Mid-Hudson Bridge)
27	Thurs. 5–7 pm	Dutchess County Executive candidate forum moderated by LWV's Ellie Charwat. Sponsored by Dutchess Co. Coalition of Nonprofit Execs, Locust Grove, 2683 South Rd, POK. Free, but register at 845-454-5062.
29	Sat. 10–1	Kingston Mayor candidate forum; UC District Attorney candidate forum, City Hall, Broadway, Kingston.
NOVEMBER		
1	Tues. 7 pm	Dutchess Family Court Judge candidate forum with County Executive candidates "drop-in". Sponsored by LWVMHR & Dutchess AAUW at POK Friends Meeting, 249 Hooker Ave.
2	Wed. 7:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker's, 106 Park St, Hurley (date, location to be confirmed)
8	Tue. 6am-9pm	ELECTION DAY
14	Mon. 7:30 am	Thank you breakfast for all county-wide candidates and retiring county elected officials, Deisings on Front St., Kingston. By invitation.
16	Wed. 3–6 pm	Conference on Solid Waste Management in Dutchess and Ulster Counties, SUNY New Paltz, Student Union. Free

Check our Calendar on-line for updated information
 Interested in one of our committees? Just show up at a meeting. Our members are always welcome to join.

Prez Sez...

It has been a challenging summer for so many of us in the region and I hope you and those you care about came through all right.

Somehow in spite of all the confusion we were able to set up a packed schedule for the fall with several candidate events, a conference at SUNY New Paltz on solid waste and our Dutchess and Ulster Resource Recovery Agencies, and even some social occasions where we can talk with one another about what's on our minds.

Please look over our calendar carefully and mark your own calendar with those events of special interest to you. Please know that you are always very welcome at any committee or board meeting as well as the more obviously public events.

We've included some events at SUNY New Paltz that should be of special interest to our members. Our frequent ally, Gerald Benjamin, is giving a talk on September 21 on "town/gown" relations - how communities and their colleges can interact most effectively. Go here for more info on that:

<http://www.newpaltz.edu/news/news.cfm?id=5614>

Then on October 3, SUNY's Center for Research, Regional Education, and Outreach (CRREO) is working with Pattern for Progress to present a conference on a topic that is affecting every local governmental body - the 2% property tax cap. We are among the sponsors and Pattern has kindly agreed to admit LWV members at a special \$30 rate - just be sure to say you're a member when you register. Click here for more info on the conference and how to register: <http://pattern-for-progress.org/join-us-tax-cap-challenge>.

Meanwhile, I hope we see you this Thursday night at 7 pm at the Saugerties Public Library. The Reapportionment Commission that redrew the Ulster County legislative lines will talk about the process and how they survived it - and set a positive example for other counties in the state. This is a Saugerties LWV event and we're delighted to be working with them on this.

See you soon. It's a busy time for voters who want to be well-informed!

Dare

Editor's Note

Due to a whole host of reasons, not the least of which were weather related problems, many of our reports are missing this month and this issue is substantially later than usual. We are sure you will understand and accept our apologies.

JMcG

ADVOCACY & STUDY**Ulster County Charter
Revision
Commission**

The newly appointed commission had its first meeting on September 8th and will be meeting every Tuesday at 3:00pm in the legislature conference room (6th floor) of the county office building. Mandated by the charter, the commission consists of 11 members (3 each appointed by the majority and minority parties of the legislature and 5 appointed by the County Executive. We're pleased to note that three members of the League are appointed to the board: Cindy Lowe (Chair), Jim McGarry and Tom Kadgen.

The commission will be conducting a number of interviews with county legislative and executive officials and experts as well as conducting a number of public hearings throughout the county.

A web page within the Ulster County website is being created to provide timely information regarding the Commission's activities. In addition to the formal hearings, the meetings are open to the public and time will be set aside to receive

comments.

Solid Waste

Our league is engaged in an ongoing study on solid waste in both Ulster and Dutchess Counties. Members are encouraged to support and participate in this effort. Cindy Lanzetta (packback56@yahoo.com) can answer all your questions. Check the calendar online or on the front page for meeting dates.

The committee has been producing and gathering a great deal of material. We hope to include brief summaries of what's on line in future years but for now you can find a list of some of the materials at

http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/Action_Study.html#Trash

Recently added materials include Financing & Fees for Solid Waste & Recycling Management (<ftp://midhudsongeosciences.com/SWfinancing/>)

Materials from the NYS Assembly Commission on Commission on Toxic Substances and Hazardous Wastes at

<http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/?sec=post&id=53>, including its most recent newsletter, may also be of interest.

Dutchess County Shared Services

The new Dutchess County Shared Services committee (Ellie Charwat, Nan Fogel, Diane Jablonski, Suzi Stoller, Anne Conroy and others) has been meeting regularly this year with the agreed-upon goal:

To disseminate to the public and other government entities what is being done or is being studied in the region in respect to shared government services, but not to conduct any studies ourselves

Most recently the committee has been talking with various towns, villages, and school districts about how they do purchasing.

Other areas where municipalities are currently sharing services: Assessor; Animal control; Highway; Library; Recreation; Sewer; Water; Zoning.

Continuing work: More municipal officials should be made aware of Hudson Valley Municipal Purchasing Group and the savings involved in cooperative purchasing. Testimonials of those who use it might make it more attractive to others.

The major cost concern to municipalities is health insurance that is increasing so much each year.

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/shareservices/index.html>

Best Practices page of the NYS Association of Counties.

www.nysac.org/County_Corner.php/

LWV GOLDEN HILL HEALTH CARE CENTER Study

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-

Group 2[Pros_and_Cons_10-19-10.pdf](#)**Materials and resources used by the League in formulating its consensus**
http://lwvmidhudson.org/Action_Study.html.**GOLDEN HILL SPECIAL TASK FORCE PRESENTATION TO THE LEGISLATURE**

The presentation video and full report can be viewed at www.totalwebcasting.com/view/?id=ulster# (the UC Legislature's "Webcast" page.) Select the November 30, 2010 entry from the menu. Also notice the "Documents" where you can view/download the full report.

**OBSERVER CORPS -
ULSTER COUNTY****Ulster County
Legislature Meeting**

The regular meeting of the Legislature was held on August 16th. (Absent: Legislators Felicello, and Frey. Richard Parete arrived at 7:51 PM)

The agenda included the usual array of funding and inter-governmental contract approvals.

Legislation regarding the "Climate Smart" initiatives was resubmitted from The Governmental Services and Administration Committee. Upon the unanimous vote of the legislature the Global Warming Committee was dissolved and a Climate Smart Committee was created. However, the companion Climate Smart Community Pledge resolution (www.ulstercountyny.gov/resolutions/184-11.pdf) had six "no" votes (Legislators Bernardo, Hansut, Harris, Hayes, Roberts, and Ronk)

Resolution 184-11, providing for a state contract to help fund an Alternatives to Incarceration program was referred back to committee after a lengthy discussion. Readers will recall an assault/homicide incident at the facility last fall at the Renaissance Program in Warwarsing. In connection with this contract, The Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee Chairman, Jack Hayes, has been attempting to obtain pertinent information from state officials with little success. The speakers expressed hope that ultimately the information would be forthcoming and would satisfy the legislators' various concerns.

Jim McGarry

**Economic
Development and
Tourism Committee**

Date: September 1, 2011 - Start Time: 5:01 p.m. - Finish Time: 6:27 p.m.

James F. Maloney, Chairman, called the meeting to order, followed by roll call and approval of the minutes of the August 8, 2011, meeting.

Lance Matteson, President, Ulster County Development Corporation (UCDC), discussed the proposed resolution approving the terms and conditions of certain PILOT agreement to be entered into between the Ulster County Industrial Development Agency and Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation in connection with the Central Hudson Gas & Electric Project. He spoke favorably of the financial benefits to CH, the county and the Saugerties Central School District. The resolution was approved.

The remainder of the meeting discussed the activities and issues surrounding the recent earthquake and Tropical Storm Irene. Legislator Jack Hayes asked what the committee can do: communicate.

Mr. Maloney discussed the Hazard Mitigation Plan(s) of the towns that are necessary for some FEMA assistance. There has been only partial participation of the towns, withstanding the request of Art Snyder, Director of Emergency Communications/ Emergency Management to complete the plans.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 9/12/11

**Governmental
Services &
Administration
Committee**

Special Meeting

Date: August 12, 2011 - Start Time: 6:03 p.m. - Finish time: About 7:15 p.m.

Chairman Kevin Roberts announced the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency Board voted to not adopt the proposed Flow Control rules. Mr. Roberts asked for a discussion on how to proceed. He suggested the agency board could bring up a motion to rescind the previous vote, then table the motion until legislators could hold discussions on the issues. After an extended discussion, sometimes led by Legislator Carl Belfiglio, on Flow Control, financial options and related issues the committee settled on the request of the UCRRA to reconsider the Flow Control legislation.

Ulster County Legislature: Governmental Services & Administrative Committee, held at the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY

Date: August 15, 2011 - Start Time: 6:03 p.m. - Finish Time: 6:55 p.m.

Chairman Kevin Roberts called the meeting to order.

Mr. Leon Smith, Chair of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency board, introduced Mr. John Parete, a UCRRA board member. He announced the board had tabled the Flow Control rules motion (as requested by the committee).

Mr. Tim DeGraff, CPA, UCRRA controller briefed the committee on financial highlights toward the upcoming proposed budget. Also discussed were elements of the draft 10-year plan that is will be issued the UCRRA.

All proposed resolutions were adopted.

Legislator Carl Belfiglio suggested the committee meet at the county office building. Mr. Roberts wants to meet at the UCRRA and the suggestion did not proceed

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 9/12/11

**Legislative Programs,
Education &
Community Services
Committee**

Date: September 6, 2011 - Start Time: 5:02 p.m. - Finish Time: 6:13 p.m.

Wayne Harris, Chairman, called the meeting to order followed by approval of the minutes of the August 8, 2011, meeting.

Lydia Reidy, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of UC, announced the CCE proposed budget will be out by September 15. She reviewed the effects of Tropical Storms Irene and Lee. They are substantial and the assessment phase is to be reviewed at a September 8 meeting.

Ms. Reidy and Melinda Herzog of the CCE staff discussed the status and activities of the Creating Healthy Places program. The City of Kingston, Ellenville and Phoenicia are involved. Complete Streets is a related program.

Ms. Eve Madalengoitia, representing the Dutchess County Arts Council discussed the recent awards event on August 19 at which 10 awards were made to Ulster County recipients. The committee is pleased with the process.

Mr. Don Katt, President, SUNY Ulster (UCCC), discussed the proposed resolution confirming appointment of member to the Ulster County Community College Board of Trustees. He recommended Mr. Bill LeDoux to the committee for that appointment. Voted, confirming the appointment. Mr. Katt also briefed the committee on activities related to Tropical Storm Irene (FEMA using the BRC) and the current enrollment situation (full-time enrollment continues to be down).

Mr. Katt and Mark Komdat, Dean of Administration, briefed the committee for awareness of the proposed 5-year plan (\$71M over time with the county share at

½) where the capital needs are to be discussed by the end of the year. They reviewed the seven High Priority Capital Projects 2011-2013 (\$7,375,000 with the county share at ½, \$3,687,500). The legislature must approve construction.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 9/12/11

Board of Health

The meeting of the UC Board of Health s convened by Chairman, Dr. Marc Tack, at 7:05 on August8, 2011 and adjourned at 8:45.

Present: Tack, Godfrey, Hilderbrandt, Stellato, Delma; Absent: Authen rieth

Other attendees: Hasbrouck, Gifford, Veytia, Heller, Martello,Qamar, Kouhout

Following approval of the Board minutes for June, 2011 (there was no July meeting), a report was given updating the status of the Scandinavian Grace Café provided by Director of Environmental Services Gifford: a 30 day extension had been granted to allow for installing the UV system; however, as of August 5 the system had been installed and the Café was in compliance. At the time of the meeting the Café owner is working on paying off the \$5000 fine.

Dr. Hasbrouck then reported on the status of the merger of the UCDOH and the UCDMH. His report was extensive. Some of the high lights of the report were:

- reason for developing this collaboration between the two departments was the need to consider other models for providing health services given the changes in the economy;
- a 12 member task force was developed which included Dr. Hasbrouck as chair; and representatives of the Office of the County Executive, UC Legislature; Departments of Mental Health, Community Services Board, Information Services, Local Department of Health. Additionally, representatives of State DOH, OMH, OASAS were involved and apparently were supportive of collaboration of the two local departments and their colocation;
- four months and 8 meetings later a variety of recommendations were developed:
- plan is to move local DOH to the building presently occupied by UCDOH at Golden Hill, which will entail some cost; no negative findings to the collaboration of the two local departments were noted; expect improvement in coordination of the two departments and development of efficiencies for both departments and those needing the services of the two departments; there will be one commissioner for both (Dr. Hasbrouck);
- an organizational structure was shown as well which included Deputy Director of Administration, Deputy Commissioner for Mental Hygiene, Deputy Commissioner for Health Access and Improvement, Fiscal Officer, Medical Examiner, the Board of Health and Community Services Board among other titles, etc. (Note: This was the second presentation on the subject by Dr. Hasbrouck, the first being to the Health and Human Services Committee on July 7 (see July/August, 2011 Commentator)

During the discussion following the report, Dr. Tack noted that UCMH is not the easiest department for people in crisis who are patients to access. The question of whether the individual meets the necessary criteria for admission apparently creates this situation.

Ms. Qamar the Deputy Commissioner for UCMH explained that an attempt had been made to fast track such patients. Unfortunately, there is a month long waiting list now in part because MH has been losing staff due to staff concerns about the possible privatization of MH services. Another problem is that health insurance does not always provide coverage for mental health services.

Dr. Godfrey noted that individuals, who don't think there is anything wrong with themselves, are unstable and frequently end up in the criminal justice system.

It was also noted that there are community organizations which do provide ancillary services which can be utilized by those in need of mental health

services. Family of Woodstock operates a hot line 24/7. While psychiatric staff in hospitals is hired by the latter, there is a close working relationship between them and the staff of UCMH which benefits those needing such services. All apparently work with UCMH.

Dr. Hasbrouck noted that as part of the merger effort there would be a "Mental Health 101" for the Board of Health. This will enable the latter to learn what services are available. This would include providers from UCMH, Probation, ARKS, Family, Criminal Justice system, Gateway, etc. There is also a 19 page report of the task force on the merger with recommendations.

Dr. Tack observed this as a positive, noting that most doctors don't know hoe to access such services.

Mr. Martello reported on the results of the Second Annual Healthy Ulster County Summit. Held July 13, 2011 about 70 people attended. Under the four headings developed during the first summit: seniors, women, environment, and youth, each provided a report on how each had developed during the last year. One aspect noted was that each had found there were others in the community doing the same type of work. Additionally, it was observed that there was a need to bring in others from the community who were more expert in the development of the four areas of investigation.

Under the Patient Services Report, Mrs. Veytia reported that the local DOH had been subject of a medication/vaccine audit conducted under Article 28 by the Royal Care Pharmacy Services group. Areas of refrigeration, medication storage at the Flatbush site and clinic site . Local DOH did well.

A second item dealt with the costs for flu and pneumonia vaccinations. The actual vaccines are purchased off the state contract. Apparently there are not a lot of people who are served; generally private pay. During the discussion it was observed that: county should not lose money; apparently Medicare will cover the cost; that time should be spent checking which vaccine provides the best results. Decided that flu vaccine should be \$20 charge and pneumonia \$50.

Dr. Heller, the Medical Examiner reported that during July there were 18 calls: no suicides, 4 autopsies and 4 site visits. In addition, Dr. Heller and Dr. Grovenburg were given a community award by the Jewish Community organization.

The final report of the meeting was provided by the Environmental Health Services Director Erica Gifford.

-the local DOH has developed several partnerships in the community regarding evaluating the lead detection program. The county has been engaged in this in the mid-town Kingston area;

-Civil Penalties Bill: this referenced a bill (no copy available at the meeting) that would raise the present \$1000 fine to \$2000. If passed the law would supersede the public health law as it applies to the hearings it holds.

During discussion it was pointed out that the goal was to get people to comply; penalties implementation was not to be viewed as a fund raiser. Other comments made were to possibly consider using increase to those who were chronic violators, but need to be consistent to be fair.

The third part of the report dealt with the Sanitary Code and the progress made in any further changes.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp