

The first order of business was a public hearing to consider the “recommendations of the Dutchess County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board for inclusion of predominantly viable agricultural land with Agricultural District 21.”

Many property owners spoke at the hearing. First was a resident of Rhinebeck whose application for inclusion in the Agricultural District was denied. He explained that his intent is to grow ginseng, which is encouraged by the DEC, the land is surrounded by land in the Agricultural District, the tract is large and he prefers that it not be developed.

Next, a Red Hook resident read from a letter to the Legislature from the Mayor of the Village opposing inclusion in the District of a 4.22 acre lot within the village as against the public interest and in contravention of the village’s land use development and animal husbandry laws. The landowner challenged this, explaining that the land is on the edge of the village, has been continuously used in an agricultural capacity for decades, and is near to commercial properties; he supported his position with a petition in support signed by 15 neighbors, many of whom use the property for a community garden.

The owner of a 78-acre parcel on Violet Ave. in Hyde Park, formerly Gilbert Darien Farm (which operated for almost 100 years until the owner died in 2006), stated that he had purchased the property with the intent of returning it back to a farm and board horses. He wants to keep it agricultural and does not want to develop it.

An aggrieved property owner from Rhinebeck complained that he had submitted paperwork to the AG Board and received an acknowledgement that the forms were received but never received a determination. Without getting into specifics, he suggested that the Board was acting improperly and had submitted false information to the Legislature. He claimed to have hired an attorney and was preparing to bring a lawsuit.

A resident of Union Vale and owner of 11 Kettle Farm reported difficulties communicating with and getting approvals for a farm from the Town of Union Vale. Her family wants to have a family farm on 11 acres but has been instructed that they must hold off on any animals.

The owner of two separate but not contiguous parcels totaling seven and a half acres on Ackert Hook was denied inclusion. He noted that he had made an error in the paperwork which may have been the reason for the denial, and stated that both parcels were farmed historically and both had farmland soil of historical importance.

Owners of a commercial nursery and florist in Pawling also owned two separate parcels in Pawling that have been used to support that business. One of the parcels was removed from the Agricultural District. Their attorney explained that in seeking to be added back, he learned that the Planning Board had requested additional information

from the owners, but that request had not been received; he provided that information to the Legislature.

The public hearing was then adjourned, with Chairman Truitt explaining that the vote on inclusion would take place at the next month's meeting and that the Legislature will recommend that the AG and Farmland Protection Board take into consideration the public comments.

A second public hearing followed on the tentative budget of Dutchess Community College for the period September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2026.

Only one person, a resident of Pleasant Valley spoke. She commented that, in light of the decline in student enrollment on campus and the growth of high school enrollment and the size of the budget, "[r]ight-sizing the college may be a needed consideration"; she hoped that "serious consideration be given to the number of staff and faculty on campus." The hearing was then adjourned.

With no one speaking on agenda items, the Legislature unanimously approved the minutes from the prior meeting. It also unanimously passed 14 items on the consent agenda without discussion.¹

¹ Resolutions 81 and 82 (authorizing the issuance of \$1,525,100 serial bonds of the County pay the cost of HVAC equipment and system replacements in county buildings; and issuances of \$667,000, \$600,000 serial bonds, to pay a part of the country's share of the cost of the purchase of busses for public transit); Resolution 98 (appointments to the Community Services Board); Resolution 99 and 106 (confirming appointment of Mary Grace Centeno, MD as Medical Examiner, and confirming appointment to the Dutchess County Board of Ethics); Resolution 101 (authorizing amendment of funding under the Trade Adjustment Act); Resolution 102 (authorizing payment of a prior year unencumbered voucher from 2025 funds as it pertains to the Department of Mental Health: Resolution 10 (amending the 2025 adopted county budget as it pertains to the Department of Health: Resolution 104 (amending resolution number 2023, 223, consenting to the issuance by the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority of its service agreement, revenue notes and bonds; Resolution 105 (amending the 2025 adopted county budget as it retains to the Housing Trust Fund and the Department Of Planning and Development); Resolution 107, 108 and 109 (authorizing grant award with New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services for statewide targeted reductions in intimate partner violence initiative and amending the 2025 adopted county budget as it pertains to the Office of Probation and Community Corrections, the Sherriff's Office, and the District Attorney's Office); Resolution 110 (authorizing the filing of Section 5307 and 5339 grant applications.

With Federal Transit Administration and New York State Department of Transportation for matching funds for capital assistance under the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 as it pertains to the Department of Public Works Public Transit Division); Resolution 111 (public auction of county property acquired through in rem foreclosure and authorization to execute quick claim deeds conveying said parcels of real property); Resolutions 112 and 113 (adoption of Dutchess Community College budget, and appointment to the Dutchess Community College Board of Trustees).

Legislator Kau gave the only committee report. She pointed to the long-standing recommendation of the Environmental Management Council that the Legislature look at the usage of road salt, a source of contamination of our drinking water. She urged the Legislature to bring in an expert to give a presentation on the issue.

Several legislators sought information about, and described the need for progress on, the YOU (Youth Opportunity Union) center to be constructed at the former YMCA site on Montgomery Street in Poughkeepsie. Legislator Kaul reported that she had recently attended a City of Poughkeepsie Council meeting where city officials had asked many questions about the YOU but did not get answers. She also discussed her constituent's desire for a pool there, especially for therapeutic purposes. Legislator Atkins stated that at a leadership meeting, he learned that the Mayor of Poughkeepsie and the County Executive were "kind of working on something" with regard to the YOU. He requested that information about this be shared at the next month's meeting, along with the minutes of the YOU Advisory Board so that the public could be apprised as to what is going on. Legislator Metzger echoed these concerns. He outlined the history of the project and noted that two years had gone by without a serious update. Legislator Brendli added that the Legislature needed to know what was going on financially, and pointed, for example, to a large Swims Grant for the pool that has not yet been used.

Legislator Drago requested the quarterly EMS data that was requested and promised a week before but not received. He also asked that the quarterly data be posted to the county website when it is received so that the public could see it as well.

Legislator Caswell congratulated Mike McCormick on his unanimous appointment to the DCC Board of Trustees. He reviewed McCormick's many contributions to the College – from financial contributions, to daycare, to architectural projects - leading to his inclusion in the DCC Hall of Fame.

Nine members of the public spoke at the session. Among them were city of Poughkeepsie residents, a City of Poughkeepsie council member, two people who are candidates for council seats, and City of Poughkeepsie business people. All spoke about the YOU and/or the 26 Oakley St. shelter, criticizing the lack of progress on the YOU, and/or supporting scatter sites for the homeless throughout the county instead of concentrating the homeless in the City of Poughkeepsie. They complained that the County was failing to prioritize youth in the county, was wasting money on a fence surrounding an empty lot where the YOU is supposed to be built, and failing to maintain 26 Oakley Street making the property an eyesore.

With respect to their support for scatter sites for the homeless, the speakers maintained that the homeless should be scattered among all the towns in the county proportionally by population. For example, a small town like Pine Plains with a population of 2116 would have to house 5 people, while the Town of Poughkeepsie with a population of 45,458 would have to house 108. One speaker, a Catholic priest from Red Hook who endorsed the idea, spoke from experience: his parish provided warming centers to homeless people in Red Hook last winter and, working with local police, volunteers

provided services to those staying there and managed to help some obtain permanent housing.

Other issues addressed were: concern that federal budget cuts will be devastating to the county and the silence regarding this by local elected officials; unlawful conduct by ICE officers; and a plea for free public busses.

At the conclusion of the session, condolences were offered for the passing of Robert Bulson, a long-time member of the Arlington Fire Department and part-time Deputy Sheriff, and Ronald Anthony Orlando, who worked for the County Department of Social Services and was a Probation Officer.