



Commentator

August 2009

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		
2009		
AUGUST		
29-30	9:00am-3:00pm	Yard Sale at Emilie Hauser's 63 Highland Ave., Kingston
SEPTEMBER		
1	7:15pm-9:15pm	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Dr., Hurley
15	Noon-9:00pm	PRIMARY DAY
22	6:00pm-8:30pm	Membership Recruitment and Salad Supper Meeting at the Town of Esopus Library, 128 Canal St., Port Ewen
OCTOBER		
1	10:30am	Observer Corps meeting at Deisings, 111 North Front Street, Kingston
6	7:15pm-9:15pm	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Dr., Hurley
20	7:00pm-9:00pm	Membership Meeting at New Paltz BOCES, 175 Route 32 North, New Paltz, NY 12561 Climate Change (Part 1) How our region is being affected by climate change and how our local and county governments can work more effectively to reduce our collective carbon footprint, adapt to the inevitable changes, and maximize the significant economic development opportunities in clean energy and green infrastructure. Part 2 of this discussion to come in early 2010.
NOVEMBER		
3	6:00am-9:00pm	ELECTION DAY

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>

MEMBERS: Need a ride? Want to car-pool?
 Contact Jean McGarry, 336-6622 or jfmcg@hvc.rr.com

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

PREZ SEZ...

Greetings,

The summer is flying by and our very able board of directors has planned much for the coming year. Perhaps our greatest accomplishment this summer is the formation of the long overdue Advocacy Committee presently chaired by Tom Kadgen. Other members serving on the committee are Jim McGarry, Jacki Moriarty, Renée Sachs, Dare Thompson, Cindy Bell, Frank Cassetta, Esther Stickley, Margaret Sellers and Vic Melville. At an organizational meeting, the committee members agreed to initially focus on a two-part mission. The first part of the mission states:

"The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region has an advocacy committee which is seeking to maintain the integrity of the Ulster County Charter in its application to the newly created Ulster County Government."

The second part of the mission will be a follow up to a previous league study on Criminal Justice in Ulster County. The committee will advocate that the Criminal Justice Council be provided with the data it needs to become effective. Policy cannot be formed or operations improved without the necessary information to do so.

While our Observer Corps has done an excellent job impartially reporting numerous public meetings, it is fitting and proper that our league more publicly assumes the role as an advocate for action and change. While Tom and the committee are open to member input, he does advise that most of the committee work will be conducted by e-mail.

In closing, I want to extend my apologies to Gloria Plasker since I inadvertently omitted her name when I congratulated our June honorees in my last column. Gloria received a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition for her many years of committing her time, energy and support to the league. Judging from the number of reserved "Plasker" tables at the luncheon, Gloria had numerous friends and family who agreed with our choice for this award. Gloria, congratulations and please accept our heartfelt thanks.

Jean

NOTICE OF STUDY AMENDMENT

The proposed study voted on at the May annual meeting stated: *How would consolidation of local government units and services achieve increased local efficiencies and effectiveness?*

Proposed change in wording: *How would the sharing of services between local government units and services achieve increased local efficiencies and effectiveness?*

Rationale for change: The League study would concentrate on shared services rather than consolidation of services. That is the initiative currently underway in Ulster County and it is the recommended method for saving tax dollars in Ulster County.

Requirements to change the proposed study: Information concerning the proposed changes must be sent to all members at least two weeks prior to a general membership meeting at which the change is to be discussed. (General meeting 9/22)

Final action by the membership will be taken at a succeeding meeting. (General meeting 10/20)

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS**LINKS:**

Ulster County Legislature webcast - live & archived:

www.totalwebcasting.com/live/ulster

New York State meeting webcasts: www.nysegov.com/webcast.cfm

Other local meetings: www.statewidemediaproject.org

Recent legislation, agendas and minutes of the legislatures:

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/countygov/departments/legislature/clindex.htm> (Dutchess)

<http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/legislature.html> (Ulster).

<http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/committeesinfo/index.html> (Ulster County)

Our Elections Page has links to Dutchess and Ulster County towns and villages websites at http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/elections.html#Local_Gov_Sites.

**Behind the Scenes I
An Interview with David
Donaldson, Chairman of
the County Legislature**

The difference between the LWV's functions of education and advocacy were explained to Mr. Donaldson and that we planned a series of articles with both legislative and executive leaders in the new county government which would represent the way the system functions, the leaders' assessments and his/her thoughts about the present and

possibilities for the future. This series would be called Behind the Scenes and its thrust was purely educational.

Donaldson stated that he likes problem solving and he views his job as putting people together to reach that goal. He Does not care for partisan politics or "drama" but if forced to play that game he knows how to do it He believes that the Legislature's role of setting policy is a very rewarding one He voluntarily interjected that he felt The Daily Freeman had somewhat misrepresented his position regarding his request for inclusion in the budget process..His goal was to achieve transparency by being an observer. He has no wish to circumvent the Charter which he supported.

The Legislature currently has a part time budget officer. The Chairman of the Legislature expressed his intention to hire a firm that specializes in budget analysis for legislatures and already serves Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, and Westchester Counties. He believes in the value of having an "outside perspective."

He noted that his goal is a good working relationship between the branches of county government and believes that mutual respect is key to achieving this. He learned this concept from his mentors on the Kingston Common Council where he began his political career. He was instructed to leave it on the floor" and not personalize political disagreements.

Looking ahead Donaldson is committed to the committee system but feels the process should be streamlined with concepts such as time limits on meetings, and limiting the size and number of committees. He sees no negative impact on effectiveness in going from twelve to seven members. In his opinion all committee meetings should occur in one week and then follow up.

Ultimately he is preparing for the period following the 2010 census when the size of the Legislature .will be reduced from thirty three to twenty three as voted on by the citizens of Ulster County. Issues may arise after the Charter has been in effect for a time. Donaldson sees the question of legislative salaries surfacing since there have been no increments recently. He also feels that increased compensation may attract more qualified candidates and possibly contribute to greater accountability. He also suggests that committee chairs should receive a differential in salary for their extra work.

Finally he feels that the legislators are in transition as they examine their new roles and functions as designed by the Charter.

Cindy Bell and Renee Sachs

Ulster County Caucuses

The Republican Caucus began at 6:00pm on August 12th with a short executive meeting with Dan Heppner, Counsel to the Legislature, in attendance. Thereafter the Caucus considered the agenda for the following legislature meeting. Among the items generating discussion was a resolution confirming appointments to the Board of Health. Several members were of the opinion that the appointees did not adequately represent the geographic diversity of Ulster County and noted all were from the northern-most section of the county.

The Caucus considered Resolution #251 relating to exempting certain employees of UCCC (essentially part time/temporary employees) from the requirements of fingerprinting and background checks. As the resolution only sets the date of a required public hearing, the members proposed the matter be transferred to the Consent Agenda.

Arriving at the Democratic Caucus after the close of the Republican Caucus meeting and noting that Resolution #251 was under discussion, it was obvious that the matter would not pass on consent. See the meeting notes below.

Jim McGarry

Ulster County Legislature Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Donaldson at 7:00pm. With a relatively short agenda the Legislature was able to wrap up its business by 8:10. The Consent agenda was passed with little comment. Resolution 234 regarding Board of Health appointees passed but only after some discussion about geographic representation.

A second item of note was a proposed License Agreement With Crossroads Ventures, LLC, for two crossings over county owned railroad in the Town Of Shandaken. A similar agreement had been presented at last month's meeting (for one crossing only) but was referred back to committee. As before, this resolution was referred back at the request

of the sponsor with little discussion. See the notes below regarding the Public Works and Capital Projects meetings.

Continuing efforts to encourage economic stimulus, the legislature adopted a resolution supporting a NYS bill to provide an income tax credit for purchases of a new primary residence (up to *and* including, one million dollars.) A number of legislators abstained from voting because they are involved in the real estate profession.

The legislature voted, again, to continue the increased sales tax rate for an additional two years. Three of the 28 legislators present voted against the measure.

Closing out the meeting was a resolution (#251) setting a public hearing on a local law exempting certain employees of UCCC from the requirements of fingerprinting and background checks as required by Local Law No. 14 of 2007. The employees covered would be essentially part time and/or temporary hires. Although there was little discussion regarding the substance of the resolution, several legislators, primarily on the majority side, opposed this "Late Resolution" as having not been fully examined by the legislators individually. Further, they took issue with the need for haste as the Local Law, if ultimately adopted, would be of little value for the current school term. Proponents pointed out that the proposal had been fully considered by the Laws & Rules Committee, offices of the college attorney, the Ulster County and Legislative Attorneys. A motion made to refer the resolution to a subcommittee comprised of members of the Education, Tourism and Community Relations, Human Development & Personnel, and Criminal Justice and Safety committees was defeated and thereafter the resolution was approved. A public hearing will be held on September 2nd.

Jean and Jim McGarry

Ulster County Public Works and Capital Projects Committee

The Legislative Public Works and Capital Projects Committee was convened at 5:03 on 7-7-09 by Chairman Loughran and adjourned at 5:35.

Members present except for Legislative Roberts and Sheeley. Other attendees: Commissioner Sheeley, Chairman Donaldson and members of the public interested in a proposed license agreement with Crossroads Venture.

First on the agenda was an amendment to resolution #178 to allow for standardization of certain equipment, i.e. trucks which will save money and lessen the need for extensive inventory on the part of the county. Passed.

The next item on the agenda was the establishment of a pedestrian and bicycle policy. As a result of the discussion the committee voted to add the statement: This resolution pertains to design work only, which was passed; providing that the Legislature's attorney, Daniel Heppner, gave his approval. Particularly concerned about the inclusion of design work so that in the future the county would be able to apply for grants that would have a benefit to this topic.

The third item dealt with authorizing the lease the county has with Ulster Savings Bank for the offices of the Board of Elections. Passed.

The fourth item was Resolution #219 regarding a proposed license agreement with Crossroads Ventures, LLC for a crossing over the county owned railroad in the T/Shandaken. There was considerable discussion and comments made by those who had come to the meeting to talk to this resolution. The final points: Chairman Loughran stated he would pull the resolution from consideration by the Legislature on 7-9-09 at the time of the Legislative meeting (necessary as resolution already part of the packet for consideration.) He indicated that he would do this as the County Attorney, Bea Havranek, had not had the opportunity to thoroughly review the resolution and its implications.

Further, he advised the group that the license was contingent upon the property in question actually being sold to NYS. If there was no sale, there would be no license.

There will be a completely new resolution developed, which could include moving the section dealing with the 30 day termination for the county from the whereas section to the resolve section of the resolution.

The 5th item dealt with Introductory Local Law #8 which will become Local Law #6 of 2009 and permit the sale of surplus county real property to Dorothy Burke for \$7,730. Passed.

Next meeting scheduled for Monday, August 17 at 4:45.

However, on August 5, 2009 there was a special meeting of this committee that was convened by Chairman Loughran at 5:50 and adjourned at 7:05. All members present.

**Ulster County
Legislative Health
Services Committee**

There were three resolutions to be considered: two were passed; one, which was the primary consideration was Resolution #245. The topic was the same as that which Resolution #219 had dealt with the proposed license agreement with Crossroads Ventures, LLC....see above for the initial discussion held in July.

Note: It should be noted that while the resolution being considered on August 5 had a new number, #245, the new resolution referenced two crossings rather than one and the 30 day termination clause remained as a whereas rather than being moved to the resolved section.

More than an hour was devoted to discussion on this new resolution. Comments were made by legislators and members of the public including the attorney for Crossroads Ventures. Given the content and delivery of the comments as spoken it was clear that this is a particularly sensitive and emotional topic to those who were present.

The concerns appeared to involve environmental matters, development of the land, appraisal value of the land and the effect on taxes and the taxpayers.

After the rather intense discussion and commentary the decision was made to table any further discussion and decision until all the environmental information and any other aspects of concern had been acquired and could be dealt with.

A further note: this meeting was considered sufficiently important that the Democratic caucus scheduled for 6 PM was not held.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The Committee was convened by Joseph Roberti, Jr., Deputy Chairman at 6:35, June 25, 2009 and adjourned at 7:34. Members present except for Legislators Parete and Stoeckler. Additionally, Deputy County Executive Beckman and Acting Public Health Director Veytia were in attendance.

Initially, DCE Beckman commenced his report to the committee by introducing Ms. Veytia, the APHD. He noted that she has assumed the position at a very difficult and trying time for the department given the developments during the last two weeks with the department's administration and the concerns regarding H1N1 (swine flu), concluding that UC is fortunate to have her on staff.

He then provided a detailed presentation of the specific events occurring since June 11. At that time the County Executive made the decision to place Dean Palen, the Public Health Director on administrative leave; and transfer Mrs. Palen, the Director's secretary to another department with the same position. As a result of opening the Health Department safe (Mrs. Palen apparently was the only one with the combination) about \$35,000 in checks, a small amount of cash and applications for permits were found; all of which were inventoried by the Finance Department. The County Executive called the Comptroller who commenced an audit of the Health Department which is still going on.

Mr. Beckman emphasized that the implications were not clear. It was difficult to determine who may have been doing business without a permit or anyone's knowledge.

It is the intention of the office of the County Executive to work/collaborate with the Comptroller, to learn how extensive the businesses and individuals operating without permits maybe...to make sure the process going forward is done correctly; that when checks are received they are deposited, a receipt forwarded to the sender, and should applications be denied that a refund is sent back; and to accomplish its work by July 15.

At this point, approximately 6:45 motion made and passed to move into Executive Session. This lasted until shortly after 7 PM.

Discussion on the salary range for the Public Health Director, who has yet to be hired and must be a medical doctor, was taken up. The \$120,000-\$150,000 range was reviewed. Mr. Beckman indicated that the application process would be closed shortly and interviews begun. He did not believe he would have to return and ask for more given the economy and what the other surrounding counties are paying. Emphasized again looking for a doctor with public health background and administrative capability, a leader.

Ms. Veytia advised that the Health Department is dealing with its 5th and 6th cases of H1N1 (swine flu), not school age; and the Village of Ellenville, which has elected to cancel any mass gatherings, i.e. in this instance the 8th grade graduation (hope to avoid the very young and grandparent age from possibly being exposed; and the UCPHD has supported such decision). In discussion following, reference made that the County

**Ulster County Human
Development &
Personnel Committee**

Executive office would on a case by case basis release the name of the school district where any cases found, but no names of individuals. Ms. Veytia noted that the nursing division had been audited and the HD had initiated its corrective action plan; the report detailing this will be distributed to the HD, CE, Legislator Parete and Board of Health Chairman Kelley.

A motion was made and passed to accept \$5,000 from NYS Senator Larkin to be used towards an Automatic External Defibrillator.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The Committee was convened at 4:00, July 1, 2009 by Chairman Gregorius and adjourned at 4:45. Members present except for Legislators Hansut and Terrizzi. Other attendees: Comptroller Auerbach, Laura Walls of Comptroller's staff, Christa Barringer, Director, UC Youth Bureau.

Following approval of the June 2, 2009 minutes, Chairman Gregorius advised that the order of the agenda would be altered in order to continue the discussion dealing with the DSS Utilization Study begun prior to convening the meeting. Legislator Loughran indicated that the request he had raised initially in 2008 to get a report from DSS on how DSS programs were used or not, who uses them, which ones are doing well, etc., (which he had not received as yet) caused him to speak with DCE Beckman. The latter advised that questions could be sent to him and he would respond as soon as possible.

It was agreed by the committee that for the next meeting all questions would be submitted so a question sheet could be formalized and sent to DCE Beckman. It was learned that the audit of DSS that the Comptroller's office is doing deal with only the spend down program of Medicaid.

Legislator Loughran also submitted a copy of an e-mail he had received (none of the others present had received such) which appeared to be advertising DSS and urging people to apply.

Comptroller Auerbach then reported on the whistleblower law review. There is a "gaping hole" in the county operation. A whistleblower law is designed to protect county employees who come forward to report matters going on in the county that are not right. Laura Walls advised that there are protections under state and Federal laws to provide protection for those who do come forward.

During discussion Legislator Provenzano noted that Administrative Services had felt Personnel should handle this matter and she intends to also contact the New York State Association for Counties for examples of what other counties do; and then bring in legal counsel (Comptroller Auerbach commented that Legislature is fortunate to have legal counsel on staff to advise it).

Legislator Loughran suggested that employees should be encouraged to come forward, but there should be consequences noted for those who are responsible for the wrong doing.

Chairman Gregorius asked Legislator Provenzano to take the lead on this matter; stating that he believed that this committee, Administrative Services, and even the County Executive's office should all be involved.

Continuing with the agenda Chairman Gregorius noted that there had been a press release that there would annual training provided by the county on its harassment policy rather than having it every 3 years.

Christa Barringer, Director of the UC Youth Bureau reviewed the draft resolution involving the NYS Office of Children & Family Services 2009 Resource Allocation Plan.

She explained that the allocation information should have been received by the county in 2008, but the state had put the funding allocation on hold for 9 months until May 29, 2009. During the last month various groups which had oversight of this matter did so and developed the resolution #223 for the committee to vote on. Following discussion, the committee passed the resolution.

The committee was again convened at 4:45 7-20-09 by Chairman Gregorius and adjourned at 5:57. All members of the committee were present. Daniel Heppner, Council to the Legislature had been excused due to personal commitments.

There were four items on the agenda for the committee to consider:

First: A review/explanation of how insurance and Medicaid as utilized to provide services for inmates. The individual holding the insurance policy on inmates at the county jail had advised county officials that inmates are in fact covered by insurance that they have on the prison; that should anything medically happen to the inmate the latter would be covered by the county up to \$10,000, but if the inmate is so eligible for MA prior to entering a local hospital the county pays for the inmate's bill up to \$10,000. Once the inmate has recovered, and been returned to the jail, the county can apply for MA and have retroactive reimbursement. Those inmates who are from other counties who experience such medical problems as noted above are nevertheless covered by their home counties.

Second: The committee approved a draft resolution authorizing the Chairman of the UC Legislature to execute an inter municipal agreement with the city of Kingston youth bureau.

Third & Fourth: Both of these items dealt with the whistle blower topic: copies of references as supplied by counsel Heppner to the committee; as well as a projected resolution to cover a program as policy for UC employees/agents.

Chairman Gregorius reviewed what had been done to date: that Legislator Provanzano and the committee she chairs, Administrative Services, had done considerable work on this subject; and he asked her to present those findings.

The committee went over the proposed resolutions developed by Mr. Heppner, item by item as well as the selection of particular words and phrases. Once this was done, the committee agreed it would be best to have a "clean copy" of what it had agreed upon to review at the next meeting; that Mr. Heppner should be asked to review the changes prior to the committee meeting; and establishing a process that the committee would follow to eventually refer to the UC Legislature. The process would include the above as well as having both committees review and approve, refer to the Laws and Rules Committee, which is required, and then back to the two committees and then to the county Legislature.

Prior to adjournment, Legislator Provenzano asked the Observer what comments she had. The Observer noted this would not necessarily be the view point of the League of Women Voters, but rather the Observer's personal opinion. The observer noted that the process the committee had followed in reviewing the material as noted above was important and appropriate as well as the procedure it had developed to eventually refer to the Legislature. Paying close attention to the used of words used to reflect what the committee wished to convey was very important. Chairman Gregorius commented that this was helpful.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp.

Ulster County Legislative Ways and Means Committee

Note: The summaries for the Legislative Ways and Means Committee meetings for July 1, 2009 and July 8, 2009 are presented together given the material that was on the agendas. Both meetings were chaired by Legislator Alan Lomita.

At the July 1, 2009 meeting there were 18 resolutions considered, 16 passed.

Resolution 217 dealt with the lease for the Family Court premises. After discussion the committee decided to delay voting for one week to permit contact discussion with the landlord regarding possible changes in the lease.

At the July 8, 2009 committee meeting the committee was advised that the plans suggested to the landlord had been rejected. The landlord, Heritage Energy, indicated that having agreed to a 10% reduction in the lease price and agreeing to provide 14 more parking places, he had done enough. The county does not at this time have another site to move the Family Court to. Further, it was noted that it is possible that if the county enters into a new 5-year lease and the states raised objections (which it has in the past with respect to the site), there could be litigation. Generally, the members of the committee agreed that the county needed a plan, i.e. to develop a new site...long overdue. Passed.

Resolution #218 dealt with the extension of an agreement with NYS for the purchase of a van for the sheriff's department...the Dive/Rescue Team; and equipment for the van in question. At the July 1 meeting this was passed and at the July 8 meeting the amendment as noted above.

Resolution #222 dealt with authorizing the UC Legislature to have representation at departmental budget review sessions with the County Executive's office and to receive

copies of all departmental budget requests and accompanying documentation. While passed at the July 1 meeting, it was in fact referred back to committee for work.

Resolution #281 referred to how the costs of election services would be charged back to the towns and city of Kingston. Note: This matter has been discussed more than once at meetings of the Town Supervisors.

A special committee met to deal with this matter and developed the resolution. It was approved by the Laws and Rules Committee as well. This was viewed as a compromise. The UC Board of Elections will provide a tentative billing amount to the various towns and the city of Kingston by August 15 of each calendar year for use by the municipality's planning for the next fiscal year's budget cycle and an actual bill for the current fiscal year on or before December 15. Additionally, the towns and the city of Kingston would be held harmless for the Inspector Training mileage for each calendar year billing cycle not to exceed \$15,000. If the latter cap is exceeded, the overage will be charged to the towns and city based on their proportional percentage of the total travel costs. If adopted, this procedure will commence in 2010.

At the July 8 meeting Art Smith, UC Budget Director, made his quarterly report to the committee on the state of UC finances. His primary concern dealt with the sales tax. A draft resolution is prepared, but must wait until the Governor signs. Once done, the county legislature must pass. Important that this be done in August. Wont know sales tax situation until July 10.

The Legislative Ways and Means Committee meetings for August 5, 2009 and August 12, 2009 are presented together given the material that was on the agendas. Both meetings were chaired by Legislator Alan Lomita. Members were present at both except for Legislator Cahill who was absent August 5.

There were nine resolutions actually considered August 5, all were passed. However, Resolution #245 dealing with executing a license agreement with Crossroads Venture was placed on hold pending the special meeting of the Public Works Committee on 8-5. Note: see summaries of the Public Works committee on July 7 and August 5 for details. Action on this resolution was eventually tabled 8-5 pending acquisition of additional information.

Resolution #248 dealing with the sale of county owned property for unpaid taxes was referred back to the Ways and Means Committee as there had been no response from the projected buyer during the 60 days since it had been removed from the list of unpaid tax property. There was some discussion and it was decided that this too would be addressed 8-12 after additional information was received.

At the August 12 meeting Chairman Lomita noted that there was a Budget Letter from County Budget Director Art Smith which highlighted the concerns about the revenues from the sales tax and the cost of pension contributions. Both will impact local budget. Art Smith will be in attendance at the September meeting.

Chairman Lomita introduced the four resolutions to be considered:

#245 (see above): will be pulled from consideration by Legislator Loughran at the Legislative meeting later in the evening.

#248 (see above): Legislator Genertine reported that he had spoken with the former owner of the property; that a definite answer on 8-12 was needed (he had not received such). The committee agreed to accept the bid made...as Legislative Council noted must act in good faith. The two late resolutions #249 and #250 were approved to start by the Laws and Rules Committee and passed.

The final item on the agenda was the report on the advancement of the Solar Consortium by Vincent Cozzolino of TSEC. He referenced the article appearing in the 8-12-09 Daily Freeman with regard to the expansion of Prism and the influx of Federal dollars. He went on to specifically enumerate the number of jobs that have been created and filled so far and what could be expected over a period of the next year to 18 months into the future: 80 jobs at Prism which will lead to 200 more in another year; the spin off company will have 20 jobs by the end of 2009 and 220 over the next 18 months.all of which will bring additional recognition to Ulster County in the area of solar energy. Apparently an additional 500 more jobs will be coming but he could not provide more details yet.

Fiscally, he noted that of the \$150,000 received from UC so far, there will be a need to

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carry some of that over into 2010. Additional money, \$200,000, will be needed in 2010 in order to keep the growing momentum going.

He noted that while there are examples of solar energy in the use of solar panels in UC, there are no examples apparently of solar energy in public buildings as such in UC. Legislator Noonan suggested that TSEC contact the Association of Town Supervisors (John Valk, President, T/Shawangunk), and indicate what services in this area the company could offer.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The Committee was convened by Chairman Provenzano 7-14-09 at 5:00 PM and adjourned at 6:06. Members were present except for Legislator Ronk. Other attendees: County Budget Director (CBD) Art Smith, Comptroller Auerbach, Legislative Attorney Dan Heppner.

The initial item was a report from CBD Art Smith regarding the present computer financial system that UC uses. In 2008 a financial team: auditor, purchasing, treasurer, information services and the county administrator met, developed an RFP which received 5 responses from potential suppliers. The latter were interviewed, the projected cost was eventually lowered to \$750,000 for the software system. This amount was put in the 2009 budget.

With the implantation of the Charter, January 1, 2009 and the ensuing economic problems, the decision was made to put implementing any change in the financial system on hold.

A further consideration was the amount of sales tax the county would have available. Initially there was an 8% drop. In early July, 2009 the county learned that the adjustment figure was now 7%.

In order to deal with the work that must be handled by the present system the CBD and the Comptroller's office have been working together and will continue to do so to develop as efficient a method of doing the work as possible. Another aspect that was considered involved the amount of training and education that the staff would need at the point any change is made and the related cost for such.

CBD Smith noted that delaying initiating the change for awhile to see if the economic picture improved was not a bad thing. Further more, developing another RFP would allow for input from the Comptroller.

Legislator Hochberg expressed a concern that there did not appear to be a policy covering how the county's computer system should be regularly serviced like the policy that exists for handling vehicles at the county highway department. CBD Smith agreed that there is no policy requiring that the software be changed/updated on a regular basis. Legislator Lomita observed that no one would disagree with Legislator Hochberg, but it was necessary to prioritize what/when such change should be done.

Committee in agreement the financial system needed to be addressed, and if economy continues to improve, then replacement should be considered as well as cost of training. In the meantime work with the Comptroller; be sure to put costs in the budget.

A second item dealt with the development of a whistleblower law. Chairman Provenzano advised committee this committee and the Human Services Committee were collaborating on this matter. Here too there was considerable discussion.

Chairman Provenzano reminded the committee that the topic was one that the Comptroller had reported to them previously; that Legislative Attorney Heppner had reviewed the related material and law. She had also notified the County Executive's office as should the Legislature pass such a law, the County Executive would have to sign it.

At one point Legislator Hochberg expressed the thought that the two representatives of the League of Women Voters might have some thoughts to offer on this topic: one observation noted that including reference to situation when someone knew wrongdoing was occurring and not reporting it had political overtones; and another observation was that following a previous suggestion from the committee of having a basic law which would evolve over time seemed appropriate.

Mr. Heppner will return with some recommendations that can be presented at the Human Services Committee meeting on July 20.

A third item dealt with assessments and equalization rates. Following discussion

The Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors

Chairman Provezano advised the committee that she would request Dorothy Martin, Director Real Property (on vacation) to be to answer questions at the next meeting.

The last dealt with a resolution authorizing the County Legislative Chairman to execute an agreement with UC BOCES to provide computer information technology to county employees-work force-Information Services. The \$25,500 cost is in the budget.

Committee passed this resolution.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The meeting was convened by Supervisor John Valk at 8:30, July 21st and adjourned at 9:36.

The first item on the agenda was a report by Glenn Gidaly, a local grants writer, who is employed as Senior Project Manager with Barton and Loguidice. Mr. Gidaly reviewed several items that pertain to grants writing. Additionally, he reviewed the material included on his handout. There is apparently considerable money available for such projects as waste water treatment plants, water treatment, energy, etc. as a result of the stimulus funds coming from the federal government. He suggested it is important for a municipality to have its study done on whatever project it has in mind to do, its paper work in order, a plan that will explain what the municipality wants to do with the money. This enables the municipality to more quickly respond to possible RFPs. Equally as important is including dollars in the annual municipal budget to pay for the services of a grants writer.

The second item was a report from Sgt. Charles Polacco of the UC Sheriff's Department who serves as the Coordinator for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) which Ulster County adopted in 2006. Part of this system is the Instant Command System (ICS). The personnel who are involved in the following agencies throughout UC are required to have NIMS training: fire departments, police, schools, sewage treatment, hospitals, highway, and elected officials, etc. Sgt. Polacco and one other member of the Sheriff's Department provide the training either in a class setting or by computer. The basic point to NIMS is working together in a cooperative manner at all levels of government in times of crisis no matter how small or how severe.

Following the above reports a representative from the County Executive's office advised the group that UC has been mapped using the GIS material noted at the last meeting. There will be further information from Time-Warner presented at the next association meeting, which will be in September.

Association President Valk commented to the representative that there are nine municipalities involved in Scenic By-Ways, but they are not being promoted in the tourism material and should be. The group was advised that the web site will be updated, a "new look", and have a link with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA).

Additional observations from the group referred to the recently passed procedure by the UC Legislature re the charge back finances involved in the election process. "It is the best that will do for now." The \$15,000 training limit is a "good faith" figure.

Local budgets are due soon. The group was reminded not to overestimate revenues: sales tax and mortgage fees are down; pension costs for state retirement costs will also have an impact on the municipal budgets.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

Ulster County Board of Health

The Board of Health was convened by Chairman Steve Kelley at 7:36 PM, June 22, 2009. The Board is part of the Executive Branch. Members of the Board were present. Additionally, County Executive Hein, Deputy County Executive Beckman, County Attorney Havranek were also present.

Chairman Kelley noted that a member of the League of Women Voters and a reporter from the Times-Herald Record were also in attendance.

Chairman Kelley congratulated Ms. Veytia on assuming the position of Acting Public Health Director, noting that she had assumed the position at a difficult time. He referenced the concern about swine flu (H1N1), particularly that of the residents in Ellenville.

He then asked DCE Beckman to review what the current situation was in the Department of Health, as he, Chairman Kelley had been away.

DCE Beckman noted that June 11 Ms. Veytia had assumed the position of Acting PHD. On June 12 upon gaining access to the safe, she and finance officer discovered

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an irregular situation: a large number of checks and applications. The APHD contact the County Executive, who made arrangements for the safe to be inventoried; and called Comptroller Eliot Auerbach to conduct an audit. On June 22 members of the County Executive's staff met with the Comptroller: they are beginning to learn how the Environmental section of the Health Department works and how the contents of the safe need to be handled.

Question was raised about the above prompting the comment that the Board would need to move into executive session for response to be made. Prior to doing that the agenda was referenced with regard to the concern about swine flu, which was addressed by Dr. Sheran: there are 4 cases in UC, no mortalities.

A motion was then made/passed to adjourn to Executive Session.

The County Executive, the reporter and the observer all left the meeting at 7:45.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

1. July 7, 2009 Kingston City Council Meeting:

a. The Kingston City Council members voted on "Local Law #7" and amended "Chapter 360" of the "Kingston City Code" (Taxation). "Veterans who rendered military service to the United States during the 'Cold War'" will henceforth (This was adopted 8/0) be granted an exemption (on the property they own) "from real property taxes."

b. Resolution #129 (2009) was adopted in a 8/0 vote. This resolution recommended the approval to authorize the City of Kingston to enter into a "contract with Hess Corporation for the City's gas [natural gas] and electric supply needs."

c. Open Speaking Session:

1. A gentleman that stated he was a resident at Washington Manor stated that the Queens Galley was an "excellent community service" and a "good program" - but that it was being "misdirected." This gentleman alleged that the Queens Galley was misusing its non-profit status, engaging in "extortion", and committing human rights violations. He stated that he was there to stand up for himself and for those that were not able to speak up on their own behalf. He also stated that he had talked to a lawyer about the issue - could pursue a lawsuit. Council President and Alderman-at-Large, J. Noble stated that he would look into the situation.

2. Bob Smith, the Temporary Kingston Area Public Access (KAPA) Chairperson, thanked the Mayor, the Council, and the City of Kingston for approving \$400 in aid on behalf of KAPA.

3. I spoke on the following: Concerns (self and neighbors) about dogs being loose and/or potentially dangerous in Ward 5 and elsewhere (according to dialogue on KingstonCitizens.org) in the City - concerns about an alleged homeless community / settlement by the railroad tracks and YMCA park in Ward 5 - and on the topic of the road work being done (and scheduled) in Ward 5. I also thanked the Council (in particular, Kathy Janeczek) for their part in the Independence Day Celebration - and seconded the thanks - to the Council and Mayor - for the KAPA aid.

4. Another gentleman spoke on behalf of the need for recycle bins in the City of Kingston (parks, etc.). Council President Noble stated that many of the City Parks and Municipal buildings already have recycle bins. This gentleman also spoke about his concerns in regard to the use of pesticides - and the need for pesticide free zones.

2. August 4, 2009 Kingston City Council Meeting:

a. Local Laws (Second Reading - 2009 - Common Council - City of Kingston) #8, #9, #10, #11 and #12 were adopted - as reflected in the following:

1. Local Law #8: Amended "Code Section 405-26 for flood damage protection as authorized by the New York State Constitution, Article IX, Section 2, and Environmental Law, Article 36."

2. Local Law #9: Amended the "City of Kingston Zoning Law to add a traditional neighborhood development overlay district."

3. Local Law #10: Amended "Chapter 350 of the Administrative Code of the City of Kingston."

4. Local Law #11: Amended "Chapter 208 of the Code of the City of Kingston, entitled 'Electrical Regulations.'"

5. Local Law #12: "Authorized a Retirement Incentive Program for Employees of the City of Kingston, New York." [Alderman Reynolds commended the Mayor for developing this "critical" (due to the current economic climate and related budgetary concerns) program.]

b. Alderwoman DiBella made a motion, seconded by Alderman Senor (all of this covered in the local papers, etc.) to reconsider and/or rescind (the difference was explained by Council President Noble) a previous vote that had allowed [already signed into law and implemented] the removal of a traffic light in Uptown Kingston. This discussion, sometimes heated, went on for some time - as apparently a lot of concerns have been raised regarding pedestrian safety. Alderwoman DiBella read a letter from Chief Keller regarding possibly seeking an "expert opinion" on the issue -- and Alderwoman DiBella read (this has apparently been passed on) an email to the Mayor from 10 Uptown residents who reputedly want the traffic light (versus a stop sign) reinstated. Long story short - Alderwoman DiBella, Alderman Senor, Alderman Hoffay, Alderman Polacco, Alderman Reynolds, Alderman Landi and Alderman-at-Large / Council President Noble were caught up in this discussion for quite some time tempered by Mr. Noble's patient explanations.

Nancy Smith

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Member Appointment

Congratulations to Secretary Emilie Hauser for being appointed to the 'Green Ribbon Task Force.' When county Legislature David Donaldson requested a member from the LWVMHR to serve on the committee, Emilie was the natural choice given her past experience and commitment to environmental issues. The first order of business will be to offer solutions to reduce the use of plastic bags in the retail sector. It's a great starting point and we wish Emilie and the committee much success.

New Member Profile

NANCY SMITH

The entrance to Nancy Smith's home is preceded by a small but orderly and tranquil garden but as she relates her background it hardly reflects what has been the turmoil that has marked her life.

She was born in Stamford, NY and grew up in Andes amidst significant rural poverty. She attended Andes Central School and became a teenage parent dropout at age sixteen. Nancy was married and had two children by the time she was eighteen, with a third soon to come. She said her life was not atypical in her area. She and her husband were both alcoholics and she struggled to raise her little ones. Eventually she moved to West Shokan where her mother helped with the children. She found a job with the Rotron Corporation working as a machine operator at both the Shokan and Woodstock plants. Her alcohol problems worsened and she "bounced around" as she put it. Nancy became a rape victim in 1985 a few weeks after having had a hysterectomy and subsequent medical & psychological treatment and eventually alcohol rehabilitation.

Despite all this adversity she had managed to complete her GED at Kingston High School. She and her husband were divorced and she met Bob who is her present husband. Nancy entered psychotherapy and was reunited with her children who were then seven, eight and nine. She enrolled at Ulster County Community College and earned an associate's degree in humanities and social sciences. She was employed at the YWCA program in the teen parent program as a counselor and case manager. She also worked as a program coordinator for the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program where she cultivated many skills such as grants writing and dealing with budget issues. She completed her bachelor's degree in psychology at the College at New Paltz as well. She is a published author having written three books for which she did much research, another of her multiple skills. Nancy has her own blog, <http://www.flingingtowardsthesun.blogspot.com>.

Attending Kingston's Common Council meetings was something both Nancy and her husband enjoyed doing together and sometimes alone so when the League's Observer Corps held a coffee for prospective observers, Nancy came and is not only a new League member but has covered several Common Council meetings as a League Observer. You have probably read her accounts in the Commentator.

Nancy enjoys reading, creative writing, singing, dancing and photography, for starters. She has also been active in politics and human right groups. She and her husband Bob share a love of singing and performing karaoke which they have done at several "open mic's". Her latest venture is in the business world as the proprietor of Chips and Dips Entertainment Services. She is largely a children's entertainer and has performed magic and clown gigs for the Kingston Lions Club, Rosendale Festival and is planning a performance for the Kingston City Independence Day Celebration at Gallo Park at the Rondout Waterfront.

This multi-talented, soft spoken woman who has displayed compassion for others still struggles with her past demons and traumas but faces them and tries her best to cope and also makes her an avid advocate for victims / survivors.

2009 YARD SALE

Sat. Aug 29 &
Sun. Aug 30
9 am to 3 pm
Emilie Hauser's
63 Highland Avenue
Kingston, NY



WANTED: GOOD SALABLE ITEMS FOR YARD SALE

Appliances in good working order
Jewelry
Household décor
Clean linens
Books (children, crafts, cookbooks only)
CDs: music or literature Sporting goods
Tools
Clean furniture
Current collectibles
Household goods
Toys, puzzles and games
Exercise equipment

PLEASE DO NOT BRING

- Outdated electronics: computers, monitors, televisions, radios
- Outdated electric appliances
- Clothing
- Books (except children's, crafts and cookbooks - *in good condition*)
- Any broken, chipped, non-functional, or outdated items.

LET'S MAXIMIZE THE SMALL SELLING SPACE WITH GOOD MERCHANDISE TO GET THE GREATEST DOLLAR VALUE.

Drop off Schedule:

Thu 20-Aug 6 to 8 pm
Mon 24-Aug 6 to 8 pm
Tue 25-Aug 6 to 8 pm
Wed 26-Aug 6 to 8 pm
Thu 27-Aug 6 to 8 pm

To arrange other times for drop-off, call Emilie Hauser at 338-4820
For Pick-up of bulky items, call Jackie and John Moriarty 331-3418

Volunteers needed for pricing:

Tue 25-Aug 9 to 11 am
Wed 26-Aug 9 to 11 am
Thu 27-Aug 9 to 11 am
Fri 28-Aug 9 to 11 am

Helpers are needed:

- Friday evening, Aug 28 to set up.
- Saturday and Sunday to work at the sale and clean-up
- Week of August 30 to dispose of items.

Directions: Highland Ave. is two streets up East Chester Street from Broadway (where Burger King is). From E. Chester St, turn right (east) on Highland and go two blocks to dead end, # 63 – a log house with detached garage.

I/we wish to become members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2010 ;

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (day) (eve)

Email: _____

I/We enclose: Individual Membership (\$50) _____ Household Membership (\$75) _____

Additional gift to the LWV Education Fund (*tax deductible*;) for our use
(Please send a separate check which MUST be payable to NYSLWV Ed Fund) \$ _____

If you are upgrading to a Household Membership, please
include the name and email address of new members _____

Will receive *Commentator* _____ online &/or will read it on website or _____ Please mail *Commentator*

**(Complete the above form and return it to us with your check at
PO Box 3564, Kingston, New York 12402)**

League of Women Voters
Mid-Hudson Region
PO Box 3564
Kingston, NY, 12402

August 2009
Commentator

