



Commentator

September 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		
SEPTEMBER		
22	6:00pm-8:30pm	Membership Recruitment and Salad Supper Meeting at the Town of Esopus Library, 128 Canal St., Port Ewen
30	1:30 - 3:30pm	Program Committee at Gloria Plasker's, 106 Park Street, Hurley
OCTOBER		
5	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 <u>Climate Change Part 1</u> Part 2 of this discussion to come in early 2010.
NOVEMBER		
2	7:15-9:15	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Dr., Hurley
3	6:00am-9:00pm	ELECTION DAY
20	7:30-9:00	Breakfast for Ulster County Legislators at Deisings, 111 North Front Street, Kingston
DECEMBER		
1	7:15-9:15	Board Meeting TBA
13	2:00-4:00	Holiday Party at Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Dr., Hurley

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.
 Members are always welcome

Prez Sez...

Greetings,

Election Day is fast approaching. Local elections are front and center this year. For this reason, we will not be subscribing to the LWVNYS Facts for Voters this Fall but rather, we will have available for Ulster County residents a local voters' guide.

Each candidate for the County Legislature, County Court, and County Clerk has been sent three questions (see below.) The questions allow for thoughtful, deliberative answers that will give constituents true insight on where the candidate stands on specific issues. Candidates have been asked to return the questionnaire by October 8th. This will allow us time to post all responses for public view well before the November 3rd election.

Being informed is the key to our democratic form of government. Indeed, the buzz word in politics of late has been "transparency." Everyone preaches it. We urge all candidates to practice it. We look forward to reading about their vision for Ulster County.

Jean

ULSTER COUNTY VOTERS' GUIDE

QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL CANDIDATES

<i>County Legislature</i>	<i>County Court</i>	<i>County Clerk</i>
1. What specific areas of county government do you think need changing and how do you intend to go about changing it?	1. Aside from your legal career, how have your life experiences enhanced your qualifications for this office?	1. What new cost saving and revenue enhancing measures would you propose?
2. With declining revenue and cutbacks in spending inevitable which services would you cut first and which services would you cut last.	2. To what do you attribute the backup in county court cases and what do you intend to do to change it?	2. What steps have you taken and/or propose to take to expand free on-line access to public records maintained by the County Clerk?
3. On strictly a county level what are the definitive differences between you and your party's platform and those of the Democrats/Republicans?	3. What is your opinion on televised court procedures?	3. Would you propose early, evening and Saturday hours or an out-reach program similar to the DMV vehicle?

PROGRAMS

Membership Meeting: October 20th

Topic: CLIMATE CHANGE

How is our region being affected by climate change? How are our local and county governments working 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?

NOW IS the TIME to GET YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT to address CLIMATE CHANGE. Join us on October 20, 7 pm, New Paltz BOCES, 175 Route 32 North, New Paltz 12561 to find out what's being done and what you can do.

With local elections happening this fall, it's a critical time to put pressure on your town and county officials to help address the problems and opportunities that the Climate Change crisis presents.

To help you be as effective as possible, we are presenting speakers from the Nature Conservancy's Rising Waters Project and the state Department of Environmental Conservation as well as local advocates who have worked to get their communities to take the Climate Smart Community Pledge.

The advocates will say what arguments have worked best (and least well) in achieving adoption and what positive results have occurred or are projected.

The Pledge, as you'll learn, is a simple way for local governments to get the guidance they need to reduce their own carbon footprint and help develop green jobs programs and other strategies that will ameliorate climate change and mitigate the inevitable effects. Check out the DEC website at for more information.

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/50845.html>

CHARTER ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Charter Advocacy Committee was formed in July for the purpose of advocating that Ulster County government comply with the Charter as written or amended. We will be monitoring how each branch of government goes about exercising its powers and performing its duties. As part of this endeavor we will also be monitoring the various councils, commissions, and boards that were mandated by the Charter.

We will be acting as a collective think tank, gathering information from various sources and, from time to time, distributing it to all members via the internet. For the most part, most of our business will be conducted over the internet; we will meet as a group when warranted, to discuss matters of organization, plans, and strategy.

The committee welcomes new members. Contact Jean McGarry or Tom Kadgen for more information.

The Advocacy Committee met individually with the County Executive, County Comptroller, Chairman of the Legislature and Minority Leader to express the League's position on the Charter transition. We stated that the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region both supported and campaigned for the adoption of a charter form of government. Our members also served on the Charter Commission and contributed to its corresponding Administrative Code.

The purpose of these meetings was to voice our commitment to the integrity of the Charter as written. We would oppose any changes that do not prove to be beneficial to the citizens of Ulster County. We stressed that any amendments to this document must have extensive deliberation and public scrutiny.

We also expressed our concerns regarding reapportionment. After each census legislative districts are readjusted by population. In addition to the regular redistricting, the county will go from 33 multiple legislator districts to 23 single legislator districts. This may prove even more contentious than usual. Not only will both parties be concerned with protecting their political interests, but candidates within the same party, especially those who reside in nearby communities, will also be concerned how the districts are divided.

Everyone we met with shared our concern. All believed that the Reapportionment Commission should be set up prior to the census data being released to ensure being ready for the 2011 election.

Thomas Kadgen

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.

Republican Caucus

Chairman Noonan called the caucus to order at 6pm on September 16th. With a short legislative calendar scheduled for the following legislature meeting, the discussion regarding the "Non-Consent" agenda ended more or less at 6:30.

Resolution 233 was considered. It provides for an amendment of the Rules of Order to the effect that if *all* members of a committee were present, the Chairman's presence *would count* for computing the number of votes necessary to pass a particular matter. The members generally discussed the implications of the rule change and expressed a variety of interpretations and projected scenarios under which the minority could be abused by the change.

By far, the most discussion of the caucus centered on a proposed budget amendment (Resolution #259) to transfer \$175,000.00 to the Medical Services account to cover one jail inmate's medical expenses through April 2009. (Said expenses are expected to continue to accrue). The members, generally unmoved by the medical needs of the inmate underlying the expenses, opposed approving the resolution paying the bill excepting those who felt duty bound to pay the county's bills promptly. Several members questioned the alternatives that might be pursued including Medicaid reimbursement and a negotiated fee. Undersheriff Frank Faluotico happened to be in attendance and was

Ulster County Legislature Meeting

able to outline certain aspects of the medical insurance covering inmates (limited to \$10,000.00) but pointed out that the issues surrounding the excess claim is not within the scope of responsibility of the Sheriff. Notwithstanding the "Whereas" representations within the resolution, some members were not satisfied that all efforts to lower the county expense had been or would be pursued... or at the least those efforts hadn't been described to the members.

The balance of the "Non-Consent" agenda was generally regarded as acceptable to the caucus.

Jim McGarry

Chairman Donaldson called the Legislature to order shortly after 7:00pm and the meeting adjourned around 9:30. Four members were absent.

The legislative session was preceded by presentations of "Pride of the County Awards" to the winners of the county Water Safety Poster and Poetry Contest. Following the awards, Legislator Rodriguez presented a Proclamation declaring National 4-H Week (October 5th – 11th).

Two members of the public and Comptroller Auerbach made remarks during the Public Comment session.

Thereafter the Consent Agenda was adopted without discussion.

The first Non-Consent item, Resolution #233 (see notes on the Republican Caucus above) passed without discussion; six minority legislators joined the majority.

The legislature adopted, unanimously, a "whistleblower" policy to provide further clarification and protections to employees and agents of the county in compliance with any State or Federal Law requiring disclosure of certain information. (During Mr. Auerbach's comments he thanked the Legislature for its efforts and awarded each a token gift... a whistle!)

As in the Republican Caucus, Resolution #259 (a transfer of \$175,000.00 to the Medical Services account to cover one jail inmate's medical expenses) generated substantial discussion and a plethora of parliamentary procedures including motions to refer, motions to amend, motions to reconsider and, again, a motion to refer. Legislators raised questions regarding billing rates, Medicaid eligibility and back-billing, negotiated fees and fiscal impact to the taxpayers, vendors and their employees. Some touched on their confidence in the ability of the County Executive and Comptroller offices to effectively and properly address these issues and settle the matter with the lowest cost to the County. Others expressed a need for further inquiry and information before the transfer of funds could be authorized. Despite the contention of several legislators that the economic health of vendors depended on timely payment of their claims, the matter was referred back to committee for further action.

Two resolutions supporting state legislation passed unanimously: a state bill to increase penalties for repeat offenders of public lewdness laws and classify them under the Sex Offender Registration Act and a bill which would enable volunteer fire fighters and ambulance workers to receive both an income tax *and* a real property tax exemption for their services (currently limited to one or the other.)

Jean and Jim McGarry

Ulster County Economic Development, Housing, Planning & Transit Committee

Date: 8/26/09 Start Time: 6:04 p.m. Finish Time: About 8:15 p.m.

Hector Rodriguez, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

The chairman made an appeal to the committee members to represent the committee at various Chamber of Commerce organizations meetings across the county.

The chairman commented there continue to be county Contract Management issues, but the problems are recognized and they are being worked on.

Ulster County Development Corporation – Lance Matteson, President of UCDC, updated the committee on staffing and the UCDC Budget.

Mr. Matteson introduced Paul Rakov as the new Director of Business Development for UCDC.

UCDC staffing levels are now back to the 2006 level, allowing for more prospective business activity, and they are looking to be more comprehensive and complete in their efforts. UCDC continue to devote most of its effort to Retention and Expansion activities.

Legislator Peter Loughran asked for the number of job losses in recent years (last 10

years) by company, to be reported to him in a week or so.

Mr. Matteson presented an Economic Development Update report dated August 26, 2009, that covered Attractions Prospects (activities since the July 22, 2009, report) including the China mission report; Retention Actions including the wireless broadband report and reports on retention efforts focusing on UC firms experiencing distress or otherwise posing retention risks ; Expansion and Recruitment activities; and Unemployment Rates for Ulster County, the Surrounding Counties, New York and USA for the Past Year noting that Ulster County tends to have one of the lower unemployment rates relative to the other counties, NY and the USA.

Tourism has been hurt, but the Rocking Horse Ranch project has been economically helpful.

There has been considerable activity on shovel ready and other sites: including Saugerties Kings Highway, in the town of Lloyd, TechCity, solar (the solar industry is in a funk and semiconductor industry is in a downturn , mainly because of the worldwide economic situation where weak companies are failing and strong companies are investing), and Winston Farm.

The Nevele Grande property is up for auction with liens expected to be repaid. Chairman Rodriguez would like to success stories reported and publicized.

Department of Planning – Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning

The committee passed resolutions authorizing to extend the end date for the implementation of the Quality Communities Grant to improve existing centers and designated Ulster County a Recovery Zone (under the Stimulus Package related to bonding authority, designating of Ulster County as distressed).

Various projects and activities were discussed: including the Wireless Broadband application, transportation (2010 will be extremely difficult), UCAT where the transition of leadership has been smooth and the capital team is working and 5301 monies are being applied to several projects. A housing campaign was discussed: a housing study is due in October, an internet URL for housing management is to be announced soon, Main Street managers are getting on board, a storm water DEC grant is expected, and development rights checks are coming through. The Brook Farm project is considered a success.

Cornell Co-op Extension – Lydia “Lee” Reidy, Executive Director

Ms. Reidy reported on a wide variety of activities: the Ulster County Fair did well in spite of heavy rains and cool weather, the “Where’s the Blueberry” completion was a big success; a Robert Wood Johnson grant on Healthy Communities about nutrition and healthy behavior is being applied for; family related programs such as relatives as parents and a grandparents picnic; water shed programs including \$60,000 - \$70,000 from the DEC for extended education, and storm water management training; the Ulster County crops have been affected by the summer’s cool and wet conditions – apple crop is big, sweet corn difficult, tomato blight effects both for home and organic, and hay being left in fields.

Donations have been down from gardeners.

Ms. Reidy appears optimistic for agriculture, even with the challenges.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 9/17/09

Ulster County Environmental Committee

Date: 8/19/09 Start Time: About 6:15 p.m. Finish Time: ? Observer left at about 6:45 p.m.

Brian Shapiro, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Department of Environment – Amanda LaValle, Coordinator

Ms. LaValle reported on the stream management application.

Resolutions were passed regarding: Request by the County of Ulster, for Greenway Trial Designation of the Sojourner Truth Ulster Landing County Park Trial System with discussion the park is underutilized; and supporting a grant application to the NYS Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Environmental Protection Fund for Watershed Management Planning and Implementation in the Esopus Creek Watershed.

The committee to no action on a proposed resolution Supporting Extended Producer Responsibilities for Recycling, Reuse and Safe Handling of Electronic Equipment Sold in the State of New York.

Ulster County Resource Recover Agency – Mike Bemis

UCRRA Budget: Mr. Bemis, assisted by Timothy Degraff and Michele Leggett made an

extensive presentation of the UCRRA Budget and highlight of various activities. The committee discussed income, expenditures, debt service, a composting proposal from the Hudson Valley Regional Council and alternative energy ideas such as the use of biofuels.

Recycling Issues: UCRRA is working with a lean staff with maintaining compliance, there is a Green Ribbon Task Force, Ms. Leggett is working on a plastics-to- clothes project and she showed an example of a dress she had designed, and she is heading a Business Recycling and Waste Management Reduction Program for businesses of 10 or more employees and a similar program is developed for schools.

SUNY New Paltz PCB Issue – Only a comment is being made here of an extension report by an activist group and extended discussion with the committee on this issue: The committee passed a motion that a letter is to be sent to the president of SUNY New Paltz requesting the Executive Summary about this issue. Other legislatures and the county health committee are to be informed and involved.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 9/17/09

Date: 9/16/09 Start Time: 6:10 p.m. Finish Time: About 8:05 p.m.

Brian Shapiro, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Mike Bemis, Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, reported on:

- the e-waste bill (manufactures responsibilities law) now in the NYS houses,
- there are some revenue increases for some recycled items, such as cardboard and paper shipping to Asia, even though some items are at 50% of last year,
- a program is in the works (9/26/09 target date) with Northeast Data (confidential) for data shredding for residences.

Amanda LaValle, Department of Environment Coordinator, reported on:

- energy and sustainability – the DOE \$750,000 grant application is in good order,
- Ulster Landing Park (Sojourner Truth) – the building and grounds grant of \$4,500 for materials and trails is secured, status of the Eagle Scout Project, the kiosk had one bad t (poor technical quality) set of maps replaced by a news GIS map that looks good and useful (4'x3 ½'), and an update of brochures and fee schedules. A comment was made by an attendee that the site is good for birding.

The observer left the meeting at this point to attend another meeting.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 9/17/09

Ulster County “Shared Services” Public meetings

During the month of August, 2009, there were three public meetings held in the Towns of Saugerties, Wawarsing, Gardiner sponsored by the Ulster County Executive and Pattern for Progress. The topic for presentation and discussion was Shared Services: how municipalities in Ulster County (there are 25) might share resources, improve services, and save the taxpayers' money. There were 50-55 attendees overall. What is written here is a summary of the three public meetings.

The presenters were UC County Executive Hein, Pattern for Progress CEO Draping, at two of the sessions and Adele Reiter, Chief of Staff to Mr. Hein and Barbara “Charlie” Murphy, VP of Pattern for Progress at one session.

Following an explanation of what the study was about, what the county hoped to achieve and why, there was a Q&A period which allowed for a dialogue between the presenters and the attendees.

It is expected that once the study has been completed and a draft Implementation Plan written (that is being worked on now by Dr. Gerry Benjamin of SUNY, New Paltz) there will be public hearings which are scheduled for October. The draft Implementation Plan will be released at that time as required by the study. Further, the study requires that monetary savings be shown; and at the end of the report it will be pointed out what would be needed to possibly consolidate anything. The study and the Implementation Plan are scheduled to be completed in November, 2009.

There was a basic point expressed and emphasized at each of the sessions by Mr. Hein and the other presenters: He explained that he believed that shared municipal services were the future of government at all levels. The study is about shared services not an attempt to either mandate or consolidate procedures. The study and Implementation Plan will not “sit on the shelf.” The main point was to identify key areas that municipalities can consider sharing, to develop methods that would best serve all, that they can work together on and that would save money.

He noted that for a long time municipalities have maintained a parochial stance regarding conducting business individually. While that may be okay, it is not a sustainable position financially in these times nor realistic. Sales tax revenues are down, pension costs are up. He observed that he believes in the end those officials who embrace the concept of shared services will do well; those who do not will fade away. The need is to save on costs. Now is the time to take the presented opportunity to discuss, to explore what possibilities exist for municipalities to share services.

Mr. Drapkin explained the background to the study. The study dealing with shared services and the dollars to pay for the study were provided by the NYS Department of State. The latter had recognized for about three years that it achieved more positive results by not mandating or consolidating procedures. It developed a grant proposal venue from which the Municipal Grants study for shared services came, as well as the \$255,000 to pay for it. Once the grant was awarded, UC hired Pattern for Progress and the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach at SUNY, New Paltz to conduct the study.

The idea of shared services is not new in UC as mentioned throughout each of the meetings: Storm Water Management involving 13 municipalities resulting in a savings of \$600,000; a Hazard Mitigation Plan which can cost \$50,000-\$70,000 for individual entities, and is a plan a municipality must have or it will not receive FEMA aid, was developed and saved \$1 million dollars; as well as having the county plan considered so good that FEMA not only paid for everything but is using it as a model for the state on how shared services can work.

For the present study the focus was to be on three areas: highways, municipal courts and economic development. There were 14 municipalities initially involved: the chief elected officials of the towns and the city of Kingston. Eventually all 25 municipalities in UC including the county were interviewed. Apparently no one said he/she would not participate. The municipal leaders understood the perimeters of the study and that was reason for participating in the study. There were even areas which some indicated they might like to try sharing. Again, the point emphasized was that there were no mandates, nor were there discussions about consolidation. Shared Services was the operative phrase.

Each of the following was assigned a key area to handle: Mike Hattery, SUNY, Binghamton, highways, Sydney Cresswell, Rockefeller College in Albany, municipal courts, Peter Fairweather, Fairweather Consulting of Ulster County, economic development. Dr. Gerry Benjamin of the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach at SUNY, New Paltz is writing the Implementation Plan.

Q&A, Dialogue, Comments, Suggestions: a sample

There was an underlying concern expressed by more than one attendee regarding the likelihood that the county would require consolidation. Mr. Hein emphasized such was not the case. To dissolve or consolidate is not the point of the study. County is not going to dictate, but rather the plan is to enter into agreements with the various municipalities to do the sharing in a collaborative way.

Studies are fine but what will be the outcome of this study? All of the presenters emphasized that the study would not "sit on the shelf." There will be recommendations and costs noted in the implementation plan.

There were suggestions of services that might be shared: rails and trails development; building inspectors: develop floating position among towns; county assessors, county provide training, municipalities share those trained, purchasing of equipment and storing, sign up to use; document storage and records management (this is presently being evaluated as all municipalities have to record management; digital storage another consideration, but requires someone to manage the various processes involved); all municipalities should use the same accounting system. Mr. Hein reminded attendees to log on to the county website where there is a listing of various services available to the county municipalities, some at no cost, others, with a price. There is also a listing of shared services presently operating in UC with some savings noted that the Center at SUNY, New Paltz has.

The question about where the dollars came from to pay for the study brought forth a comment from one attendee that the state did not have the right to use taxpayer dollars to fund the \$255,000 study; and the suggestion from the same attendee to get rid of county government and have the state and towns absorb the work the county now performs. Mr.

**Ulster County
Legislative Health
Services
Committee**

Hein said he is aware dollars come from taxpayers, and he is open to discussion on how saving can be developed. How much will the Implementation Plan cost? Mr. Hein stated he does not expect there to be more cost, but rather that people will do more work.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The Legislative Health Services Committee was convened at 6:33 on 8-20-09 by Chairman Rob Parete and adjourned at 7:00 PM. All members were present. Other attendees were DCE Beckman and Richard Parrish, Acting Emergency Medical Services Coordinator.

Minutes from July approved.

Initial item was a proposed resolution to support the appointment of an UC Emergency Medical Services Coordinator. The Chairman explained he had received a memo from County Attorney Havranek that appointments like this were the responsibility of the County Executive under the charter. Chairman Parete indicated that he had spoken with Mr. Hein and apparently any problems will be worked through. Mr. Parrish is the person whose appointment to this position is being supported in this resolution. He spoke briefly with regards to the work he does now as the Acting Coordinator, having been appointed to that position by the Emergency Medical Services Council, and some of the work that needs to be done. Resolution passed.

Second resolution to be handled and passed was support for the Alzheimer's Association Annual Memory Walk.

DCE Beckman then updated the committee on how matters were progressing at the Department of Health (DOH). Acting Director (AD) Veytia and the staff at the DOH are doing an excellent job of getting caught up: as of July 30 seventy-nine establishments had been issued permits they had not had; two others were closed; septic tank permits have been issued and camps have received their permits; numerous boxes of material have been found during the clean up that require review and handling. County has received additional applications for Public Health Director: individuals are presently enrolled in schools with excellent PH programs or they already have all the necessary credentials. Believes that being able to advise what the salary range is has made all the difference. Chairman Parete and a member of the Board of Health will be involved in the interviewing. Mr. Beckman plans to have screening of applicants completed by September and realistically a PH Director will be on board come November. County must have approval of the NYS Department of Health as well.

A memo from the NYS Department of Health dealing with H1N1 was distributed to the committee.

Mr. Beckman offered to have AD Ms. Veytia and Sheree Cross, Director of Golden Hill come to the September meeting to review handling H1N1 virus. Chairman Parete accepted.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

**Ulster County
Public Works and
Capital Projects
Committee**

The Legislative Public Works and Capital Projects Committee was convened on 8-27-09 at 5:35 by Chairman Loughran and adjourned at 5:50. Members were present except for Legislators Fabiano, Decker and Hochberg.

The first item on the agenda was the approval of a memorializing resolution authorizing the Legislative Chairman to allow Western Avenue in the T/Marlborough to be dedicated in memory of UC Vietnam Veterans.

Next item on the agenda dealt with a capital project at UCCC. Originally the project was adopted in 2006. During the course of other project work it was determined that work to be done on the college gymnasium would be cost prohibitive. Part of the money originally allocated to the latter construction is still available (some of the money, \$425,000 had already been used to update the nursing labs in 2008). The committee approved the use of \$555,000 of the \$777,8000 remaining to be allocated to the project which will extend a public water supply from the High Falls Water District to the campus of UCCC.

The third item discussed was an update of the Crossroads Ventures project. The attorney for Crossroads has advised the county that it is now withdrawing its request for access rights, i.e., a license. Instead it will proceed with its original plan to sell the property to the state. Question was raised regarding the \$500 application fee for the license that had been paid by Crossroads Ventures and whether it should be refunded or forfeited. During the discussion it was noted that there is no county policy addressing this

**Ulster County
Human
Development &
Personnel
Committee**

matter. Committee passed motion to refund: given the amount of work done, that the project was good for the county and that it should be done as a matter of good faith.

The fourth topic deal with the Kerhonkson Bridge. DCE Robert Sudlow noted that bids were opened on August 20. Contract approved, abstract of which will be submitted at September meeting. Commencement of the project has verbal approval of DOT, written approval expected in a day or two. Committee passed motion to approve, a comment being made that it had taken 13 year to reach this stage in the project.

Minutes of July 7 and August 5 meetings were approved.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The Legislative Human Development and Personnel Committee was convened by Chairman Gregorius on 8-24-09 at 4:45 and adjourned at 6:00 PM. All members of the committee present except Legislator Hansut. Other attendees were DCE Beckman and representatives from UCCC: President Donald Katt, Marianne Collins, Director of the Foundation, Chris Marx, Director of Continuing Education and Representatives of the College/DSS Program: RISE, Kathy Keyser and Todd Zeff.

Initially, the committee dealt with Local Law #9 of 2009 which involved performing criminal background checks and finger printing of prospective applicants for employment with UC. This law is due to be presented at a public hearing on September 2, 2009. The purpose of this item being on the committee agenda was explained by Chairman Gregorius: He felt that having the college representatives present to explain its request for exemption from the law for a specific group of individuals would be helpful for the committee to have this information prior to the public hearing.

The college is not asking for an exemption for its regular instructional staff; just those who are involved in the continuing education portion: those who teach less than 15 hours. Chairman Gregorius observed that there would be considerable comment at the public hearing. The committee was agreeable to what the college was requesting.

The next item for discussion was the RISE Program. Chairman Gregorius was particularly interested in having Mrs. Collins explain what had taken place at a meeting in Albany; as well as having DCE Beckman hear these developments as DSS is part of his portfolio.

Mrs. Collins explained some of the background to the program, now called RISE, operated at the college in cooperation with DSS. This arrangement is over 22 years old. Over the years various changes had taken place, more recently it had ceased to be as successful as far as the State Agency OTDA was concerned. As a result the latter was apparently prepared to require discontinuance. Arrangements were reached to improve the situation. Now it is so much improved that at a recent meeting in Albany the state advised UC that it now had a model program which could be followed by the rest of the state (referrals from DSS are up, participation rates for DSS have improved, and DSS clients are receiving an education and leaving public assistance). Throughout the entire process the UC Legislature supported the efforts to restore the program to its former level of excellence.

The third item of business dealt with the proposed whistle blower law. At Chairman Gregorius' request Legislator Provenzano explained what the Administrative Services Committee had done at its most recent meeting...with regards to the two drafts that it had reviewed (Note: see summary for Administrative Services Committee 8-17-09 for details). She explained that an employee might be more comfortable reporting any violation to the Personnel Director rather than a supervisor, as the former would be outside the employee's department. Committee discussed and approved the same draft that Administrative Services had the one provided by County Attorney Havranek. It will now be referred to the Laws & Rules Committee, to review at its August 31 meeting, noting the desire to see this approved at the September Legislative meeting.

The last item dealing with a resolution to renew agreement with NYS Department of Health for the Early Intervention Program handled by DSS was approved, along with amending the UC budget for DSS for 2009.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

**Ulster County
Legislative Ways
and Means
Committee**

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 Gerertine 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 spinoff 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 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

**Ulster County
Legislative
Administrative
Services
Committee**

The Legislative Administrative Services Committee was convened at 5 PM on 8-17-09 by Chairman Provenzano and adjourned at 5:57. All members present except Legislator Paul Hansut.

Comptroller Auerbach, Dep. County Ex. Sudlow and Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Director of Information Services were in attendance.

Initially, the committee dealt with the next installment of the whistle blower resolution. Following July's meeting and the decision to review a clean copy of what the committee had decided on, a copy was sent to the Human Development and Personnel Committee for review and the County Executive for review by the County Attorney Bea Havranek.

Chairman Provenzano distributed two draft versions of the proposed resolution, one from each of the above sources. The committee reviewed both. Legislative Council Dan Heppner was present to provide legal comment. For the most part the two versions were sufficiently similar that the intent was not altered. The committee generally agreed that any employee who became aware of a situation which he or she believes, in good faith, may

violate a law, rule or regulation has an obligation to promptly report the matter, after learning about it, to the UC Personnel Director rather than an immediate supervisor. The Personnel Director may conduct his or her own investigation or refer the matter to an appropriate official, i.e., DA, Sheriff, Comptroller for a more complete investigation. The committee adopted the version that came from County Attorney Havranek. The version so adopted will be referred to Human Development and Personnel Committee for its input and action. Chairman Provenzano noted that if the above committee approves the version then it must be referred to Laws and Rules for review. It is her hope that the final version would be accepted and adopted at the September Legislative session.

Next the committee was briefed on two items related to Information Services by its Director, Sylvia Wohlfahrt.

The first item dealt was a response to the audit that had been conducted by Comptroller Auerbach's office of Information Services (IS) covering the period December, 2008-June, 2009. The audit involved usage of wireless telecommunication devices (WTD)-cell phones, the costs involved and related considerations.

IS Director Wohlfahrt's comments were in the form of a list of talking points with related comments: she suggested that \$60,000 more than was actually spent by the county had been noted in the audit as other items had not been considered; that there is a need to create a strong policy on how these WTD are used (using for personal use is not to be done; if the holder of the phone does use it in this way then UC must consider it a perk and it must be taxed. How to enforce such a policy and pay for such must be discussed at the policy level); that IS needs to educate department heads as to the importance of knowing who on their staffs has a phone; and in turn they need to review phone usage and costs with staff who should sign off on the review; IS has initiated certain procedures to help reduce costs. Since she reports to the County Executive a report will be provided, the Comptroller will be notified, the public and later a monthly report to department heads which will show changes in the last three months and the savings she expects there to be.

The second item dealt with a resolution authorizing the Chairman to execute an agreement with the NYS Office of Cyber Security and Critical Infrastructure Coordination allowing UC to provide funding for the statewide digital Orthoimagery program.

Director Wohlfahrt explained what this referred to as follows: Every 4-5 years NYS has planes which fly over the state taking pictures. These pictures are a certain size. The resolution presented would increase the clarity of the areas, much like adjusting binoculars to improve what is seen at a site on the ground. These services will be available to the towns as well. The Sheriff, Planning Department, Emergency Communications are some of the areas of county government that would find this improvement beneficial.

The GIS steering committee meets quarterly. Reviewed what it had, considered what it can get to improve its capabilities. In 2006 this work was presented to Chairman Donaldson and then County Administrator Hein, both agreed at the time to this process, signed off on the agreement which was sent to Cyber Security. Now there is a need to sign a contract. Costs are already in the budget. Committee passed.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

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

Additional gift to the LWV Education Fund (*tax deductible*;) for our use
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September 2009
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