



NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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CHARTER CONSTRUCTION WORK COMPLETED AT THOUSANDS LESS THAN PROJECTED

Kingston, NY – (May 14, 2009) – Ulster County Executive Mike Hein announced the costs associated with the reconfiguration and renovation of the Ulster County Office Building, for the transition to the new Charter form of government. *The project was completed for \$181,221 and is both budget neutral and \$418,779 (70 %) less than the lowest original estimate.*

The savings were realized as a result of a directive from the County Executive to complete the project within existing budget limits. *No bonding was sought and no additional funding was requested.* The figure reflects costs, such as professional fees, labor, materials, signage, wiring and office furniture. Areas included in the total are: the Legislative Offices, the Comptroller's Offices, as well as the Executive branch of government, including the County Attorney, Payroll, Finance, Self Insurance and Real Property.

County Executive Hein said, "I am committed to protecting the taxpayers of Ulster County. It's unfortunate I inherited this situation, but I am proud of the hard work of the Public Works and Information Services Departments as they delivered this project in a timely manner and substantially under original estimates. I would also like to thank the Legislature for their cooperation as this project progressed."

Hein went on to say that, "It's also unfortunate that some have attempted to politicize this matter. Not only have we completed this project for 70 % less than the lowest original estimate, my administration has also cut over \$1.5 million from the County's overall 2009 Budget.

In April of 2008, in anticipation of the transition to the Charter form of government, and in order to evaluate the overall space needs of County government, the Ulster County Legislature formed the Buildings Utilization Committee, chaired by Legislator Richard Parete (D- District 3).

One of the primary responsibilities of the Committee was to formulate a budget and plan for the reconfiguration and renovation of offices within the County Office Building to accommodate new and existing branches of government. The Committee commissioned and received multiple estimates from Architect, Paul Vosburgh; the lowest of which was approximately \$600K. The estimate assumed that all work would be performed by an outside contractor. The estimate was reviewed by the Committee; however, it was not approved. Subsequently, when County Executive Hein took office in January 2009, he worked with his staff to create an alternative plan utilizing internal County labor. Hein's plan eventually reduced the estimated cost by over \$ 418 thousand dollars.

Legislator Richard Parete commented, "I've been very impressed with the County Executive's leadership. Though our Committee accomplished a great deal, clearly the renovations are something we dropped the ball on. The new form of government allows for faster decision making and I'm thrilled that this necessary work was finished quickly and within the existing budget. It's a great example of why I supported the Charter form of government in the first place."

Mike Hein, our County Executive did an excellent job in completing this project expeditiously and substantially under estimate. Reporting these costs to residents is open and transparent government at its best," said Ulster County Comptroller Elliot Auerbach."

Attached is a detailed spreadsheet of expenses.

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