

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
LAWS & RULES COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES – September 8, 2009
LOCATION – Chambers, 6th Floor, COB**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Legislator Gary Bischoff, Chair
 Legislator Sue Cummings, Deputy Chair
 Legislator Brian Cahill
 Legislator Hector Rodriguez
 Legislator Kevin Roberts

ABSENT/EXCUSED: Legislator Jon Decker - excused
 Legislator Robert Parete
 Legislator Brian Shapiro
 Legislator James Maloney - excused

OTHERS ATTENDING: Legislator Phil Terpening
 Legislator Susan Zimet
 Kathleen Mihm, Commissioner of Elections
 Thomas Turco, Commissioner of Elections
 Daniel Heppner, Counsel to Legislature
 Meg Dellay, Deputy Clerk, Legislature
 Heather Ohlson, Prevention Connections
 Ellen Reinhard, Prevention Connections
 Linda Showers, Prevention Connections

Chair Gary Bischoff called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

1. Board of Elections - Commissioners Kathleen Mihm and Tom Turco reported on pilot program for new scanners is being held in Rosendale, rather than Kingston or Town of Ulster. Rosendale's site consolidates multiple districts with a large parking area and is handicap accessible. All ballots will be counted after the vote to ensure accuracy. Chair Bischoff urged BOE to hand count all ballots in all districts that use the new machines in the first year of testing.

2. Late Resolution – (Draft) Prevention Connections – *Requesting The Transfer of \$25,000.00 Of Funds From Contingent Account To Family Services, Inc., For Emergency Funding To Cover The Work Of Prevention Connections Until The End Of The 2009 Fiscal Year*

Legislators Zimet and Terpening were present to support the request by Prevention Connection (PC) staff. Dan Heppner said he does not see any conflict since both legislators are volunteers with the organization. Heather Ohlson, Associate Director, reported their primary source of money was denied. It was a very last minute notification - 160 out of 400 applicants received funding – PC was in the final cut and surprised everyone. Their five year contract expires September 30th. The requested transfer of funds would keep the infrastructure in place for another three months.

Motion made by Legislator Cahill, seconded by Legislator Cummings for purposes of discussion. Points raised:

- Need to see annual budget with work sheets and line items
- Could trigger more organizations to follow suit.
- \$2,000 collected last year in media and cash donations.
- Federal representative, who just reviewed program and recommended it as a model, was very surprised by cut.
- Hinchey's office was contacted; checking for other money.
- Long term plan is needed to maintain sustainability.

Call for the vote: Three Ayes (Legislators Cahill, Cummings, Rodriguez), Two Noes (Legislators Bischoff, Roberts). MOTION DENIED.

3. Representation on County Boards/Agencies - Chair Bischoff asked for input on Legislator Rich Gerentine's request for geographic diversity of appointments.

- Many boards and agencies are diversified.
- However, Board of Health is rather heavily concentrated in Kingston.
- There is often a problem with the issue of travel and meeting times.
- Legislators sensitive to this issue; Co. Executive focused less on residency.
- Most agreed, more often than not, expertise can be found regionally.

Committee takes no action on the request at this time.

4. Resolution #254 – *Adopting A Whistleblower Employee/Agent Protection Policy For Ulster County Employees/ Agents* – for discussion purposes only.

Legislator Cahill is concerned that the law as written does not give an employee the option of reporting; instead it mandates the reporting only to the Personnel Officer. Dan Heppner said state statute and NYS False Claims Act already covers employees. Legislator Cummings questioned again if a hot line will be set up. Legislator Rodriguez said he's concerned someone following county policy could be in violation of state /federal laws. **Legislator Cahill will make a friendly amendment on the floor.**

5. Resolution #255 – *Adopting Introductory Local Law No. 9 of 2009 (A Local Law Amending Local Law No. 14 of 2007 [A Local Law Requiring Criminal Background Checks Of Prospective Applicants For Employment With The County Of Ulster]), Hereinafter Known As Local Law No. 7 of 2009*

Moved by Legislator Bischoff, seconded by Legislator Cummings. Passed Unanimously.

6. Resolution #270 – *Memorializing Resolution calling Upon The NYS Legislature To End Cost Shifting As A Method Of Closing The State's Budget Gap*

Moved by Legislator Rodriguez, seconded by Legislator Cummings. Passed Unanimously.

7. Other Business -

Reporting policy – department heads reporting to committees. Put on agenda for next month.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meg E. Dellay
Deputy Clerk, UC Legislature