

Public Health and Social Services Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: January 29, 2014, 5:30 PM
LOCATION: Karen L. Binder, 6th Floor, COB, Kingston, NY
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Craig V. Lopez
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn Tantillo, Deputy Clerk
PRESENT: Legislators Jeanette Provenzano, Chris Allen, Carl Belfiglio and Herbert Litts, III
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes
OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislator Kenneth Ronk, Jr., Legislative Counsel Erica Guerin, League of Women Voters Observer Lee Cane

Deputy Chairman Craig Lopez called the meeting to order at 5:45 PM.

MOTION NO. 1 Electing Legislator Craig V. Lopez as Chairman

Motion Made By: Legislator Belfiglio

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Litts

Discussion:

Deputy Chairman Craig Lopez opened the floor to nominations for Chairman of the Committee. Legislator Belfiglio nominated Legislator Lopez and Legislator Litts seconded the nomination.

Legislator Lopez asked if there were other nominations.

Legislator Provenzano nominated herself and explained that when she was appointed Chairman of this committee by Legislative Chairman John Parete earlier this month, this was the only committee she was appointed to. She stepped down as Chairman of the Public Health, Social Services Committee hoping for an opportunity to serve on additional committees. She expressed disappointment in the process of giving committee assignments because it did not take into consideration the input of the Majority Leader. She said she would like to be Chairman of the committee if had the support of the members of the committee. She noted that she had 23 years on the Legislature was well qualified to act as Chairman and hoped the members of the committee would support her. There was no second. Legislator Provenzano voted no on the motion in protest.

After the vote, Legislator Lopez thanked the members of the Committee and said he was looking forward to working with all of them. Legislator Lopez hoped they could work collectively in a positive way.

Legislator Litts “seconded” that sentiment, adding they were all elected to serve the people of Ulster County. He noted that he was only there because another Legislative member had refused to serve on the Committee and said he was very happy to have the opportunity to be on the committee.

Legislator Belfiglio spoke about his respect for Legislator Provenzano’s knowledge and experience. He enjoyed serving with her. He also felt that Legislator Lopez brought a different and unique perspective to the committee that will be a benefit and was confident Legislator Lopez will be an excellent Chairman.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Allen, Belfiglio and Litts
Voting Against: Legislator Provenzano
No. of Votes in Favor: 4
No. of Votes Against: 1
Disposition: Carried

MOTION NO. 2 Electing Legislator Jeanette Provenzano as Deputy Chairman

Motion Made By: Legislator Allen

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Belfiglio

Discussion:

Legislator Lopez opened the floor to nominations for Deputy Chairman. Legislator Allen nominated Legislator Provenzano noting her dedication to Ulster County and her constituents, her 23 years as a Legislator and her roll as a Legislative Leader. Legislator Belfiglio said he was pleased to second the nomination.

After the vote, Legislator Provenzano thanked the committee members.

Legislator Lopez said he was humbled to have Legislator Provenzano as Deputy Chairman and was pleased to have her experience and advice.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Provenzano, Allen, Belfiglio and Litts
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 5
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

MOTION NO. 3 Resolutions No. 12 – January 29, 2014

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolutions No. 12 - Approving The Execution Of A Contract In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Family Of Woodstock, Inc. – Department Of Social Services

Motion Made By: Legislator Provenzano

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Belfiglio

Resolution No. 12 Summary: This Resolution will approve a contract from 1/1/14 thru 12/31/14 between Ulster County Social Service and Family of Woodstock to provide intensive homeless supervision for individuals whose homelessness in complicated by substance abuse, mental health and/or criminal justice issues.

Discussion: Legislator Belfiglio noted that it is a renewal of the contract and asked what the contract amount was last year. The information was not available at the meeting.

Legislator Lopez felt that this information should be available as well as information about programs measures. He would insure that someone was available to provide this information in the future.

Legislator Provenzano spoke about a how important this program is because it provides supervision for a population that for various reasons needs this extra assistance to overcome homelessness.

Counsel Guerin reminded the committee that programs of this type have well established criteria for reporting progress and must meet measurable thresholds that are laid out in the contract.

Legislator Allen said there were hidden benefits to programs like this noting that without such programs many of these individuals would become an additional burden on the Ulster County Jail and criminal justice system.

Legislator Belfiglio asked if it would be possible to take a look at how these programs work.

Legislator Provenzano recommended that Family of Woodstock be invited to a future meeting to describe this and other programs they oversee.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Provenzano, Allen, Belfiglio and Litts

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 5

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Carried

MOTION NO. 4 Resolutions No. 13 – January 29, 2014

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolutions No. 13 - Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Gateway Community Industries Inc. – Mental Health Department

Motion Made By: Legislator Belfiglio

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Allen

Resolution No. 13 Summary: This Resolution is for the approval of a contract from 1/1/13 thru 12/31/13 between Ulster County Mental Health Department and Gateway Community Industries, Inc. to provide additional funding for the Office of Mental Health Community Support Services and Prior Liability Funds for the Affirmative Business Model portions of the NYS mandated agreement for this agency to receive NYS OMHI, OASAS and OMR/DD Aid and County contribution to provide residential, vocational, rehabilitation , training and evaluation services for the mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed and developmentally disabled.

Discussion: Legislator Provenzano praised the outstanding work of Gateway Community Industries, Inc. and described some of their programs.

Legislator Ronk agreed.

Legislator Allen noted that these funds were mostly “pass thru” because the State paid 93% and the Federal Government paid 4% of the program.

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Provenzano, Allen, Belfiglio and Litts

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 5

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Carried

MOTION NO. 5 Resolutions No. 14 – January 29, 2014

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolutions No. 14 - Authorizing The Chairman Of The Ulster County Legislature To Enter Into An Inter-Municipal Agreement For The Coordinated Children’s Services School Placement Preventive Program With Ulster County Board Of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) – Department Of Social Services

Motion Made By: Legislator Litts

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Allen

Resolution No. 14 Summary: This resolution authorized the Chairman to enter into an inter-municipal agreement with BOCES Coordinated Children’s Services School

Placement Preventive Program to enroll fifteen high-risk students in an after school program and provide a case aid to oversee and organize after-school activities, assist the students on a daily basis and in times of crisis, meet with their families, and facilitate collaboration with school and community service providers.

Discussion:

Legislator Belfiglio stated that he would abstain from voting because he is employed at BOCES.

Legislator Provenzano spoke about the after-school activities that included arts, sports, culinary and other topics and activities. This often exposed these students for the first time to new interests and sparked them to continue in school.

Voting In Favor:	Legislators Lopez, Provenzano, Allen and Litts
Voting Against:	None
Abstaining:	Legislator Belfiglio
No. of Votes in Favor:	4
No. of Votes Against:	0
Disposition:	Carried

MOTION NO. 6 Resolutions No. 29 – January 29, 2014

Text of Motion: Resolve to Approve Resolutions No. 29 - Opposing The Closure Of The Social Security Office Located At 809 Grant Avenue in Lake Katrine, NY

Motion Made By: Legislator Belfiglio

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Allen

Resolution No. 29 Summary: This Resolution opposes the closing of the only Social Security Office in Ulster County

Discussion: Legislator Provenzano, who was the original sponsor of the resolution, told the committee that since she first put forward this resolution there had been discussions with our Federal representatives, (Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressman Gibson) the Social Security Administration and the County Executive to try to relocate the office to a County building like the Business Resource Center.

Amendment 1 - Legislator Provenzano motioned, seconded by Legislator Allen, to amend the first RESOLVED by striking the words “seek other cost saving alternatives” and adding the words “accept the offer proposed by the Ulster County Executive to move into the space at the Business Resource Center which would result in substantial savings” AND amend the second RESOLVED by striking the words “urges all of” and adding the word “applauds”, striking the word “to” and adding “Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten

E. Gillibrand, and Congressman Chris Gibson for supporting this move, and requests that they”, adding the word “only” in front of the words Social Security Administration office, striking the words “Lake Katrine” and adding “Ulster County”.

Discussion on Amendment 1 – Legislator Provenzano told the committee that this office serves 30,000 clients annually while the staffing has been reduced from 25 to about 7. She discussed the vital need to maintain an office in Ulster County.

Legislator Belfiglio spoke about the advantages for the Social Security office to be in the BRC where it is serviced by UCAT. He pointed out what a good idea it is for them to be near other services like the Veteran’s Administration Office and the Office of Employment and Training. He then discussed concern about the Federal Government requirements for armed security and wondered who would provide and pay for that level of security in that building.

Legislator Provenzano said that if the Social Security Administration was agreeable to the move, details of the contract for renting the space would be worked out at that time.

Legislator Litts said he had gone in person to do business at a local Social Security office recently when he lost his Social Security Card. He waited in the queue for an hour and a half for service that took less than 5 minutes when it was his turn. He felt the other offices are already at or beyond their capacity.

Legislator Provenzano quoted Senator Schumer who said Ulster County is the area of Rhode Island. She said the Federal Government would never leave Rhode Island with no Social Security office.

Legislator Allen complimented job Legislator Provenzano has done to bring this resolution forward.

On Amendment 1

Voting In Favor:	Legislators Lopez, Provenzano, Allen, Belfiglio, Litts
Voting Against:	None
No. of Votes in Favor:	5
No. of Votes Against:	0
Disposition:	Carried

Amendment 2 - Legislator Lopez moved and Legislator Litts seconded an amendment to the second WHEREAS to add the words “on March 14, 2014” AND amend the fourth WHEREAS to strike “eleven (11)” and add “seven (7)”.

Discussion on Amendment 2 – Legislator Lopez explained that he felt it was important to include the date the Social Security Office had announced it would close the Lake Katrine office. He also noted that while early newspaper articles stated there were eleven employees at the Lake Katrine Office, there were now only seven.

Legislator Belfiglio noted that while the Social Security Administration claims that most business can be conducted on the internet or by mail, there are many things you need to go to the office in person to take care of. He spoke about his recent experience at the local office.

Legislator Ronk agreed and told the committee he and his wife needed new Social Security cards. They also went to the office in person because they were not comfortable mailing their passports, driver's licenses or other personal documents thru the mail.

On Amendment 2

Voting In Favor: Legislators Lopez, Provenzano, Allen, Belfiglio, Litts
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 5
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

On the Resolution as Amended

Voting In Favor: Legislators Belfiglio, Parete, Provenzano and Ronk
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 5
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: Carried

New Business

Level of Care at Area Hospitals

Legislator Belfiglio reminded the committee that last year they had met with Health Alliance to discuss the future of the Hospitals. While the issue of one of the Kingston Hospitals closing seems to have passed for the time being, there are new concerns about the impact of changes in the status of St. Francis Hospital in Poughkeepsie and their plans to stop providing Level 1 Emergency Services. He feels it is important to have a Level 1 Emergency provider in the area and the committee needs to continue to meet with the CEO's of local hospitals to insure we maintain an adequate level of care in the region.

HIPAA and Insurance Fraud

Legislator Allen recently lost his father and became aware of a problem caused by Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations which prevent patients or family members from reviewing email, faxes, phone records or other correspondence regarding a patients care unless they are willing and able to file a law suit. He believes this situation is ripe for Insurance Fraud.

Chairman Lopez suggested both Legislator Belfiglio and Legislator Allen do additional research and get back to the committee with information.

Old Business: None

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Litts

Motion Seconded By: Legislator Belfiglio

No. of Votes in Favor: 5

No. of Votes Against: 0

TIME: 6:36 pm

Dated the 30th day of January, 2014

Fawn A. Tantillo, Deputy Clerk

Minutes Approved on: February 6, 2014