



ULSTER COUNTY NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ulster County District Attorney Donald Williams – Ulster County Law Enforcement Center Press Release

This Office has received a copy of the Ulster County Legislature's Special Committee to Investigate the Planning, Pre-Planning and Construction of the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center ("Special Legislative Committee"). We commend Chairperson Bartels and the Committee consultant, John Mavretich, for their tireless efforts and thank them for keeping this Office informed of the status of their inquiry. The Special Committee has now requested that this Office examine its findings and, due to the Special Committee's own resource and time constraints, other allegations that the Special Legislative Committee was unable to explore more fully.

In the course of our communications with the Committee, we were advised that based upon newly discovered information, a referral to our Office was likely. In light of that, on August 24th, I made a formal request to the Office of Court Administration that a Special Grand Jury be convened. The Special Grand Jury was impaneled last week and will sit for a Term of up to six months while the currently impaneled Grand Jury continues to hear felonies prosecuted by this Office. The Grand Jury Special Session will begin on Wednesday, October 3rd.

In conducting an investigation, the Grand Jury has the power to compel by subpoena the appearance of witnesses and the production of documents. The New York State Criminal Procedure Law provides the Grand Jury with the following options:

- Vote criminal charges if reasonable cause exists to believe that a crime has been committed;
- Prepare a report concerning misconduct, nonfeasance or neglect in public office by a public servant;
- Prepare a report finding no misconduct, nonfeasance or neglect in public office by a public servant, if requested by that public servant;
- Prepare a report proposing recommendations for legislative, executive or administrative action in the public interest based upon stated findings;
- Neither return charges nor issue a report, if the Grand Jury concludes that neither is warranted.

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In announcing the Grand Jury's review, District Attorney Williams stated:

“The Grand Jury is an independent body, free of political bias and agendas, and insulated from media speculation. It will conduct a full and unfettered review of the matters referred by the Special Legislative Committee. Its decision will be based only on legally admissible evidence, not conjecture, assumption or surmise.”

District Attorney Williams added, “an independent Grand Jury investigation is a fair, thorough, non-political means to review, and I sincerely hope, resolve outstanding questions, including those now raised by the Special Committee. The Grand Jury will conduct its inquiry as expeditiously as the scope and the importance of this matter permits. It is my desire that the Grand Jury complete its work by the end of my term on December 31st, 2007, but there will be no constraints placed upon its review, other than as provided by law.”

By order of New York State Law, proceedings of the Grand Jury are secret and therefore neither this Office nor the members of the Grand Jury will be able to comment on the substance of this ongoing review until its completion.