



Frederick J. Wadnola

Chairman

Ulster County Legislature

Chairman's Message

Paul J. Hansut, Majority Leader

Kenneth Ronk, Jr., Majority Whip

Jeanette M. Provenzano, Minority Leader

Mary F. Sheeley, Minority Whip

**Robert Aiello
Carl Belfiglio
Terry Bernardo
Dean Fabiano
Frank Felicello
Walter Frey, Jr.
Richard Gerentine
Wayne Harris**

**Jack Hayes
Mary Beth Maio
James Maloney
Laura Petit
Kevin Roberts
Michael Sweeney
Catherine Terrizzi**

**Thomas Briggs
David Donaldson
Donald Gregorius
Roy Hochberg
Alan Lomita
Peter Loughran
Michael Madsen
Richard Parete**

**Robert Parete
Hector Rodriguez
Brian Shapiro
Joseph Stoeckeler
Susan Zimet**

March 2, 2010

I would like to express my Thanks for bestowing upon me the honor and privilege of electing me your Chairman for this historic term of the Ulster County Legislature. This term is the last of the 33 member Legislature as we will down size to 23 single member districts in the 2011 election.

I believe that the residents of Ulster County have spoken in returning a Republican majority to this Legislature. However, in the interest of working toward a common goal of a better, more efficient county government, we will ask our democratic colleagues to partner with us to make this goal achievable. Our new form of Government, created by the Ulster County Charter separates the legislative and executive functions of county government. The Legislative branch functions as the legislative, appropriating and policy making body of government. The executive branch has the responsibility to carry out the day to day operation of county government and is responsible for the development of the annual county budget. Our Charter calls for checks and balances and I believe it is the Legislature's responsibility to provide that. Working together, I believe we can fulfill this mandate.

Government at our national and state level is dysfunctional and heading for a financial meltdown. The financial prospect for our County for 2011 is tenuous. I believe, however, that this Legislature will face the problems that will come before us in a bipartisan effort to solve them as they develop. In addition, it is incumbent upon us to proactively identify problems, bring them to our legislative committees for analysis, and develop solutions before they can negatively impact our citizenry. To that end, I am proposing the following action plan, some of which has already taken place.

The Legislature is committed to streamlining and making the legislative branch more accountable. To this end we have reduced the number of

standing committees from eleven to eight. Although this has not been without controversy, I ask my legislative colleagues to work with us for 6 months, to evaluate our efficacy. At the end of 6 months, I will convene a meeting of the legislative leadership to evaluate how we are functioning, determine if we are meeting our collective expectations, and make any changes suggested by our leadership.

I have asked the Government Operations and Efficiency Committee chaired by Legislator Terry Bernardo to review the current county personnel policy and develop a new policy to address the question of nepotism and family related conflicts in the workplace. In addition, as I do not believe in a “piecemeal” approach to policy changes, I have asked the committee to expand their scope of interest to include all levels of county employment in the personnel policy, as well as the potential for conflicts of interest within county government.

I have asked the Economic Development and Tourism Committee chaired by Legislator James Maloney to review and assist on the development of the proposed project of Crossroads Ventures in the western end of the County and to help facilitate development in Ellenville and Saugerties. I have also, asked him to investigate and initiate a new program we will call “Ulster Online” to expand broadband service to all areas of the County so professionals can relocate to Ulster and work out of their homes. In addition, I have asked this committee to rededicate their efforts in locating and developing shovel ready sites for future development and job creation. I would also be remiss, if I did not mention the hard work of one of our former colleagues, Minority Leader Glenn Noonan in his tireless efforts in keeping the Gillette Creamery in Ulster County.

I have asked Legislator Jack Hayes , Chairman of the Law Enforcement and Safety Committee, to investigate the utilization of the old county jail which has been empty for the past three years and report possible options for the use of the building and property to the Legislature. I would, also, ask the Law Enforcement Committee to investigate the utilization of video arraignment at the County Jail to reduce the operational costs of the Sheriff's Department.

I am asking the Health and Human Services Committee chaired by Legislator Walter Frey to generate recommendations for the Golden Hill Health Facility for improvements to the facility in the area water supply and routine renovations. I would also ask that the question of privatization or partnership be addressed in the committee discussions, as well as any other potential options that may be identified. I would, also, ask the Committee Chair to create a task force to review federal and state mandates as they pertain to the Department of Social Services versus policies and regulations of the County of Ulster.

I have asked Legislator Richard Gerentine to represent me on the Stewart Airport Commission to facilitate development in the southern region of our county.

This Legislature will be tasked with the monumental responsibility of convening the Commission on Reapportionment to downsize the existing 12 multimember districts to 23 single member districts for the 2011 election. We will also have the responsibility to appoint a Charter Revision Commission to review and revise changes to our County Charter.

I am going to ask the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader to enter into discussion to pass a charter revision this year to reduce the number of

single member legislative districts from 23 to 21 which I believe would reflect a savings to the residents of Ulster County in the area of \$70,000.00 in salary and benefits.

I would like to briefly reinforce the need expressed by the County Executive in his address, to work together for our common goals to serve the residents of our County. It will be more likely to take place, however, if the two branches of government operate in the spirit of the Charter, as equals, rather than adversaries.

As your Chairman I hope each member of this historic Legislature will forget about which side of the aisle they sit on but join together to work as a unified whole to address the problems of rising taxes, excessive government and improving the economy of our County by creating jobs and helping to provide financial stability.

I pledge to you that I will work with you to serve the residents of our County to the best of my ability. God Bless you for serving Ulster County and God Bless America. Thank you.