

Charter Transition Team Meeting
April 22, 2008
4:30 PM
Chambers, 6th Floor, COB

Attendance:

Members: Legislator Gary Bischoff, Chairman
 Legislator Jon Decker - *excused*
 Legislator Phil Terpening
 Legislator Wayne Harris
 Dr. Gerald Benjamin, SUNY New Paltz
 Marianne Collins, SUNY Ulster
 Louis Klein, Attorney

Staff: Arthur Smith – County Administrator’s Office
 Bea Havranek, Eric Stock – County Attorney’s Office
 Robert Wenzel – County Auditor
 Adele Reiter, Paul Hewitt – County Treasurer’s Office
 Meg Dellay – Assistant to Charter Transition Team

Public: Tom Kadgen – LWV
 Emily Johnson – LWV & Youth Bureau
 Krista Barringer – Youth Bureau
 Margaret Sellers
 Allan Wikman

Agenda

- **Administrative Code**
- **Financial Organization Report**
- **Space Needs / Buildings Utilization Committee**
- **Charter Reimbursement**
- **Other**

Gary Bischoff opened the meeting at 4:37pm.

1. Financial Organization Report – The Financial Subcommittee – comprised of Bob Wenzel, Adele Reiter, Paul Hewitt and Art Smith – met with Dutchess County’s Commissioner of Finance and Comptroller. Auditor Bob Wenzel distributed a packet of information with letters from himself and Paul Hewitt, Director of County Finances.

See attached

Bob reported on Comptroller:

- Dutchess Comptroller’s Office comprised of 15 positions.
- Total 2008 Dutchess Budget is \$394.2 Million versus \$325.3 Million for Ulster.
- Dutchess County has two Senior Auditors and six Regular Auditors.
- Recommendation to hire two internal auditors plus a confidential secretary to set up auditing department under the new Comptroller.
- Dutchess County has two divisions: Accounts Payable and Auditing.

- Ulster County is missing internal audit position; our “auditors” are actually accounts payable clerks.
- Ulster will need to supplement or create/start up operation.
- Recommend \$75K-\$100K for outside consultants for the first year.
- Organizational chart is coming; civil service positions need further research; information forthcoming.

Adele reported on Commissioner of Finance:

- Dutchess Commissioner of Finance is set up similar to UC Treasurer’s Office.
- Dutchess Comm of Finance is aided by County Attorney and Real Property.
- Dutchess Finance Office performs all bank reconciliations.
- Recommend all of the functions which are currently performed by the Treasure’s office will remain to ensure separation of powers and checks and balances.

Gary asked the Finance subcommittee to continue assessment of present Administration and how positions compare with County Executive office.

2. Administrative Code –

Bea first addressed an issue that Legislator Rich Parete raised at the #2 Informational Meeting on April 2, 2008:

- Commission on Reapportionment (p.7, §A2-4 (A) – Charter states: “*This Commission shall consist of seven members who are County residents...and are not public officers or employees.*” Rich voiced a concern that the wording eliminates a lot of people, and he suggested a change.

Bea proposed adding: “For purposes of this section, public officers or employees shall be defined as public officers or employees of the County of Ulster.”

Discussion ensued with members of the former Charter Commission (Benjamin, Collins, Klein) explaining the intent of the Charter language was to include individuals not associated with county government in order to take decisions out of the hands of those who would benefit. However, Wayne Harris said the number of people is reduced considerably with the language stated as “public officers and public employees” – eliminating library board members, fire commissioners, board of education members, etc.

Gary suggested eliminating county and town employees. Bea suggested eliminating any town city, or village employee. Proposed change reads: “For purposes of this section, public officers or employees shall be defined as *county employees and employees of any town, city or village within the County of Ulster.*”

Motion by Wayne Harris, Phil Terpening seconded. Vote passed unanimously.

Bea reported on RECENT CHANGES:

- Comptroller [p.50, §A9-2 (I)] – the words “County Executive” added as recipient of comptroller’s report, along with County Legislature.
- Comptroller [p. 50, §A9-2 (K)] – added from Dutchess County Admin Code, as recommended by the Finance subcommittee: “The Comptroller, within

appropriations provided, therefore, shall have the power to engage such expert accountants and consultants as may be necessary to perform and carry out the functions and duties of his or her office.” All agreed.

Bea continued with NEW ARTICLES:

- Information Services / Article 15 (p.64-65) – Bea included language from LL #5, 1993 in the duties of Director of Information Services. Also noted, Assistant Directors is unique to Info Services Department per local law and civil service classifications.
- Purchasing / Article 16 (p.66-67) – Bea clarified who signs, approves and executes contracts under/over \$50,000 in Purchasing, Legislative and Executive Articles. The Director of Purchasing will have the authority to continue to execute recurring types of contract services, and will submit an abstract of these contracts to the Legislature and Executive. Inclusion of reports and deputies follows other departments.
- Real Property Tax Service Agency / Article 17 (p.68-69) – reports and deputies are the only additions.
- Public Defender / Article 18 (p.70-71) – Bea included LL#3, 1978 that stipulates public defender shall be a resident of Ulster County. Reports included “all cases handled by his or her office during the preceding year” from County Law 720.
- County Clerk / Article 19 (p.72-73) – Deputy position is in state law, 526 of County Law; reports added.
- Sheriff / Article 20 (p.74-75) – Bea explained the inclusion of “Salary of Sheriff; Accounting for fees and funds” to set up specific and clear instructions of Sheriff’s salary and reporting and payment of money collected by Sheriff’s Department. Bond of Sheriff added.
- District Attorney / Article 21 (p.76) – Bea still researching: 1) residency requirement of DA; 2) licensing of Assistant DA’s. Lou Klein asked about insurance for ADA’s, if not licensed. Bea will check on further.
- Fire Coordinator and Fire Advisory Board / Article 22 (p.77-78) – Coordinator has residency requirement per County Law; included language from job classification; reports and deputies follows other departments. Fire Advisory Board includes specifics from County Law §225-a.
- Office for the Aging / Article 23 (p.79-80) – Bea added job classification descriptions to clarify duties. Added to Nutrition Program for the Elderly – “as may be directed and or appropriated by the County Legislature” since Legislature created the program. Reports and deputies follow other departments.
- Consumer Affairs / Article 24 – HOLD, not distributed – Bea is working out issue that Charter has Weights & Measures in this department. Also, Consumer Affairs has been in the DA’s office and would like to remain.
- Veterans’ Service Agency / Article 25 – Bea added Executive Law specifying that the Director must be a veteran who has served in active duty during a wartime period. Reports and deputies follow other departments.

3. Space Needs / Buildings Utilization Committee – Gary asked Wayne Harris to represent the Charter Transition Team on this newly formed committee, and he agreed. The Buildings Utilization Committee was created (April 2008) by Chairman Dave Donaldson to review and assess the report done by C & S Engineering concerning the County’s space needs. The committee will then make recommendation to the full legislature as to what can and should be acted upon.

4. Other – Gary asked for more information about pay grades and salaries. Arthur Smith referred to packet of information from Bob Wenzel (distributed earlier). Points made:

- Other counties have a range of titles and salaries for Department of Finance; information supplied by NYSAC.
- Currently \$95,500 is salary for Ulster County Clerk, Sheriff, and Treasurer. Historically, County has paid these three elected officials the same.
- District Attorney’s salary is set by state law.
- Arthur suggested paying up from the other three elected officials.

Motion made by Phil Terpening to pay Comptroller the same as County Clerk and Sheriff; seconded by Lou Kein. Passed unanimously.

Discussion around Executive salary:

- Suggestion for a minimum of \$120,000, based on the average and median of other counties; plus salaries of school superintendents.
- Rather than an arbitrary number, come up with a number that feels right for us.
- Be mindful of circumstances and conditions in Ulster County.
- Salary will grow; entering uncertain financial period.
- Suggestion for \$125,000; noting a base salary is defining, county is a third of a billion dollar organization, and considering adjacent communities.

Motion made by Wayne Harris to set salary for County Executive at \$115,000. Seconded by Lou Klein. Vote passed, with two noes - Marianne Collins, Gerald Benjamin.

Meeting adjourned at 6:10pm.

(Date of next meeting was not discussed. May meet sooner than fourth Tuesday in May.)

Respectfully submitted,
Meg E. Dellay
Assistant to Charter Transition Team