

**ULSTER COUNTY RESOURCE RECOVERY AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE DRAFT BUDGET OF 2024  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

The Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency held a Public Hearing on September 21, 2023.

The proceedings were convened at 5:30 PM. The Public Hearing was held at the Agency's Main Office located 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY.

**Board members present:** Chair Andrew Ghiorse, Vice Chair James Gordon, Treasurer Regis Obijiski, Member Donna Egan and Member David Gilmour (arrived at 5:33 PM).

**Staff present:** Counsel/Secretary Kenneth Gilligan, Acting Executive Director/Director of Finance and Administration Timothy DeGraff and Office Manager Melinda France.

**From the public:** Reporter Bill Kemble from the Daily Freeman; Manna Jo Greene, Ulster County Legislator; March Gallagher, Ulster County Comptroller; Peg Nau, Councilperson from Town of Saugerties; Supervisor Rich Parete of the Town of Marbletown and Katherine Beinkafner.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (Recording :45-18:46)

Comments were made by County Legislator Manna Jo Greene, Supervisor Rich Parete and former UCRRA Board Member Katherine Beinkafner.

**Ulster County Legislator Manna Jo Greene discussion points, comments, and updates made** (Recording 1:00-11:38):

- The legislature made a lot happen in the past year which will affect the budget
  - Contracted Sustainable Hudson Valley to prepare a feasibility study for a Reuse Innovation Center (RIC)
  - RIC would essentially manage the waste the Agency does not handle
  - RIC would be for items that can be repaired, reused and sold for a cost
  - The study was intended to be written with recommendations this year and implemented in 2024
  - Asked the Agency to consider, in its capital budget and operations, the RIC
  - Doesn't know who will run RIC or where it will be housed
  - Has asked for cost estimates on various options
  - Wants Ulster County to succeed and believes RIC is a critical component to that success
  - Diversion rate is at 40% and believes there could be 80-85% diversion
- Motion to request that the Agency not move forward with the Feasibility Landfill Study was defeated
- NY Times article regarding Seneca Meadows
- Time to take local responsibility of the waste generated and not to think of it as waste but as materials
- Legislature and the Energy, Environmental and Sustainability Committee (EESC) meetings have been more about the future of UCRRA
- Need to bring stakeholders together and sort it out in a way that would be best for Ulster County

- Zero Waste Implementation Plan
  - Three-quarters of the way done-ran out of energy and funds
  - Purpose was how to implement waste diversion
  - Have all stakeholders review the ZWIP and collect input
  - The ZWIP creates an opportunity for everyone to work together
- Hold focus meetings to discuss:
  - Expanding the Agency's Board
  - Possible dissolving the Agency
  - Agency becoming a County Department

**Supervisor Parete of the Town of Marbletown comments and discussion points made (Recording 11:49-15:51):**

- Thanked the Agency for their hard work and service
- Agency has been responsive to the Town's needs. Marbletown and the Agency have a great working relationship
- Has been great working with Manna Jo Greene for the last few years, with the legislature.
- Give the Agency credit for trying to site a landfill but don't see it happening in Ulster County
- Noticed some of the towns and supervisors have been "beaten up the staff at the Agency"
  - All towns have contracts
  - All contracts state the Towns have 90 days written notice to get out of the contract by the end of the year
  - No Town has gotten out of their contracts
  - Speaks volumes of the service the Agency supplies to the Towns
- Noticed costs on the budget are fixed
- Try and reduce the net service fee
- Opposed of three towns receiving compactors, while the other towns pay for it
- Suggested:
  - More education to the towns on how to fill the boxes
  - 2-tier system
  - Provide more education to the public, legislatures, supervisors and the towns with a slideshow or presentation

**Katherine Beinkafner comments and discussion points made (Recording 16:05-18:46):**

- In her opinion, a landfill is not the solution to Ulster County's solid waste
- In her opinion, the Agency and NYSERA should team up to build a modern waste-to-energy plant
- Waste-to-energy plant is not an incinerator
- Westinghouse has technology that can turn the waste into gaseous materials
- The material can be used as a commodity
- Believed NYSERDA and NYSDEC has failed by not planning for the future or how to handle the solid waste
- If more waste was needed, could reach out to other counties, to run the waste-to-energy plant
- Willing to help gather information
- Thinks it is important to consider the waste-to-energy option

**ADJOURN**

James Gordon motioned to adjourn the September 21, 2023, Public Hearing at 5:49 PM and it was seconded by Regis Obijiski. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

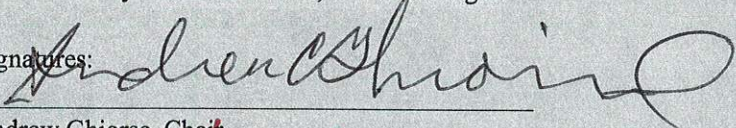
September 28, 2023

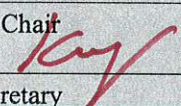
Motion to approve the above transcribed Minutes of the September 21, 2023, Public Hearing was made by David Gilmour and seconded by James Gordon. 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 absent.

The minutes were approved by the Board.

Transcribed by: Melinda France, Office Manager.

Signatures:

  
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Andrew Ghiorse, Chair

  
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Ken Gilligan, Secretary