

WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY

MINUTES: August 11, 2008

MEMBERS (E&E): Chair: Abinanti; Legislators: Harckham, Kaplowitz, Myers, Nonna, Oros, Rogowsky

IN ATTENDANCE: STAFF: C. Crane, T. O'Connell; GUESTS: A. Neuman (CEO); Comm'r. P. Redd Zeman (WCDHR); S. Glass (Law)

Environment & Energy Committee meeting called to order at 1:25 pm.

Item(s) Discussed: **Executive Director, Public Utility Service Agency (COWPUSA)**

Chair Abinanti commenced the meeting with renewed discussion of a proposed county pay plan amendment to create a position of Executive Director for the County of Westchester Public Utility Service Agency (COWPUSA). Because the 'blue sheet' time was immediately pending (1:30 pm), the Committee voted out the pay plan amendment for consideration by the full Board, with an understanding that the item could be re-committed. Upon the motion of Leg. Rogowsky, seconded by Leg. Myers, the Committee approved the pay plan amendment (all in favor; Oros w/out prejudice). Committee members then continued discussion of COWPUSA and the Executive Director position.

At Chair Abinanti's request, Mr. Glass described COWPUSA budgets for several preceding years (shown on handouts provided by Mr. Glass), which the Committee then reviewed. Leg. Kaplowitz inquired what the Executive Director's relationship would be with the Board of Legislators. Mr. Glass stated he viewed the position as having the following functions: i) administrative tasks for the COWPUSA agency, ii) working with the Administration on present electric rates and other utility purchases and energy issues, iii) researching new initiatives for the Administration and the County Board. Mr. Glass noted that several tasks historically performed by COWPUSA for the County are not within the express COWPUSA charter provisions. Leg. Kaplowitz concurred with the functions described by Mr. Glass, but noted that COWPUSA has had differing

positions from the Administration and the County Board, such as regarding Indian Point electricity purchases.

The Committee further discussed the Executive Director position. Upon review, the committee members concluded that the Executive Director is appointed by, is supervised by, and may be released by the COWPUSA board. Chair Abinanti said that there should be an agreement between COWPUSA and the County for services that COWPUSA performs for the County in exchange for money the County provides to COWPUSA (similar to agreements between the Medical Center and the County). Also, Chair Abinanti listed several past proceedings in which the County Board authorized the County Attorney to intervene (as well as COWPUSA). An agreement (or bylaws, memorandum of understanding, etc.) could better clarify COWPUSA's relationship with the County and clarify COWPUSA's functions. Mr. Neuman stated that the COWPUSA board should be present to participate in such discussions. Chair Abinanti expressed hope that a follow-up meeting with the COWPUSA board would explore these issues.

Upon the motion of Leg. Myers, seconded by Leg. Harckham, the Committee voted to adjourn (all in favor). The meeting concluded at approximately 2:00 pm.

[An audio recording of this meeting is on file]