

EDUCATION, CULTURE & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, March 9, 2009

The Education, Culture & Recreation Committee of the Broome County Legislature met on Monday, March 9, 2009 in the Legislative Conference Room, Sixth Floor, Edwin L. Crawford County Office Building, Binghamton, New York.

Members Present: S. Buchta (Chair), W. Howard, B. Klipsch, R. Materese, S. Messina

Members Absent: None

Others Present: P. Brennan, County Exec's Office; J. Sluzar, P. DeWind, Law; M. Kalka, Budget, B. Fiacco, E. Hart, B. Hoffman, Parks; J. DiMascio, R. Sall, D. Martin, Arena Board; T. Mitchell, Binghamton Senators; A. Nocciolino, Broadway Theater League; S. Wilson, Binghamton Philharmonic; R. Smith, Tri-Cities Opera; G. LaBare, J. Marinich, D. Moran, M. Nirchi, D. Reynolds, E. Denk, C. Marion, C. Hall, Legislature

The Committee meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:30 pm. Mr. Howard moved the agenda, seconded by Ms. Messina. The Committee took the following action with regard to the matters before it:

#42 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A WAGE INCREASE FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FOR NON-UNION, TEMPORARY, SEASONAL EMPLOYEES FOR 2009

Carried. Ayes-5, Nays-0

#44 RESOLUTION AMENDING THE 2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE ALM'S HOUSE DEMOLITION

Carried. Ayes-5, Nays-0

Heldover from a previous session

09-80 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CREATION OF A MANDATORY FACILITY USER FEE FOR ALL EVENTS AT THE BROOME COUNTY VETERANS MEMORIAL ARENA AND THE BROOME CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, THE FORUM

Mr. Smith from the Tri-Cities Opera stated that fund drives, government contributions, subscriptions, ticket sales, etc. are all down and the Tri-Cities Opera is not in support of a user fee at this time. Ticket prices range from \$20 to \$60.

Mr. Wilson from the Binghamton Philharmonic opposes the user fee. He stated that it will decrease attendance. He said there is a direct correlation between price and attendance. The Binghamton Philharmonic is currently using deep discounts to increase and stimulate demand. The average ticket price is \$27-\$28 with \$10 at the low end and \$40 at the high end. Mr. Wilson stated that they also use the Anderson Center which charges a higher rental rate than the Forum.

Mr. Nocciolino from the Broadway Theater League asked the committee to consider the economic impact of creating the user fee and encouraged the committee to look at alternative revenues noting that there are federal and state grants available for renovations/restoration. He suggested the county might be generating less revenue by imposing a user fee. He stated that there are some theaters with more than 2,500 seats that have a restoration charge added to ticket prices and that revenue stays with the theater.

Mr. Mitchell from the Binghamton Senators stated that attendance has been down for the last four years. The ticket prices did increase this season for the first time in three years to \$16.25 and \$17.25 with discounts for groups, etc.

Mr. Sall from the Arena and Forum Board stated the user fee is a way to increase revenues, estimated at \$250,000, for much needed repairs and to keep the venues appealing.

Mr. Marinich suggested the user fee be placed only on tickets that are not sold at the box office.

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, Ms. Messina made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Klipsch. The meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.