

TOWN OF SAUGERTIES

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MEMBERS OF TOWN BOARD
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May 11, 2015

Hon. Michelle I. Phillips
Hon. David L. Prestemon
Administrative Law Judges
Public Service Commission
Three Empire State Plaza
Albany NY 12223-1350

**RE: Cases 13-E-0488; 13-T-0454; 13-T-0455; 13-T-0456; 13-M-0457; 13-T-0461 –
Ruling Denying Requested Funds (May 5, 2015)**

Greetings:

The Town of Saugerties request for \$42,500 in funding to defray the cost of our participation in this matter was denied in this Ruling because all funds that were determined to be made available for participating in the remainder of Part A of the proceedings were awarded, and your offices “were not persuaded” to reconsider that decision.

The Town understands this decision and accepts it. We do not wish to appeal, but the arguments that we put forth as to need in our application remain, and toward those needs I am making inquiry to determine if a part of the \$42,500, namely the \$9,000 needed for the time and effort of our Special Projects Coordinator, might be considered.

Saugerties feels that the qualities and abilities that Vernon Benjamin brings to the table warrant a consideration of this request. He is, in addition to a former town supervisor and former aide to Assemblyman Maurice D. Hinchey, a published historian (*The History of the Hudson River Valley: From Wilderness to the Civil War*), an accomplished bill drafter (the New York State Acupuncture Law of 1990 and the Medical Physips Practice Act of 2001), an adjunct lecturer in history, art history and writing at Marist College, and an aide of mine who works on other complicated matters like this, including testimony in a major NYSDEP SPDES violation case, the administration of USEPA and New York Rising infrastructure monies, and other watershed and land use issues. He has a special expertise in heritage and cultural issues related to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area that we anticipate will be helpful in explaining the cultural impacts of transmission lines of this nature to our region. I believe that the April 22 Town of Saugerties Scoping Comments that Vernon provided on our behalf illustrated his capabilities in this matter.

Vernon's goal in assisting the Town on any project is to do so at little or no cost to the taxpayer—this is what he brings to the table for Saugerties. He is able to do complicated language drafting, environmental reviews, and other work that engineers and professional planners would normally have to do, at considerable savings to us, and has also significantly reduced his rate in order to make his services affordable to the Town. I assure you that if his \$9,000 estimated costs are allowed, he will not only provide good service in these proceedings but also try and do so at even less cost than that.

I do not know if there is a mechanism for the ALJs to consider a matter of this nature, but I respectfully request that you do reconsider the decision and award Saugerties partial funding in the amount of \$9,000 to cover Vernon Benjamin's costs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Helsmoortel", written in a cursive style.

Greg Helsmoortel, Supervisor

Cc: Town Board

Vernon Benjamin