



P.O. Box 507  
Ghent, NY 12075

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**COLUMBIA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE (CCDC)**

**Democratic Supervisors seek solutions, Republicans play political games**  
*More dirty tricks from Chairman Matt Murell*

**COLUMBIA COUNTY, NY:** On September 14, 2022, the Columbia County Board of Supervisors (BOS) held a full board meeting. The differences between Democrats and Republicans were in stark relief. “Matt Murell, the Chairman of the BOS, worked with right-wing Republicans and pushed for the adoption of politically divisive resolutions without public comment or feedback from fellow Supervisors,” said Sam Hodge, Chair of the Columbia County Democratic Committee.

Resolution 395-2022, addressing overtime for farm workers, and Resolution 396-2022, concerning common sense gun reform, were brought to the full BOS without following the normal process for adopting Resolutions. Linda Mussmann, Hudson’s 4th Ward Supervisor, stated, “They skipped normal procedures and we were asked to support these resolutions without committee input or public comments. We were simply given no time to consider and no time to comment on these Republican-supported resolutions. Citizens need to understand that I, for one, will not be blindsided. I want to have my eyes wide open and hear from the people that these resolutions affect. I will not vote for resolutions that have not been vetted properly, especially when it comes to gun permits and farm labor.”

Claire Cousin, Hudson’s 1st Ward Supervisor, similarly had problems with the process employed by Republicans on the BOS, saying, “Last night, I believe the Republicans made an attempt at passing last minute, oppositional, and empty legislation on issues that are far too important and deserve much more care and consideration. The BOS should be able to come together on more issues than not to create meaningful, solution-based actions for our County. There’s real work to be done.”

In stark contrast to the housing resolution that was unanimously passed at the meeting, which included a study, a public forum, and a special Supervisors meeting to discuss that resolution, Republicans insisted on rushing Resolutions 395 and 396 with little notice. As proposed by the Republicans, Resolution 396, opposing gun regulations, uses divisive and attacking language; and Resolution 395, addressing a complicated farming and farm workers issue, did not offer any solutions for our farmers.

During the BOS meeting, Republicans admitted that their Resolutions were politically motivated. The Resolutions were pushed by Republican Elise Stefanik, Assemblymember Chris Tague (R), and “someone in Greene County.” Even more concerning, Chairman Murell chose to bury the proposed materials in a long document, featuring 46 other resolutions. The document was distributed to Supervisors on Friday, September 9th. Supervisors had little time to consider the resolutions. Republicans then called for two special meetings for this past Wednesday to pass the resolutions – all to be completed within 15 minutes.

In a show of strength and unity, Democratic Supervisors interrupted the rush to vote to advocate



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for community interests, insist on an opportunity for the public to speak, and clarify the motivations behind the resolution.

Democrats were able to amend Resolution 395-2022, removing divisive language, inserting a statement of principle to support all workers of Columbia County, establishing a process for community engagement, and committing to create local solutions for both farmworkers and farm owners. The Democrat version of the resolution passed with bipartisan support.

Supervisor Michael Chameides, representing Hudson’s 3rd Ward, stated, “The County Board of Supervisors needs to create local solutions for our community. But on Wednesday, Republicans were more interested in passing divisive and misleading resolutions written by outside interests. I insisted we hear from the public and discuss these critical issues. Joining together, we made improvements, but we didn't have the votes to stop these antics. Columbia County deserves better.”

Republican Supervisors repeatedly stated that the goal of the resolutions was to grandstand and to send a message, claiming the specifics of the resolutions - even if clumsy, false, and divisive - didn’t matter. When Resolution 396-2022, which opposed common sense gun regulations, was brought up, Chairman Murell closed the discussion, expressing concern that Democrats were likely to persuade Republicans to vote against his resolution. Even more troubling, 20 of 23 Supervisors admitted that they had never read the legislation referenced in Resolution 396-2022.

Tistrya Houghtling, New Lebanon Town Supervisor and Minority Leader of the BOS, stated, “It is unfortunate that these important issues were dealt with in a rushed, political way. I find it always better to be solution-oriented and bring all voices to the table to come up with the best outcome possible. I was glad my Republican colleagues joined us in amending the proposed farm resolution and making a commitment to action that will actually help our local farms and farm workers. I was disappointed that those same colleagues shut down our attempt at having a productive conversation on the proposed gun resolution, instead rushing to a vote to pass it as written, with all its divisive and attacking language.”

Resolution 396-2022 passed with mostly Republican votes. To view the meeting, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWcIHZGwqNQ>

**Columbia County Democratic Committee**

The Columbia County Democratic Committee is committed to the advancement of progressive Democratic goals through efficient and effective government: economic equality and meaningful job development; quality public education; affordable healthcare, childcare, and housing; respect and inclusion for all. The CCDC meets every fourth Thursday of the month.

For more information, visit [columbiacountydemocrats.org](http://columbiacountydemocrats.org).

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