

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH  
Monday December 21 2009

PRESENT: Representatives Mulholland, Ford, Aguiar, Ward, Friedrich (late), Laliberte, Gionet, Williams, and Preston, Commissioners Cryans, Burton and Richards, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Martino.

OTHERS: Harold Brown, Howard Hatch, Rep. Ladd

Rep. Mulholland called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM

Rep. Preston moved to approve the Executive Committee minutes from November 16, 2009, which was seconded by Rep. Laliberte. All were in favor. (Rep. Friedrich had not arrived yet).

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Sievers was not available for the meeting so Director Clough informed the committee that all of the taxes from the towns had been collected as of the 17<sup>th</sup> of December in the amount of \$17,555,749. \$3,650,000 in TANs had been borrowed with an interest amount of \$10,737, which has all been repaid as of December 16<sup>th</sup>. As of last Friday there was \$12,750,000 in the general account.

Treasurer Sievers had emailed her proposed investment plan for tax monies to Director Clough, who passed out the information. The committee took a moment to read the information. Director Clough said she really couldn't answer any questions regarding the information as she just received it this morning upon her arrival.

Director Clough said that she did have some concerns about a couple of items in the proposal. The proposal suggested putting money in liquid account and then switching between banks weekly as the rates change. Director Clough said that given Treasurer Sievers history of not availing herself to the County she would probably not be able to follow through on that suggestion because she is just not reliable in that way.

The letter also proposed borrowing money in the middle of the year and the fact is, you can not borrow money if you actually have money in the bank.

At present the money is in Woodsville bank accruing 1% interest which is fairly comparable to what other banks are offering according to the bid proposals.

Rep. Gionet asked Director Clough if she had any recommendations or if she should assume the responsibility of the Treasurer. Director Clough said that being Treasurer is not her responsibility. She said she didn't think that banks that did not bid (there were many) should be re-asked if the County could invest money with them, and the money should only be invested in a bank or banks that have prepared bids.

10:15 AM Rep. Friedrich arrived.

Rep. Preston asked if money could be bounced around without having the Treasurer present and Director Clough said that she didn't know if that were possible and at the very least the banks would have to have her signature on file.

Rep. Williams said that he is not pleased with the information that he has just heard about the Treasurer and asked the Commissioners for their thoughts. Commissioner Cryans said that she is an elected official and the Commissioners have no control over her. He said that after looking at the interest rates he didn't think that the situation would be any different even if she were here. He also noted that switching around money didn't seem to be a healthy solution for anyone involved, including the banks. He said that it doesn't appear that moving money out of Woodsville right now would make a big difference.

Rep. Ward suggested keeping the funds where they are for one month and then for the Commissioners and Director Clough to come back at that time with another recommendation. Rep. Mulholland said that sounded like a good suggestion.

Rep. Williams moved to keep the funds at Woodsville bank for one month and that the Committee should be updated with another recommendation at the next meeting which was seconded by Rep. Ford. All were in favor.

Rep. Gionet had a question regarding a \$1600 fee on the cash management report and Director Clough said that she would have to pull the report to find out.

Rep. Ladd wanted it noted that he sees a lack of professionalism in the Treasurers Report that was presented and could not understand why she was not present at this meeting to go over it. Rep. Mulholland said it was duly noted.

Rep. Laliberte moved to accept the Treasurer's Report which was seconded by Rep. Aguiar. Reps. Mulholland, Ford, Aguiar, Ward, Friedrich, Laliberte, Gionet, and Preston were in favor. Rep. Williams was opposed.

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander arrived with an informational packet which referenced the statistics of long term care on the economy. The new reduced Medicaid reimbursement rate was discussed along with the impact it will make on the budget. There will be a \$270K reduction from the time period of January to July. The rate has dropped from \$159.06 a day to \$144.96. Commissioner Cryans said that this rate takes the County back to the rates of 2006.

Rep. Gionet asked if some of the older population comes from retirees who are moving into the State and NHA Bolander said that is true for Carroll and Coos. She said there does seem to be a migration of people. Rep. Ward said that it tends to happen in areas where hospitals are located.

Rep. Ladd asked what direction the State is going and NHA Bolander said that she really didn't know and that they are just as confused and overwhelmed as anyone. She said it's near impossible to get any information from them.

Commissioner Cryans said that three years ago past Commissioner Stephen had said that the fastest growing population is ages 85-90 and it is growing by 30%. He said there is

only so much of the pie to go around and added that a \$270K cut in the budget will be difficult.

Rep. Laliberte asked if the actual costs for people to stay in their homes in later years has been calculated and NHA Bolander said that it would be hard to do because it would depend on the level of care. Rep. Gionet said that he had read in AARP that it was a less expensive way to go.

In closing, NHA Bolander said that there is an opportunity for legislators to see what other kinds of revenue could be available because right now things are not sustainable in the State.

### COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Commissioner Cryans said there was a recent Drug Court graduation in which Rep. Bulis attended. There was also a recent GED graduation of 11 graduates which brings the number of graduates to 60 in 14 months. Reps. Ladd and Aguiar attended.

- On January 7<sup>th</sup> the Court will hear oral arguments on the Jail issue and the County is still waiting on word about the oral argument on the Elected Officials.
- An MOA regarding the County and Woodsville Water & Light has been sent to an attorney for review.
- The Commissioners met with the town of Littleton Selectboard. Reps. Ward and Bulis were present.
- The Commissioners will hold their annual Christmas party tomorrow for employees.
- The Sheriff's Dept. has received its accreditation which is the only one in any County in New England. Commissioner Cryans gave credit to the Sheriff, Cpt. Leavitt and Lt. Morris for all the work done for this program.

Rep. Ward moved to accept the Commissioners Report, which was seconded by Rep. Williams. All were in favor.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Clough stated that there were 102 inmates in-house at the Jail and 133 in the Nursing Home.

Director Clough passed out packets of information on Farm projections, partially for information and partially in response to an article in the Bridge Weekly which stated that the Farm would see a \$230K loss this year. According to the projections, losses may reach \$125K which are actual projected numbers.

Farm Manager Kimball was present and was asked about what was driving the increased milk prices. FM Kimball said that it's an attempt to help the farmers.

FM Kimball said that he's been trying to cut back as much as he can on expenses. Howard Hatch noted that the capital expenses are missing from the Farm budget and so is the cost of production.

Commissioner Richards talked about starting a Farm Commission and said she feels that a lot more could be done with the Farm.

Rep. Aguiar asked FM Kimball what was the next biggest expense that the Farm had and FM Kimball replied that it was the labor of the three fulltime benefited employees.

Rep. Ward asked Director Clough about the capital expense in the Farm budget and she replied that it is not included and that there is \$35K budgeted with about \$10K paid out so far.

Rep. Laliberte asked how many inmates were used and FM Kimball said that he has four seven days a week plus more if needed and then there are four, five days a week. Rep. Williams said that it would really drive the budget cost up if that labor had to be paid.

There was a discussion about the cost of milk, which H. Hatch said was primarily about supply and demand and he noted that there really wasn't anything that legislators could do about it. Rep. Williams said that the milk issue is in a complete mess and is in the hands of the feds.

Director Clough continued on with the Variance Report and reported that revenues are down for the Victim Witness (which is a quarterly grant), the Farm and Interest. She then reviewed the expense side of things.

Rep. Gionet discussed the wood sales and whether they should be done annually. Director Clough said that in the past, the Forester thought that wood cuts should be done according to a forest management plan and not just for profit. Rep. Gionet said that there seems to be plenty enough wood to cut with all the acreage. Director Clough noted that it is very labor intensive to do. FM Kimball said that inmates can't do a lot of the work because of injuries that have been sustained and that the Farm just doesn't have enough time to do it.

Rep. Aguiar asked about loggers taking down the trees and Director Clough replied that the timber harvests are done at the decision of the Forester and that last year the timber prices were so low it wasn't worth doing it. She said she thought that there was an area marked off for a future cut.

Rep. Williams said that the only way that it can be done properly is with a management plan through the new Forester.

Director Clough found the report that Rep. Gionet questioned earlier regarding fees and informed the committee that the fees were from ADP which is paid for the time clocks and there is also a monthly service charge included in the fee.

Director Clough reviewed the Pro-Rated Report.

Rep. Preston moved to approve the Executive Director's Report which was seconded by Rep. Gionet. All were in favor.

New Human Resource Director Mike Simpson joined everyone at the table and was introduced by Commissioner Cryans.

Director Clough had sent the committee copies of the Grafton County Salary and Benefit overview that she had compiled for their information and she, the Commissioners, HRD Simpson and the committee reviewed the information.

Rep. Williams asked what percentage of people do not receive a merit increase and HRD Simpson said that he estimated that it was approximately 30% but that he would have to check that figure.

Rep. Williams asked what the rationale was for beginning the longevity benefit at six years employment and Director Clough said that it originally began because there were only six steps on the wage chart. There have since been more steps added but the policy had not been changed.

At present the Union contracted employees are paid \$100. a year for longevity and Employee Council members are paid \$95.

Rep. Aguiar asked about new hires and at what step they begin. HRD Simpson said that it goes case by case depending on experience.

Rep. Aguiar asked about salaried employees and Director Clough said that she believes there are 33 salaried or "unclassified" employees and there are some minor differences but they follow the same employee manual.

Commissioner Cryans gave credit to Director Clough for putting together such a comprehensive report. He addressed the issue of longevity and said he feels that it's a small portion of the budget though he wouldn't be opposed to stopping the practice for new hires. He noted that a large percentage of employees have less than six years and that there's a healthy mix of employees. He added that he is dead set against doing away with it for those who are here.

Rep. Ford suggested a change from six to twelve years could be considered.

Rep. Aguiar said that he has seen longevity used as an incentive for those who are maxed out and feels it should be considered for that use only. He said that he would encourage the Commissioner to terminate the benefit of longevity for future employees.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Monday January 25<sup>th</sup> beginning at 10:00 AM.

The February meeting will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March beginning at 10:00 AM.

12:08 PM Rep. Gionet moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Rep Williams. All were in favor and with no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Phil Preston, Clerk