

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH
Monday April 19, 2010

PRESENT: Representatives Mulholland, Ford, Williams, Laliberte, Aguiar, Preston and Ward, Commissioners Cryans and Richards, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Martino.

EXCUSED: Representatives Friedrich and Gionet

OTHERS: Register of Deeds Sharp and Harold Brown

Rep. Mulholland called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM

Rep. Preston moved to approve the Executive Committee minutes from March 15, 2010, which was seconded by Rep. Aguiar. All were in favor.

Executive Director Clough informed the committee that there was no Treasurer for the meeting and that she had not heard from her for a least a week. Director Clough said that \$650K had been drawn down from the Mascoma account.

Rep. Williams asked what the Commissioners thought about the Treasurer's situation and Commissioner Cryans said there wasn't really anything they could do about it and that there will be a new filing period in June and an election in November.

Rep. Williams asked if the Deputy Treasurer was being used. Director Clough said that if the Treasurer doesn't call or email that she's not coming there's really no time left to work something out with the Deputy because by that time the checks have to be signed and it's usually done by stamping them at the last minute.

Rep. Williams said this really puts the County in a bad situation and he didn't think that the burden should be put on Director Clough or her staff.

Commissioner Cryans said that right now, checks are going out and bills are being paid so it's really not a burden.

Rep. Williams said this is a sad situation and it's just not right.

Rep. Laliberte said they get to make a choice in November and they have to make the best choice.

There was a discussion about whether or not the lawsuit regarding Elected Official's salaries could affect payments to the Treasurer and Rep. Preston asked if they could go back and refigure salaries. Director Clough did not think that was something that could be done and added that the lawsuit is still pending at this time awaiting Supreme Court ruling.

Rep. Ward said that the Executive Committee could ask the Treasurer to resign and empower the Deputy Treasurer to carry on the duties. He said that the Commissioners Office may be operating fine at this point but there are going to be some legal duties that

will need to be done by the Treasurer. Director Clough agreed and said that if the County is going to sell bonds there will be a huge responsibility required.

Rep. Williams moved that the Commissioners address this with the present Treasurer and if she is going to be out of the country she should resign. Rep. Aguiar seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Rep. Aguiar asked if anyone has tried to reach the Treasurer to find out what's going on. Rep. Preston said that there have been a number of responses from the Treasurer, all saying that she would perform her duties and be present and that hasn't happened. He questioned the validity of her word. He wondered aloud if asking her to resign would get the message out.

Rep. Williams said that he feels a clean motion should be made and withdrew his original motion. Rep. Aguiar then withdrew his second to the motion.

Rep. Preston moved that the Executive Committee ask Treasurer Sievers to submit her resignation as Treasurer, which was seconded by Rep. Ward.

DISCUSSION:

Rep. Aguiar said they need to be careful about setting precedence in that Elected Officials are asking another Elected Official to resign. He said he didn't think this should be taken lightly.

Director Clough said that she did not specifically ask the Treasurer to attend this meeting, nor did she think that was her responsibility to do. She said that Treasurer Sievers knows that the Executive Committee meets the third Monday of each month and the Executive Committee voted that either she or the Deputy Treasurer attend all meetings. Treasurer Sievers has missed the last three (including today).

Rep. Aguiar, knowing that the Deputy Treasurer is affiliated with a bank, said he feels uncomfortable about someone in banking accepting the role of an Elected Official and Rep. Ward said there is no conflict of interest there and that this was an issue that was not being taken lightly but that the Treasurer has had a long track record of inattentiveness.

When the vote came down, Reps. Laliberte, Williams, Mulholland, Preston, Ford and Ward were in favor. Rep. Aguiar was opposed. Motion passed.

Rep. Aguiar wanted it noted that the previous Treasurer had missed a good many meetings.

Commissioner Richards asked how this would be carried out and Rep. Ward said that a letter should be written from the Chair, Rep. Mulholland, which references the minutes. Commissioner Richards suggested that it be mailed certified.

Rep. Ward moved to accept the Treasurer's Report which was seconded by Rep. Ford. All were in favor.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Commissioner Cryans began by saying that on April 1, 2010 the Supreme Court decided in favor of the County in the Jail case. There was a Motion for Rehearing or Reconsideration filed by the plaintiffs and the Attorney's for the County have filed an objection to that motion. They await a decision on that. Plans for the Jail will continue.

Tentative ground breaking on the Jail project will be on June 10, 2010 contingent on the appeal being denied.

Director Clough and Supt. Libby are working on the tax impact numbers for the communities. Rep. Ward asked when that would be done and Director Clough replied that it would be soon.

There will be a Drug Court graduation on May 19, 2010.

The public hearing for the presentation of the Commissioners Recommended Budget will be held on May 24, 2010 at 6:00 PM.

There was a discussion about the meeting that needed to be held to make the decision about the Elected Official's salaries for the biennium which needs to be held before the end of May. The Commissioners recommended a 0% increase for Elected Officials for the two year period.

Director Clough will be out on FMLA beginning the 28th of April for five weeks.

Rep. Aguiar had asked Commissioner Cryans prior to the start of the meeting, where the County stood on budget issues. Commissioner Cryans said that the Board of Commissioners had recommended a 2% COLA increase across the board for employees, with no step increases for the year.

Rep. Preston asked how this compares to just a merit increase and Director Clough said it costs more because it affects everyone.

Commissioner Cryans said the County had expected to pay a 20% increase in health insurance but Director Clough and the Human Resource Director were able to find an alternative to LGC and the County will likely be going with Harvard Pilgrim with only a 10% increase which will include a co-pay for employees.

Rep. Mulholland asked what the drivers were for the increase and Director Clough said that claims have a lot to do with it but insurance has been going up nationally. The County will be working to educate employees with a wellness program.

Rep. Ford said that the school districts that she works with were facing the same type of increases and Rep. Ward echoed that same sentiment.

Director Clough said that Union negotiations were not completed but she feels they are willing to work with the Commissioners recommendations.

Director Clough said the expense side of the budget has remained static while the revenues are down. Rep. Laliberte asked if the decreased revenues had to do with the reimbursement rate to the Nursing Home and Director Clough said absolutely they do and that she believes that rate may decrease again in July. Commissioner Cryans said the first loss due to reduced reimbursement rate was \$540K.

Rep. Williams said he would like to see what the loss is to the County because of the State. Director Clough said legislation regarding the retirement system could also affect costs to the County. Rep. Ward said he would recommend budgeting the projected decreases.

Rep. Preston asked why the Commissioners didn't recommend an increase for Elected Officials. Commissioner Cryans said that he views Elected Officials differently than regular employees and that the Commissioners haven't taken a pay increase in two years. He said that the Delegation can do as they choose when it comes to Elected Official's salaries but the recommendation from them was no increase.

Rep. Ward said that it has been the responsibility of the Executive Committee to set the salary of the Elected Officials, including the Commissioners. Commissioner Cryans said that historically the Commissioners have made increase recommendations but in these hard times they felt that there should not be an increase.

Rep. Ward said he applauded the recommendation.

Commissioner Richards noted that a new Farm sign had been place on the property. She said that the Farm Advisory committee has recommended an Open Dairy Barn day at the County and she is on the committee. She said there will be a lot of activities.

Commissioner Richards said that a \$378K grant through the DOE will be awarded for the wood biomass project. She said that it will be used toward engineering and design and credited Director Clough for securing the grant.

Commissioner Richards informed the committee that the Social Service portion of the budget is around \$600K and is larger than any other County's budget. She said that it could be an area for reduction if there need be one, though she sees it as a worthy investment.

Rep. Ford said that she attended the County Conversation through UNHCE and said it was a very good meeting. She said that it was good to talk and learn from UNH President Huddleston.

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 began with the census at the Nursing Home at 131 and the Jail, 80 with 10 out on electronic monitoring and 21 in Drug Court.

Variance Report:

Revenue: The Farm is down \$61K with a projected finish of an approximate \$85K loss. Milk is holding steady at around \$17.

Expenses: Farm expenses are down approx. \$43K. Drug Court is over expended and HS will level out. Governor Commission grant is slightly over.

Rep. Aguiar asked why the Farm expenses are down and Director Clough said that the Farm is trying to hold back on expenses.

There is just about \$3M in the undesignated fund balance.

Rep. Ward asked if FMAP money was still coming in and Director Clough said that it was and there has been some talk about it continuing until June, 2011 but nothing is firm yet.

There was a discussion about how the FMAP was budgeted this year and shown as a reduction in the HS budget.

Director Clough passed out reports on the Over Expended line items and a quarterly grant report.

There was a discussion about Contracted Nursing being over budget and Director Clough said that five nurses had all left at the same time which created a gap which had to be filled. There are also a number of people on FMLA at the Nursing Home. Rep. Laliberte asked why these nurses left and Director Clough replied that three left due to illness and two moved away.

Rep. Aguiar asked about the appeal in the Jail case and Director Clough said the plaintiff's appealed on the last day they could and the Attorney for the County sent in their objection to the appeal. Rep. Ward said that the appeal had to be made but there is a 99% chance that it will be denied.

Rep. Mulholland asked how many jobs will be created by the building of the Jail and Director Clough said she would have to get those figures from the Construction Co. She said that the intent is that local contractors and craftsmen will be used on the project whenever possible.

Director Clough said that a date needed to be set for the Delegation to vote on the Elected Official's salaries. It was decided that the meeting would be held here at the County on the regularly scheduled Executive Committee meeting day of May 17, 2010, beginning at 10:00. The Executive Committee will meet before that at 9:00 AM.

There was a discussion about what they needed from Director Clough in the way of information and how the Delegation planned to view the salary, meaning were they going to take all the County benefits paid to full time Elected Officials into consideration.

Director Clough said that she believes that the Delegation sets only the salary amount and not the benefits. Rep. Williams agreed with that.

Rep. Ford said she would still like to see the benefited information because it does impact the budget.

Rep. Laliberte said she would like to see a comparison between Grafton County and the other Counties regarding what they pay their Elected Officials. Director Clough said she could do that but asked that they keep that all in perspective noting that some Counties have quite a larger population than Grafton County.

Rep. Ford moved to accept the Executive Director's report which was seconded by Rep. Preston. All were in favor.

Register of Deeds Sharp asked to be heard and presented a list which compared the Elected Official's salaries from Grafton County to the Department Head salaries. He said he felt annoyed because he has saved the County \$70K and he was the first Register of Deeds to bid out the computer program for Deeds. He thought his salary should be increased.

Rep. Mulholland said that this matter is already under discussion.

RD Sharp said also that he spoke to the Secretary of State regarding the Treasurer and the decision that the Executive Committee made. He then referenced an RSA. He added that the Commissioners are grossly underpaid and that the salary for the Treasurer should be increased by \$10K in order to validate the position.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on May 17th beginning at 9:00 AM, followed by a full Delegation at 10:00 AM.

10:34 AM Rep. Williams moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Rep Ford. Reps. Laliberte, Williams, Mulholland, Preston, Ford and Ward were in favor. Rep. Aguiar was opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Preston, Clerk