

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Budget Reviews

Board of Commissioners' Office

North Haverhill, NH

Thursday, March 11, 2011

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, Omer C. Ahern Jr. and Ray Burton, Executive Director Julie Clough, Financial Coordinator Susan Cunningham and Secretary Jeri Martino

Commissioner Cryans called the Meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

HUMAN SERVICES

Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop presented her budget along with the accompanying explanations. HS budget is up 9.42%. If ARRA monies were still available there would be no increase.

There were discussions about whether proposed changes by the state to the HHS budget would affect the HS budget and HSA Bishop said that they were more likely to affect the Nursing Home.

Commissioner Burton asked HSA Bishop to keep the County informed about changes at the state which may affect the County.

Commissioner Ahern said that if HSA Bishop had any thoughts or suggestions about legislative changes he would be interested in bringing them forward.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resource Director Mike Simpson presented the Commissioners with a summary of the Dept. budget and the proposed increases and reductions. Increase is 4.26% but only .85% when you figure the Nursing Home allocation into it. The increases include staff salary, health insurance and retirement.

Commissioner Cryans asked if there was any updated information regarding the health insurance and Director Clough said that she and HRD Simpson still have some things to review and when there is something conclusive they will bring it to the Commissioners. She said the actual rates will be set by April 15th.

Commissioner Burton had questions about the HR Director attending conferences, in particular the NHACo Conference, feeling that it was important to do so. HRD Simpson said that in all honesty, he didn't see much in the way of education at the last conference and wasn't very impressed. HRD Simpson listed which conferences or educational seminars that either he or his staff planned to attend. Commissioner Burton stressed the importance of networking.

Commissioner Burton asked if anyone in his department is required by law to maintain any kind of certification and he replied that there is no mandate but that he is certified and pays to keep that certification updated on his own.

HRD Simpson said that he would like to move his HR Clerk from grade 2 to 3 effective July 1st. He said that there has been a dramatic work increase from the previous person in that position and

gave the Commissioners an updated job description with the new responsibilities on it. Cost to the budget would be \$846. Step increases were included in the HR Budget but HRD Simpson did not put in an increase for himself.

He stated that his budget is reduced as far as possible and the only way that it could be reduced would be by staffing.

In regard to "Outside Legal Council" line, Commissioner Ahern was concerned that the County already pays Sheehan Phinney Bass & Green a lot of money for the legal services that they presently and are contracted to provide to the County, and that one would think that they could provide these additional workshops/seminars, where other folks are invited to attend as well, at no additional cost to the County. He said he would like to see that conference removed. He also noted that if all the HR Director is getting is a subscription to the NH RSA's, all NH RSA's, as well as all State Agency rules and regulations, can be accessed on line via the State of NH website at no cost and that amount could be removed also.

Commissioner Cryans stated that this will be a demanding budget.

There was a discussion about the changes in the retirement system which will affect not only employers but there could be a large change to the employee as well, which is yet to be seen depending upon legislation.

In regard to outside council, Commissioner Ahern said that he feels those departments looking for outside council should be going to the County Attorney first and he would like to see that line eliminated from all budget lines. He estimated that there were enough attorneys at the County Attorney's Office to be able to help out and that perhaps the best time for the Commissioners to approach the County Attorney would be the next time that the County Attorney is in to a Board of Commissioners meeting, or at the time that the County Attorney submits her budget proposals to the Board.

DEEDS

Register of Deeds Kelley Monahan began her budget presentation by reading an opening statement. The Deeds budget is up \$50K or roughly 8%. RD Monahan has increased the amount of estimated revenue by \$10K.

There was a discussion about keeping the Deeds records in Deeds and not making them public by way of a database out to a single source. RD Monahan said that it is her opinion that there are entities that would like Deeds to hand over information so that it can be resold at a profit which she opposes.

RD Monahan discussed the fact that she is looking to create more revenue by purchasing a type of copier that can handle topographical maps and then Deeds will make those copies for planning boards at a cost of \$50 each. She said they would need to make 340 maps in order to recoup the money for the copier which will be purchased out of the surcharge account. Her plan is to meet with planning boards on a specified evening to see if this is something they would be interested in.

Commissioner Cryans thought that perhaps there just wouldn't be enough interest or need to make this a viable resource.

Commissioner Burton was concerned about the duplication of services as these maps are already being provided by Regional Planning Offices. RD Monahan said it would be less of a travel for people to have this service at the Deeds Office. She said that right now it's just in the infancy stage and she will have a better idea about it when she meets with the town planning boards.

Commissioner Burton said that he would entertain questions or concerns from planning boards in his district if that should come up when she has her meetings and that she should feel comfortable bringing that information to him.

Commissioner Cryans said that if there was anything that could be paid out of the Surcharge account it should be considered and he asked if RD Monahan would take another look and perhaps review with Director Clough to see if the revenue could be upped a bit, if that were feasible.

11:20 AM The Commissioners broke for lunch.

12:10 PM The Commissioners resumed their meeting.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Linda Brownson, Gary Peters, James Seidel and Ben Hudson presented the Conservation District budget which basically consists of the one employee. Increase is due to step, health and retirement as in all budgets.

Mr. Seidel wanted to thank the Commissioners for the space at the County which has allowed them to maintain a presence in the area in which they can have staff, and their district meetings since having to move to Orford.

G. Peters welcomed the Commissioners to sit in on a meeting whenever they liked and noted too that he doesn't feel that the CD is represented well in the southern part of the County.

Both Commissioner Ahern and Commissioner Cryans will be attending the Conservation District's Annual meeting which is at the Common Man in Plymouth, and Commissioner Burton will be stopping by after another engagement.

Commissioner Burton invited everyone to an agricultural informational meeting which the Commissioners will be holding on the 13th of May beginning at 10:00 AM saying Jay Phinizy from USDA will be making a brief presentation.

There was discussion about getting more information out to the public about with the Conservation District can do to help out landowners. G. Peters said there are a number of programs but a lot of people still don't know about them.

Commissioner Ahern asked if there has ever been a presentation to the Plymouth Rotary Club and noted that they meet on Wednesday mornings at 7:00 AM. He said he thought that would be a good idea to make a presentation there.

12:45 PM With no further business the meeting adjourned.