

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Budget Reviews

Board of Commissioners' Office

North Haverhill, NH

Thursday, March 24, 2011

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

Commissioner Cryans called the Meeting to order at 9:06 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Supt. Libby.

CORRECTIONS:

Corrections Superintendent Glenn Libby presented his budget to the Commissioners with a comparative review of FY11. New positions will include Programs Personnel, Correctional Officers, Administrative, Medical and Cooks. Increase is 1,063,769. or approximately 27%. Increase is not just due to staffing but costs for operation of the building. Some areas are expected to decrease such as consultants, meals and laundry.

Director Clough said that she would get the tax impact information out to the public as soon as the interest rates are set for the next bond.

Supt. Libby said the budget he presented represents the operational needs of the Jail with the current philosophy practiced. He said that he understands the current fiscal climate and what the Commissioners will be struggling with in the County budget but he feels comfortable with the number of staff he is requesting. He said that he understands this is a big request.

Commissioner Cryans said that he felt that when they put out the original information to the towns, they made it known that there would be a cost to staff and to operate. He said that the fact that the project came in \$5M under was a good thing. He said that he's not surprised with the number of people it will take.

The various numbers of towns that had received presentations were discussed and Director Clough said that they had also gone to the Selectboards as well.

Commissioner Ahern said he would like to have copy of the information that was presented to the towns.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS:

This budget is up approx. \$13K which is due to wages, retirement and operation. Taxes on the building are \$5K. Commissioner Ahern asked Director Clough what properties are taxed on the campus and she said that the white building and all the Farmland and buildings. Commissioner Ahern asked if the property was under current use and Director Clough said she thought so but would have to check. Commissioner Cryans asked how much is paid in taxes and Director Clough said between \$11K and \$12K.

Commissioner Ahern questioned if the County is making the best use of the current facilities on the complex and suggested that if the County is going to pay taxes on the white building then maybe it would be best to try to rent it out and have Community Corrections move into the basement of the Administration building.

Director Clough said the white building sat vacant for quite some time and though it was advertised for rent nothing ever came of it.

Commissioner Ahern suggested that maybe it could be used for employee housing. Commissioner Cryans said he wouldn't be very comfortable having anyone living on campus.

Supt. Libby said there are inmates housed in the Admin building basement and there are a number of rooms down there that are also used for storage.

Director Clough said that when the Jail moves over to the new building that will open up the space in the basement for availability.

GOVERNORS COMMISSION GRANT:

With this grant, \$76,067 comes from the state and the County picks up \$12,512.

Commissioner Ahern asked if this money is definitely coming and Supt. Libby said that it is supposed to be. This money funds a licensed drug and alcohol position full time and the money comes from the sale of alcohol to fund the grant. Supt. Libby said that one of his peeves is that every year the Legislature raids this dedicated fund to bring their budget in line so money is not going towards what it is intended for.

NIGHT WATCHMEN:

There are two Night Watchmen who share a 7PM to 3AM shift seven days a week. Supt. Libby said they check all the Farm buildings, keep the vehicles ready and also help the animals if they need any assistance. Budget shows a merit increase for one person, other is maxed out, these are unbenefitted positions.

Howard Hatch arrived.

REVENUES:

Revenues have decreased by \$20K as Supt. Libby didn't feel they could achieve last year's figure. Director Clough asked if Supt. Libby thought that the revenue's from Community Corrections was a good number since this year's amount is off from that and he replied that he felt comfortable with the amount.

CAPITAL OUTLAY:

No request

The Commissioners took a brief recess.

The Commissioners resumed their meeting

FARM:

Farm Manager Kimball presented his budget and included a brief overview of his line items. The Veterinary Fees line is increased as is Breeding/Testing, Supplies, Gas & Oil and a new line Custom Cropping was added in the amount of \$9200.

Commissioner Cryans asked about the increase in the supply line and FM Kimball attributed a lot of it to having to purchase bags for the potatoes.

Director Clough said the supply line from last year is already over expended and asked FM Kimball if \$20K was going to be enough. He said he would make it work.

Commissioner Ahern asked if the potatoes that were delivered as donations were put into bags and FM Kimball said they were. Commissioner Ahern said he didn't think that the purpose of the County Farm is to be giving food away to agencies. He noted in particular a donation of 250#'s of potatoes to the Farm Bureau for their annual dinner. Commissioner Ahern said he attended that dinner and by no means did they cook 250#'s worth of potatoes as there were only 40 people at the dinner. He said that if the Farm is growing produce, it should be used at the complex and that donations take money out of the Farm's pocket.

Commissioner Cryans said he doesn't have the same philosophy and feels that the food banks should receive them.

Both Commissioners agreed that the produce grown on the property should be used at the County.

H. Hatch said that the amount of potatoes has increased over the years at the request of the Commissioners specifically to give away. He said there is no need for 10 tons of potatoes to be grown and the best solution is to cut that number in half. He agreed that root crops should be used to feed the inmates and said potatoes, squash etc. can be kept all winter to feed the inmates. Mr. Hatch said that he wants to see the County Farm survive and if he can be of any help he would be willing to make suggestions.

10:50 AM Commissioner Burton arrived.

Commissioner Cryans questioned whether or not the amount put into the Farm budget for Gas & Oil was going to be enough considering FM Kimball is close to his budget number now and the costs have gone up.

There was a discussion about custom cropping and FM Kimball said that H. Hatch both plants the corn and chops it. It was noted that having Mr. Hatch do it reduces the amount of time and labor it takes the Farm to do its own.

Mr. Hatch suggested that the advertising line may have to be increased if the County now has to put everything over \$300 out to bid.

A discussion ensued about the RSA which speaks to the issue of putting things out to bid and how the Commissioners can waive bid.

FM Kimball said that he would get into a quandary when he has an animal that is sick or distressed and can't get rid of the animal before it expires. He said he has two animals right now that he needs to get rid of.

Commissioner Ahern said that his main issue with this process was when FM Kimball sold the bred heifers off without going out to bid. He said that he wondered where the figures for the sale of those animals came from.

FM Kimball said that when a situation like that comes up again he will be sure they go out to bid.

H. Hatch said that for one thing, he feels that employees shouldn't have the right to buy or bid on something first and that every member of the public should be given the same opportunity at the same time.

He also said that he thought that the amount FM Kimball got for the bred heifers, at that time, was a decent one.

Commissioner Cryans asked if anyone was interested in making a motion to waive bid and then thought it would be better if it were done in a regular Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Ahern suggested that they could make a motion today so that FM Kimball could deal with the two cows that he would like to move out.

Commissioner Ahern moved to waive bid and to authorize the Farm Manager to sell up to three cows because of the urgency of the current situation and need to relinquish the cows, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Commissioner Burton told Mr. Hatch that he appreciated the strong working relationship and help that Mr. Hatch has always provided to the County Farm as a good neighbor. The other Commissioners agreed. Mr. Hatch said he doesn't look at the County Farm as a competitor and wants the Farm to succeed.

FARM CAPITAL OUTLAY

FM Kimball has requested \$35K for a new pick up to replace a 2003 which he said has over 50K miles on it. Commissioner Ahern had some specific questions about the current vehicle and other Farm vehicles and ultimately said that he doesn't see the justification for the replacement. FM Kimball said that the current vehicle costs too much for repairs and to get inspected and the vehicle is getting tired.

In regards to revenue, FM Kimball feels that milk prices are going to stray strong according to Agrimark and that he feels comfortable with a budgeted number of \$19.

11:30 AM The Commissioner broke for lunch

12:23 PM The Commissioners resumed their meeting.

TREASURER

Treasurer Carol Elliott brought in her budget slightly over (\$200) even with a reduced Education and Conference line. Service Charge line has been increased as that line is currently over expended and Treasurer Elliott felt it was best to increase it.

Interest income on the general fund investments will remain at \$50K and interest income on the bond has been decreased because rates have been so low which has reduced the amount of interest income by \$25K.

There was a discussion about trying to get higher rates but that seems unlikely in this market. On the flip side it will cost the County less in interest when money is borrowed.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET

Maintenance Superintendent Jim Oakes presented the Capital Improvement budget with a total request of almost \$86K. Majority of that amount is a request for \$65K for repairs to the mortar on the Admin. Building. This is approximately 50% of the funding needed to do this work and Supt. Oakes said he would request the remaining funding in FY13. Work would be done in late 2012.

Next two largest requests were for a heat exchanger wheel for the Admin. Building in the amount of \$8000 and a removable heated soft cab enclosure for the Maintenance Dept. tractor for \$4600. Supt. Oakes also wanted to purchase Maintenance Manager Software for tracking of jobs and staff in the amount of \$3200.

Commissioner Cryans said that if there is still money in last year's Capital budget he would like to see if some of that can be used to purchase some of the requested items. It was also suggested that money for a project in the Courthouse for the Dispatch Center come out of the Dispatch Capital Reserve account.

Commissioner Ahern wondered if there may be some money available from the State for the work on the Admin. Building as an historical building. Commissioner Burton said that there are a lot of requirements for historical conservation and that may mean no future changes to the building.

Supt. Oakes said that he plans on putting out the RFP for the well drilling and there was a discussion about the Board deciding to go forward with a water system for the County. Commissioner Cryans said that he is not inclined to be in the water business and Commissioner Ahern said he is not either. They talked about Rep. White being very opposed to the project, although Rep. Gionet was very in favor. Commissioner Cryans said both ends of the spectrum were voiced by the Executive Committee. Commissioner Burton said he does not like the water that Woodsville Water and Light provides because of where it comes from and what it takes to make it drinkable. A discussion ensued.

Supt. Oakes said that if the Commissioners aren't going to want to get into the water business then he would like to put the brakes on now. He said that if this is about money then the Commissioners need to consider that there may be grant money available.

Commissioner Cryans said again that he doesn't feel that the County should get into the water business and continued on by saying that Supt. Oakes is "one of a kind" and that he's not sure that somewhere down the road when Supt. Oakes leaves they will be able to find someone who is willing to take on the task of this kind of operation.

Commissioner Ahern said he's concerned about the liability aspect.

Supt. Oakes said that he would like some direction but stressed that he didn't feel that the opening and closing of the gate valve was a long term solution. Commissioner Cryans said it was the least expensive option on the table.

Supt. Oakes said that if they put the brakes on now the Commissioners need to understand that the money they spent on hiring Horizon to do the engineering report would be lost and Commissioner Cryans said that sometimes those things happen.

Director Clough said she got the sense that the Executive Committee wanted to find out about the feasibility of whether or not a water system is even an option.

There was further discussion.

Director Clough said that if two of the Commissioners are opposed, then there really is no reason to spend the \$40K to see if there is water viability.

Commissioner Cryans said that he can not defend being in the water business and he would like to feel that he can make a commitment to a project and just doesn't feel that way about this one.

Commissioner Ahern concurred and said he couldn't really wrap his arms around this right now.

Supt. Oakes said that he just wanted say that there will be some changes in the EPA rules which are going to require more expenses for WW&L and those expenses will trickle down to the rate payers.

Commissioner Ahern discussed Supt. Oakes request for the heated covered cab for the tractor and said that he did not think this was a reasonable request. Supt. Oakes said that his crew is out in the elements plowing and had complaints about the conditions. He said he felt it was a reasonable request.

DRUG COURT

Drug Court Coordinator Bob Gasser presented his budget. Commissioner Cryans asked DCC Gasser to give Commissioner Ahern a brief overview of how Drug Court works.

DCC Gasser said that Grafton County is the second County after Strafford to start a Drug Court and went on to give Commissioner Ahern details of the program.

In a review of the budget, the line for Treatment was increased by \$3000. Contracted Services which DCC Gasser said was for a program evaluation was eliminated. Clinical Evaluator is reduced. DCC Gasser provided statistics about participants in the program of which there have been 47 over that last 4 years.

Commissioner Cryans asked if there has ever been an evaluation of the program and DCC Gasser said there has not.

Commissioner Burton said he would like Drug Court to consider doing a video of their program.

Commissioner Cryans said that the program saves more than money it save lives.

Director Clough asked what the average number of clients has been and DCC Gasser said 19. Director Clough said that in the last two months, the cost for treatment has been averaging \$14K and the line will again be over expended, as it was last year. She said the program is set up for 28 people who could never be served with the amount of money requested if the costs are correct. She asked DCC Gasser if he knew why the line was over expended and he said that there have been some very extensive treatments lately. He said he will check into the specifics.

Commissioner Cryans said that he would like DCC Gasser to take a closer look at the billing as perhaps there was something overlooked. He stressed that with any program, you have to live within your means.

1:55 PM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk