

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.

North Haverhill, NH 03774

March 2nd, 2017

PRESENT: Commissioners Lauer, Ahern and Piper, County Administrator Libby and Admin Assistant S. Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: Sheriff Dutile, Director of Communications Andross, Thayer Paronto, County Attorney Saffo, Office Administrator Farina, Attorney Jack Bell, Enfield Police Chief Crate, Treasurer Hill, Conservation District - Pam Gilbert, James Seidel, Gary Peters, Linda Brownson

Commissioner Lauer called the meeting to order at 9:00AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Treasurer – Karen Liot Hill

Education & Conference – Treasurer Hill stated that she plans to attend the New Hampshire Association of Counties Conference this year and has budgeted accordingly for that conference.

Travel Expense – Treasurer Hill explained that she had an estimate based on the actual mileage and the travel to and from the conference.

Interest Income – They have estimated \$26,500 in the interest for FY18 based off of this year's numbers.

Commissioner Ahern asked if Treasurer Hill had any insight on future interest rates. She stated that she did not.

Sheriff's Department & Dispatch – Sheriff Dutile, Director of Communications Andross, Office Assistant Thayer Paronto

Revenue

Sheriff Department Fees – Sheriff Dutile explained that these fees are from when they go out and serve civil process. Right now it looks like they may be a little ahead of that number for the rest of the fiscal year but they have left the amount for FY18 the same.

Court Bailiff – The state reimburses them for Court Bailiffs. If they do not spend that expense line item, they do not see the revenue. If the state budget passes as proposed they will have \$105 per day in that line item.

DCYF Transports– Sheriff Dutile explained that there is a large decrease because they are not transferring juveniles to these Juvenile Placement Facilities due to them being full.

Sale of Equipment – Sheriff Dutile stated that they are selling two (2) cruisers a year. This year’s amount will be lower because they gave one (1) of the used cruisers to the Alternative Sentencing Department.

District Court Fines – This line item is from any arrest or ticket that is made for minors in possession of alcohol. Sheriff Dutile stated that this has decreased due to better education out there, the lack of grant money and fewer “details” at the colleges.

District Court Prisoners – Sheriff Dutile explained that this line item is when they take prisoners to the District Courts. They receive a flat rate of \$65 a day no matter how many transports are made.

Dispatch Fees – Director Andross stated that they will be coming in May with their recommendations for FY18 dispatch billing fees so the number that is currently budgeted will change. Commissioner Ahern stated that sixty (60) entities are utilizing their dispatch services. He asked if that number is up or down from the last time he was here. Director Andross stated that he believes it is down one (1) or two (2). They have not had any recent changes, the last being when Groton left roughly three (3) years ago. Commissioner Ahern asked if they do exit interviews when an agency leaves. Director Andross explained that they are aware of the reasons for an agency leaving and any of the recent changes have been due to costs. The agencies have let them know that they are aware that they are sacrificing safety to save money and Sheriff Dutile gave an example of lack of radio coverage that an agency may have in certain areas.

Sheriff's Department Expense

Commissioner Ahern stated that in reviewing some of the descriptions he noticed that increasing some of the salary positions is based on the survey done by Human Resources. Sheriff Dutile stated that there is only one (1) of his positions that was recommended was a grade increase. This was to even out the civil secretary positions as they are the same positions with the same responsibilities.

Commissioner Ahern stated that knowing potential realities, many of his constituents are on social security and got a small increase. He asked Sheriff Dutile if the Delegation were to cut your budget 10% could he do it. Sheriff Dutile stated that he cannot, not if they want to provide the same services they provide today.

Commissioner Ahern asked if since the introduction of video arraignments, if Sheriff Dutile has seen any savings in his budget. Sheriff Dutile stated that they have seen about a 3% savings. He explained that the reason it is only 3% is due to the fact that they do the same number of transports still for arraignments but they are transporting fewer inmates per transport. The video arraignment is much safer for all involved.

Sheriff Dutile stated that the majority of the increase in budget his is due to the increase of health insurance and retirement.

New Equipment – Sheriff Dutile stated that this year they are asking for three (3) cruisers again. He explained that they were asked a few years ago to drop down to two (2) cruisers. The mileage has gone up on the cruisers and in this current fiscal year they had to replace a motor in a cruiser which it cost them roughly \$10,000. He stated that by only buying two (2) cruisers a year they are seeing large increases in their repair bills due to the mileage that they are putting on the cruisers. He also stated that he has budgeted for the purchase of new bullet proof vests. He explained that there is a federal grant that they receive for the bullet proof vests, they receive \$1,500.

Dispatch Expense

Director Andross stated that there are not a large amount of changes. The largest is the health insurance and retirement rates. He noted that he has two (2) communication supervisors that are being reclassified in this budget due to the Human Resources wage study.

Sheriff Dutile noted that he could potentially have four (4) deputies retiring but has not included that in his budget. He stated that could have a significant impact on his budget due to an increase in the costs for training new deputies, etc.

Dispatch Capital Reserve

Director Andross explained to the Commissioners that the Dispatch Capital Reserve account was created many years ago. The Delegation takes 10% of the revenue coming back from the dispatch fees and puts that into the capital reserve account. They then spend out of that account with the permission of the Commissioners and Delegation for things that are related to Communications only. Commissioner Ahern asked how much is in the account. County Administrator Libby stated that they currently have \$168,000.

Dispatch & Sheriff's Department Capital

Sheriff Dutile stated that in this year's capital budget they only have the purchase of three (3) new cruisers and the costs associated with the changeover in equipment.

Sheriff Dutile noted that he has provided information in the Commissioners budget packets on costs associated with leasing the cruisers versus buying them outright. To lease a vehicle they would spend \$1,488 per vehicle in interest. He stated that he feels that it is not necessary to spend that extra money and recommends purchasing them outright.

County Attorney's Office – County Attorney Lara Saffo & Office Administrator Alison Farina

CA Saffo stated that they have four (4) reclassifications for legal assistant positions as recommended from the Human Resources wage study. They have also budgeted for one full time new support staff person.

She noted that they have also budgeted for one (1) new full time assistant county attorney and increasing one circuit court prosecutor.

There is an increase in the investigator line due to an increase in hours and the step increase.

CA Saffo had a discussion regarding the need of a new attorney due to the implementation of Felonies First. She brought in Chief Crate from the Enfield Police Department to discuss the matter and she also brought in Assistant County Attorney Jack Bell to discuss the complexity of the cases they are currently handling and why there is a need for another Assistant County Attorney. She answered various questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ahern stated that in regards to the cases that they have outlined, not all of those cases are different defendants. He asked if they are over charging. CA Saffo stated that they are absolutely not over charging.

Commissioner Ahern asked with regards if there are any of the cases she is seeing that deal with non-American citizens. CA Saffo stated that there are very few, less than five (5) a year if that many.

Conservation District – Pam Gilbert, Gary Peters, James Seidel, Linda Brownson

The County supports the Administrative Assistant position for the Conservation District. The increase in this budget is directly related to that position, mostly associated with the increase in the County's health insurance premium. It was also noted that the Administrative Assistant position was reclassified as a part of the Human Resources wage study.

Other materials were provided for the Commissioners review and J. Seidel thanked the Commissioners for all the support they offer to the Conservation District.

11:56AM With no further business the meeting was adjourned

Wendy A. Piper, Clerk