

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW

Administration Building
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH
Monday May 21, 2012

PRESENT: Representatives Bulis, Aguiar, Sova, Gionet, Almy, White, Brosseau, Townsend and Ladd, Commissioners Cryans, Burton and Ahern, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Martino.

OTHERS: Robert Blechl of the Caledonian Record

Rep. Bulis called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM and the committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by R. Blechl.

Rep. Sova moved to approve the minutes from the April 16, 2012 meeting as amended which was seconded by Rep. Almy. All were in favor.

Rep. Bulis said he would like to try to stay on schedule in order to be more productive. He asked if there were any comments about the Commissioners public hearing from those who attended. Rep. Gionet said he was disappointed there weren't any selectman, (other than Rep. Ladd) from the towns in Grafton County.

Rep. Almy said there seemed to be a lot fewer complaints about the tax burden but a lot of input from people who wanted to see the bus service from Lancaster funded.

Rep. Townsend said there were people there who either wanted to see a total cut or were there in support of individual items.

Rep. Bulis said he would like to see an alternative budget.

Rep. Ladd arrived

Rep. Bulis continued by saying he wanted to see some reductions in spending and to not have any kind of increase.

Rep. Almy said the majority of increases come from the bonded debt and the staff for the new Jail.

Rep. Bulis said the Jail and the Nursing Home are the drivers of the budget and they couldn't afford to have those increases. He said he would like to see some items out of the budget that are not within the domain of the County.

Commissioner Ahern arrived.

Rep. Almy said they all knew that once the Jail came on line that they would be looking at increases.

Rep. Sova said there could be a different budget that the Administration puts in place doing the best they can do.

Rep. White said this suggestion is not timely and would have been a better idea if the committee wasn't already into the budget and in the process of seeing department heads. He said if there is something that the Chair would like to see out of the budget then a motion was in order. He said he didn't feel it was responsible to ask the Administration to go back and alter the budget they already presented.

Rep. Gionet said that level funding is the least he would consider and he didn't care how they got there.

Rep. Bulis said he feels the Executive Director could give an alternative foundation on which to build on.

Rep. White asked then if a motion to adjourn would be in order because anything that was done today would be a waste of time.

Rep. Bulis said he would just like something else to look at.

Rep. Almy said she feels the Administration has cut as much as they could and that this is a conversation that they should have been having last November.

Rep. Bulis said that the employee compensation package is substantial and said he feels people have an objection to what is being given out here.

Rep. Brosseau said the town of Campton has only had one raise in four years.

Commissioner Cryans said that he feels the Commissioners have presented a very good budget which came in under what had been forecasted, particularly because they had expected it to be more with the new Jail coming on line. He said there are different ways of looking at things and says he will stand by this budget.

COUNTY ATTORNEY – Attorney Lara Saffo

County Attorney Lara Saffo arrived and reviewed her budget. She discussed her request for a full time clerical position that would be split between CA office and Victim Witness. She stressed the importance of having more help.

Rep. Ladd said he will be looking at priority needs, protection and public safety.

Rep. Sova asked if CA hours are related to law enforcement hours and asked Atty. Saffo if she had any figures on that. Atty. Saffo said she could get those numbers. She said there was a correlation between officers and solving of crimes but didn't have any statistics.

Atty. Saffo said that she is only asking for \$40K for Mental Health Court as the remainder of money will come from left over grant money.

Rep. White moved to recommend expenditures in the amount of \$1,186,763 for the County Attorney's budget including all budgets under her supervision (not

Drug Court). (This also included money to fund a part time file clerk position which was not approved by the Commissioners.)

Rep. Bulis interjected that a motion was not in order as they would not be making motions today. Rep. White stated that he objected to that ruling as the agenda that was sent to the committee states that motions are in order and should be in line with the events of the day. Rep. Bulis said that voting on that motion could hobble any flexibility on the budget in the future.

There was some discussion and Rep. White was allowed to make the motion.

Rep. Almy seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION:

Rep. Gionet said he thought the budget could be fine tuned and if they vote on it now their hands are tied.

Rep. Ladd said the process is not what he would like to see but the content of the CA's budget is.

Rep. Townsend said he didn't know when he would be better prepared to vote on these budgets.

There was further discussion about the best way to go forward with the budget.

Rep. Almy said that unless there is discussion about the salaries then she didn't feel there would be any more to look at with this budget.

Rep. Bulis said they should be looking at total numbers and not line items. He said it is not their responsibility to micro manage.

Rep. Ladd said they needed to have some ground rules as to how this should be handled.

Rep. Aguiar said he wanted to see some consistency in how the individual budgets are viewed.

Rep. White said he wanted to make sure that the County Attorney gets the money she needs to operate her department and that zeroing out the budget will not allow that funding. He said there could be zeroing out or support for the budget.

Rep. Gionet said he hasn't done a budget this way in the last ten years and he won't do it now.

Rep. Aguiar didn't see it as it only being zeroed out or supported. He said there had to be something in between.

When the vote was taken, Reps. Almy, White and Townsend were in favor and Reps. Aguiar, Sova, Ladd, Bulis, Brosseau and Gionet were opposed. Motion fails.

CORRECTIONS – Corrections Supt. Glenn Libby

Revenue was discussed first which had increased and was attributed to the new inmate phone system due to the fact that there will be an increase in the number of phones in the

new facility. It was noted that this is one of the budgets that the Commissioners voted unanimously in favor of.

Supt. Libby urged the Committee to respect the negotiations with the County employees regarding their pay saying that they deserve it.

There was a discussion about the cost of meals and Rep. Almy said that they have increased 26% if you include the cost for cooks. Supt. Libby said they will do their best to keep the costs down but the cost is comparable to Cheshire County.

Community Corrections was discussed and they supervise Drug Court participants, electronic monitoring, daily work programs, and inmates. They also run Operation Impact.

Governors Commission Grant was discussed and Commissioner Cryans said that for disclosure, Headrest does the substance abuse counseling for a sum of \$23K. Supt. Libby said they received the same grant amount money as last year.

Night Watchmen were discussed and Rep. Aguiar asked if electronic equipment was ever considered over the manned positions and Supt. Libby said that there is no substitute for eyes, nose and ears in a situation. He said that they also help the Farm when they need it at night with the animals.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) grant is also in Corrections and is specifically for the substance abuse treatment of females. Supt. Libby said that this money has dwindled and this may be the last year they receive this money.

Rep. Sova asked Director Clough if she could come up with the costs for departments to show that there will be money in the undesignated fund. Director Clough said that there is \$3M in a separate account set aside for the reduction of taxes.

Rep. White moved to expend \$5,003,267 (pages 25 ED – 30 ED) on the Corrections budget which was seconded by Rep. Townsend.

DISCUSSION:

Rep. White said he realizes that no one is really thrilled about these motions but he is not thrilled about what is going on either. He said they have been presented with a responsible budget that everyone can live with, with the exception of about \$100K and if the committee feels that way, then it should be voted on.

Rep. Ladd said he wasn't ready to vote on what is being presented here.

There was a discussion about the transfer of money in the mental health portion of services.

When the vote was taken, Reps. White and Townsend were in favor and Reps. Aguiar, Sova, Ladd, Bulis, Brosseau, Gionet and Almy were opposed. Motion fails.

The Committee took a brief recess.
The Committee resumed their meeting.

HUMAN RESOURCES - Director Mike Simpson

This is a three person department that works with managers and employees. Some general questions were asked about turnover.

Delegation Expenses, Tax Anticipation and Bonded Debt were reviewed. **Medical Referee** was briefly discussed with the County Attorney's Office budget.

11:25 AM The Committee recessed for lunch
12:15 PM The committee resumed the meeting.

MAINTENANCE – Superintendent Jim Oakes

A new person was hired in April who will be in place for the upcoming fiscal year and will be associated with the Jail maintenance. Supt. Oakes talked about how his staff would be used in the Jail. He said he is hiring people with certifications to save on having to hire out many of the technical jobs.

Rep. Bulis asked what it would cost to keep the old Jail running once it is vacated and Supt. Oakes said it would be about \$52K, which would include fuel, lights, water and inspections.

Rep. Bulis asked Supt. Oakes to speak about the allocations for maintenance and he replied that the Maintenance budget will now carry all the costs of maintenance, except in the Nursing Home, which was done at the recommendation of the performance audit.

Rep. Ladd said he feels it is getting to the time that there needs to be something done about the old Jail and is personally in favor of demolition.

Supt. Oakes went over some of the things that would need to be repaired if they decide to keep the old Jail building. The discussion about demolition included the fact that there is asbestos in the building that would have to be properly abated. Supt. Oakes said there is a lot involved in the demolition including the removal of all the steel in the building.

Rep. White encouraged the Board to look at all the alternatives and said that he didn't see any issues with turning everything off and didn't see the worry of the risk of fire since there is no ignition source.

Rep. Ladd said he would like to see money in the budget to deal with the old Jail and there was further discussion.

Commissioner Ahern said there is a committee which has been established to help decided what to do with the old Jail and the next meeting is on the 19th of July at 2:00. He said he feels they need to do their due diligence.

Rep. Ladd said he would like to see a study of what would need to be done to the building no matter what choice was made.

Rep. Gionet suggested getting a hold of a salvage company to see if there is anything of value in the building so it could be subtracted from the cost of the demolition.

Rep. Almy said she would like to see a study done to find out the cost of demolition.

Maintenance Capital budget was discussed and Supt. Oakes talked about re-pointing the Administration building and addressing water issues with the building.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY – IT Manager Brent Ruggles

IT had requested another full time position as there are only two people in this department and there have been 22 new users added and an additional 36 PC's. The Commissioners only approved 24 additional hours to be used by hiring either a part time person or contract help. There was further discussion about what was being requested and what was actually needed.

Capital outlay was discussed and ITM Ruggles said he wanted to run a loop for the fiber optics which would follow the path that was being put in for the biomass and would therefore not cost extra money for the digging of the trenches.

REGIONAL PLANNING was discussed and the Commissioner Cryans said they are strong believers in regional planning.

A short recess was taken
The meeting was resumed.

HUMAN SERVICES – Administrator Nancy Bishop

HSA Bishop began with revenue which comes in the form of recoveries. The expenses in the HS budget, aside from personnel, are mandated from the state. These expenses have gone down for FY13. There was a discussion about billing.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Rep. White asked to talk about the budget in regard to what Rep.Bulis had asked about bringing it in at 0%. He said he didn't believe it was responsible to ask the Commissioners and Director Clough to do this since it was a lot of work and they have already spent a lot of time preparing what is in front of them. He said if there is a specific area that someone wants to deal with they should have the fortitude to bring that up on its own.

Rep. Sova said an alternative budget will give them something to look at.

Rep. Ladd said he would like to review the Social Service budget and see if towns are also contributing to these agencies, suggesting that they (the agencies) are receiving double funding from the tax payer money.

Commissioner Cryans asked what the parameters were that Rep. Bulis was asking for in a 0% budget.

There was a discussion about the performance audit and Rep. Bulis said that the committee had asked the Board of Commissioners to meet with the committee to discuss the audit and that didn't happen. Commissioner Cryans replied that there hadn't been any resistance to do that.

Rep. White said there seemed to be an overall disconnect of communication and a dialog is in order but right in the middle of the budget discussion is not the right time. He said that what is being asked of the Executive Director and the Commissioners is outside of the authority of the Executive Committee.

Rep. Ladd said that he had brought forth a priority sheet which outlined how they could look at items and nothing was done with that. He also said that they never adopted any kind of resolution regarding the budget which they had talked about and which is in their by-laws to do.

Rep. Bulis said that the Commissioners had made decisions to fund things that had been cut last year and questioned why the Commissioners were giving money to Economic Development, and why they decided to fund daycares when they were eliminated last year. He questioned why the farm was planning to raise chickens again. He suggested that the Commissioners had "cherry picked" positions out of the recommendations of the performance audit.

Rep. White said that was all minutiae and diving way to deep into areas. Rep. Bulis said he was just looking at where the money goes.

The next budget meeting will be held on the 4th of June at 9:00 AM

2:45 PM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Sova, Clerk