

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW

Administration Building  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH  
Friday May 27, 2011

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

OTHERS: D. Maes, G. Libby, K. Monahan, R. Clough, D. Lee, A. Farina, B. Patanovich, E. Bolander, W. Hubbard, M. Simpson, C. Larson, T. Andross, H. Brown, N. Bishop and other who came and went at various times.

Rep. Bulis called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. Representative Aguiar led the Pledge of Allegiance. Rep. Bulis thanked the committee members for the decorum that was shown at the last meeting saying it made for a more congenial and respectful meeting.

Rep. Almy addressed emails that were sent to Delegates with a written statement which she read aloud to the committee.

Rep. White moved to place the statement by Rep. Almy into the minutes which was seconded by Rep. Brosseau. All were in favor.

Below is Rep. Almy's written statement.

The executive committee of the Grafton County delegation is charged by the delegation with following budgetary matters throughout the year and taking the commissioners' budget and revising it until we have a document that the delegation can vote for. The delegation is the voting body of the county and as such represents all the citizens of the county, not just its employees.

Among those citizens are people who have lost jobs and/or substantial income in this recession and people who are mentally or physically so disabled that they cannot fend for themselves, both categories including many elderly citizens who have contributed much during their lifetimes. We have a constitutional responsibility to assure that the incarcerated are treated humanely, which the opening of the new jail will redress. The social service budget and evaluation program is aimed to cut the numbers of county citizens needing to be kept in the nursing home and jail, which are expensive operations, and over the years it has succeeded in keeping per capita county costs lower than all but the largest two counties'.

The employees are very important to the county, but they are the agent rather than the purpose of county government. They cannot expect to be immunized from the effects of the recession that has hit all our citizens, and is now particularly badly hitting all levels of government. Over the years there have usually been annual 6% raises for most staff, a 3% step and a COLA varying around 3%. Even in the boom years of the '90's the vast majority of our citizens did not see this level of raises. It cannot be sustained in a world where general incomes and property values go up much more slowly, and we will need to reach a compromise sooner or later. Some of the executive committee feel that this compromise must be reached immediately, and some of us feel it should be done more deliberatively over the summer and fall, but we all feel it is needed.

Right now, we must carry out our delegated responsibility, which is to listen to the department heads and commissioners but to revise the budget to something that over 50% of our delegation can accept on behalf of the people of Grafton County. The period we have to work together on this budget is severely limited, so we cannot insert more public hearings for either staff or public. Some public and staff have contacted us since the commissioners' hearing and we have listened. Any further new information we can use to fulfill our duty is welcome.

## **NURSING HOME**

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander and Finance Manager Bryan Patanovich were present to go over the NH budget.

NHA Bolander said that increases to the NH budget include allocations from other departments, wages & benefits and the supplemental appropriation that was awarded this fiscal year. She said they have cut what they could but decreases in Medicaid rates and Medicare part A, have an affect. She reviewed some line items.

Rep. Bulis asked how the NH stands regarding the last audit. NHA Bolander said that no fines have been imposed and there were some things that were taken out of the report.

There was a question about the separate internet line for the NH which some members found confusing. Rep. White said he struggles with the reasoning for that and it was suggested that the IT Manager could shed more light in that area.

NHA Bolander said the food service contract was being put out to bid. She said that she was informed in an email by one of the bidders that if the County wasn't concerned with quality, only the bottom line, then they should continue with Fitz Vogt.

Rep. Almy asked about options that the food service be handled by County employees and NHA Bolander said it hasn't been done by the County in 25 years and her main concern is making sure there is a Dietician on staff. She said the cost to replace that person is high if they should need time off.

Rep. Townsend asked about using food from the Farm and NHA Bolander replied that it costs more to use the food from the Farm than to purchase outright. She said there are also issues with storage, diets and preparation. Rep. Townsend asked if the current Dietician is okay with food being used from the Farm and NHA Bolander replied yes.

Rep. Ladd asked about the cost per meal to which NHA Bolander replied it was about \$5.60. There were questions about combining the food for the Jail and the NH and NHA Bolander said the population is very different in their needs and the NH has more staff preparing and delivering the food to the residents.

Rep. Gionet asked what the cost was for wage increases and stipends in the Dietary budget and B. Patanovich said it was about \$12K.

Rep. Aguiar asked if the NH could increase its buying power if they grouped with other entities and NHA Bolander replied that it doesn't usually help in the food end of things. Other areas were discussed and NHA Bolander said there are new regulations regarding the medical coding of residents. She said that there needs to be training in these areas and it falls to the County to receive and pay for the training.

Rep. Ladd said he had a difficult time with the unfunded mandates by the federal government and feel they should bear the expense of training when new regulations are required.

Rep. Almy said she would like to bring forth a resolution regarding excessive regulations. Rep. Sova and Rep. Brosseau said they would both be willing to co-sponsor.

### **NH CAPITAL RESERVE**

NHA Bolander is requesting the replacement of carpeting with flooring. Director Clough said that this would be 100% offset of revenue for the NH reserve account which has \$25K in it this year. She said they hope to be able to add Pro-Share money to that.

Rep. Bulis asked how much longer the NH Bond is and Director Clough said that it goes until 2023 and the NH pays 75% of the share.

### **REVENUE**

B. Patanovich said that revenue is up \$175K over last year and part of that is due to increasing private pay by \$20 a day.

Revenues are a best guest estimate said NHA Bolander.

10:35 AM the committee took a recess.

10:45 AM the committee resumed the meeting.

### **SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT**

Sheriff Dutile and Communications Director Andross were on hand to go over the budgets.

Rep. White commented that the Sheriff's budget is only up 4/10's of a percent. Sheriff Dutile said that is \$4,344.

The Sheriff went down the list of items.

Rep. Ladd asked about cruisers and Sheriff Dutile said that in the last three years they have reduced their cruiser purchase to one a year but that is beginning show in the maintenance and upkeep of the vehicles. This year there is a request to go back to purchasing three cruisers.

Rep. Almy asked if less expensive cars could be purchased just for the delivery of writs and the Sheriff replied that they try to make their trips more efficient by combining duties so they could theoretically deliver a writ and pick up a prisoner transport while in the area.

Rep. Aguiar said that he would still like to see the Department look into other vehicles.

Rep. White said that he would like to recognize the Sheriff for the achievement of the CLEA accreditation which he said was a big step and congratulated the Sheriff.

Director Clough said that the liability insurance was reduced because of that accreditation.

Rep. Brosseau thanked the Sheriff for bringing in such a low increase.

#### **CAPITAL OUTLAY**

There is a \$56K request to have video equipment installed in the vehicles so that all the activities are taped. The intent is to eliminate any accusations by riders. There are matching funds from the federal government for this.

#### **REVENUE**

The Sheriff went over the revenues.

#### **DISPATCH**

Director Andross said that 86% of this budget is personnel, which includes retirement and health insurance.

There was discussion about the Mobil Communications Trailer and some of the leases held by the department.

#### **DISPATCH CAPITAL RESERVE**

There is a request for \$43,200 from the fund for six computer terminals, updating of some electrical areas and a new mail server.

Rep. Ladd asked what the balance of the account was and Director Clough said that it was around \$230K.

The subject of Dispatch fees was discussed and how the costs are calculated.

There were discussions about certain items being in the Sheriff's Capital Outlay which might be more appropriately placed in the Dispatch Capital Reserve.

**DISPATCH REVENUE** was reviewed.

Informational handouts regarding maintenance implications related to postponing the opening of the Jail were passed out. Rep. Bulis said he would like to have Supt. Oakes present to go over some of the information.

Rep. Almy passed out information about Prison Privatization.

While waiting for Supt. Oakes, Rep. Bulis said that it would be good to have a conversation about where they were as a group and where they wanted to be. He stressed the importance of working together. He said that all the Dept. Heads so far have made

compelling cases for their budgets but he still didn't like the bottom line. He suggested that in order to move on there be a motion to consider the Commissioners' budget.

Rep. Gionet moved to consider the Commissioners' proposed budget which was seconded by Rep. Brosseau. All were in favor.

Supt. Oakes arrived and went over some of the information in the handouts which included pictures of areas in the existing facility and its deteriorating infrastructure.

Supt. Oakes also stated that postponing the opening of the Jail for a year would put the warrantees of equipment in jeopardy.

Rep. Gionet clarified that when he made his motion to postpone for a year, what he was proposing was actually 3-4 months and not a full year. Director Clough said even that would preclude the hiring of staff which would mean further delay of about nine months.

Rep. Ladd asked when the building was scheduled to open and Director Clough said it would be mid May when they would actually start using the building.

Rep. Aguiar said that the County created some problems when they changed the parameters of the water tank and he didn't want to see the same thing happen. Reps. Ladd and Gionet disagreed that the issues with the water tank had anything to do with the changes in the Jail.

Supt. Oakes said that a lot of work has been deferred in the current facility in anticipation of the new Jail.

Rep. Ladd said he was expecting to hear about staffing from Supt. Libby.

Supt. Oakes left.

There was some discussion about salary increases, and if the current provisions in the budget are the same for both Employee Council and Union, to which Director Clough said they were. Rep. Bulis asked when raises are given. Director Clough said that if COLA's were received, it would be the first of July. Step increases are given on the employee's anniversary date.

Rep. Brosseau asked if there are ongoing negotiations with the Union and Director Clough said yes though there is no date for finalization.

Rep. Bulis said that the committee could determine what they would like the budget to be and ask the Commissioners and the staff to meet those numbers rather than wresting with numbers today. He said he would entertain a motion to work backward.

Commissioner Cryans said that it was important to be mindful of the role that the County tax has on a \$100K property. He said that in Lebanon an increase in the county tax represents a very small portion of the over-all tax bill. He said that the Jail was supposed to be an increase of 16% but was brought in at 11%. He said you have to consider the impact fairly when you step back and look at the tax bill.

Rep. Bulis said he understands and supports that but has to be able to present the rationale as an obligation to the people they represent. He said they have to go through the motions.

Commissioner Cryans said he has never run away from the Jail, knowing it would be an expense.

Rep. Bulis said the situation is what it is and said he's not finding fault but the numbers are high. Rep. Brosseau said he doesn't see anyone cutting the budget and said they should think about coming back with a number.

Rep. White said that Lebanon is building a school and because of those costs they are likely to see a cut in services. He said there are other considerations and they need to start looking for compromises or alternatives. He said that hearing that the committee shouldn't scrutinize the budget is just not right.

Rep. Ladd said that his town is looking at several increases and there are people who can't even pay their water bills. He said he'd like to see a million dollars knocked off.

Rep. Almy said if the committee comes in with a \$500K decrease it will end up coming off the surplus and the following year there would be even less money available to reduce taxes. She said she feels that if they ask the Commissioners to do this that's what the result will be and she thinks the committee should state what things should be cut.

Rep. Brosseau said he was elected because of the economic situation and wants to see cuts and to see the government live by the same standards as everyone else does.

Director Clough said that she knows that the members were elected to do a job and that she too has a job to do and she sees the passion they have for things and that she too has that passion to be able to run a safe secure and humane place for those who are incarcerated. She said that there was no information on the Jail today because she was not asked by the Chairman to provide that today. She said the issue here has to be addressed which is that a cut of a million or million and a half would mean detrimental changes to the operation of the County. She said that every day people work to keep costs down on things.

She said that Correctional Officers are not just public employees but their jobs are their careers and these are people who live and pay taxes in the towns the committee represents. She noted that there was no questions asked when the Nursing Home wanted extra people last year in order to take care of people and they were given it. She said the Jail needs to take care of people also. She said the County is statutorily mandated to operate a Jail and an adequate number of staff is required in order to make sure that those inmates are supervised properly.

Rep. Gionet said he has a problem with people making a \$90K salary when talking about tax payer money.

Rep. Bulis said that Supt. Libby was requested to make some changes which he felt was unfair because the committee is not his boss, the Commissioners are and it wasn't fair to ask him to make cuts and not other department heads.

Rep. White said he has a sense that the full Delegation will not support this budget and they might come to a number that the County is not in favor of.

Rep. Aguiar said he's been involved in the legislature long enough to know that he's not sure what's going to happen with the Delegation. He added that he did not think it was fair to talk about the salaries that people are making in relation to the budget.

Rep. Townsend said that the message he has gotten from his constituents is not to make cuts to Social Services or to see them disappear.

Rep. Aguiar said there should be more thought about coming up with a number. Rep. Almy said she would oppose just coming up with a number and they have an obligation to see where the number comes from.

Rep. Bulis said he'd rather see department heads look at the numbers. Rep. White said they tried that and were met with resistance. He said the concerns in the room center around the Jail. He said he didn't think reductions in Social Services would go over well in his community either.

Commissioner Cryans again went over monies that they were committed to including the \$1.2M bond debt, \$250K in health insurance, \$300K in retirement, \$230K salary increase as well as an \$800K loss due to the loss of FMAP money. He didn't know how a reduction of \$1M -\$1.5M could even be considered. He said he wouldn't even know how to get to \$500K. Commissioner Cryans said they proposed a very good budget and money was actually saved. He said he didn't see everyone in the communities doing terrible like everyone else saw. He said he's seen some people who are doing quite well and getting raises. He said it seemed that according to members of the committee, everyone seems to be doing horrible.

Rep. Brosseau moved to reduce the budget by \$1M, which was seconded by Rep. Gionet

Discussion:

Rep. Ladd moved to amend the motion to request that the Administration reduce the budget in a range between \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 and to bring that back to the committee for consideration which was seconded by Rep. Bulis.

Discussion:

Rep. Ladd said that trying to set a number without having a report by Supt. Libby would not be right.

Rep. Almy said that she would agree to this as long as the motion clearly says they are not committed to just cutting this budget by a number, but that they want to see what the budget looks like. She noted concern for the surplus.

Rep. Ladd said he doesn't know what these numbers mean but feels they're all concerned about the bottom line.

Rep. Bulis said that the surplus is the constituent's money anyway. Rep. Almy said a shrinking surplus amounts to larger budget increases next year though.

Commissioner Ahern said that he believed that he was voted in on a mandate from the voters and he did not vote in favor of the budget, but it is the budget of the Commissioners. He said he did not feel that the Commissioners gave clear direction to the Dept. Heads when putting the budget together.

Commissioner Ahern said that the Grafton County staff of Dept. Heads are very professional and have a clear understanding of the statutes and he is convinced they can do what they need to do.

Rep. Brosseau motioned to move the question which was seconded by Rep. White. All were in favor (Rep. Sova had left)

When the vote was taken on the amendment, Reps. Bulis, Gionet, Almy, White, Brosseau, Townsend and Ladd were in favor, Rep. Aguiar was opposed. (Rep. Sova had left)

When the vote was taken to accept the motion as amended, Reps. Bulis, Gionet, Almy, White, Brosseau, Townsend and Ladd were in favor, Rep. Aguiar was opposed. (Rep. Sova had left)

Director Clough asked if the committee thought it was reasonable that this be presented back to the committee on the 6<sup>th</sup>, which they did.

Rep. Aguiar said he thought this was an effort in futility.

The meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> would begin at 9:00 AM and continue all day.

1:15 PM All were in favor of adjourning.

Respectfully submitted,

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Charles Sova, Clerk