

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW

Administration Building
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH
Monday May 9, 2011

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

EXCUSED: Representative Sova

OTHERS: Rachel Clough

Rep. Bulis called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM. Representative White led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rep. Bulis had copies of the revised by-laws and revenue/expenditures since FY2008 for people to review. Rep. Almy passed out a copy of the Ethics Guidelines which she said applies to the legislative body and is more pertinent in Grafton County where people are more likely to know contractors personally.

Rep. Bulis said these things will be discussed at next week's regular meeting.

Rep. Bulis asked about the employee wage and health benefits and Director Clough said they were incorporated into the budget. He then asked the size of the undesignated balance in which money will come out of to reduce taxes. Director Clough said it was somewhere around \$4M and it starts with the remainder of last year's undesignated balance and then either grows or reduces depending on revenues and expenses.

Rep. Almy said she would like to be sure and go over the revenues when the Dept. Heads come in to review their budgets. She also said that she would like to see a benefit and wage comparison for the last six years and the total increase in the number of staff. Rep. White called that position control, which he said referred to how many people occupying how many positions. He said he would like to see a five year salary history.

Rep. Ladd said he would like both full and part time employees and contracted services, broken down by Departments.

Rep. Aguiar asked how the process works and how the Commissioners reach their final recommended number on an item.

Rep. Bulis wanted to set some guidelines and would like to have a verbal exchange with the presenter, to stay on topic and that everyone should feel free to ask all the questions they would like to.

Director Clough then answered Rep. Aguiar's question by saying that Dept. Heads were given parameters in the beginning, such as the health insurance not to exceed rate of

20%, and they were to keep in the step increases. After that it was a matter of the Dept. Heads figuring out what they needed to operate with.

Commissioner Cryans said that this budget has an expense increase of 11.09%, which he felt was very good considering they had originally thought that bringing the Jail online would create a 16% increase in that area alone. He asked the committee to keep in mind that there would be \$830K of ARRA money going away, there were two bonds that the County was obligated to and that there is an increase in personnel, retirement and health insurance. All these come to \$3.67M added to last year's budget. He added that some things such as the ARRA money, the bonds and the retirement are out of the control of the Board and they make up about 2/3rds of that amount.

Rep. Almy asked if there was anyone leaving because of the change in retirement and both Commissioner Cryans and Director Clough said not that they knew of.

CORRECTIONS

Corrections Superintendent Libby was the first to go over his budget with the Executive Committee. He informed the committee that he was responsible for the DoC, Community Corrections, Governor's Commission Grant, RSAT Grant and Night Watchmen budgets.

Supt. Libby said that 19 new positions were being requested in order to open the new Jail based on the philosophy and programs for reducing recidivism. There are 11 Correctional Officer positions and 8 ancillary positions. CO's will be phased in with training over an 11 week period. There will be a total of 60 staff members at the new facility.

Rep. Bulis asked Supt. Libby if he could explain the two grants.

Supt. Libby said the **Governor's Commission Grant** comes from a portion of alcohol that is sold in the state. This money is put into a fund which is supposed to be used to support drug and alcohol treatment. Grafton County has received this money every year though there are times when the State has used those funds for some other reason. He said it is not clear how the funding stands right now. One full time Substance Abuse Coordinator and some agencies for treatment are paid for with this money.

Rep. Almy said that she has heard that the plan is to pro-rate that money around.

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment grant (RSAT) ~ Supt. Libby said this is a grant through the Attorney General's Office for the substance abuse treatment specifically for females.

Rep. Almy asked if there could be a chart that shows how many people are in the departments in the new Jail and what positions are filled.

There was a discussion about how employees will be phased in.

Supt. Libby discussed how the staffing is currently handled and how new staff members would be brought on.

Rep. Ladd asked if they could get salary comparisons of the different Counties and Supt. Libby said he didn't have that but perhaps he could find the information through NHACo.

There was a discussion as to whether or not the County expected a pay-back for training and certification of Correctional Officers if they should decide to leave employment. There is no expectation of that from the County at present.

Rep. White asked if in the short term, consultants could be used to handle the program areas and Supt. Libby said they could.

Commissioner Cryans said that he believes that training is essential for the size of this facility and he would like to stay with the recommendations of the training officials and their guidelines. Commissioner Burton added that it wasn't just as simple as closing one door and opening another as he may have previously thought. The discussion continued about training and transition of personnel.

Rep. Ladd asked if the 19 new positions are predicated on the maximum capacity of the facility or the inmate census of today and Supt. Libby replied that this is the amount of staff needed on day one to open the facility but he did not see that there would be a need for more staff in the future unless new programs are added.

Rep. Ladd asked if Supt. Libby was looking at any revenue by offering beds out and Supt. Libby said that he has always felt that his first responsibility is to the people of Grafton County, however, if there are extra beds in the future then he will consider the option and discuss that with the Commissioners.

Rep. Gionet asked why the Nursing Home doesn't supply the Jail with meals any more and Supt. Libby said that the mission of the Nursing Home is to supply meals to the geriatric population and his population is quite different. He said all meals are currently being prepared at the facility now.

Rep. White asked why there was a need for another administrative person and Supt. Libby replied that he and other managing level staff need that support, as they will be expecting to do more paperwork in the new facility.

There was a discussion about keeping two buildings open at the same time and the costs of that. Director Clough said they wouldn't know the actual cost of operating the new facility until it's been in operation for a year.

Rep. Ladd suggested that the Commissioners should ask Woodsville Water & Light to lower the electrical rate and see what they say because the House Bill in Concord is going no where at this point.

There was a discussion about the need for additional nurses if the population remains the same.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

There is an increase of about \$4K which is mainly due to salary and benefits.

Rep. White asked why there is property tax on the white building and Director Clough said that it has always been there and is billed by the town of Haverhill. Rep. White said that should be checked on as he didn't believe any government building should be taxed. Director Clough said that it was looked into some time ago, though not by her, and they were told it would be taxed, but she would follow up on it again.

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION GRANT

Supt. Libby asked that the Representatives continue to support that money continues to be put into this fund.

NIGHT WATCHMEN

Supt. Libby gave an overview of what the watchmen do which included keeping an eye on all the Farm buildings 7 days a week during the times when the farmers are not there.

There was some concern as to whether or not there would be enough substance abuse councilors in the new Jail.

Rep. Bulis asked if it would be possible to scale back some of the efforts and to postpone some of the facility's program concepts for another year or two until the economy recovers. Supt. Libby said that he could postpone some of the programmatic areas and just continue with what they're doing today. Rep. Ladd said he had a concern about that in terms of recidivism and he would like to see more done in the way of education and less in Correctional personnel, though he assumed it couldn't work that way.

Rep. Almy asked how many people stay long enough for these programs to matter and Supt. Libby said that some people would only need a week for it to make a difference but that all depends on an individual's motivation. Supt. Libby said that with more education they are more likely to be able to find a job and less likely to return to Jail.

Rep. Gionet said he would like to see the opening of the Jail postponed for at least a year and then to look at privatization.

Rep. White said that because of the added burdens on towns, this has become more difficult than it was in the past. He said he would like to see things phased in, in a more strategic way and maybe they could consider closing parts of the Jail and to prioritize and to stagger things. He said that it is difficult for communities to sustain this type of burden.

Rep. Bulis asked if they could close an area and not hurt the services. Supt. Libby said no, they could not do it that way because of classification and that the areas are there to segregate inmates. He said he wouldn't know how to do it another way.

Rep. Bulis said they were looking for ways to ameliorate the costs in this budget. Supt. Libby said that there have been some huge changes made in the way they have looked at things and he feels that sacrifices have been made.

Rep. Ladd said a 60 person staff to 100 inmates is a hard sell to the public.

Commissioner Cryans said he hopes they don't go down the road of privatization and that it should be kept in mind that there are about 230-240 staff working in the Nursing Home with 135 residents. He said that he doesn't feel that the increase is too much and to him the budget is still phenomenally low. He said that though authorized by the Delegation for \$38M, the Jail came in at \$33M, which was a savings of \$5M. He said he thought the Corrections budget came through with flying colors.

Rep. Almy said that in order to privatize you would have to find a company willing to do that and she didn't think that was likely. She said that they have been running a Jail "on the cheap" but that she would like to see a comparison of other counties.

Supt. Libby told the committee that if there was any other information he could get them or questions that needed to be answered that he would be happy to provide it for them. Supt. Libby left.

11:03 The Committee took a brief recess

11:12 The Committee resumed their meeting.

FARM

Farm Manager Kimball was present to go over his budget. He said that milk prices have risen but so has the price of grain. He said that right now the Farm budget is \$35K in the red. Grafton County is slated to be the only County Farm that remains active.

It was noted that the Committee neglected to review the revenue for Corrections so they began the Farm with the revenue and went over each line item.

Rep. Gionet asked about firewood and whether or not it would be provided for sale again. FM Kimball said they are no longer selling firewood as they can no longer use inmates for safety reasons and there just isn't enough manpower.

There was a discussion about the possibility of selling milk directly from the Farm and FM Kimball said that would be a whole other business, both costly and difficult to make money on.

Rep. Townsend asked if the Jail reimburses the Farm for the produce it uses and FM Kimball said they do not. Director Clough said the inmates grow all the produce.

Rep. Almy asked if there was a way that Supt. Libby could estimate how much produce is used in the Jail to see what the cost would have been had he had to purchase it. Director Clough said she believed that was tracked and Rep. Townsend said he would like to see that figure.

Rep. Almy asked why the Veterinarian line was reduced since they have already gone over that line at present. FM Kimball said he thought he could stay in the amount budgeted.

There was a discussion about the registration of the cows and if it was necessary to continue to do this. FM Kimball said it's not really a necessity these days but they have continued the practice. Rep. Bulis asked what the cost of registration was and FM Kimball said he would have to look that up.

There was a discussion about the cost of breeding and that it had increased 80%. FM Kimball said a lot of that had to do with genetics and the cost of artificial insemination.

FM Kimball reviewed what kinds of items were used out of the supply line and said that he had spent \$3K last year on potato bags, which he said was factored back into the price.

FM Kimball explained that H. Hatch plants the corn for the County and he also is now cutting the corn in the fall. FM Kimball said it would take him a month to harvest if he had to do it himself.

Rep. White asked if the chopping is ever bid out and FM Kimball said it was not but there are only a couple of people in the area that can actually do that work.

Rep. White asked who sets the price for the sale of items from the Farm and FM Kimball said he generally checks with the Market Bulletin.

Rep. Aguiar asked why they decided to get rid of the chickens and FM Kimball said they didn't make any money on them. It was noted that since the Jail uses the eggs it was important to find out how much it would cost to buy the eggs as opposed to the cost to feed the chickens through the laying season.

Rep. White said he still questions why the County has to pay taxes on any of their properties noting the tax payments for the Farm buildings. Rep. Aguiar said that universities have to pay some kind of contribution and Commissioner Cryans said that Dartmouth pays taxes on their dormitories. Rep. Ladd said he will delve into this further tonight at the Haverhill Selectboard meeting and Rep. Almy said she would check further at the State with the DRA.

Rep. Bulis said that over the last five years the Farm has been \$262K in the red and questioned whether or not this is something that the County wanted to continue supporting. FM Kimball said that out of the \$35K that he is down this year is \$18K in donated produce to agencies in Grafton County.

Rep. White said that he was originally opposed to the Farm until listening to what was said today and would encourage the committee to wait to see what the audit turns out. He said the Farm does need to get a better handle on the accounting however. He said he would like to know through the audit if there are some benefits to the Jail because of the Farm.

Rep. Gionet said he agreed that waiting for the audit to be done was a good idea. Rep. Brosseau agreed with that also and asked how many inmates work on the Farm. FM Kimball said it can be as many as up to 20 but there are generally 4 people in the barn and 2 inmates outside five days a week.

Rep. Ladd said the Farm provides educational opportunities such as having elementary children visit and there is also the benefit of providing duties for inmates.

Rep. Gionet said donations to Senior Centers are appreciated and the Farm has been a great outlet for inmates.

Rep. Aguiar said they need a comprehensive overall look at the Farm.

Commissioner Cryans went back to the discussion about the chickens and said that in a Commissioner meeting it was decided that they eliminate the chickens.

Director Clough asked when the committee wanted to discuss wages and benefits and it was agreed by all that they would be the first thing discussed at the next budget meeting.

There was a quick question about longevity and the overall cost and Director Clough said in this budget the cost is \$113,220.

Rep. Ladd asked that there be comparative data on employee salaries for the next meeting.

12:20 PM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Sova, Clerk