

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Budget Reviews

Board of Commissioners' Office

North Haverhill, NH

Thursday, March 20, 2008

PRESENT: Commissioners' Michael Cryans, Ray Burton and Martha Richards, Financial Coordinator Susan Cunningham, Executive Director Julie Clough and Secretary Jeri Martino.

Commissioner Cryans called the Meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS: Superintendent Libby presented his budget(s)

GOVERNORS GRANT: Included additional money for Headrest councilors but is level funded. Commissioner Burton asked about funding from New Futures to which Supt. Libby said that they don't fund ongoing programs. Commissioner Cryans suggested getting a letter out in request and support of funding from New Futures.

NIGHTWATCHMEN: This budget has decreased slightly as security equipment and repair was reduced. There was a discussion as to the duties of the Night Watchmen.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS: This budget has increased 14% and will include new positions. Commissioner Cryans asked about the possibility of a mental health court in Grafton County and Supt. Libby said that there certainly was a need for it and that there may be some federal funds available. Commissioner Burton questioned how much more could the County taxpayers be expected to pay and Commissioner Cryans said that hopefully the results would be to keep the people out of jail.

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS: There is an 8.5% increase. There are three new positions requested, plus one new mental health social worker based on the proposed new jail. Because of the new positions, insurance and benefits have also increased. Commissioner Richards said that Congressman Hodes office has money available for mental health and questioned whether that should be looked into. Supt. Libby said that it would be better to get the new structure in place first and then seek out grant money.

Commissioner Richards asked if there was enough room to put the new employees that are being requested and Supt. Libby said that some will be considered transitional staff who will work in the ongoing construction area. There was discussion about transition time. Commissioner Cryans asked if there were room for reduction if it became necessary and Supt. Libby said that would compromise the long term plans and he feels it would have significant impact on the future.

FARM: Farm Manger Kimball arrived to present his budget, which is up 12% and much of that is in maintenance allocation and due to the newly proposed maintenance

building. Fuel and dairy feed is also up, as well as sawdust. Equipment repair is also an added expense. Revenue is down slightly from last year but milk prices are expected to remain around \$19. In capital outlay, FM Kimball has requested a new skid steer and tractor at \$22K each.

Commissioner Burton said there has to be a way to increase the revenue based on the sale of wood. Commissioner Cryans asked if revenue would increase in the next six months enough to make the FY08 projections and Director Clough said that the sale of the upcoming timber cut would bring up the wood revenue.

There was further discussion about what the Farm could do to increase revenues and Commissioner Richards brought up the information that Dr. Gulbrandson went over in his review of the Farm.

Commissioner Cryans asked about the possibility of increasing the amount of cows that are milked and FM Kimball said that he could look into that and work with Supt. Libby to see what the offset might be to adding new cows, i.e. grain and sawdust etc. This may be an incremental process.

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL: Donna Wallis and Steve Whitney arrived to hear the Commissioners response to their request of 4.3% cost of living increase. The response from the Commissioners was for a 2.5% cost of living increase noting that while they understand the economic conditions of the times, other factors regarding the budget as a whole must be considered. The Commissioners also factored in the existing 3% step increase of those who are not maxed out and the recommendation from the wage consultant.

D. Wallis asked how much the insurance would be going up and Director Clough said the max was 10%.

D. Wallis then asked about the wage survey that was done and whether there were any changes according to that. Director Clough said that it was complete and that she would get a copy to the Employee Council.

D. Wallis said that they would take the Commissioners counteroffer back to the Council.

Commissioner Cryans said that the real issues are being dealt with are the economy and what the taxpayers are dealing with. "It is very difficult scenario" he said. He added that there is still a difficult row to hoe with the Executive Committee and Delegation and they are trying to balance the best they can keeping in mind that the money comes out of the taxpayer's pockets.

Commissioner Burton said that the economy is in bad shape across the country and if the Commissioners don't make the decision against the increase here, it will be done by the Delegation.

Commissioner Richards asked for patience and understanding and to be cognizant of the fact that it is on the backs of the tax payers.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Attorney Rick St. Hilaire and Office Mgr. Alison Farina were present. Atty. St. Hilaire said that his budget is up 7%.

There was a brief discussion about cases and Atty. St. Hilaire said that the Ntl. Crime statistics say that New Hampshire is the safest state to live in and he noted that there was a reduction in arrest in the Lebanon areas.

Atty. St. Hilaire said that he would like to see a 2+ step increase for his Asst. Atty. which would correct an error that happened last year.

Atty. St. Hilaire requested to increase the investigative position an additional ten hours and said that it has proved to be a beneficial asset.

There is an increase in the health insurance line as there are two additional family plans. Education and Conf. has also increased due to reduction in funding.

VAWA Grant budget is up slightly or 6%

VICTIM WITNESS is a grant program. Education & Conf. line is down somewhat.

CAPITAL OUTLAY has been reduced.

MEDICAL REFEREE has increase and Atty. St. Hilaire said this is still an ongoing dispute with the state regarding payments and charges. He said this is a serious financial issue for some Counties thought the funeral directors are now getting paid by the state. According to Atty. St. Hilaire though, the system is not working.

11:50 AM Commissioners broke for lunch

12:45 PM Commissioner resumed their meeting

COMMISSIONERS OFFICE:

Director Clough presented the Commissioners' Office budget with two separate scenarios which depend on the outcome of the Human Services Dept. and the approval of a Community Relations position, which was also presented. Director Clough also requested the appointment of a Financial Director to act as second in command to her position and to help handle the financial needs of the County, which she said are becoming far more complicated. Her proposal under option 1, would be 2.72% increase and under option 2, would be a 7.06% increase.

There was further discussion about the moving of people and positions.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1:37 PM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk