

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH
Monday May 18, 2009

PRESENT: Representatives Mulholland, Williams, Aguiar, Preston, Ford, Ward, Gionet (arrived late), Friedrich and Laliberte, Commissioners Cryans, Richards and Burton, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Jeri Martino.

OTHERS PRESENT: Harold Brown and RD Sharp

Rep. Mulholland called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM

Rep. Preston moved to accept the minutes from April 20, 2009, which was seconded by Rep. Laliberte.

Rep. Friedrich stated that there was information in the draft of the minutes that she felt should be removed saying that although it was an accurate account of what was said, she felt it presented the Treasurer in a negative light and didn't think it needed to be included. Rep. Ward disagreed saying that accurate accounts should not be taken out. A discussion ensued as to what everyone thought.

A motion was made by Rep. Preston who suggested that everything in the paragraph after "investment account" in the draft minutes should be removed, which was seconded by Rep. Friedrich.

Reps. Preston, Friedrich, Aguiar, Mulholland and Ford approved the removal of the wording, Reps. Laliberte, Ward and Williams opposed. The motion passed.

The Representatives then voted on approval of the minutes. Reps. Preston, Aguiar, Mulholland, Ford and Laliberte approved, Reps. Williams and Ward did not approve.

Rep. Ward then asked how the minutes from today would reflect this vote without the wording that was removed and it was decided that it would be presented as it is written above.

TEASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Sievers informed the committee that she has gotten a second signature on all the investment accounts but one which she is having difficulty with. She said that the securitization agreements have been received and Attorney St. Hilaire is reviewing them.

Treasurer Sievers said that she discussed the TAN's with Director Clough and they will probably need to borrow around \$7M around the end of July. She said that she will be looking for an Attorney around the end of June to handle this.

Treasurer Sievers said that she would like to recommend Frank Stiegler as Deputy Treasurer for the next year.

Rep. Aguiar asked the Treasurer for information on Mr. Stiegler and she said that he was the Deputy Treasurer for the past Treasurer.

Director Clough said that the Treasurer recommends who she would like for Deputy Treasurer and the Commissioners vote to appoint the person.

Rep. Preston asked which bank Treasurer Sievers was still waiting on and she said it was Meredith Village and that somehow the information was not reaching its destination even though phone calls and emails have been sent. Rep. Laliberte suggested a personal visit to the bank when phone calls and emails don't do the job.

There was a discussion about getting bids from outside the County when it came to investing money. Rep. Aguiar suggested that better rates may be had by doing so. Treasurer Sievers said that she considered looking into that perhaps next year and Rep. Aguiar said he for one would be in favor of that. Rep. Ward said that he was opposed to that saying that property taxes that are collected should be put back into Grafton County for the economic value and that there should be good rates that can be found here. He said it had long since been a practice of doing it this way.

Rep. Williams said that he didn't have a problem looking outside the county but this is only short time money and it was probably better to stick within the County. Rep. Aguiar said that he was aware of the tradition but didn't think that they should fall into the habit of always doing things the way they've always been done. He said that maybe the taxpayers would want to see that the County is doing the best they could with the funds.

Rep. Aguiar moved to accept the Treasurer's Report, which was seconded by Rep. Ford. All were in favor.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Commissioner Cryans began by informing the committee that the Commissioner's hearing on the budget will be on May 26th at 7:00 PM in the UNH Conference Room if anyone wanted to attend.

The Commissioners will be attending a retirement party at the Nursing Home on that same day at 2:00 PM for four retirees who cumulatively have over 100 years of service.

There was another GED graduation at the Jail on the 13th for 9 graduates. This makes 44 people who have received their GED through the program, which Commissioner Cryans said was phenomenal.

On June 24th the Drug Court will have a graduation and will celebrate its second anniversary. Attorney General Kelly Ayotte will be the guest speaker. The ceremony starts at 10:30 at the Courthouse.

On May 29th at 11:00 AM there will be a hearing on the summary judgment motions in the Elected Officials lawsuit.

Nothing has been heard regarding the Jail lawsuit and the Supreme Court.

Rep. Laliberte noted the article in the Valley News about Billy the Cow and said that it made the County sound insensitive. Commissioner Cryans said that unfortunately, that is the life of an animal on the Farm.

Rep. Ward asked how many Drug Court graduates there have been and Commissioner Cryans replied two. He asked how many people are in the program and Director Clough said 15 at present. Commissioner Cryans explained how people progress in the program and the rewards and disciplines.

Rep. Ward asked when the program began and Commissioner Cryans said 2007.

Rep. Williams asked where the Jail was headed as far as the budget goes and Commissioner Cryans said that it has to be heard by the Supreme Court and he didn't really have a time table yet. Rep. Williams asked if there was money put in the budget for it this year and Commissioner Cryans said they had taken some money that was in this current budget to use for the re-design and currently have received a new estimate of around \$33M. He said they want the process to continue. There are no new positions in the budget except a part time person for maintenance.

Rep. Williams asked when the architects would be ready with the re-design and Director Clough said that if they could move forward, they could do some site work in September but the full building documents won't be ready until late fall or early winter. She said that they hope to begin construction in the spring of 2010.

Rep. Friedrich said that there may be something that the County could do to get reporters on their side.

Rep. Friedrich asked if there will be a re-vote on the Jail bond vote and Commissioner Cryans said that he didn't see why there would need to be. Rep. Friedrich said that she thought she heard Commissioner Burton say that their Selectboard meeting.

Commissioner Burton said that he didn't recall saying that and didn't think there was a need for another vote.

Rep. Mulholland asked about geothermal and test drilling and Commissioner Cryans said that it is being looked into by SMRT although ultimately there will come the time when testing will have to be done to see if geothermal will even work.

Rep. Ward asked if the Jail operating budget and the bonding costs for the new facility have been revised since the reduction and Director Clough said they had not as of yet and are still working the redesign. They hope to be able to nail down all the numbers including the principal and interest by mid summer.

Rep. Ward asked about the biomass project and Commissioner Cryans said that it was originally voted on to proceed two to one and then he asked if the motion be reconsidered saying that without grant funding it just seemed like too much to ask given all the other things going on. Commissioner Richards said that after rethinking it, she agreed that maybe this wasn't the time so she voted to take it back out of the budget. Commissioner Burton stayed steadfast on his vote. She said that she was still looking for outside funding. Commissioner Cryans said that he wasn't insensitive to the issue and noted there would certainly be no grant money if in fact it did make it into the budget.

Rep. Williams said not to give up on this as he thought that there would be more stimulus money coming and that biomass at the County would keep the local wood industry busy in this area.

Commissioner Cryans said that the Commissioners had a tour of the geothermal plant at the Merrimack Nursing Home.

Rep. Ward asked how much savings there would be if the biomass was used at the Jail and Commissioner Cryans said that there would still need to be a redundant oil system for backup. Commissioner Richards said that the geothermal used in Merrimack didn't need a redundant oil system because of the number of working wells.

Rep. Preston went back to the question for the need of another bond vote for the Jail project and Director Clough said that the delegation originally voted to allow the Commissioners to spend up to \$38M and right now it is the same project so legally there doesn't need to be another vote, and that information the Director said, is a legal opinion from an attorney.

Rep. Friedrich said that she has heard a lot from constituents about going forward with this project in bad times and asked if there had been any reconsideration of the matter. Commissioner Cryans said that the reduction of the project is a response to letters that were written but stated that there is still a very real need for a new jail and he felt that the Board responded in a responsible way by asking for a reduction. Commissioner Richards said that the costs would not be seen in the taxes for a while and deferred to Director Clough for further information. Director Clough said that they would probably bond a couple of times to spread out the impact. She said that after bonding, the first payment which would be due in six months would be interest only and then at a year it would revert to principal and interest. . She said it would take a couple of years before the full impact was felt.

10:17 AM Rep. Gionet arrived.

Director Clough added that the costs for geothermal is not included in the estimated \$33M, so that number will increase.

Rep. Aguiar said that he would like to be sure that the County took into consideration exploring all measures of conservation. Commissioner Richards said much of that had been done and that Maintenance Superintendent Oakes could supply more information on that, including the energy audit.

Rep. Williams moved to accept the Commissioners Report which was seconded by Rep. Ford. All were in favor.

Rep. Ward offered congratulations to the Commissioners and Director Clough saying that they had a great start on the budget.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Census at the Nursing Home is 131 and the census in-house at the Jail is 103 with 15 in the drug court program and 13 out on the electronic monitoring bracelet.

Monthly Variance Report:

In the monthly variance report, Director Clough said that the Farm, Deeds and Interest were off and will finish behind in revenues. In expenses, the Drug Court will be over expended by the end of the fiscal year but Human Services has met the cap, meaning no more bills will need to be paid, and then that number will level out. Under Other, the expense is legal fees.

Prorated:

The FMAP money has been approved and will be received covering the period from Oct. 1st to Mar 31st. The County will then receive money quarterly through next year (FY2010) but it is not shown in the Commissioners budget.

There is an undesignated fund balance of almost \$2.3M.

Rep. Ward asked about pro-share money and Director Clough said she didn't know if it would be received but had heard that the increase in bed tax payments will reduce the pro-share dollar for dollar.

Rep. Laliberte moved to accept the Financial Report which was seconded by Rep. Williams. All were in favor.

Rep. Mulholland recognized Haverhill citizen Ron Willoughby who asked to address the committee.

Mr. Willoughby asked that the County reign in their spending and questioned the need for continuing with the Farm as it loses money. He then listed items he would like to see:

- All contracts should be put out to bid and the County should accept the lowest bidder regardless.
- There should be minimum project spending and anything over that should go to the voters to agree on.
- There should be complete and honest explanations of planned projects including cost of maintenance once complete, administrative costs, etc.
- There should be an obligation to the taxpayers.

Mr. Willoughby commended the reduction of the Jail.

He stated that the middle class is being wiped out and this has to stop. He said everything rides on the backs of the taxpaying property owners. He suggested allowing gambling in the state and said that he was in favor of a sales tax but not an income tax. He said that the legislators could either be a part of the solution or a part of the problem and asked for more fiscal restraint.

10:36 AM Rep. Ward was excused.

Commissioner Burton said that he and Senator Reynolds were sponsoring a meeting on the state budget at Glenclyff home for the elderly beginning at 7:00 PM this evening.

Rep. Aguiar said that times are frustrating for everyone who pays taxes including everyone in the room.

Rep. Mulholland thanked Mr. Willoughby for his observations.

Director Clough said that the delegation meeting to approve the budget was set for June 29th at 10:00 AM.

The committee discussed when they would be presenting their overview of the Departments budgets. It was decided that meetings would be held on Monday, June 8th, 15th and 22nd for committee members to present their reviews.

There was a discussion as to how the process works.

11:10 AM Rep. Preston moved to adjourn, which was seconded by Rep. Ford. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Preston, Clerk