

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH
Friday January 9, 2008

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Harold Brown, Register of Deeds Bill Sharp, Reps. Ladd, Bulis and Ingbretson.

Vice Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 9:10AM saying that this meeting is rescheduled from a cancelled meeting in December.

Rep. Mulholland arrived

Rep. Preston moved to approve the minutes from November 17, 2008, which was seconded by Rep. Aguiar. An edit was made. Representatives Mulholland, Williams, Preston, Aguiar, Gionet and Friedrich were in favor, Rep. Laliberte, Ford and Ward abstained.

Rep. Laliberte moved to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2008 Delegation Reorganization meeting, which was seconded by Rep. Preston. Edits were made. All were in favor.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Director Clough gave the report in Treasurer Sievers stead saying that the new Treasurer was sworn in on Wednesday and could not be at the meeting today, however, she is expected to be in attendance at future meetings.

Director Clough informed the Committee that the outgoing Treasurer closed many of the money market accounts and placed the \$11M left over from tax money in a CDARS account at Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank earning 1% interest until January 22nd so that the incoming Treasurer can invest the money. Treasurer Sievers has been signed on as signatory and F. Steigler is still the Deputy Treasurer until June 1, 2009. Director Clough said that they do not expect to make their interest budget as that \$11M was only drawing 1% interest.

Rep. Ward asked if that money was collateralized and Director Clough responded affirmatively adding that the money is distributed out to other banks in amounts under the \$250,000 FDIC insurance level.

All town taxes have been received with the exception of Ellsworth.

\$6.4M TANs money was borrowed and was paid back as of December 17th. \$23,423 of interest was paid on the loan.

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

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Commissioner Cryans welcomed the new members to the Committee and began by saying the Nursing Home received a five star rating and that Senator Reynolds would be working on a letter of commendation on its behalf.

The water tank project is nearly complete and the road work is done and there is electricity to the site. The tank is expected to go online the first week of February. Commissioner Cryans said that it does not appear the Woodsville Water & Light will be taking over the tank as they have voiced some concerns about the project. The need for using the tank for fire suppression remains.

Jail Lawsuit: Legal fees are still pending. The attorney for the County is refuting fees of \$212K to be paid to the litigants and is offering \$23K instead. This information is in the hands of the Judge.

Elected Officials Salaries: Still pending final court hearing.

Elected officials were sworn in on Wednesday and there is only one (Treasurer) who is new this term.

There was a ribbon cutting ceremony on the new Maintenance Building and Commissioner Cryans recommended that the Representatives take a tour if they could.

The budget process would be starting soon and Commissioner Cryans said that he expected it to be a tough year and that he has already cautioned some of the Department Heads to be very prudent and that there should be no new positions and to cut where they can. The budget would then be in the hands of the Delegation.

Commissioner Richards said a feasibility study has been conducted regarding energy consumption on the complex and that the Alternative Energy Committee has been a tremendous source of information with a magnitude of expertise and added that the Committee has given so much volunteer time to help out the County. Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC) out of Montpelier, VT has been looking at Biomass for the entire complex and an independent geothermal study will be looked at for the Jail itself. There will be a full presentation to the Delegation on February 2, 2009 beginning at 10:00 AM and the Commissioner strongly urged everyone to attend.

Commissioner Cryans informed everyone that Ray Burton was sworn in as Executive Councilor for his 16th term (32 years), which is the longest running Councilor in NH history. Everyone applauded the accomplishment.

Commissioner Cryans said that letters from a number of towns have been received which voice concerns over building the new Jail during these economic times and most ask that the project be put on hold. Commissioner Burton said that he encourages the communications and noted that the Board of Commissioners are planning to send a letter to Congress asking for funding.

Rep. Williams said that he feels as though the County is in an excellent position to ask for federal funding for the Jail project. Commissioner Burton agreed and said the stars in all in alignment for that.

Rep. Williams said that he did not want the Commissioners to put the budget process off on the Committee and Commissioner Cryans replied that was not the intent but that the Committee is the ultimate deciders.

Rep. Ward passed out information that he had compiled regarding Grafton County taxes and equalized valuations saying that there is a decline in growth of the tax base and they are likely to see a decline in equalized values. He said that budget increases are not sustainable and that needs to be addressed as early as possible and costs need to be contained.

Rep. Gionet said that he is not surprised to hear about letters from the towns about halting the Jail process because it's what his towns has been saying all along. He also referenced keeping people on the payroll who have no job description and that he has heard "rumors" about the water tank and the concrete not being poured properly.

Director Clough said that the tank was poured at the correct temperature and that the shotcrete that was applied to the outside of the tank was also sprayed on at the correct temperature.

Rep. Gionet asked if there was water in the tank sitting stagnant and Commissioner Cryans said that they need to have someone such as Supt. Oakes to answer all the questions.

Rep. Gionet said that he still didn't have an answer to a question that he asked months ago about hydrology testing.

Rep. Aguiar asked if they could stay on one topic and Rep. Mulholland said they could continue with the water tank.

Rep. Aguiar said that he was startled to hear that WW&L is not willing to take over the water tank adding that he thought that the project was predicated on this assumption, and asked what was in the letter. Director Clough went to retrieve the letter.

Rep. Preston asked what the downside was of WW&L not taking over the tank. Rep. Williams said that would put the County in the water business, meaning testing and such and said that the Commissioners and Executive Director need to take care of this.

Rep. Friedrich said that she recalled that 60K gallons of water were to be potable and now it appears that the tank is all about fire suppression. Director Clough said there will be potable water.

Rep. Mulholland said they may not get all these questions answered today and suggested they move on.

Rep. Ward said that before he can feel comfortable about discussing the new Jail, he would like to have further information about the maintenance of it and well as general operations and staffing.

Commissioner Cryans said that although he was not in favor of this, a meeting would likely be taking place with SMRT and HP Cummings about the possibility of reductions or changes. He said the Board is very aware of what is best for the residents of the County.

Rep. Bulis was recognized and said that much has changed since the bond vote and he feels that constituents are looking to their Representatives to take some action to halt the process until there is some resolution of the economic situation. He said that he felt strongly that action is taken now.

Rep. Mulholland asked about the appeal process regarding court fees and Director Clough said that a 30 day appeal time begins after the decision.

Rep. Bulis said that there is money in the budget to continue with the project and that's what needs to be stopped and that he would like to have a special Delegation meeting to vote on this.

Rep. Ward said that he needed clarification on engineering costs and how much was tied to the bond. Director Clough said there is \$330K set aside for the project, with \$40K of that money spent.

Rep. Williams said there was a meeting in December with a motion to stop the Jail process and that was defeated. Rep. Ford agreed with Rep. Williams.

Rep. Preston said that it would be counterproductive to vote to postpone because that might lessen the chance to obtain federal funds.

Superintendent Oakes arrived to address questions about the water tank.

Supt. Oakes said that he feels that the information in the letter from WW&L is misleading and contains some untruths and that he thought that WW&L was originally in

favor of it. Concrete was poured under the correct temperature and the greenhouse was used as research by NATGUN to figure their costs, not to see if the process worked or not.

Rep. Gionet asked if test wells were drilled and Supt. Oakes said there were hydrology studies done but nothing regarding looking into having a well.

Supt. Oakes said that they may begin to look into having an artesian well for the property and possibly creating an independent piping system to become self sufficient in the future.

Rep. Williams asked how much the County pays per month for water and Supt. Oakes said approximately \$3K. Rep. Williams said that he didn't think that WW&L would want to lose that money and reiterated the fact that the County does not want to be in the water business.

Rep. Aguiar asked Supt. Oakes to explain the greenhouse set up, which he did saying that the concrete was poured in good weather and the shotcrete was done under the greenhouse at a temperature of 70 degrees. Rep. Aguiar asked if there could be two separate systems and Supt. Oakes said it would be far more cost effective to have only one.

Rep. Aguiar suggested that in the future, no decisions that involve spending money be made without being in writing.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

Director Clough informed the Committee that the Nursing Home census was at 135 and the Jail, 99.

The Medicaid rate increased from \$151.54 to \$155.41 as of January 1st.

The bond sale for the water tank took place on December 18th and the money has been received. Interest rate is 4.14% on the 10 year bond, which amounts to \$140K a year repayment cost.

Variance Report: Revenue is below and is due in part to low interest rates. Taxes have been received as of this date. Expenses are off as Human Services is working on a capped amount of money and is current with payments. There will be a partial payment in May and no payment in June. The Farm is down due to feed and equipment expenses, as well as lower milk prices. The capital outlay will come back with bond payment.

Prorated: Director Clough noted the very low undesignated fund balance which she said is going to have an impact of the budget this fiscal year.

Rep. Laliberte asked what the current cost of legal fees is right now and Director Clough said that it was \$308K for the Jail litigation and another \$15K for the Elected Officials litigation.

Rep. Gionet said that he did not feel that Friday was a good day to meet and Rep. Mulholland said this was a one time schedule and that they would continue to meet on Mondays.

There was a discussion about moving the time of the meeting in the winter months.

Rep. Williams moved to change the meeting time to 10:00 AM in the months of December through March, which was seconded by Rep. Gionet. All were in favor.

Rep. Ward moved to accept the Executive Director's Report, which was seconded by Rep. Preston. All were in favor.

Rep. Williams asked about the longevity for elected officials and Director Clough said that it will be put together in the budget. Rep. Preston asked if there will be a separate line for longevity and Director Clough said that it couldn't be done by person but it would be broken out in Departments.

Rep. Gionet said that he felt that his reference about a "rumor" and not having a name associated with it had no relevance to the situation.

Rep. Bulis was recognized and wanted to know how many Reps it would take to call a special meeting. Rep. Williams said that he thought that a majority of the Delegation could call the meeting. It was noted that the Delegation would be meeting on the 2nd of February for the Alternative Energy presentation.

Commissioner Richards asked if Register of Deeds Sharp could speak.

RD Sharp passed out some financial information pertaining to the Deeds Department and some information on foreclosures in Grafton County.

Rep. Ward said that foreclosures came later to Grafton County than to the rest of the state and now they are right in the middle of the situation.

Rep. Williams asked about LCHIP and RD Sharp said there were no complains. Rep. Ward said those paying the fee are not all that happy about it.

11:55 AM Rep. Williams move to adjourn, which was seconded by Rep. Preston. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Preston, Clerk