

Grafton County Delegation Vote  
Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2010  
Grafton County ~ UNH Conference Room  
North Haverhill, NH  
Monday June 29, 2009

PRESENT: Reps. Ward, Bulis, Taylor, Gionet, Ford, Ladd, Ingbretson, Aguiar, Friedrich, Cooney, Smith, Maybeck, Williams, Preston, Benn, Pastor-Bodmer, Pierce, Laliberte, Mulholland, Almy, White, Gould and Harding. Commissioners Cryans, Richards and Burton, Executive Director Julie Clough and Sec. Martino

OTHERS: S. Cunningham, B. Ruggles, C. Putnam, L. Rock, L. Klein, D. Dutile, T. Andross, K. Jablonski, J. Oakes, N. Bishop, S. Leavitt Doubleday, M. Tyler, T. Gahn, B. Sharp, H. Fisher, H. Wetherbee, B. Paronto, G. Libby, H. Brown, D. Kimball, R. Bleckyl (and others who did not sign in)

Chair Mulholland called the Meeting to order at 10:05 AM

The roll call was taken by Rep. Preston and a quorum declared.

Rep. Taylor moved to take a recess to caucus, to return at the call of the chair, which was seconded by Rep. Benn.

Reps. Ward, Gionet, Ladd, Ingbretson, Maybeck, Williams were opposed. Reps. Taylor, Ford, Aguiar, Friedrich, Cooney, Smith, Preston, Benn, Pastor-Bodmer, Pierce, Laliberte, Mulholland, Almy, White, Gould and Harding were in favor. (Rep. Bulis had not arrived yet) Motion passes 16 in favor to 6 opposed.

10:09 Chair called a recess to caucus.

Democrats moved to the Commissioners conference room to caucus. Republicans also chose to caucus and moved to another conference room.

10:20 AM Rep. Bulis arrived and joined the Republicans.

10:46 AM Everyone returned and the Chair called the meeting back to order.

Rep. Williams moved to appropriate \$32,522,390 for Fiscal year 2010 budget of which \$17,785,749 is to be raised by taxes, which was seconded by Rep. Aguiar.

Discussion:

Rep. Almy moved to make an amendment and to reduce the Nursing Home revenue on line 02-5020-102 by \$100K, line 02-5020-108 by \$500K and line 02-5020-113 by \$200K, increasing the reduction of amount to be raised by property taxes by \$800K, which was seconded by Rep. Taylor.

Rep. Almy stated that to increase the revenue for the increase of the Medicaid rate would mean that you would need to add two more people to the census.

In regard to the Pro-share money, she said that money is likely to be removed altogether as the federal government would like to use it for their healthcare program, so it is unlikely to continue to come in.

She said that the Bed Tax is proposed for removal but at the very least, the amount will decrease.

Nursing Home Administrator Bolander spoke in agreement with Rep. Almy saying that when putting the budget together, she looked at all aspects as to what was possible. She said that they were realistic and responsible. She said it was very likely that both the Pro-share money and the Bed Tax money would be taken away and that she had great concerns about using them as revenue.

Rep. Pierce asked about the probability of receiving the money and NHA Bolander said it would depend on whether there is money to fund the programs or not.

Rep. Bulis said that the loss of money is pure conjecture and nothing will change until next year anyway. NHA Bolander said that if it were to happen it would be in the federal fiscal year 2010 and the other changes would come over time.

Rep. Ward who had proposed the adjustments to the executive committee spoke and said that there was a \$3.61 increase to the Medicaid reimbursement rate which would bring in approximately \$131K for a six month period and the proposal is for only \$100K. He said the proposal was approved in vote of 7 to 2 with the executive committee.

Rep. Ward stated that the Bed Tax money had been received over the past years and that the budget operated on a surplus over the last two years. He said that the executive committee voted 7 to 2 in favor of adding \$200K of that money to the Nursing Home revenue.

Rep. Ward then said that the Pro-share money has always been off budget though the money was always received. He said that the revenue had not been included to reduce the property taxes and they needed to do that. He said the executive committee voted in favor of adding \$500K to the Nursing Home revenue 5 to 4.

Rep. Ward noted that the FMAP money had not been included in the budget revenue to reduce expenses and that using this money for revenues will decrease taxes.

NHA Bolander wanted it noted that you can not increase the Medicaid rate without increasing the care.

Rep. Pierce further discussed putting revenue in the budget without the possibility of it always being there. NHA Bolander said that in her opinion it would be taking a risk.

Rep. Bulis said there was a risk to all revenues and that he believed they should stick with the numbers agreed upon by the executive committee.

Rep. Almy changed her mind and said that now she would be accepting of keeping in the increased Medicaid reimbursement revenue and made an amendment to her amendment, to remove only the \$100K Bed Tax and the \$500K Pro-share money from the Nursing Home revenues, which was approved as accepted by K. Taylor (who originally seconded the amended motion).

Rep. Ladd said that he wanted to know more about the FMAP money and read some information from a website which discussed how that money can and can not be used. He wanted to make a separate motion but could not since there was already one on the table at present.

Rep. Benn said he was concerned about the surplus interfering with the bond rating if it were to drop too low and Director Clough said that the Commissioners adopted a policy to keep 5% in the undesignated fund balance. She said that her biggest concern is that there won't be enough money there for next year. She said that a steady fund balance is what they would like to see as opposed to a fluctuating fund.

Rep. Ward said that not using the Pro-share money to help the taxpayers would be irresponsible.

Commissioner Cryans said that the budget is created with the concerns of the taxpayers. He said that he thinks this is a good budget and does not feel that County taxes are out of sight. He did not agree with the changes that the executive committee made and said that he thought it would have consequences next year. He said that the Medicaid increase came in after the budget was approved by the Commissioners and he is okay with adding in that revenue, but he is not comfortable with adding in the Pro-share and Bed Tax money and said that he thought it would be risky.

Rep. Pierce moved to call the question. Rep. Ward seconded the move. All were in favor.

Rep. Almy re-read her amended amendment as follows:

Rep. Almy revised her amendment to reduce the Nursing Home revenue on line 02-5020-108 by \$500K and line 02-5020-113 by \$100K, increasing the reduction of amount to be raised by property taxes by \$600K, which received its second from Rep. Taylor.

Reps. Taylor, Ford, Aguiar, Cooney, Smith, Preston, Benn, Pastor-Bodmer, Pierce, Laliberte, Mulholland, Almy, White, Gould and Harding were in favor. Reps. Ward, Bulis, Gionet, Ladd, Ingbreton, Friedrich, Maybeck and Williams were opposed. Motion passes, 15 in favor, 8 opposed.

Rep. Ladd moved an amendment that FMAP revenue in the approximate amount of \$100K and known to most as stimulus money, be applied as revenue to support this year's budget in the amount of \$400K, or thereabouts, and in the amount of \$600K or thereabouts in the 2010 budget to offset property taxes, and that these funds not be placed in surplus, which was seconded by Rep. Ward.

Rep. Ladd said that FMAP money is for relief of property taxes and cannot be applied to the surplus as he understands it.

Rep. Almy asked to hear from Director Clough who said the money for this fiscal year has to go into the surplus as it was an unanticipated revenue. She said that next year is the only place to put the \$600K and that the following year that money will not be there. She said that the County is definitely getting \$400K for FY09 and will get some money for FY10 but she was not exactly sure how much or when.

Rep. Ward said that \$400K could be used to reduce taxes and that next year the \$600 could go to the Nursing Home as revenue to offset taxes.

Rep. Laliberte said that this was only a two year deal at best and that she didn't like the idea. She also suggested that there may be unexpected expenses that it may be needed for. Rep. Williams did not agree with that.

Rep. Ingbretson said that if there was ever a time for a cut it was now and Rep. Ladd said that they need to start ratcheting down and use the one time shot.

Rep. Taylor asked Commissioner Cryans if he was comfortable with the amendment and he replied that he did not want to use something on a one time basis and that knowing it is not coming in again, it would not be prudent to do so.

Rep. Almy made a friendly amendment to take \$600K in FMAP money and place it into the Human Services budget line 01-9072-102, which was agreed upon by Rep. Ladd and that this money was to be used to reduce property taxes by \$600K.

Reps. Ward, Bulis, Gionet, Ford, Ladd, Ingbretson, Aguiar, Friedrich, Cooney, Smith, Maybeck, Williams, Benn, Pastor-Bodmer, Pierce, Almy, White, Gould and Harding were in favor. Reps. Taylor, Preston, Laliberte and Mulholland were opposed. Amended motion passes 19 in favor, 4 opposed.

Rep. Williams moved to call the question on his original budget motion which was seconded by Rep. Ward. All were in favor.

The motion is: to appropriate \$32,522,390 for Fiscal year 2010 budget of which \$17,785,749 is to be raised by taxes.

All were in favor. Budget passes 23 to 0

Rep. Preston moved to authorize borrowing up to \$9M in anticipation of taxes which was seconded by Rep. Williams. All were in favor. Motion passes.

Rep. Laliberte moved to expend \$4,861 from the Register of Deeds Surcharge Account for equipment in the Registry which was seconded by Rep. Aguiar. All were in favor. Motion passes.

Rep. Aguiar moved to contribute \$64,511 from the Dispatch Fees for fiscal year 2010 to the Dispatch Capital Reserve Fund, which was seconded by Rep. Gionet. All were in favor. Motion passes

Rep. Williams moved to expend \$4500 from Dispatch Capital Reserve for the purchase of a voicemail system, which was seconded by Rep. Ward.

Director Andross spoke to the motion saying that the current voicemail system in the administration area has gone down and needs to be replaced. After some discussion the vote was taken.

In the vote to expend \$4500 from Dispatch Capital Reserve for a new voicemail system, all were in favor. Motion passes.

Rep. Aguiar made a motion that beginning in the 2011 budget year, the Commissioners of Grafton County shall terminate the practice of providing "longevity" payment to all elected officials of Grafton County. The authority and responsibility of establishing compensation for Grafton County elected officials rests solely with the delegation, which was seconded by Rep. Pierce.

Rep. Aguiar said that he has disapproved of giving longevity to elected officials saying that the delegation should be the ones who determine their salary. He said his personal opinion is that the County cease all longevity but this motion speaks only to full time elected officials.

Rep. Pierce asked about the worth of health and other benefits and Rep. Aguiar said that was not part of this current motion.

Rep. Williams said that the delegation votes on the elected officials salaries but then longevity is added in later by the Commissioners. He said the amount should be voted on as a whole.

Rep. Aguiar said this deals with 2011 and forward and does not take this budget into consideration. He wants to make it clear that the Commissioners do not have the authority to give elected officials longevity.

While discussion the elected officials, Commissioner Cryans informed everyone that the summary judgment regarding the elected official's salary has been decided and the County has prevailed. He said that the salary decision is applicable.

Commissioner Cryans also noted that he feels that longevity is valid and has been in place for quite some time.

Rep. Aguiar said he is trying to determine who has the authority to decide on this.

Rep. Ingretson made a friendly amendment to eliminate a portion of the motion, perhaps making it a bit clearer.

Amended motion would read:

Beginning in the 2011 budget year, the authority and responsibility of establishing any longevity payments for Grafton County elected officials shall rest solely with the delegation. Rep. Aguiar agreed.

There was some further discussion and clarification of the motion and its intent.

Rep. Williams moved to call the question, which was seconded by Rep. Ward. All were in favor.

In the vote to leave the responsibility establishing any longevity for elected officials to the delegation, Reps. Bulis, Taylor, Gionet., Ford, Ladd, Ingretson, Aguiar, Friedrich, Cooney, Smith, Maybeck, Williams, Preston, Benn, Pastor-Bodmer, Pierce, Mulholland, Almy, and Harding were in favor. Reps. Ward, Laliberte, White and Gould were opposed. Motion passes 19 to 4.

12:35 PM With no further business, Rep. Williams moved to adjourn and was seconded by Rep. Ward. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Phil Preston, Clerk