

Special Meeting of the
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners
January 5, 2011
Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH
Minutes of the Public and Non-Public Session
(Not Official Until Approved by the Board and signed by the Clerk.)

The Commissioners participated in a ceremony presided over by the Honorable Richard E. Galway during which they took their Oath of Office. Following the ceremony the Board met to organize for the term.

Present: Comm. S. Ziehm, Comm. C. Holden, Comm. T. Pappas, C. Kirby, D. Reidy, E. Robinson, M. Castonguay, G. Wenger, and L. Stonner.

Also Present: Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wenger called the initial meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 9:10 a.m.

2. Pledge to the Flag

Comm. Ziehm was welcomed to the Board and led the Pledge to the Flag.

3. Board Organization

Mr. Wenger explained that the first order of business under RSA 28:1 is for the Board to choose a Chairperson and a Clerk. He called for nominations.

Motion: To nominate Comm. S. Ziehm as Chairman for the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners. By Comm. C. Holden, second by Comm. T. Pappas.

Mr. Wenger asked if there were any other nominations, questions or comments; hearing no further nominations, he asked for a vote.

Motion carried.

Mr. Wenger welcomed S. Ziehm as the new Chairperson and turned the meeting over to her. Commissioners Pappas and Holden congratulated her. Comm. Holden presented Comm. Ziehm with a NACO publication, "The Right Way to Run a Meeting – A Handy Reference for County Officials." Comm. Ziehm expressed her thanks and explained that she is looking forward to working with both Commissioners as a team.

Mr. Wenger informed the Board that the statute also requires that the Board choose a Clerk; he noted that the custom has been to choose a Vice-Chair and Clerk, but it is his understanding that the Board is not required to choose a Vice-Chair; as the statute only refers to a Chair and a Clerk.

Motion: Comm. Holden nominated Comm. Pappas as Clerk. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Motion: Comm. Pappas nominated Comm. Holden as Clerk. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Comm. Ziehm polled the Commissioners to understand if either was willing to serve as Clerk. Comm. Holden indicated that a Commissioner has served as both Vice-Chair and Clerk, and in the past, she has served in both

positions. Comm. Pappas indicated that she has served as Clerk many times and would like to take a break; she indicated that she does not believe it is necessary to have a Vice-Chair. She asked Comm. Holden if she would consider being a Vice-Chair and a Clerk. Comm. Holden agreed.

Motion: To nominate Comm. C. Holden as Vice-Chairman and Clerk for the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners. By Comm. T. Pappas, second by Comm. S. Ziehm. Motion carried unanimously.

Comm. Ziehm asked the Board if there were other issues to address. Mr. Wenger noted that an important consideration relates to the Board's schedule. Comm. Ziehm noted that she prefers to have a schedule and asked if the Board had met on certain days. Mr. Wenger provided the Board with a draft schedule consistent with the prior practice of meeting every other Wednesday for its consideration. He explained that the practice has been that the regular meetings of the Board have been every other Wednesday; he noted that the Business Office asks that the Board try to hold its meetings on non-payroll weeks. Discussion ensued.

Comm. Pappas inquired if it is necessary for the Board to meet every two weeks and if it were possible to meet less often. Comm. Ziehm noted that since the other Board members have more experience, she would defer to them regarding that decision. She noted that she attended a recent Executive Committee meeting and the members discussed having fewer meetings, but also noted that there was concern that having less meetings could be difficult because of the need to address transfers and other business. Comm. Holden indicated that she would prefer that the Board continue to meet every two weeks; she noted that the Board could always vote to cancel a second meeting during the month if there was not business to address. Comm. Holden explained that there are many things that must be addressed including grievances, transfers, and many other items of business. She noted that the Board could hold the transfers and address them quarterly, but some transfers are done on an emergency basis and since the Board is not conducting Telephone Polls, it is necessary to hold meetings to address all business. She noted that some time ago, she participated in a meeting that lasted only 15 minutes, but explained that that was an exception, not the norm; other meetings have lasted until 1:00 p.m.

Comm. Ziehm asked Mr. Wenger if he had any sentiments to share. Mr. Wenger noted that he agrees with some of the points made by Comm. Holden. He explained that while the regular meetings can be scheduled, there are occasions when the Board will have to hold special meetings; an example would be when a Chemical Worker's grievance has been filed; the Board is required to hear a grievance within 14 days of the Board's receipt of the grievance per the contract. He noted that during the budget process it will be necessary for the Board to meet a number of times, so it may not be necessary to hold 2 so called regular meetings during that time. Mr. Wenger expressed his belief that it is important to let the Administrators know what the Board's practice will be so that they can be prepared to transact business. Mr. Wenger offered that from a Business Office standpoint, if the Board chooses to meet every 3 weeks or once a month, it would be important for the Business Office to have an understanding that it can make its payments, and that payroll would be issued in a timely manner, subject to the Board's approval at its next meeting.

Comm. Ziehm explained that she will certainly go with the consensus, but has an issue regarding transfers. She noted that she would like to make a motion relative to that. Comm. Holden noted that it is appropriate for her to make a motion, but if she does so, she would need to step down as Chair. Comm. Pappas noted that she is not sure a motion is needed. Comm. Holden suggested that the Board defer this discussion until the next meeting because there are a number of different policies and procedures that would be nice to have in place, and she has a list of items she would like to address at a future meeting. She noted that it would be good to have all the Department Heads and Commissioners know what is going to happen going forward. Mr. Wenger suggested that it would be important for the Department Heads to give their opinions with respect to these issues; they are responsible for running their departments and he is not sure what issues they may need to address. He explained that the Board does not always have control over when the transfers come in because some are presented on an emergency basis. Comm. Ziehm remarked that she understands and offered that circumstances alter cases; she noted that she is not suggesting that anything be cast in stone and that it is

important to be flexible. Mr. Wenger suggested that the Board set its next meeting, at a minimum, and address other scheduling at that time. Discussion ensued and the Board agreed to address meetings for January at this meeting and to defer further scheduling until the next meeting. The Board agreed to continue its 2-week schedule for the month of January.

Motion: To convene a Board meeting on January 12, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

Comm. Pappas asked if the Board wished to set further meetings. Comm. Holden suggested setting two meetings in January and noted that if the Board has not been received feedback from the Department Heads by the meeting on the 12th, it should have adequate information by the January 26th meeting.

Motion: To convene a Board meeting on January 26, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

4. Other Business

Comm. Ziehm remarked that she has an issue that she would like to discuss; she noted that this may not be the time to raise her suggestion and she has no problem moving it forward should the other Commissioners wish her to do so. Comm. Ziehm remarked that she wished to raise her issue at this meeting so that the other Commissioners are informed. She explained that she attended a recent Executive Committee meeting at which time the Committee decided to take a \$20 stipend for the Representative's meeting attendance as opposed to the \$25 stipend that they have been receiving. Comm. Ziehm suggested that the Board needs to consider taking a similar action and noted that she wanted to inform the other Commissioners of her feelings relative to this issue and is open to discussion at this meeting or the next meeting. She suggested that she would like to see the Board reduce its annual remuneration from \$16,500 to \$15,500, making a \$1,000 concession and noted that this would say to the Executive Committee that we are on the same page, and that we are also concerned about the finances of our State, and we are working together.

Comm. Holden informed Comm. Ziehm that she is not ready to move on this issue at this meeting; she explained the process of setting the Commissioners salaries; the salaries of the Commissioners are set by the Blue Ribbon Salary Commission, which meets every two years just prior to elections so that the elected officials (County Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, Register of Deeds and the Commissioners) all know before they run for office what the salary will be. She suggested letting this issue sit for awhile and acknowledged that the Executive Committee did reduce its stipend, but this is the first time she has heard of Commissioners considering it. Comm. Ziehm agreed that it was not necessary to make the decision at this meeting; she noted that the Executive Committee has reduced its stipend by 20%. She observed that she has been told that she might consider waiting until the next Budget, but she sees no reason to do that. She noted that she understands that the Board operates by consensus, but from her perspective, she would like to send a message to the Executive Committee that she is on board with their philosophy.

Comm. Pappas noted that she is in agreement with Comm. Holden and noted that Comm. Holden explained the process very well; the salary is set and cannot be changed by the Board. She noted that it is her belief that the salary that they receive as Commissioners is extremely low for the responsibility that the Commissioners have. She noted that it has not been raised in several years, and there was a time when the Commissioners also received Health Insurance as well as a salary. She further noted that she feels that the Commissioners are not compensated equitably for the work that they do. She offered that the only way to attract quality candidates is to provide a somewhat reasonable salary; she expressed her belief that the person running for office should know what his/her salary is going to be and what he/she can depend on. Comm. Pappas noted that she would be willing to discuss travel or other areas in the budget where the Commissioners receive reimbursement, but that she personally believes that the salary should remain as it is. Comm. Ziehm noted that she is somewhat in agreement with the other Commissioners and noted that she is prepared to give this as much time as necessary;

she noted that there might be a different way to approach this, such as mileage or some other stipend that the Board receives. Comm. Holden noted that she appreciated being informed and concurred that the Board does need to have an open discussion relative to Commissioner wages and expenses. Comm. Holden informed the Board that she was approached by 3 Representatives at different times that favored cutting the Commissioner's salaries; she noted that when approached for the third time, she explained to the Representative that it is the Blue Ribbon Salary Commission that sets the wage, and it can be changed through the Blue Ribbon Salary Commission process.

Comm. Ziehm noted that it is her understanding that any money that is left over in the budget goes into the Surplus line. Comm. Pappas noted that this would still be an individual decision among the three Commissioners. Comm. Ziehm noted that she has great respect for the process; she explained that she believes in democracy in the true sense, and understands that each Commissioner has one vote; she noted that she is accustomed to losing and believes she can do so graciously. Comm. Pappas offered that each of the current Commissioners can make her own decision regarding whether or not she wishes to cut the salary. Comm. Ziehm noted that a Commissioner could agree to cut her salary while the other two may not agree to do so.

Mr. Wenger noted that he has a list of items procedural items he would like the Board to address, but suggested that it may be more appropriate that they be addressed at the next meeting. Comm. Holden noted that she too has a number of items to discuss with the Board. It was agreed that the Board would address any procedural items at its next meeting.

Other Business

Attorney Kirby offered that the Board may wish to choose the rules of order it wishes to follow, such as Robert's Rules of Order. Following a brief discussion, a motion was entertained.

Motion: To adopt Robert's Rules of Order for conducting the Board meetings. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

5. Adjourn:

Comm. Ziehm asked the Board if it wished to address any other business; there being none, a motion to adjourn was entertained.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Signed 1/14/2011

Comm. Carol Holden, Vice-Chairperson/Clerk
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

Date