

Continued Meeting of the  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners  
February 24, 2012  
Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH

Minutes of the Public and Non- Public Session  
**(Not Official Until Approved by the Board and signed by the Clerk.)**

**Present:** Comm. S. Ziehm, Comm. T. Pappas, Comm. C. Holden, J. Hardy, B. Moorehead, M. Castonguay, E. Robinson, G. Wenger, and L. Stonner.

**Opening**

Comm. Ziehm called the meeting to order noting that this meeting was the continuation of the Board's recessed February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

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

The meeting reconvened at 12:14 p.m. following the Executive Committee Meeting that the Commissioners attended along with many Department Heads.

The Board addressed its Budget instruction letter. The Commissioners discussed the Board's goals and its interpretation of the Executive Committee's expectations relative to the budget.

The Board discussed the possibility of using up to 6 million dollars from Surplus to reduce the amount to be raised by taxes; there was concern expressed that to simply level fund the budget would result in having to cut approximately one and one-half million dollars from expenses.

Comm. Pappas expressed her concern, noting that it is the Commissioner's task to make certain that the core responsibilities are met.

Comm. Holden offered that the best thing moving forward would be that the Commissioners are united in what they present. Comm. Ziehm noted that she is concerned about cuts and safety issues and suggested that there is a need to gain the Executive Committee's support through conversation and education; she indicated that she would support a joint work session as proposed by the Executive Committee.

Comm. Holden added that a work session would be fine, but it is important to note that under RSA 24:13, the County Convention in the absence of special Legislative authority, has no power to appoint a committee to act with the County Commissioners in the performance of the duties committed to them. She added that she would want to hear more from the Treasurer relative to investment recommendations first. Comm. Ziehm disagreed and added that at some point in time, the Commissioners are going to have to make an effort to gain the support of the Legislators. She added that she sees no harm in exchanging differences and letting them know why the Commissioners feel they are being unreasonable. Comm. Pappas added that the Board has obligations and laws that it must follow. She commented, "We are obligated to produce a budget that we think is the best budget for the County because that budget could become the default budget so we are obligated to produce the most responsible budget that we possibly can."

Following further discussion, the Board agreed to approve the budget instructions that will be provided to the elected Officials and Department Heads.

**Motion:** To approve the Board of Commissioners budget instructions for FY 2013. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

Mr. Wenger asked for clarification relative to the message the Board is sending to the Departments. He added that it is his understanding that the approach the Board is taking is the same as in past years, which is that the Departments will present their budget recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and then the Board of Commissioners will cut that budget. He noted that the alternative approach that Comm. Ziehm appears to support is to tell Departments that the Board intends to meet a particular goal and if appropriate, the Board will add back into the budget. Comm. Ziehm responded that in her view, if 4 million, or perhaps more, is the most we can use from Surplus, then realistically, that is a target.

Mr. Wenger offered options as to how the Board wishes to proceed. Comm. Ziehm added that she does not favor creating any safety issues. She added that she sees an opportunity to win over the Executive Committee.

Comm. Pappas added that she does not see why the Commissioners doing their job and facing their responsibility is opposing the Legislators. Comm. Holden added that she perceives that as the Board standing its ground. Discussion ensued with a general agreement that the Board has a responsibility to produce a budget and that that budget should be respected.

Sheriff Hardy added that his sense that the Department Heads and elected Officials should approach the budget by describing the essential functions of their departments; he added that his office will make a renewed effort to contact the influential Legislators with an effort to explain the department's goals and to educate them regarding the Department's and the Board's responsibilities. He will also offer Legislators an opportunity to ride along to see what the operations entail.

Comm. Holden added that in order to have a level budget, it will be necessary to find 1.5 million dollars over the current budget to cover increases in insurances and other expenses; additionally, while the Board does not want to raise taxes, the tax rate has gone down the past three years, so she would think that the goal would be to have level taxes, which could be done with an approximate 1% increase in the amount to be collected in taxes. She added that she has visited Selectmen's meetings throughout the County and they are happy; she stressed that they won't be happy if the County does not provide the services.

Mr. Moorehead informed the Board that the only area where he could make significant cuts would be cutting aide positions; a cut of 1 million dollars to the Nursing Home would result in the equivalent of 33 aides being laid off; he noted that laying off higher paid employees would not work because of bumping rights.

There was discussion relative to using Surplus in the short term and long term. Mr. Wenger added that in the long term, there are revenue sources that include developing the County property and programs.

There was a consensus that the safety and security of personnel and residents is a priority as well as meeting the Board's core responsibilities.

Sheriff Hardy stressed that it is critical to look at the services the County is required to provide and the impacts of any cuts.

#### Administrative Reorganization

Comm. Holden indicated that she would like the Board to address the Administrative reorganization and offered a motion.

**Motion:** To direct Mr. Wenger to proceed with the development of a plan to consolidate and reorganize the Administrative operations and functions that fall under the direction of the Board with the objective of identifying efficiencies and cost savings and further to request that an outline of the plan be presented to the Board at its March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting prior to the submission of the Department budget recommendations. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas.

Discussion ensued relative to the plan.

Motion carried.

Sheriff Hardy added that his Department has specific fiscal responsibilities and requested that if a reorganization is going to affect the operations of the Sheriff's Department, he would want to have a full opportunity to discuss this with the decision makers and to have any administrative proposal fully vetted.

Discussion ensued relative to a reorganization and whether there was time for the proposal to be fully considered prior to the budget submission deadline. The Board discussed its meeting schedule; currently the next Board meeting is scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup>, followed by another meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>. The Board agreed to move its March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to March 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

The Board discussed the voluminous amount of mail it is receiving from a religious organization. Mr. Wenger will look for options to address the mail.

Without objection, the meeting adjourned.

*Approved on 3/14/2012*

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Comm. Carol Holden, Clerk and Vice-Chair  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

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Date