

**Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners
FY2010 Budget Review Meeting**

April 6, 2009

Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH

Minutes of the Public Session

(Not Official Until Approved by the Board and signed by the Clerk.)

Present: Comm. T. Pappas, Comm. C. Holden, Comm. M. Clemons, J. Hardy, L. Movsesian, M. Pilotte, C. Beaulac, S. Chidavaenzi, J. Dimick, A. Durette, C. Kirby, M. Lencki, C. Roach, M. Rusch, E. Therrien, M. Wageling, G. Wenger, and L. Stonner.

Comm. Pappas welcomed those present and entertained a motion to come out of recess.

Motion: To come out of recess. By Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Clemons. Motion carried

The Board moved out of recess at 9:02 a.m.

Comm. Pappas informed those present that the Board would like to hear an overview of their Department's budget, followed by more detail relative to any significant changes.

County Attorney M. Wageling reviewed her Department's budget, noting that the only significant change facing her Department is the proposed Courthouse move to Nashua, and how that would impact her office and staff. There was discussion that the step level increases have been eliminated with the exception of the upper level professional legal staff. Attorney Wageling indicated that her funding for the HIDTA Drug Prosecutor (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area) is running out in September; she noted that she is actively pursuing funding jointly with the Police Department through a Byrne grant. The position has been funded at 25% by the County, and 75% by the grant. She explained that this position has been partially federally funded since the '90s, and further noted that this prosecutor handles hundreds of cases each year. She is hopeful that she will find funding by the end of this budget process. Comm. Holden noted that this is an example of momentum spending-you get the grant and then when the grant runs out, it is still in the budget. Comm. Holden suggested that it might be wise to fund it for the first three months of the new budget and to put the remaining nine months in Contingency, and then when/if the funding comes through; the funds can be easily transferred. Attorney Wageling noted that she will make as strong a case as possible to keep that position because the level of case load that that attorney carries is monumental in comparison to the other attorneys; he handles hundreds of cases per year. In response to a question from Comm. Clemons, Attorney Wageling responded that it is her belief that this attorney provides an essential service for the County Attorney's office.

Attorney Wageling informed the Board that three sexually violent predators are due to be released in the near future because statutes were not followed that required the Court to find, or not find probable cause within ten days of filing; it also requires that a trial be scheduled within the 60-day time period of the filing of a petition. She noted that some of the language in the statute is unclear; there is pending legislation to attempt to clarify that. She explained that in three of five cases she was involved with, the Superior Court did not follow the statute, and the Supreme Court indicated that that is a jurisdictional flaw. She further noted that one of the defendants was released the previous Friday; she has two other cases that will follow the same direction because

of the Court's failure to schedule these cases and find probable cause. She noted that she has asked the Court to follow the Statute and indicated that this is a wake-up call for the Superior Court.

Attorney Wageling reviewed the remainder of her Department's budget and noted that the Re-Entry program is fully funded by the Federal Government. Attorney Wageling noted that her budget also includes expenses that relate to the Court's move to Nashua.

Attorney Wageling informed the Board that Hillsborough County's attorneys process over 200 cases a year, more than twice that of many other Counties. M. Wageling thanked the Board for its consideration of the County Attorney's budget.

The Board next welcomed the Delegation Representatives and Coordinator. The Board reviewed the Delegation budget; Comm. Holden inquired if there were any areas where budget cuts could be made, including changing the annual conference to a one day event, and reducing travel. There was a discussion related to having \$5,000 remain in the Board of Commissioner's budget for its own legal expense with a difference of opinion related to this issue. The Delegation representative was of the opinion that the County's legal Counsel could handle any legal issues on the Board's behalf, while Comm. Holden expressed her belief that there should be funds in the Commissioner's budget for its own legal services, independent of the County's legal Counsel. Delegation representatives expressed their belief that the County has competent legal Counsel that can act on behalf of the Board.

Mr. Wenger informed the Board that the Registry of Deeds' 7020 line needs to be adjusted to reflect the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Salary commission, and the Delegation.

Motion: To reduce the Register of Deeds, Elected Officials Line 4193-7020, from \$57,650 to \$56,100, as approved by the Blue Ribbon Salary Commission and the Delegation, a reduction of \$1,550,. By Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Clemons. Motion carried

The Board reviewed its budget, and considered possible reductions. Comm. Clemons noted that the Commissioners understand the importance of attending annual conferences to become educated, yet the taxpayers may not share the Board's opinion.

Referring to the earlier discussion, Comm. Holden noted that anytime the Board feels the need for its own legal counsel, it must go to the Delegation and request a transfer. She indicated that she favored having \$5,000 in the Commissioner's budget for Legal Expense. Discussion ensued.

Motion: To reduce the County Commissioner's Legal Expense, line 4130-7200, from \$5,000 to \$1. By Comm. Clemons, second by Comm. Pappas. Commissioners Clemons and Pappas voted in favor of the motion; Comm. Holden voted against the motion. Motion Carried.

The Board held further discussion relative to counsel. Comm. Holden noted that a statute passed in 1975 provides the Commissioners with the express legal authority to hire counsel, provided that they remain within the limit of the appropriation, and provided that they are retained to advise on County affairs.

Comm. Clemons asked about details for the Consulting expense, to which Mr. Wenger responded that this expense relates primarily to negotiations, and that there are several contracts pending. He further noted that toward the end of the budget process, that line might be able to be reduced if some of the contracts are settled. There was discussion about taking two (of three) phones from the Commissioner's offices, and to provide \$30/month per commissioner to reimburse some of the cost of the Commissioner's personal cell phone expense when the personal phone is being used to conduct County business. Commissioners Pappas and Holden noted that they do incur expense for using personal cell phones for County business. Comm. Clemons indicated that his plan covers unlimited national calling. The Commissioners favored level funding the Telephone expense line, noting that it will likely cover the reimbursement.

Motion: To level fund County Commissioner's line 4130-7680 by reducing line 7680 from \$1,800 to \$1,200. By Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Clemons. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed its travel and made the following motions:

Motion: To reduce County Commissioner's District Travel for District 2, line 4130-7702, from \$4,280 to \$4,000. By Comm. Clemons, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

Motion: To reduce County Commissioner's District Travel for District 1, line 4130-7701, from \$1,780 to \$1,500. By Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

Motion: To reduce County Commissioner's District Travel for District 3, line 4130-7703, from \$4,680 to \$4,500. By Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Clemons. Motion carried.

Comm. Pappas welcomed staff from the Sheriff's Office, and asked for an overview of their budget. Sheriff Hardy indicated that increases in the salary line includes increases that are contractual monies for the affiliated employees, but are level funded for the non-affiliated employees, as has been the past practice. Sheriff Hardy explained that a vacancy recently occurred. The Deputy holding that position had a salary of approximately \$60,000, but the person hired to replace him will start at the entry level salary, so there will be a savings there.

Comm. Clemons indicated that he wished to send a message to the Delegation and to express his belief that the line 7020, salaries for the elected officials, should be raised, noting that he feels that line 7020 is too low for the Sheriff's office, for the County Attorney and the Register of Deeds. He commented that in some cases, the elected official is earning less than one of his/her employees. Comm. Clemons noted that he wishes to send this message to the Delegation, and have it on the record.

Sheriff Hardy informed the Board that his Department is experiencing an increase in civil processing, and a resulting increase in the workload that is concurrent with the existing economy; that increased workload also affects increased office supplies, postage, and other lines.

Chief Deputy Sheriff Durette explained that there will be a cost involved with moving/acquiring communications equipment related to the Court's move to Nashua. He noted that the burden for moving the radio equipment will be shared with others who rely on the use of the equipment. He informed the Board that other than four vehicles, the major increase in the New Equipment line 7970 is the purchase of 32 Tasers at a cost of \$21,600.

There was discussion about the use of Tasers, and Sheriff Hardy expressed his opinion that while there are public perception issues with the Tasers, the Tasers would better protect an officer because it prevents the officer from having to engage in an altercation with a person who may be high on drugs or intoxicated on alcohol. He noted that the pepper spray can be effective; however, it is difficult to use it outside because the wind may carry the spray into the officer's face. Sheriff Hardy noted that he considers the Taser a valuable weapon as long as it is utilized following the appropriate guidelines and protocols, and is not abused. He explained that officers using the Taser are required to obtain certification and maintain credentials for Taser use as well as for firearm and OC (pepper) spray. The Commissioners asked questions relative to the use of OC spray versus the Taser. Sheriff Hardy explained that officers are trained to use an appropriate level of force that is directly related to the level of resistance. Sheriff Hardy offered to provide more information, and a presentation to the Board if it so desired.

Comm. Holden asked which vehicles are being replaced; to which the Sheriff responded that he will provide a list of all vehicles with their corresponding mileage. Comm. Clemons asked why those particular vehicles are being chosen, and the Sheriff provided that information. Chief Deputy Sheriff Durette informed the Board that the cost of providing a Bailiff for covering nights and weekends is not covered by the State, so this is an additional expense.

Sheriff Hardy thanked the Board for its consideration of the County Sheriff's Office budget.

The Board discussed the Business Office budget with Mr. Wenger. Mr. Wenger informed the Board that in the Business Office, a position changed from full time to part time resulting in a reduction. He noted that there are two part time positions; one position is for 25 Hours, the other for 32 hours. He also suggested reducing Overtime and Outside Wages. He noted that Retirement System contributions will be reduced because there is one less Retirement System-eligible full time employee.

Mr. Wenger noted that the Audit expense line has changed because the government standards have changed that affect the tracking of contributions to the retirement system and health system, further noting that this information will be needed by the auditor. He estimated that the expense for meeting these government standards will be approximately \$15,000, and will include the services of an actuary.

Comm. Holden asked if the Business Office has a scanner or color printer, to which Mr. Wenger responded that the office does not have a scanner, and currently it can access a scanner in the CIS office, and the only color printer is the old home-type printer in his office. She suggested that the Business Office consider purchasing one. There was discussion relative to the merits of purchasing a color printer. Comm. Holden asked Mr. Wenger to look into the cost of a color printer for the Board, noting that it could also be used by other departments.

Mr. Wenger addressed the Human Resources budget, and noted that the only significant change in the Department is that Human Resources has taken over the responsibility of recruiting and testing for the Department of Corrections. Mr. Wenger noted that the recruitment and testing has increased the Office Supplies and Printing & Binding expense of this Department. He further noted that the Human Resources Advertising budget is down because the Department is now placing most of its jobs postings on the "JobsinNH.com" website.

Mr. Wenger spoke about the Health Insurance costs, noting that he is hoping for a further decrease in premium; he recommended a commitment to four training programs this year, which will result in the County realizing an additional 1% savings in its Health Insurance premium. There was discussion about having Primex come in and talk with the Board relative to the trends they see.

Mr. Wenger addressed the County Debt line and recommended that it be funded at \$1.

Mr. Wenger addressed the lease with the State for the Court and noted that there is a request from the State to extend the lease through March of 2010. He noted that he left the funding at \$55,000 because he expects that even if the Court were to move early, it is expected that the County will be paying rent at another location.

Mr. Wenger explained that he left the \$800,000 in the Manchester Courthouse line Buildings line 7960 in anticipation of the move; however, he noted that this might be high, noting that it represents a build-out cost of 8,000 square feet at \$100/sq.ft.

Comm. Clemons mentioned a building with parking across from the Registry of Deeds that is for rent. Mr. Wenger responded that he will look at that building.

Mr. Roach reviewed the Computer Information Systems (CIS) budget. Mr. Wenger explained that all requests for computers, software, licenses, etc. for all Departments have been included in the CIS Department. He noted that the staffing in the Department remains the same.

Mr. Wenger noted that the County buys blocks of time for training in advance, and uses the training in a timely manner; Other Fees & Services includes consulting services. Mr. Wenger explained that the Data Processing line includes the contracts for annual maintenance agreements in the different Departments that allow the County to remain current and keep software up to date. Mr. Wenger also explained that licenses and anti-viral software need to be renewed each year for the programs that are running in the County.

Mr. Wenger noted that the New Software line is up significantly; the majority of that increase relates to the Nursing Home's request related to government mandated paperless record keeping. The request includes additional software licenses, new Laptop PC's, New Care Tracker Program & Training and licenses for add-ons.

Mr. Wenger reviewed other lines, noting that a postage line has been added for the CIS Department; he also reviewed other CIS lines. Mr. Roach informed the Board that when computers are outdated, the hard drives are removed and destroyed. Mr. Wenger noted that monitors are considered hazardous waste, and the County wants to maintain a record of having properly disposed of its property.

Mr. Wenger explained that the Equipment Rental line has decreased because the County now owns most of its own equipment. Comm. Holden inquired about the cost of a good color printer, to which Mr. Roach responded that it would be approximately \$500.

Mr. Lencki and Ms. Chidavaenzi explained that the Nursing Home is federally mandated to be paperless in its operation by 2011. Ms. Chidavaenzi explained that she has looked at the impact of going paperless, and noted that the Nursing Home will utilize DocStar for scanning all records. She noted that computers at the kiosks can be converted immediately, as well as

laptops that can be taken throughout the facility as well as by laptops for Rehab staff for their use when doing treatment so that they can document patient care as it is happening. Also, a laptop is needed for a nurse liaison offsite. Ms. Chidavaenzi noted that there is a grand plan for the conversion to paperless recordkeeping, and it will be done in steps, including training for staff as the projects moves forward. Comm. Holden inquired about the entire cost of the project, noting that this request addresses only the first year. Mr. Lencki estimated that the cost that has been presented is approximately half the cost of the entire project.

Comm. Clemons inquired about how involved the CIS Department will be, to which Mr. Lencki responded that it would be involved with Hardware needs. Comm. Clemons inquired if the software would be compatible County-wide. Ms. Chidavaenzi responded that it will be compatible with Orcus. Comm. Clemons asked if there were any issues with the plan. Mr. Wenger responded the plan has to go hand-in-hand with the County's network; he noted that anytime anything is added to the network, it puts a drain on the network. He noted that it has to be integrated, and noted that he would like to see the overall plan because it is the CIS Department's obligation to see what impact it will have on the rest of the County's operation. Mr. Wenger noted that he is concerned that the CIS Department be kept in the information loop from the beginning so that it can address the issues with respect to network integration. He noted that for the first time, there will be an individual offsite who will have access to the County's network; there are security issues and other issues that have to be addressed from the beginning. He noted that there are no issues with respect to what the Nursing Home has to do, but there are concerns with respect to how we execute the project. He noted that there has to be communication with respect to the plan, and he stressed the importance of allowing enough funding for the training that will be needed.

Comm. Clemons asked if this should go out to bid. Ms. Chidavaenzi and Mr. Lencki assured the Commissioner that the Care Tracker is the system used by many facilities, it works with Orcus. They noted that the Nursing Home would follow the County bidding process. Ms. Chidavaenzi noted that it is her plan that the project be phased in over time so that an assessment can be made relative to how much training is required; this plan will allow them to see how staff reacts to the changes.

Ms. Chidavaenzi and Mr. Lencki thanked the Board for its consideration and discussion of the Nursing Home budget; they excused themselves from the meeting.

Mr. Wenger informed the Board that this is a huge project for the Nursing Home, and there are many employees who will need to be trained to use the computer; he noted that training is a major component of the project. He noted that communication has improved, and there seems to be an understanding of the importance of working together with the CIS Department. He mentioned that the Nursing Home is requesting three laptops now, but they won't work because there is a problem with connectivity. Before the wireless computers will work, wireless connections must be established, and there are many issues there with brick walls and areas where wireless will not work. This issue must be overcome first, and it can be done.

Comm. Holden noted that if the County does share in any stimulus money, it should probably be put in a Capital Reserve Account, and not be spent immediately, and that it can be spent for a project such as the Nursing Home project.

Mr. Wenger noted that there should be more research done relative to the cost of the entire project. He recommended that consideration be given to bidding the entire project so there will be one vendor and so the County will have the whole picture.

There was no further business before the Board.

Motion: To recess the meeting. By Comm. Clemons, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed at 12:45 p.m.

(SIGNED 6/10/2009)

Comm. Michael Clemons, Clerk
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

Date