

Budget Meeting of the  
**Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners**  
**April 6, 2015**

Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH

**Minutes of the Public Session**

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

**Present:** Comm. Pappas, Comm. Holden, Comm. Ziehm, J. Hardy, Rep. D. Hogan, L. Gagne, P. Boardman, G. Fisher, C. Beaulac, C. Kirby, L. Vallee, D. Reidy, K. Rickrode, M. Castonguay, G. Wenger, and L. Stonner.

**Also present:** C. Hardy and R. Noonan from the Conservation District Board of Directors

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting convened at 9:10 a.m. Sheriff Hardy led the pledge to the flag.

Mr. Wenger provided an overview of the proposed FY2016 Budget. He explained that:

- the Department's Budget Requests for FY 2016 have resulted in a FY 2016 budget of \$92,267,788
- it is an increase over FY 2015 of \$3,569,270
- there is a 1% increase in the Budget equals \$886,985
- the FY 2016 Budget represents a 4.02% increase in the total Budget
- the Undesignated Fund Balance in the General Fund started this Fiscal Year at \$2,811,555, which represents 3.17%
- the Budget presented to the Board today does not include any use of Surplus (Undesignated Fund Balance)
- the amount to be raised by taxes for FY 2016 is \$53,570,484, which is an increase of \$5,496,334 over FY 2015
- a 1% increase in the amount to be raised by taxes equates to \$480,741
- the FY2016 budget presented to the Board, as it now stands, starts with a tax increase of 11.43%
- as an example, if the FY2015 budgeted Surplus of \$2,811,555 was used in the FY 2016 budget, it would reduce the amount to be raised by taxes by 5.85%; however, it is not a recommendation

Significant contributing factors to the Budget Requests and the increase in the budget include:

- the one-time expense of a 27<sup>th</sup> pay period for this year; which equates to \$1,081,605 increase in line 7010 Salaries & Wages
- line 7100 Social Security (7.65%) increase of \$82,743 related to the 27<sup>th</sup> pay
- line 0130 Retirement (Estimated @ 11.7%) increase of \$120,816

The aforementioned increases for the 27<sup>th</sup> pay equal \$1,285,164

Additional increases:

- Line 7120, Health & Accident Insurance increase (at a not-to-exceed amount) of 8.2%, which equals \$609,433
- Human Services Legislative Downshift \$720,928

Mr. Wenger explained that the aforementioned items are the major contributors to the increase in the FY 2016 Budget. He also provided the following breakdown:

Budget Request:	\$92,267,788
Employee Cost	\$48,645,147 (52.72% of budget)
Human Services	\$32,441,003 (35.16% of budget)
Operating Costs	\$11,181,638 (12.2 % of budget)

Mr. Wenger noted that the Human Services budget has increased by \$720,000 over the current year's budget; Health & Accident has increased by \$609,000 and the one-time payment of the 27<sup>th</sup> pay period adds 1.2 million dollars; these items together add 2.5 million dollars.

In response to a question from Comm. Pappas relative to the increase in the Salaries & Wages line, Mr. Wenger explained that there are no wage increases in the budget with the exception of the County Attorney's office step increases; the County is negotiating six bargaining agreements that currently do not include wage increases.

Mr. Wenger noted that there are no wage increases included for the non-affiliated employees at this point. He explained that the wage increases in the budget include performance increases from FY 2015 that were budgeted for part of the year; those increases will be budgeted for a full 12 months in 2016; there is also the cost of the 27<sup>th</sup> pay.

### **Sheriff's Department**

Comm. Ziehm recognized Sheriff Hardy. Sheriff Hardy explained that the extra pay period for his office increases his Department's Salaries & Wages line by \$73,668. Sheriff Hardy added that his department needs to look at what it pays its part-time non-affiliated employees, whether they are in the Communications Center or on the road working as a Deputy Sheriffs to back-fill the operations. He added that while they have received the increases that the non-affiliated employees receive, it is difficult to find part-time employees at the rate the County offers in the Communication Center and it is becoming more difficult to acquire part-time staff for the Deputies who are out on the road.

Sheriff Hardy reviewed other lines in his budget; he noted that his budget includes 2 new Ford Interceptors under the New Equipment line and added that the department has 4 vehicles to be sold at auction. He communicated that his vehicle inventory includes the annual cost of auto repairs by vehicle for the Board's information.

There was discussion about the Drug Asset Forfeiture line and how that budget line is set based on estimated revenue from pending or future cases. In response to a question from Comm. Ziehm as to whether Drug Asset Forfeiture funds could be used to purchase the 2 requested vehicles, Mr. Wenger explained that there are strict guidelines for expending those funds; he noted that Drug Asset Forfeiture funds cannot be used to supplement the Sheriff's Department regular budget items, and the vehicles included in the regular budget do not meet the guidelines. Comm. Ziehm asked to see more information relative to this line.

Sheriff Hardy discussed how the Superior Court Bailiff's could be impacted by the Affordable Care Act. Comm. Holden added that it continues to be her belief that the County should not be responsible for paying \$15 of the daily wage for Superior Court Bailiffs; she believes that the State should be responsible for paying the full daily rate of \$80. Comm. Holden offered that perhaps it is time for the County to stop paying the \$15/day. Sheriff Hardy noted that taking such action would create issues because the State Court Officers who are frequently in the same building are receiving \$92/day.

Sheriff Hardy addressed Revenue for his department; he noted that he will be coming back to the Board with recommendations for the dispatch fee that is charged to the Towns that utilized the department's Dispatch Center.

Rep. Gagne joined the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Sheriff Hardy thanked the Board for its attention to his budget; he and his staff excused themselves and left the meeting.

Attorney Kirby joined the meeting at 11:12 a.m.

## County Convention

Mrs. Castonguay reviewed the County Convention budget lines. Mr. Wenger again provided an overview of the budget for Rep. Gagne who asked about the Salary & Wages line. Mr. Wenger explained how the 27<sup>th</sup> pay period and other increases affected the budget.

Rep. Gagne thanked everyone for the information provided; he excused himself and left the meeting. Attorney Kirby also left the meeting.

The Board moved into Recess at 10:32.

**Motion:** To move into Recess. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

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

The meeting reconvened at 10:44 a.m.

## UNH Cooperative Extension

Mr. Reidy joined the meeting to review the UNH Cooperative Extension Budget. He thanked the Board for its past support and provided an overview of the operation. He explained that the County's budget for Co-op Extension has only one line; that line, 7290 Other Fees & Services is budgeted at 379,522; he noted that it represents an increase in the FY 2016 budget of 1.6% based on the Consumer Price Index. Mr. Reidy observed that the current budget is \$70,000 less than it was in 1965. The department has a dozen staff and 4 staff in the Education Center in addition to many Master Gardener volunteers. Mr. Reidy explained that the Revenue for his department is made up of:

- 27% from grants
- 42% from the State through the University of New Hampshire
- 15% from Hillsborough County
- 2% from gifts
- 3% from fees

## Conservation District

Comm. Ziehm noted that the Board is running ahead of schedule. Mr. C. Hardy addressed the Board regarding the Conservation District budget. He explained that the Hillsborough County Conservation District partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide its services. He explained that some of the programs and workshops the Conservation District has conducted this past year include:

- a Soils Field Day for engineers, towns, and supervisors that addressed the proper way to do septic systems and work with soils
- a Pollenizer Habitat workshop for farmers and other interested people
- working with Food Hubs and collecting excess food for a feeding program
- trapping and scouting for an invasive species that affects strawberries & raspberries and other berries
- soil health workshop for farmers working on new types of tillage in combination with a soil nutrient management workshop that addressed a reduction in the use of chemicals that could get into the ground water

Mr. Hardy added that the Conservation District is always active doing soil samples and soil surveys.

Mr. Hardy explained that the five members of the Board of Supervisors are all volunteers; the only employee is the Conservation District Manager.

Ms. Rickrode explained that her departments workload has increased over the past couple years as well as being able to take on more dynamic projects. She added that they are seeking more grants, which in turn provides more funding to provide more workshops to help some of the Towns and farmers in the County.

Ms. Rickrode provided a copy of the Conservation District Annual Report. In response to a question from Comm. Ziehm, Ms. Rickrode explained that she works with five regular board members and one associate member. Board meetings are held monthly at which time she reviews the monthly operations; the Board provides input and direction.

Mr. Hardy noted that annually there is a meeting that includes people in agriculture and forestry, at which time they set the priorities for programs that the County needs for the coming year.

In response to a question regarding this year's heavy volume of snow, Mr. Hardy responded that it is good in that as far as agriculture is concerned it will build up the water table and reserves; it is good for blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries because it provides a lot of extra insulation, but it postponed pruning.

Mr. Noonan joined the meeting. It was noted that he was not late, but that the Conservation District's budget was heard ahead of time.

The Board thanked the folks from the Conservation District; they excused themselves and left the meeting.

### **Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance**

Mr. Wenger presented Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance (COAF) budget. He noted that the Salary & Wages line is based on current staffing but added that there will be a significant change in the department with an unanticipated retirement; therefore, he will be coming back to the Board with a proposal to address that change. He added that there are six full-time and 2 part-time employees. He remarked that the department was in the midst of filling the Account Clerk position, but has put that on hold until he is able to address the change in the department. Mr. Wenger went on to explain that he is requesting that \$1 be added to the Overtime line and \$1 be added to the Outside wages line.

Mr. Wenger reviewed the Salary & Wages line as well as the related lines. He went on to further review other lines in the COAF budget including Education & Conference and explained how that line is used for staff training.

Mr. Wenger noted that Legal Expenses is budgeted at \$1. Comm. Holden indicated that she would like to see \$1,000 in that line in the COAF budget. Comm. Pappas indicated that she would be comfortable in assuming that money could be transferred from County Convention, if needed. Discussion ensued; no action was taken.

Mr. Wenger reviewed the Auditing line and noted that there will be a separate GASB 45 audit in addition to the regular audit. The additional funding will provide the funds for the separate audit and will keep the County in compliance and avoid any flags or deficiencies.

Mr. Wenger explained that the Consulting line includes the work Mr. Lunsford does in overseeing the County's benefit package and the expense of a person to handle negotiations.

Mr. Wenger communicated that the Grants line includes \$500,000 for the CDBG Grant for the YMCA and \$200 for criminal background checks.

The Board discussed the Out of State Travel like and the possibility of increasing that line; Comm. Pappas noted that the County benefits when Commissioners are able to go to conferences and to Washington, DC to meet with Senators and Representatives relative to programs that benefit the County. The Board agreed to revisit the line.

The Board held a discussion about what the Drug Asset Forfeiture funds can be used for. Mr. Wenger explained that the Sheriff's Department has proposed the purchase of two vehicles. Mr. Wenger added that it is his understanding that Hillsborough County and the Commissioners have much more oversight of the Drug Asset Forfeiture funds and the Executive Committee has more involvement in the expenditure of those funds than Cities and Towns have. The law (by NH Statute) outlines that no money can be spent in Hillsborough County unless it is appropriated by the County Delegation; which means that it has to go through the County's budget at the Board of Commissioner's level and at the Delegation level; he added that this process provides greater oversight than Police Departments, for example.

Mr. Wenger added that over the years, there have been less vehicles funded; the Sheriff's Vehicle inventory has become older and it has fallen behind in replacements. He added that the request for two vehicles is the lowest request he has seen from the Sheriff's Department in 14 years.

Mr. Wenger outlined the remaining requirements related to the CDBG Grant for the YMCA. He added that he is waiting for the Grant documents, and once received, he will develop a MOU.

### **County Attorney's Office**

Comm. Ziehm welcomed County Attorney Hogan, P. Boardman, and L. Vallee who represented the County Attorney's Office.

Attorney Hogan reviewed the County Attorney's Office budget and explained that with the exception of Salaries & Wages and related roll-ups, the remainder of his budget decreased by approximately one-half percent. He explained that the Extradition Expense is a reasonable estimate, adding that it impossible to accurately predict the number of extraditions.

Attorney Hogan informed the Board that the law has changed relative to when the Police Departments bring in a suspect for questioning, and a file is created. He explained that now the law requires that the entire process be recorded and later transcribed; he noted that process has created a large increase in the amount of transcripts that need to be done, adding that his office needs the transcripts for its cases. He added that Manchester is in its budget process and there is a question as to whether it will continue creating the transcripts for the County Attorney's Office. Attorney Hogan explained that if Manchester does not continue providing the transcripts, someone is going to have to do them, and he is concerned that it may fall on his office. He added that when they are dealing with a Sexually Violent Predator, there is a great deal of expert testimony needed, which in turn results in more transcriptions and explains why he has increased the Consulting Fees line.

Mr. Wenger questioned why the Cities would not be doing the transcripts if they have the responsibility for presenting a prosecutable case to the County Attorney's Office.

In response to a question from Comm. Ziehm, Ms. Boardman explained that the Towns rarely do a transcript, unless it is a bigger case, when they might provide one. She noted that frequently the Towns only take notes, but the Cities are more likely to provide them. There was discussion about telling the Cities & Towns that the County is not responsible for the transcripts. Ms. Boardman noted that if even one Sexually Violent Predator case comes in, it would not be unusual to spend \$10,000 and more; the highest case has been \$46,000.

Comm. Ziehm asked if there was any other action before the Board.

**9. ADJOURN**

Lacking further business, Comm. Ziehm entertained a motion to recess. The meeting recessed at 1:07 p.m.

**Motion:**

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

*Approved on June 3, 2015*

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Comm. Toni Pappas, Clerk  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

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Date