

**Budget Meeting of the  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners**  
April 9, 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. Ziehm, Comm. C. Holden, Comm. Pappas, J. Hardy, C. Beaulac, C. Connelly, M. Estey, E. Robinson, G. Wenger, and L. Stonner.

**1. Reconvene the Meeting**

Comm. Ziehm reconvened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Supt. Dionne reviewed his budget and distributed information relative to the previous year's reorganization, noting that 17 positions were affected by reductions; further noting that staff has had to assume more responsibility. He explained that the facility's operating budget has been reduced and the facility is handling more inmates transferred in from other Counties. He remarked that there are 14 inmates who have been charged with murder that require special handling who show no regard for authority or other inmates and therefore there is a real concern for the safety and security of staff and other inmates.

Supt. Dionne added that he is hoping to increase revenue by accepting additional inmate transfers from other facilities and noted that he anticipates more female inmates from Rockingham County.

Supt. Dionne informed the Board that there will be two staff retiring this year. He added that after reviewing the budget, he is able to offer a reduction of \$245,566 and recommend that the DOC budget be level funded to the original FY12 budget amount of \$14,899,363 with no increase. Ms. Montminy provided information regarding the lines affected by the reduction and Commissioners Pappas and Holden offered appropriate motions to implement the changes.

**Motion:** To reduce Department of Corrections line 4230-7010, Salaries & Wages by \$123,979 and to fund the line at \$7,441,899. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

In response to a question from Comm. Ziehm, Supt. Dionne explained that 1 position will be reduced to part-time and 3 full-time positions will be reduced to \$1. Comm. Holden asked what position numbers were involved. Ms. Montminy explained that the following position numbers were changed:

- Position # 401741001 will be reduced from full-time to part-time.
- Position # 801121013 will be reduced from full-time to \$1.
- Position # 800511010 will be reduced from full-time to \$1.
- Position # 800511062 will be reduced from full-time to \$1.

**Motion:** To reduce Department of Corrections line 4230-7100, Social Security, by \$3,092 and to fund the line at \$214,408. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

**Motion:** To reduce Department of Corrections line 4230-7120, Health & Accident, and to fund the line at \$1,902,764. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

**Motion:** To reduce Department of Corrections line 4230-7130, Retirement Contributions, by \$20,828, and to fund the line at \$1,337,272. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

Comm. Holden noted that she will be looking for lines across the County that can be reduced such as Out-of-State Travel, Education & Conference, etc. Supt. Dionne added that the DOC has started having their Correctional Officers do their required pre-certification training through Correspondence Courses when they have time while on duty versus paying them for their time out of the facility for up to 40 hours. He added that this will save money in their time away, as well as in overtime, and travel.

Mr. Wenger requested an opportunity to meet with the Board in Non-Public Session consistent with RSA 91-A:2 I (b) relative to strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

**Motion:** To move into Non-Public Session with M. Montminy, D. Dionne, and G. Wenger consistent with RSA 91-A:2 I (b) relative to strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Ziehm-yes, Pappas-yes, Holden-yes. Motion carried.

The Board moved into Non-Public Session at 9:29 a.m.

The Board met with M. Montminy, D. Dionne, and G. Wenger.

The Board moved out of Non-Public Session at 9:58 a.m.

**Motion:** To move out of Non-Public Session. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

The Board discussed the restructuring of the departments that now make up the Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance; there are now seven full-time positions and one part-time position; additionally, one position went from full-time to a part-time position. Mr. Wenger noted that line 7020 includes the wages of the County Commissioners and the Treasurer, who is paid \$3,625/year. The salaries are determined by the Blue Ribbon Committee, which will make its recommendation to the Executive Committee, and then the Delegation will meet to address the recommendation.

Ms. Castonguay informed the Board that the next Executive Committee meeting is schedule for April 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Board took a brief break.

Comm. Ziehm recognized Register Coughlin. Ms. Coughlin explained that her staff was cut last year from nineteen employees to the current fifteen employees; there is one vacancy at this time. She remarked that it would be difficult to make additional staff cuts in the FY13 budget. She informed the Board that she will be in a better position to make recommendations once the cost analysis of the

Registry is complete. Register Coughlin explained that the Registry has many staff that have long tenure who are entitled to several weeks of vacation; which makes staffing difficult during the summer months. Discussion ensued relative to the Board reviewing the cost analysis before finalizing the budget as well as the possibility of early retirement incentives.

Register Coughlin explained that she is looking for additional reductions in expenses and/or an increase in revenue. She offered a reduction in her Dues & Periodicals line.

**Motion:** To reduce Registry of Deeds line 4193-7370, Dues & Periodicals by \$50, and to fund the line at \$500. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

**Motion:** To increase Registry of Deeds Revenue line 3402 and to fund the line at \$3,300,000. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance budget; discussion ensued relative to several of the lines in the budget and whether there were any lines that could be cut including Travel and Education & Conference. Comm. Ziehm stated that she would like to see the Education & Conference line reduced to \$1,000; she stepped down to offer a motion.

**Motion:** To reduce Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance line 4140-7170, Education & Conference by \$800, with the understanding that her portion of this line will not be used. Motion by Comm. Ziehm.

Discussion ensued; Comm. Holden suggested that the Board look at all Education & Conference and Travel lines County-wide.

Comm. Ziehm withdrew her motion.

The Board discussed several lines in the Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance budget. Discussion ensued relative to membership in NACo and NHAC. Comm. Ziehm stepped down from the Chair to offer a motion.

**Motion:** To eliminate the County's NACo membership. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Comm. Holden requested an opportunity to get feedback from the departments relative to the NACo membership. Further discussion ensued relative to the dues and the merits of membership. Commissioners Holden and Pappas favored continuing the membership. Mr. Wenger offered that County Government interests are protected through NACo membership.

Comm. Ziehm's motion failed for lack of a second.

Following discussion relative to the Travel line, Mr. Wenger noted that Travel has already been reduced in the FY13 budget as a result of the previous year's staff cuts in the Human Services department and the resulting reduction in Travel expenses.

The Board reviewed other lines in its budget including Repair & Maintenance, Equipment Rental, and New Equipment.

**Motion:** To reduce Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance line 4140-7710, Travel-Out of State, by \$600, and to fund the line at \$1,500. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board reviewed other lines in its budget including Repair & Maintenance, Equipment Rental, and New Equipment.

The Board moved into Recess for lunch at 11:42 a.m.

**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 12:50 p.m.

Comm. Ziehm recognized Megan Brady-President, Peter Pike, Richard Plumondin, and Brooke Holten from St. Joseph's Community Services. Ms. Brady thanked the Board for its previous support of the Meals on Wheels program and asked the Board to consider the support for those low income and disabled individuals who desperately need it. She explained that the program provides meals for low income individuals throughout the County. Ms. Brady noted that the program served 521 individuals last year and added that the need this year has increased by 5%. She also informed the Board that funding comes from State and Federal sources as well as fund raisers that they organize and coordinate. Ms. Brady added that the administrative/overhead costs are about 10%. In response to a question from Comm. Holden, Ms. Brady explained that the top two salaries are \$77,812.80 (her salary) and \$66,788.80 (the Vice-President). She explained that the median wage for a President of a similar sized agency is \$87,000, and the high end average is \$93,000. Ms. Brady noted that State funding has been cut and 98% of those that were served by the State are now coming to St. Joseph's Community Services for assistance. A discussion ensued relative to the number of employees and volunteers. Ms. Brady explained that there are 13 full-time staff and approximately 77 part-time employees whose hours vary; she added that 58% of their 62 routes are covered by volunteer drivers.

Ms. Brady cited the costs of providing a meal versus the cost of admitting a person to the County Nursing Home, and explained that their services help keep low income and disabled individuals in their homes longer. She added that any further cuts would put them in a position of having to place people on a waiting list and could represent a huge cost to the County. She explained that the cost of having a person in the Nursing Home for a year is over \$100,000; the cost of providing a person with meals for a year is between \$2,000 and \$3,000.

Comm. Pappas noted her support of the program and offered that she would like to see it funded at \$75,000. Comm. Holden noted that the County has a very tight budget, and added that difficult cuts have to be made.

**Motion:** To reduce Special Projects line 4145-7290, Other Fees and Outside Services by \$15,000, and to fund the line at \$60,000. Motion by Comm. Ziehm, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried with Commissioners Ziehm and Holden voting in favor of the motion and Comm. Pappas voting against the motion.

The Board addressed the County Convention lines; Mrs. Castonguay offered the following reductions:

**Motion:** To reduce County Convention line 4110-7350, Printing & Binding by \$500, and to fund the line at \$3,500. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

Rep. Ullery offered input relative to the Executive Committee's position relative to the budget. He added that there will be a motion and discussion at the Executive Committee level to recommend that Legal Counsel pay her own Bar dues.

**Motion:** To reduce County Convention line 4110-7290, Other Fees & Services by \$350 and to fund the line at \$900. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

Further discussion ensued relative to the County Convention Legal Expense line and the appropriate use of this line for legal advice and/or consultants.

Rep. Ullery informed the Board that there is a strong position among the members of the Executive Committee and the majority of the Delegation that the tax rate be maintained as close as possible to the previous year's rate; he added that when it comes to cutting essential services, those will be given a very thorough examination to determine whether or not the Surplus will be used. Comm. Ziehm noted that when consideration is given to the DOC and Nursing Home, and other departments, cutting services means affecting safety and security, as well as services provided by the County and the well-being of the community. She added that as Commissioners, they are responsible for these concerns and the safe operation of the facilities. Rep. Ullery added that while the economy may improve, the revenue projections are not good looking forward for the next few years.

Discussion ensued relative to whether the taxpayers understand County government; Comm. Pappas offered that people who show up at Public Hearings feel strongly about the continuation of the valuable services that the County provides. Comm. Ziehm added that she is hopeful that there will be a healthy balance and a cooperative effort to establish the budget without harm being done.

Rep. Ullery indicated that if a need can be demonstrated in black and white then it will be given higher consideration; he added that the overriding concern of the Executive Committee is the bottom line. He explained that part of the Executive Committee's goals include that justification be provided for every penny that is spent, and that the current tax rate and that the Surplus be maintained.

Mr. Wenger offered his appreciation of the Representative's comments but noted that meeting the Executive Committee's goals could be detrimental to the long-term health of the County and its operations. He noted that Hillsborough County cannot reach the goals set out by the Executive Committee without significantly changing the operations of the County; he added that in order to change operations of the County, laws would have to be changed. He noted that while it may look as if things are going well after last year's cuts, that is not the case; the reality is that the County has a great staff that is covering its responsibilities as best it can.

Mr. Wenger enquired if the Board of Commissioners comes forward with a budget recommendation that meets the Executive Committee's recommendations, will that budget be respected, or is there going to be a micro-managing of every single line to see if every single penny can be justified. Mr. Wenger added that he is hearing that the emphasis is on the bottom line, but nobody tells the Board

what the bottom line is. Comm. Pappas concurred and asked what the bottom line is; she added that it seems to be a moving target. Mr. Wenger added that any further cuts in the budget means cutting personnel. Rep. Ullery added that he is not certain the Board can meet the goals of the Executive Committee but added that if the budget cannot be reduced, “you are going to have to justify every single line.”

Rep. Ullery queried, “If we cannot maintain the current tax rate, how much is going to have to come out of Surplus to maintain the current tax rate?” He added that the surplus has been used in the past as a tax rate stabilization fund. He noted that consideration will be given relative to reduced services if there are cuts and whether “we have cut to the bone or if there is still fat to be cut.” Rep. Ullery added that it would be important to show what would be lost if there was a 1% or 2% cut in the amount to be raised by taxes. Mr. Wenger added that it is difficult for the departments to present their budgets to a Subcommittee and provide enough information during the hour that is allotted to meet the Executive Committee’s goals because there is no further input from the departments from that point on; he added that he is not sure that the process can meet the expectations of the Executive Committee or how that could happen. Comm. Holden added that sometimes the Subcommittees only ask questions but don’t allow the departments to speak or provide input. She added that she is hopeful that the Subcommittees and the Executive Committee also have to justify their reasons for any cuts; she noted that this is a two way process and she is hopeful that both sides will be respectful.

Mr. Wenger informed the Board that there will be a decrease to the Health & Accident line and an increase to the Worker’s Compensation and Liability lines. He noted that the County Debt line is proposed to be left at \$1.

## 2. Recess

Lacking further business, Comm. Ziehm entertained a motion to recess.

**Motion:** To move into recess until the next budget meeting. Motion by Comm. Pappas, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed at 12:24 p.m.

The Board will meet again on April 11<sup>th</sup> for further budget consideration.

*Approved 5/30/2012*

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Comm. Carol H. Holden  
Vice Chairman/Clerk  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

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Date