

Budget Meeting of the
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners
April 10, 2013
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. T. Pappas, Comm C. Holden, Comm. S. Ziehm, P. LaFrance, P. Boardman, D. Reidy, M. Rioux, E. Robinson, M. Castonguay, G. Wenger, and L. Stonner

Others Present: Meghan Brady and Brook Holt representing Southern NH Service's Meals on Wheels program

Call to Order

The budget meeting reconvened at 9:08 a.m.

Cooperative Extension

Comm. Pappas recognized Mr. Reidy, and requested that he identify:

- priorities,
- things that are being done differently, and
- any changes in the department's budget over the previous year.

Mr. Reidy distributed a packet with detailed information relative to the UNH Cooperative Extension and its programs. He noted that his budget is based on following the CPI of 2%, further noting that his budget was reduced the previous year when the support staff became employees of the University. He offered that his other lines reflect a 2.1% increase that relates to how costs have increased; he noted that his department has lost more than 20% of its revenue over a 10-year period, yet it still carries out the same work thanks to the staff and volunteers. He added that the grants that have been brought in have also contributed to the programs.

Discussion ensued relative to Communities of Interest and Agenda 21. Comm. Holden expressed concern, noting that it is important to protect County property; she added that the UN initiative and Agenda 21 could affect property and how it could be used as well as surrendering control. Discussion ensued relative to the need to be informed and cognizant of the effects of Agenda 21.

Mr. Reidy excused himself and left the meeting.

Conservation District

Mr. Wenger noted K. Rickrode was not here to represent the Conservation District; he added that he had indicated that he would follow up with her if any additional information is requested, but added that it may not be necessary to call her in if there are no issues with the Conservation District budget. He explained that the Conservation District budget is down \$8,000 based on current enrollment.

Special Projects

M. Brady thanked the Board for its past support of the Meals on Wheels program and outlined the program and the increased need for the County's support to help provide meals and support to the County's elderly and disabled residents. She explained other efforts that So. NH Services undertakes to support its programs. Ms. Brady requested the County's support again this year, noting that it is an important part of every meal served under the program. She referred to a 10-year study that showed that low-need residents who received support from Meals on Wheels programs had fewer low-need seniors in Nursing Homes, so there is a direct impact on the expenses of the County when there are people in Nursing Homes that could exist in the community; Meals on Wheels is an important part of that. Ms. Brady thanked the Board for its time; she and Ms. Holt excused themselves and left the meeting.

Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance

The Board discussed the Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance (COAF) budget. Mr. Wenger explained the lines and noted that the Salary & Wages line includes 6 full-time and 2 part-time employees in the Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance budget as well as 4 elected officials; they are the 3 Commissioners and the Treasurer. He added that he anticipates another "holiday" from Primex that would lower the Worker's Compensation & Liability line and expenses in the other lines. The Board discussed the Education & Conference line and its plans for attending Conferences in the current budget as well as the new budget; it was noted that this line would also cover education for all employees in the department. Mr. Wenger added that it is difficult to anticipate several of the lines for the coming year because of combining the Commissioner's budget as well as the Business Office, Human Resources, and Human Services.

Comm. Holden referred to the line for legal expense, adding that it is her belief that the Board has the right to have its own legal opinion; however, she is aware that there are limited funds available. Mr. Wenger added that one of the issues is that the Commissioner's do not have funds to pursue litigation of any nature relative to the Board's responsibility and requirements under the Statutes. Comm. Pappas noted that the Board could use money in Legal Counsel's budget; Comm. Holden noted that it could only be done with a transfer that would have to be approved by the Executive Committee. Comm. Ziehm added that she could see that becoming a conflict.

The Board considered the following motions:

Motion: To reduce the Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance line 4140-7200, Legal Expenses by \$5,000 and to fund the line at \$5,000. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Ziehm. Motion carried with Commissioners Holden and Ziehm voting in favor of the motion and Comm. Pappas voting against the motion.

Motion: To reconsider the previous motion. Motion by Comm. Ziehm, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried with Commissioners Pappas and Ziehm voting in favor of the motion and Comm. Holden voting against the motion.

Motion: To reduce Commissioner's Office of Administration & Finance line 4140-7200, Legal Expenses by \$9,999 and to fund the line at \$1. Motion by Comm. Ziehm, second by Comm. Pappas. Motion carried with Commissioners Pappas and Ziehm voting in favor of the motion and Comm. Holden voting against the motion.

Mr. Wenger reviewed other lines, noting that there are additional GASB audit requirements relative to Hillsborough County's grants. Comm. Holden noted that while the Board has consistently included funding to meet these requirements in its budget, but the Delegation has not funded it.

The Board discussed the Consulting expense line and the benefit of having a consultant who helps keep insurance costs down as well as a consultant to represent the County in its collective bargaining negotiations, as it has done in the past.

The Bank Charges line was discussed; it is a change that would reflect a change in the way the County does its banking and investing; the line will be re-visited at a later meeting. Mr. Wenger explained the remaining COAF lines and the anticipated expenses.

The Commissioners discussed their individual Travel lines. The Board agreed to fund the fund the Travel-Out of State line at \$1,000, noting that this line could include elected official's Travel-Out of State or employee's Travel-Out of State for training; in 2012, the Board of Commissioners funded the line at \$2,100; Human Services funded the line at \$1,000, and the other 2 departments were at \$1.

Mr. Wenger reviewed the Insurance and Worker's Compensation lines and summarized by saying that he is hopeful the County will receive a "holiday" again this year, in which case, the line could be lowered. He added that the budget is very tight and noted that he is hopeful that there will not be a need to borrow money; he did recommend funding the Debt line at \$1 as it has been for many years.

Mr. Wenger explained that the Grant Expense line of \$275,000 will be offset by grant revenue; the line includes \$50,000 for unanticipated grants and \$225,000 for DOC grants that are anticipated as well as offsetting revenues.

Comm. Ziehm noted that she has real concerns about leaving the front building empty and noted that it is her belief that the Registry of Deeds should be moved into that building, noting that if the Registry is not moved, then the County should work toward renting the building. Discussion ensued relative to funding that project. Mr. Wenger noted that if the project were to be funded, it would need to be included in either the County Complex budget or the Contingency. He added that the Board has included a Capital Reserve Fund for this purpose in its last 2 budgets, but the Executive Committee has denied the request. Comm. Holden noted that the first step would be to have a Capital Reserve Fund; she agreed that there would be advantages to moving the Registry of Deeds to the Complex property, but noted that she anticipates a great deal of resistance. Comm. Pappas indicated that she would also like to see the Registry moved to the Complex. The Board agreed that taking money from the Undesignated Fund balance would leave less money for the current budget.

Mr. Wenger added that another factor for consideration is that the County is in the second year of a three year agreement with the Women's Prison, and the Women's Prison will be relocated; now is the time to also give consideration to that building and the lot. Comm. Ziehm added that she would recommend that a professional

study be done relative to use of the Women's Prison and the lot it occupies. Comm. Ziehm noted that she would like to re-visit the discussion. Mr. Wenger added that it is his belief that at a minimum, it would be in the County's best interest to engage someone to do the analysis of that building, the Bouchard Building, the Registry, how the Registry could be incorporated into the Complex space and then to come forward with a plan.

County Attorney

The Board welcomed County Attorney LaFrance.

Comm. Holden reviewed the current year's County budget challenges; she explained that:

- the budget has increased by \$3,674,414;
- the amount to be raised by taxes has increased to \$8,377,424;
- the Human Services budget has increased by nearly \$1,400,000 as a result of changes at the State level;
- the budgeted non-tax Revenue has decreased by \$4.7 million dollars;
- the Undesignated Fund Balance, or Surplus, has decreased by \$3,500,000.

County Attorney LaFrance reviewed the department's budget lines and noted that while the budget is up slightly, most of the increases are wage-related items that are beyond the department's control. She noted that they made small cuts where possible and added that it is a bare bones budget. Attorney LaFrance explained that the Consulting Expense line is up due to the cost of expert testimony that is frequently required in the preparation and/or trial of criminal matters. She added that the budgeted amount will only cover the expense of one sexually violent predator a year, the cost of which is approximately \$20,000, and it is difficult to project this expense. She added that many requests for expert testimony have to be denied because of budget constraints, yet the Public Defenders get a budget of up to a million dollars.

Ms. Rioux explained that there may be a need to transfer funds into the Medical Referee line prior to the end of the current budget, noting that a transfer has been necessary for the past 2 years.

Mr. Wenger noted that the non-affiliated employees have not had an increase in 3 years, adding that the Assistant County Attorneys are the only County employees that remain on a step increase program; however, they have not received an increase in three years. Attorney LaFrance commented that the attorneys have actually seen a pay decrease because their Health Insurance increased, and because the bar dues were removed from the budget the previous year, they have incurred this additional expense. She added that their case load has increased, noting that it is not uncommon for the Assistant County Attorneys to be outnumbered two-to-one in the trials that serve on; she explained that they try to have 2 Attorneys for each trial, but the funds are not there to allow for 2 Attorneys for each case. She explained that it is often the case where a junior attorney is working with a senior attorney, and that is difficult when they are up against 2 senior attorneys. Attorney LaFrance noted that the Public Defenders do not face this difficulty; they are funded by the State ; the Public Defenders get a great deal more funding for expert witnesses but the County Attorney's office is frequently unable to call in experts because of a limited budget.

Temple Street

Ms. Robinson explained the Temple Street budget noting that the budget is up approximately \$1,000. Based on information provided by Ms. Robinson, the Board addressed the following motion:

Motion: To reduce the Temple Street Sewer line 4197-7640 by \$500, and to fund the line at \$1,500. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Ziehm. Motion carried.

Ms. Robinson explained actions that are being taken to improve security at Temple Street. Mr. Wenger offered that the Board may wish to re-visit bringing in a person who would handle building maintenance and address many of the security issues at that location; if that were done, then other related lines could be reduced.

County Complex

Ms. Robinson reviewed the County Complex budget. She explained the Wages and related lines, noting that overtime was higher than normal due to one position being vacant for 3 months. Ms. Robinson noted that cell phones have replaced pagers used by the Maintenance staff to increase efficiency. Discussion ensued relative to a gas line being extended past the County Complex, and later having the Complex hook onto the line. Ms. Robinson outlined the Repair line items in the Complex budget and explained the related expenses.

Manchester Courthouse

Mr. Wenger explained that the Manchester Courthouse budget covers the lease agreement and insurance for 300 Chestnut Street.

Human Services

Ms. Robinson addressed the Human Services budget. She noted that spread sheets have been provided with the budget document and reviewed the budget for this department. The budget of \$30,834,000 is based on current law which has the Medicaid Cap going to 109 million dollars, and a loss of the MQIP (Nursing Home bed tax) credit of 2.5 million. She noted that the County's share of the Cap is based on a 3-year average based on the MMIS billings; and recommended that the Board base the budget on the NH House version.

Mr. Reidy gave the Commissioners information relative to Agenda 21.

The Board discussed increasing the Registry revenue line.

The Board agreed to recess for lunch.

Motion: To move into recess. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Ziehm. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed at 12:35.

The meeting reconvened at 1:01 p.m.

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

Comm. Pappas entertained a motion for Non-Public Session.

Motion: To move into Non-Public Session consistent with RSA 91-A:3 (a). Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Ziehm. Ziehm-yes, Holden-yes, Pappas-yes. Motion carried.

The Board moved into Non-Public Session at 1:02 p.m.

The Board moved out of Non-Public Session at 1:24 p.m.

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

Motion: To Recess the meeting. Motion by Comm. Holden, second by Comm. Ziehm. Motion carried.

The meeting recessed at 1:25 p.m.

Approved on May 29, 2013

Comm. Sandra Ziehm, Clerk
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

Date