

**Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners**

**Public Hearing**

**May 4, 2015**

Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH

**Minutes of the Public Hearing**

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

**Present:** Commissioner Toni Pappas, Commissioner Carol Holden, and Commissioner Sandra Ziehm; Dennis Hogan, County Attorney; James Hardy, County Sheriff; Pamela Coughlin, Register of Deeds; Superintendent David Dionne, Dept. of Corrections; G. Fisher, Chief Deputy Sheriff; L. A. Gero, Deputy Register of Deeds; Marlene Montminy, Corrections Business Manager; Bruce Moorehead, Nursing Home Administrator; Michael Lencki, Nursing Home Purchasing Manager; Ellen-Ann Robinson, Human Services Director; Daniel Reidy, Cooperative Extension Coordinator; Marcia Castonguay, County Delegation Coordinator; Gregory J. Wenger, County Administrator, and Linda Stonner, Secretary

**Also Present:** State Representatives and members of the public

**1) CALL TO ORDER**

Comm. Ziehm called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Comm. Ziehm welcomed the Department Heads, County Elected Officials, County Representatives and members of the public who attended the Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners' Budget Public Hearing.

**2) PUBLIC HEARING**

**a. Purpose of the Meeting**

Comm. Ziehm presented the following: *"The Board of Commissioners is required under RSA 24:13-c, to hold a PUBLIC HEARING for the purpose of receiving public input on its Proposed Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Recommendation. This meeting has been posted to convene this Morning, Monday May 4, at 10:00 AM here at the Bouchard Building in Goffstown, NH."*

Comm. Ziehm explained: *"At the rear of the room you will find copies of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration MS-46 Form outlining the Board's Budget Recommendation and copies of the Comparative Budget & Expenditure Request report which provides information on our current, Fiscal Year 2015 budget and our budget recommendation for Fiscal Year 2016. You will also find public comment cards on the table. For the purposes of this morning's hearing we ask those wishing to speak to fill out a public comment card and to submit it to Commissioner Pappas, the Board's Clerk."*

**b. Introductions of Elected Officials and Department Heads**

Comm. Ziehm said, *"Prior to moving to your comments I would like to introduce the Board, the Elected Officials and Department Heads:"*

Comm. Carol H. Holden, Vice Chairman, District 3

Comm. Toni H. Pappas, Clerk, District 1

Comm. Sandra Ziehm, Chairman, District 2

The State Representatives stood and introduced themselves. Comm. Ziehm introduced the other Elected Officials and Department Heads; they included:

James Hardy, County Sheriff  
Gary Fisher, Chief Deputy, Sheriff's Office  
Dennis Hogan, County Attorney  
Pamela Coughlin, Register of Deeds  
L. Gero, Deputy Register of Deeds  
David Dionne, Superintendent, Dept. of Corrections  
Marlene Montminy, Corrections Business Manager  
Bruce Moorehead, Nursing Home Administrator  
Michael Lencki, Nursing Home Purchasing Manager  
Ellen-Ann Robinson, Human Services Administrator  
Daniel Reidy, Cooperative Extension Coordinator  
Marcia Castonguay, County Delegation Coordinator  
Gregory J. Wenger, County Administrator

Comm. Holden introduced Mike Smith, a new resident from Goffstown.

### **c. Budget Overview**

Comm. Ziehm said, *"As we approached our budget deliberations the Commissioners, as always, were looking to contain spending and to keep County taxes to a minimum. With that in mind we set a goal to deliver a budget recommendation that would continue to deliver necessary County services with no increase to the amount to be raised by the County tax. We are pleased to tell you that with the cooperative effort of all of our Department Heads and the Elected Officials who willingly worked with us in the pursuit of what became a common goal; the budget recommendation that we are discussing today delivers necessary services without raising additional taxes.*

*To walk you through our process we have prepared several documents which you should find in front of you. The first document outlines the County's budget history over the last 13 years. The first line is a breakdown of our new Fiscal Year 2016 budget recommendation including our recommended use of surplus funds. Before leaving the this document I would like to note that at the bottom left side of the table that over the thirteen years shown, including our fiscal year 2016 recommendation, the average increase in the County budget has been 1.94% and the average tax increase is lower at 1.37%."*

Comm. Ziehm added that it has been her honour to serve with the County's Department Heads, further adding that it is due to their efforts that the Board is able to present the budget it is successfully bringing forward. Comm. Ziehm communicated the following:

*"The second document is a one page outline of the issues the Board confronted and how we arrived at our budget recommendation.*

*The Board's budget recommendation is \$90,901,197. This represents an increase of \$2,202,679 over the current budget, or 2.48%. As I suggested, we are recommending that the amount to be raised by taxes be level funded at \$48,074,150 or no change from last year.*

*In arriving at this recommendation the Board was confronted with several issues. The most significant of these was the fact that during the coming fiscal year the County, like many employers, will have an additional or 27<sup>th</sup> pay period. The County pays its employees on a bi-weekly basis and once every eleven (11) years the so called "Payroll Leap Year" occurs. This anomaly will cost the*

*County approximately \$1.2 million dollars this coming year. The estimate is broken down in the second section at the top of Exhibit 2*

*In addition to the Payroll Leap Year, the Commissioners faced an increase in health insurance costs of \$571,591 based on an 8.2% Not-to-Exceed rate from our provider, the Interlocal Trust and an increase of \$317,353 in Retirement costs based on an increase of 0.4% for our Group I employees and an increase of 1.08% for our Group II employees.*

*And the County's Human Services budget will be increasing approximately \$720,928 due to legislative actions increasing the CAP and the County's Quality Incentive Payments, or MQIP revenues will be reduced by 25% or approximately \$850,000.*

*These issues along with the traditional challenges that every budget process presents saw the Board confronted with a budget request from the departments that represented a 4.02% increase in the budget and an 11.43% increase in the amount to be raised by taxes. After working through each budget request with the individual departments and several joint meetings where the challenges of the budget were discussed and debated collectively with all the departments present, the Board is able to achieve its goals by presenting a recommendation that includes:*

- *The incorporation of one new staff position in the Nursing Home Rehabilitation Department which will be a revenue generating position.*
- *The elimination of two Correctional Officer positions at the Department of Corrections to realize a savings of approximately \$80,000.*
- *An increase in our health insurance appropriation that is approximately 3.0% below the guaranteed Not-to-Exceed rate we initially received from our insurance pool. We are anticipating that based on recent claims experience the actual rate will be lower than the guaranteed rate and consistent with our recommendation.*
- *A Human Service budget recommendation based on the House approved budget which is the best information that we have at this point of your State budget process.*
- *We have also increased the total Non-Tax Revenue projections by \$2,211,679 including:*
  - *Increasing total Nursing Home Related Revenues by \$645,920*
  - *Level funding the projected revenues for the Registry of Deeds,*
  - *And, finally, increasing the amount of Fund Balance, or Surplus, that will be used to offset taxes by \$1,068,187 to \$3,879,743. We have done this in part to offset the oddity of the 27<sup>th</sup> pay period.. It was our feeling that this unusual occurrence is infrequent enough and comes at a time when our taxpayers can ill afford a significant tax increase that it justifies the sacrifice. We hope you agree.*

*As the budget process moves forward we anticipate that, as with every year, there will be much discussion and debate about the amount to be raised by taxes and the use of Fund Balance to reduce taxes. We look forward to those discussions and anticipate that with Mr Wenger's assistance we will be able to provide the committees reviewing revenue with an analysis of the County's fund balances and why we believe that our recommendation is both reasonable and justified.*

*Finally, I would like to note that we are actively involved in negotiation with our six (6) collective bargaining units. Tentative agreements have been reached with four (4) of the units. One of those agreements has been ratified by the Union and will be considered by the Board shortly. We are waiting on word from the other three units on whether the Unions have ratified the agreements. If they are ratified we will consider them and, if appropriate, we will forward the cost items to the Delegation approval. As for the two remaining bargaining units, we remain optimistic that we will reach agreements for your consideration.*

*While the cost items associated with the collective bargaining agreements are not included in our budget recommendation as they must be considered for approval separately by the Delegation, our budget recommendation does include adjustments for our non-affiliated employees, including a 0.5% base wage adjustment as of July 1<sup>st</sup> and a 1% performance adjustment as of an individual's employment anniversary date. The Step program for the Assistant County Attorney's has also been funded. And while it would be inappropriate to discuss cost projections associated with the ongoing collective bargaining process at this time, we are confident that our negotiating teams are proceeding under the parameters that the Board have provided to them".*

Comm. Ziehm asked if her fellow Commissioners have any comments that they would like to make.

Comm. Holden thanked everyone for attending and explained that the Board made an extraordinary effort to work together with the Department Heads and Elected Officials to develop this budget; she added that it was a cooperative effort and noted that she is hopeful that the Budget will be approved at the next level.

Comm. Pappas thanked those who worked so diligently with the Board as a team to develop this budget and added to produce this budget; she added that the Board feels that it is a good budget, and she too is hopeful that it will be approved.

**d. Public Comment**

Comm. Ziehm said, *"At this time I would open the floor to public comment and again remind you that if you wish to speak, we request that you fill out a public comment card and submit it to Commissioner Pappas. We ask that you keep your comments to the topic of the proposed Budget Recommendation and that you direct them through me as Chairman."*

Megan Brady, who represented Meals on Wheels, thanked the Board for its continuing support of this program.

**c. Close of the Hearing**

Lacking further comment, Comm. Ziehm declared the Public Hearing to be closed and said, *"The Board appreciates your comments and concerns and will take them into consideration as we finalize our recommendation and pass the budget along. As the process moves through the next two phases of Subcommittee and Executive Committee review, we will continue to work with our State Representatives to see that necessary County services are provided at the lowest possible impact to the County taxpayer. Thank you for your input and attending this morning."*

The Public Hearing closed at 10:20 a.m.

*Approved on June 3, 2015*

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Comm. Toni Pappas, Clerk  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

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Date