

Budget Public Hearing  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

May 5, 2008, 4:00 P.M.  
Bouchard Building, Goffstown, NH

Minutes of the Public Hearing  
(Not Official Until Approved By the Board and signed by the Clerk.)

**Present:** Comm. T. Pappas, Comm. C. Holden, Comm. M. Clemons

Also Present: Members of the County Delegation, elected officials, department heads, members of the Public and L. Stonner.

Comm. T. Pappas convened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. J. MacDonald led those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

Comm. Pappas stated that the purpose of the meeting was, in compliance with the Board's statutory obligation under by RSA 24:13-c, to hold a Public Hearing for the purpose of receiving public input on its Proposed Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Recommendations. She reviewed the procedures and rules for the meeting and requested that those individuals wishing to speak fill out a public comment card and submit it to Commissioner Clemons, the Board's Clerk. Comm. Pappas informed the attendees that copies of the NH Department of Revenue MS-46 form, which outlines the Board of Commissioners' budget recommendations, are available at the rear of the room, as well as Comparative Budget and Expenditure Request Reports, which provide information on our current Fiscal Year 2008 budget.

Comm. Pappas proceeded with introductions. Comm. Pappas introduced herself, Comm. C. Holden, and Comm. M. Clemons. She requested that the Representatives stand and introduce themselves as well. Those present at that time included Rep. Armand D. Forest-Manchester Ward 12, Rep. Steve Vaillancourt, Rep. Catriona Beck, Rep. Maurice Pilote, Rep. Russell Day, Rep. Edith Hogan, Rep. Peter Cote, Rep. Angeline Kopka, Rep. Joan Schulze, and Rep. Steve Spratt.

Comm. Pappas then introduced the department heads and elected officials, J. Hardy, County Sheriff; J. MacDonald, Registrar of Deeds; J. O'Mara, Superintendent of the Department of Corrections; E. Robinson, Human Services Director; D. Reidy, Cooperative Extension Administrator, M. Rusch, Delegation Coordinator; G. Wenger, County Administrator; M. Wageling, County Attorney; C. Kirby, Legal Counsel; and B. Moorehead, Nursing Home Administrator.

The meeting was opened for public question and comment at this time.

Comm. Pappas recognized Megan Brady, Executive Director of St. Joseph Community Services, as the first speaker. M. Brady noted that St. Joseph's Community Services provides the Meals on Wheels service throughout Hillsborough County. She expressed her gratitude to the County for its support of their Title 20, Meals on Wheels program, noting that the program benefits those low-income folks who are homebound, age 18 and over.

Rep. R. Day addressed the Board, noting that in the FY08 budget, there was an appropriation of \$3,503,489 for the Nursing Home, further noting that if the expenditures of the first nine months were annualized, it comes out to \$3,536,000, which is approximately \$30,000 more than the appropriation.

He noted that with a proposed budget for the Nursing Home of only \$3,421,000, he is curious if this does not suggest a possible overage at the end of the next fiscal year, and asked for the reason for the reduction in FY2009. Mr. Moorehead responded that expenditures in the Administration line as of 5/2/08 were at 82% (targeted expense was 84%), so he is projecting that those numbers will come in below budget, and noted that capital is typically delayed until the second part of the fiscal year. He stated that he believes the budget recommendation to be accurate.

Rep. S. Vaillancourt spoke in respect to the tax increase. He noted his observation that although the increase on the expense side was only 0.73%, the amount that must be raised by taxes will be up 4.3%. He expressed a concern that this is inordinately high in relation to what we have been accustomed to in this County for the last several years. He expressed his belief that the County must look at ways to reduce that. He pointed out the 19% increase in the County Attorney's budget over the \$3,565,000, and if annualized, it looks like they will be using only approximately \$3,100,000 this year, so they will come in with half a million dollars extra, opining it is "way beyond the pale." Comm. Clemons explained that the Board still has one more opportunity to review the figures and it can take into consideration Rep. Vaillancourt's comments and try to reduce the budget wherever it can.

Comm. Pappas presented an overview of the budget process explaining that over the course of the past several months the Board had worked with department heads and the elected officials to develop a budget recommendation that addresses the County's responsibility to deliver necessary services to citizens while being ever mindful of the burden that County taxes put upon the taxpayers. She explained that the Board faced several difficult issues that dictated much of what could be done and that the County continues to face great uncertainty as the State Legislature completes its work in Concord. She noted that the Board is very appreciative of the effort put in by each of the departments and elected officials as they worked with the Board to produce reasonable budget recommendations that will allow the County to continue to deliver necessary County services. She noted that the Board's budget recommendation maintains its current level of service and does not include any expenditure for major new initiatives. Comm. Pappas explained that the revenues are down due to the difficult economy. She noted that the Board will take the speakers comments under consideration when they review the budget again; and then it will go to the sub-committees, the Executive Committee, then to the full Delegation.

Rep. A. Matarazzo addressed the Board and attendees, informing them that the State passed a bill this session which removes the expenses of operating Nursing Homes from the State, and shifted it to the Counties, noting that he sees that as a nightmare and that the Counties have joined together and filed suit against the state. He noted that New Hampshire's population is aging and this is going to result in placing the burden on the County, which has one source of revenue, as opposed to the state, which has twenty. He asked how the case is going. Comm. Pappas noted that the case is still going on and that all ten NH Counties are extremely concerned about this, further noting that the Legislature has put a cap on what the Counties will be charged for the next two years, and are holding the Counties harmless, but that could go away. E. Robinson noted that the Superior Court handed down a decision the prior Thursday, finding against the Counties. She noted that the issues raised were: the extension of the sunset without the Counties approval, the medical surcharge, which basically doubled in the previous fiscal year, and delaying the implementation of HB2, which has been delayed until 2011. She noted that the population of youth is stable and one can project a level cost; however, the cost of Nursing Homes has, and will continue to increase as the number of persons needing Nursing Home care increases. A brief discussion followed regarding the potential impact on the Counties.

Comm. Pappas acknowledged Judith MacDonald, Registrar of Deeds, who had previously noted that she did not intend to run for re-election, and thanked her, on behalf of the Board and Hillsborough County, for her twenty-eight years of dedicated service.

There being no further questions or comments Comm. Pappas closed the public hearing and entertained a motion to adjourn.

**Motion:** To adjourn. By Comm. Clemons, second by Comm. Holden. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

*(SIGNED 8/27/08)*

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Michael Clemons, Clerk  
Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners

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Date