

## Belknap County Delegation Minutes March 31, 2011 at 7:00 PM

Chair Millham called the Belknap County Delegation meeting to order at 7:00 PM on the above date at 34 County Drive, Laconia, NH and started with the pledge of allegiance.

In Attendance: Reps. St. Cyr, Millham, Russell, Tilton, Luther, Swinford, Pilliod, Comtois, Fields, Bolster, Malone, Worsman, Tobin, Accornero, Greemore and Kingsbury.

Absent: Reps. Simpson and Flanders

Also present: Commissioners, County Administrator, and Department Heads.

**Approval of Minutes:** M/Fields, S/Bolster to approve the minutes of 1/31/11, 2/7/11, 2/10/11 3/14/11 and 3/21/11. S/Swinford. All in favor. **Approved.** Rep. Worsman abstained. **Motion carries.**

**2011 Belknap County Budget:** M/Bolster, S/Fields to approve underlying amendment to the budget for the allocation of \$224,000 as recommended by the County Commissioners. Madam Chair opened for discussion.

Rep. Greemore asked several questions; if the information they were given tonight was different since the last meeting “some I got last night” and also the information that “somebody just passed out”. He questioned, where the cuts in this particular budget are and “how they relate to the Capital budget.” Chair Alida responded that “it is probably muddying the water for what we are doing, allocating things through this form” He questioned what was related to the capital budget projects within the department budgets and highlighted on the form just handed out. How does that relate to the projects using stimulus money?” Further he asked “How do we have time to verify this list?” Chair Alida responded we don’t have time it was supposed to be taken care of in the sub committees but we’ll address them in a future meeting. Answer from Commissioner Philpot is that none have been moved out of Commissioners recommended budget. Rep Greemore continued to share his concern that we have had insufficient time to review this information in order “verify this” to make a good decision.

Rep. Worsman asked about the process to arrive at the \$224,000 that is on the table and if anything else can be discussed tonight. Chairs answer: The only discussion on the table is the \$224,000. Rep. Worsman is in favor of level funding salaries.

Rep. Bolster stated that the \$224,000 would’ve been the amount in raises but that we don’t have to take it out of raises, it winds up as the same thing.

Rep. Worsman expressed concern that we have just received the detail and had less than 2 minutes to see where the Commissioners recommend we make the budget reductions (report printed 3/31/2011, an hour ago) We have had insufficient time to review the information. Rep Worsman makes a motion to amend the detail of the allocation in the motion made by Rep. Bolster to now allocated the \$224,000 reductions off the salary lines (original amount \$244,000) In the end the salary reduction will mean more to the taxpayers than taking it off meetings and training. The goal is that the allocations come off increases in salaries straight across the board. S/Malone.

Commissioner Philpot went on to explain that the county has three collective bargaining contracts. You can’t negotiate a contract until the time has come to re-negotiate. Rep. Worsman said that the

Commissioners should ask those employees to do a salary adjustment similar to many towns and the state. Further there are a number of positions that are not contracts such as the administrator and supervisors that can be adjusted.

Chair Millham said that the purpose of this meeting is to make the necessary adjustments to the MS-42 and that the Commissioners have the authority to allocate the funds anyway that they see fit. Tonight, the delegation needs to fill in the blanks on the MS-42.

Rep. Worsman made a motion to use the salary lines on MS-42 to equate to raises on the paperwork that amounts to \$244,309. Rep. Worsman said \$224,000 cuts across the salary lines and cut costs across all those lines in the total budget. The Department of Revenue Administration needs to know where the \$224,000 comes from per line.

Rep. Luther made an observation and asked why were we beating up on the county staff, had they done something wrong? Rep. Worsman said “absolutely not, there is up to a 5% increase for salaries that was not attributed to the general public and that, I am hearing the taxpayers well that they have not received raises” and that in 5 to 1 e-mails she has received, she is directed that “salaries are too high” and “work on that”.

Commissioner Philpot stated that everyone has heard Rep. Worsman’s issue regarding salaries and that the Commissioners have submitted to the Delegation their recommendations of where to take the \$224,000 recommended cuts, that they cannot cut contracted salaries (per CBA). The Commissioners have given them a listing of real places to take the \$224,000 and that they understand the symbolism. He would like the Commission and the Delegation to move forward in a cooperative, collaborative way on how they manage county affairs.

Rep. Tilton asked that if the fiscal year starts January 1, 2011, are employees waiting for their money or are they being paid according to contract. The contracts end December 31, 2011.

Commissioner Philpot responded that the employees have been collecting their increase since 1/1/2011.

Rep. Bolster said sadly, this is the time to take the opportunity and send a clear message to the public and the Commissioners and employees of the county that the next time the CBA’s come around, not to expect generosity; it’s going to be “tough” and “lean”. It is the nature of the times.

Rep. Accornero asked who negotiates and if the delegation is involved. Answer: The Delegation approves the costs associated with the CBA’s and the contracts are negotiated by the County Commissioners and office personnel.

The Commission has discussed many times the economic difficulties moving forward. They are aware of the message of the people and they are clear that they all have work to do. They (meaning commissioners and delegation) are all elected by the same people.

Rep. Greemore asked why the \$224,000 can’t be taken from capital projects. Commissioner Philpot replied that the allocation has to come from budget totals.

Rep. Kingsbury announced that for the record, last year’s budget was \$30 million and the budget is up \$2 million this year to \$32 million “and that to me is an excessive increase in one year”

Madam Chair asked if the delegation is ready to vote on the motion. Rep. Worsman stated, “I’m willing to withdraw my motion with some incredible stipulations, I am hearing that we are headed more in the

right direction that makes sense”. She is under the understanding Rep Bolster is willing to level fund benefits next year. Hearing from the Commissioners that they know next year’s budget will need greater restraint. She believes that once the stimulus money of 2.5M is out we should be looking at a \$29M budget next year. “If we are getting that kind of communication from the commissioner and the delegation is willing to hold them to that, then I am willing to withdraw my motion.” Malone withdrew his second.

Rep. Greemore, once again questioned the capital expenditures. Rep. Tilton stated that you are headed in the wrong direction when you try and take from certain capital projects. There are a lot of needs (not wants) in capital. That they Commissioners made the decision based on how they feel they can run the county taking the \$224,000 out of budget lines instead of capital repairs. We need to listen to their decision and opinion as to how they came up with these cuts, in a calculated fashion as the Executives of the day to day county operations.

**Vote:** Madam Chair called to vote on the original motion by Rep. Bolster, seconded by Rep. Fields to approve the \$224,000 allocation as recommended by the County Commissioners for the FY 2011 budget to \$32,158,768. Rep. Fields seconded. Chair called for a roll call vote. 10 – Y, 6 – N. **Motion passed.**

**Other Business: Bond discussion:** Rep. Worsman asked about bonds, a discussion ensued about bond approval and that there is no requirement for a public hearing for TAN’s (Tax anticipation notes). Rep. Kingsbury also asked for clarification of the necessity of bond hearings being voted on by the whole delegation.

**Upcoming meeting:** Executive committee to meet with the Commissioners on 4/6/11 at 5:30 PM to hear a request from the treasurer to borrow in anticipation of taxes. (TAN’s).

**Public comment:** Mr. McGee from Sanbornton asked if the State down shifts NHRS costs (New Hampshire Retirement System) who will pay for the county employee’s contribution.

**Adjourn:** M/Swinford, S/Fields to adjourn at 7:55 PM. Unanimous. **Motion carries.**

Respectfully submitted,

Angela A. Bovill,  
Administrative Assistant