

Delegation Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2016 at 6:00 pm

Chair Frank Tilton called the Belknap County Delegation meeting to order at 6:00 pm on the above date at 34 County Drive, Laconia, NH. Representative Vadney recited the pledge of allegiance. The Chair asked the Clerk to call the roll.

In Attendance: Representatives Aldrich, Dumais, Fields, Fraser, Gallagher, Howard, Lebreche, Russell, Tilton, Vadney and Varney (at 6:30 pm).

Absent: Representative Comtois, Fisher, Flanders, Hurt, Spanos and Sylvia.

Rep. Tilton stated Rep. Luther passed away Saturday. A moment of silence was observed.

Public Hearing: Rep. Tilton opened the public hearing at 6:07 pm.

Randy Eifert, Meredith, BCEDC Chair, stated there are over 50 businesses that support the agency. He stated they have 7 volunteers for loans, 22 fundraising volunteers. Mr. Eifert stated Commissioners DeVoy and Taylor are in favor of the agency's request. He stated that it is not factual that County money is used for high risk loans and they are not a high risk lender. Mr. Eifert stated they helped the following businesses J.Jill, Riverfront Place, Beacon Street West condos, Inn at Mills Falls, Hermit Woods Winery and GCN Engineering. He asked that we move past the seed funding theory. He stated that they have not increased the requested amount in the last 15 years. Mr. Eifert reviewed some of the services they provide. He quoted Rep. Fisher's website, to show what he says is what they do.

Fran Wendelboe, New Hampton, UNH Coop. Extension, stated the information the agency provides is vital to farmers. She stated the youth 4-H program is excellent. Ms. Wendelboe stated by cutting programs to youth it is penny wise and pound foolish. She stated she has never opened her tax bill and been concerned about the County tax portion. Lisa Morris, Gilford, Executive Director Partnership for Public Health, stated she supports the agencies that contribute to public health. She stated UNH Coop. teaches healthy meal preparation to low income families, Genesis helps with suicide prevention and Service Link provides services to the elderly.

Ken Kettenring, New Hampton, Supervisor BC Cons. District, stated he appreciates the support received in the past. He stated if the cuts get passed they will have to cut services. Mr. Kettenring stated so much of their work is provided by volunteers. He stated they recently purchased a high tunnel to help assist in the department of corrections garden program. Mr.

Kettenring stated the board members are volunteer and have lots of experience. He stated as a tax payer he is asking that the Commissioners recommended budget be approved.

Jim Hundrieser, New Hampton, President Genesis Behavioral Health, stated the mental health programs they offer are very important to the County.

John Moulton, Meredith, Moulton Farm, stated he is a recipient of services from the UNH Coop. Extension and BC Conservation District. Mr. Moulton stated he depends on them for soil tests and pest prevention. He stated he supports 4-H for the leadership piece that individuals receive.

Dean Anson, Laconia, Supervisor BC Cons. District, stated they work with home owners and businesses. He stated they help prevent soil erosion and keep water sources clean. Mr. Anson stated the agency can work across municipalities. He stated they get individual grants to cover projects. Rep. Howard asked how they helped with soil erosion in Alton. Lisa Morin stated they worked with Alton school and talked about beach erosion.

Dave Bouchard, Sanbornton, stated he works in the mental health field. He stated Genesis Behavioral Health helps people with mental illnesses function in the community. Deborah Pendergast, Gilford, Vice-President of Genesis Behavioral Health, asked that the funding be supported. She stated 1 in 4 adults need some mental health services.

Susan Smith, Gilford, Winnepesaukee Public Health Council, stated she had sent a letter of support to the Delegation members. She stated the programs offered will be affected if funding is cut. Ms. Smith stated the constituents rely on the services provided by the agencies.

Sandra McGonagle, Gilford, BC Conservation District, thanked the committee for the respect shown in the past and request that they fully fund the agency this year. She stated they have had several years of level funding.

Nancy Thomason, Meredith, commended Commissioner Taylor for his article in the paper and recognized the effort he put into it. She stated the agencies are doing remarkable work. Ms. Thomason suggested that the committee members visit the agencies to see exactly what they do. She stated the poorest County pays almost twice as much as Belknap County. Rep. Howard asked if she would be willing to write a check to the agencies. Ms. Thomason stated she would but that doesn't let the committee off the hook.

Alida Millham, Laconia & Gilford, commended Commissioner Taylor's letter. She stated she supports fully funding the outside agencies. Ms. Millham suggested changing the name from outside agencies to Belknap County service partnership. She stated the fund balance helps in the bond rating.

Barbara Howard, Alton, stated the outside agencies had a deadline to submit information. She stated she is asking for responsible spending. Ms. Howard stated to look at it from a cumulative level and many people are struggling. She stated for years the agencies have asked for more money from the County.

Donna Hepp, Belmont, BC Conservation District Supervisor, stated the agency protects the ground water. She stated they helped with the 3 town aquifer. Ms. Hepp is requesting full funding as the requested amount has not changed since 2008.

Terry Thomason thanked the members for paying attention. He asked that the members restore the full funding of the agencies.

Aaron Lichtenberg, Alton, farmer asked how the budget process worked. Rep. Tilton explained the process. Mr. Lichtenberg stated without the agencies support it would be hard to operate a business. He stated they provide pesticide certification and food safety classes that help him to be able to sell fresh products directly to local restaurants. Mr. Lichtenberg asked they approve the Commissioners budget.

Everett McLaughlin, Gilford, asked that the BC Conservation District be fully funded. He stated they have been a huge help with the erosion problem at Gunstock brook. Rep. Howard asked where the grants come from. Lisa Morin stated \$20,000.00 in private funds and section 319 federal funding. Rep. Tilton asked who completes the application. Ms. Morin stated she assisted the town of Gilford.

Nina Gardner, Sanbornton, urged the members to realize the importance of the fund balance use. She stated the outside agencies do fabulous work in the County. Ms. Gardner stated we need economic growth and the young are leaving. Rep. Gallagher thanked Ms. Gardner for sharing. He stated the proper balance is to use some fund balance to fund programs. Ms. Gardner stated she believes in lowering taxes and funding programs.

Senator Jeanie Forester, Meredith, stated she appreciates all the work being done. She stated if the agencies are not fully funded then the expenses will be passed down to the towns/cities. Commissioner DeVoy stated he supports fully funding the outside agencies. Rep. Tilton closed the public hearing at 7:49pm.

There was a 15 minute recess.

Rep. Tilton recognized there were 6 members missing. He stated they more than likely would not vote next week. Rep. Gallagher stated he was uncomfortable moving forward. Rep. Tilton stated they have a quorum to have a meeting. Rep. Howard motioned to discuss all testimony heard. Rep. Tilton agreed and to tie it in with the individual line items. Rep. Fields stated he is willing to give money back to the agencies. Rep. Gallagher stated he was concerned that some of the folks assigned to the outside agencies are missing. Rep. Lebreche stated she was thrilled to hear everyone and learned a lot. Rep. Vadney stated if he was an agency he would go elsewhere rather than embarrassing himself begging for money. He stated Genesis should quit coming. Rep. Tilton stated they help the inmates and will also be helping with new programs. Rep. Howard asked what was heard tonight. Rep. Lebreche stated she heard that if we don't fund the agencies then the expenses gets passed down to the towns. She stated she agrees with Ms. Howard that it all adds up but it will cost more if we don't help. Rep. Gallagher stated he sensed there is a difference of opinion and it would be a good idea to talk next week. He asked if money should be taken from the fund balance to fund the agencies or have the Commissioners look at their proposed budget for the money. Rep. Tilton stated they could

restore the funding to the outside agencies that were funded last year. Rep. Gallagher suggested postponing increasing amounts until next week and not pursue a motion this week. Rep. Howard asked if two of us left would there still be a quorum. Rep. Tilton stated the question was out of order.

UNH Coop. Extension-M/Russell, S/Fields to restore budget to \$152,217.00. 6-5 Rep. Dumais, Fields, Fraser, Lebreche Russell and Tilton voted yes. Rep. Varney, Gallagher, Vadney, Aldrich and Howard opposed. **Motion passed.**

BC Conservation District-M/Fraser, S/Fields to change budget to \$92,400.00. 5-5 Rep. Fields, Fraser, Lebreche, Russell and Tilton voted yes. Rep. Varney, Gallagher, Vadney, Aldrich and Howard opposed, Rep. Dumais abstained. **Motion failed.** Rep. Dumais stated he objected to the process and the absent people need to be here. Rep. Aldrich agreed there needed to be more representatives present. Rep. Tilton stated it is not a final vote it is for working numbers. M/Howard, S/Varney to table outside agencies until the next meeting. 7-4.

Rep. Tilton stated there is a little confusion on how we are going to repair the roof. Rep. Howard asked for clarification on the health insurance line in the laundry department. Commissioner DeVoy stated every new employee in the department has a family plan where the previous employees had single plans. Rep. Tilton stated for the roof the plan had been to use the existing contractors. Commissioner DeVoy stated the current roof has failed. He stated he has received an unofficial quote for \$550,000.00 for a metal roof and \$750,000.00 for shingles. Commissioner DeVoy stated he would like to use the fund balance to repair the roof. Rep. Howard asked what type of metal roof and if the quote included stripping the shingles. Commissioner DeVoy stated standing seam roof and it does not include strip the shingles. Rep. Gallagher stated everyone recognizes the need to fix the roof. He reviewed the history of the jail planning costs. Rep. Gallagher stated the bond has not been issued and the Commissioners could ask the Delegation to reauthorize the bond to include the roof. He suggested tabling this item until next week. Commissioner DeVoy stated everything Rep. Gallagher stated about the history of the jail planning costs was true. He stated it concerns him to take money from the fund balance this year and have to bond more for the roof. Rep. Tilton stated the fund balance is a rainy day fund not a golden pot. He stated we should not take out more than is being put back in as the balance has been going down. Rep. Howard stated he needed more information on the roof warranty. Rep. Tilton stated they are receiving estimates for budget purposes.


Rep. Gallagher stated history shows the County uses fund balance for the budget. He stated using fund balance for debt service will leave \$2 million for a balance. Rep. Gallagher stated we need to be careful not to ask for more money from the tax payers than needed. Rep. Tilton stated the balance needs to be reserved for unanticipated expenses. Commissioner DeVoy stated he agrees with Rep. Tilton. He stated a bond payment of \$7.3 million is a lot cheaper than an \$8 million bond payment. Commissioner Taylor stated on a \$200,000.00 property the savings to the tax payer would be \$15.00 a year with Rep. Gallagher's proposal. Rep. Varney asked if the roof could be done by taking the money from the outside agencies. Rep. Tilton stated their budgets are a 10th of that. Rep. Gallagher stated the issue is where to take money from. Commissioner DeVoy stated the board had to come up with a budget by November and things change as more information becomes available. He stated he would like to start the roof this summer.

Rep. Aldrich asked if we are paying interest on the current debt service. Rep. Gallagher stated yes. M/Gallagher, S/Howard to table discussion. Unanimous. **Motion passed.**

Acceptance of new vehicle: The Sheriff explained a program where Strafford County donated a vehicle to Belknap County. He assured the Delegation that Strafford County would be willing to take the vehicle back. He explained that the Commissioners had accepted the vehicle as county property. M/Dumais, S/Fields to concur with the Commissioners decision. Unanimous. **Motion passed.**

Adjourn: M/Howard, S/Aldrich to adjourn at 9:20 pm. Unanimous vote. **Motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Gallagher".

Brian Gallagher, Clerk of the Delegation

