

Belknap County Delegation
Budget Work session Minutes
1/9/17 @ 9:00am
Belknap County Complex, Laconia NH

Members present: Representatives Maloney, Silber, Flanders, Fields, Abear, Spanos, Vadney, Howard, Sylvia, Aldrich, Huot, Plumer, Frasier, Lang, and Comtois.

Absent: Representatives Tilton, Varney, and Fisher

Chairman Vadney thanked the outgoing Representatives for their service. He explained the process he planned to follow for reviewing the budget.

There were several comments made about the legal role of the Delegation vs. the Commission and the lawsuit from several years ago, relating to budgetary authority, which was later dropped.

Discussion moved to presentation of County revenues.

- Commissioner Devoy presented the projections.
- Rep. Howard raised the \$175,000 Gunstock line item and suggested excluding it.
- Discussion ensued in which Chairman Vadney indicated that Representatives Frasier, Plumer, and Howard would serve on the Gunstock Subcommittee. The Gunstock subcommittee will address the memorandum of agreement (MOA) and issues attendant for future presentation to the delegation.

Rep Sylvia inquired whether the intention was to finalize the revenue budget.

- Commissioner Devoy indicated the tax amount will increase. Further there are grant applications in an amount between \$500K-\$1MM between Corrections, County Attorney and Restorative Justice.

Rep. Silber raised question of the status of the County's Undesignated Fund Balance and its history.

- Rep. Hout commented he saw no problem.
- Rep Comtois expressed concern with the balance and the direction of change.
- Commissioner Devoy stated the county has been spending down the fund balance.
- Rep Huot commented that spending and revenues are estimates, discussed performance, department givebacks and raised HB-120 Revenue Stabilization Fund.
- Rep Howard raised the question of the proposed use of the 2017 fund balance.
- Commissioner Taylor referenced the situation experienced by Grafton County's nursing home closure and resultant forced tax increase. He observed Belknap County's fund balance has decreased to the point where we will soon have no ability to stabilize tax rate increases.

- Rep Comtois observed the revenue projection increases about \$1MM and the commissioner's budget proposes using about \$2.1MM of the fund balance. Further, spending is increased in the proposed county budget.
- Commissioner Devoy characterized the spending increase as uncontrollable.
- Chairman Vadney suggested that based on fund balance we can at most kick the can down the tax increase road one year and doing so depletes the fund.
- Commissioner Taylor referenced the HHS line item as the county's largest single line item.
- Rep. Huot responded with a discussion of action by the legislature saying it forced the counties to choose between responsibility for the elderly or juvenile services. He laid responsibility for HHS line on the state.
- Chairman Vadney commented on the gray tsunami we are encountering.

Rep Silber asked the commissioners: What percentage of health insurance is paid by the employees?

- Commissioner Devoy responded: None and expanded on contract negotiations moving forward.
- Chairman Vadney asked: When will we know the negotiation results?
- Devoy responded that is unknown.

Discussion turned to the contents of the 2017 revenue budget analysis columns:

- The meaning of each column was explained.
- There was discussion of variance analysis. No action was taken to effect same.

Discussion moved to the spending side of the county budget.

- Commissioner Devoy reviewed the county convention section.
- Rep. Abear made a motion to add \$5000 to the line item for legal expenses.
- There was a second from Rep. Comtois
- The vote in favor. (15 – 0) Motion carried.

The Delegation discussed the practice of using the Federal mileage reimbursement rate for its members. No vote was taken.

It was noted that the meetings are not posted in a newspaper that covers the Town of Barnstead. Several ideas were considered in order to address the issue. The Commissioners will provide a recommendation on how much will have to be added to the budget to publish notices in additional newspapers.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the county attorney section of the proposed budget. The largest cost increases center on personnel increases. Discussion centered on the increases. Other areas of concerns were: contracted services where increases are attributed to previously free use of Westlaw and a SOPTS terminal and witness and legal experts where the discussion revolved around use of the state for processing of evidence and the state's contract with labs from outside NH. No action was taken.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the county administration section of the proposed budget.

Areas of discussion:

- Addition of an HR director.
- Wages of elected officials.
- Group health insurance.
- Retirement.
- Change in the legal services line.
- Cable and internet. See page 80 of budget book.
- Dues and subscriptions.
- Meeting recording.
- Training.

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the information technology section of the proposed budget.

Areas of discussion:

- Contracted IT services. See page 78 of the budget book.
- Software support.
- I/T electronic Maintenance and hosting. See page 74 of the budget book.
- Electronic equipment repairs and maintenance. Unanticipated occurrences.
- New equipment. See page 74 of the budget book.

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the finance section of the proposed budget. Areas of discussion:

- Wages. Step increases resultant from the union contract approval.
- Bank services. CMS deposit to Citizens Bank IRS SNAFU
- Training to maintain investment in Munis. See page 55 of the budget book.
- Books. "Green Book" NH accounting How to manual.

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the registry of deeds section of the proposed budget. Areas of discussion:

- Wages. They decreased
- Telecommunications.
- Contracted services. Software and support for scanning and indexing.
- Equipment repairs and maintenance. Microfilm required for backup in case of disaster.
- Property and Liability insurance. Bid increase.

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the maintenance section of the proposed budget. Areas of discussion:

- Workers compensation. 4 employees
- Cleaning services. Outsourced work to Great Northern.
- Contracted services. See page 117 of the budget book.

- Electricity. New service provider.
- Property repairs and maintenance – courthouse.

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the contingency section of the proposed budget. Areas of discussion:

- None

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Commissioner DeVoy reviewed the sheriff's section of the proposed budget. Areas of discussion:

- Request for an additional dispatcher.
- The number of double dippers in court security?
- Why are we expecting no change in dispatcher overtime after adding an additional dispatcher?
- Compensation other – health insurance incentive. Lump sum to induce people to leave the county policy.
- Contracted services. Scanners, copiers, printers, radios, dispatch system, data terminal, telecom for running plates, radio towers
- Professional services- special operations. Radios and vests.
- Training. New detectives.
- Uniform allowance. Contractual.
- Uniforms... TBD
- Safety and ammunition supplies. Minimum to qualify staff at the range with margin for required requalifications.
- Vehicle maintenance and repair. No new vehicles.
- New equipment. Tazers, radios and vests at end of useful life.
- Vehicles/vehicle leases. 6 vehicles.

No action was taken on this section of the budget.

Representative Sylvia presented a motion to authorize a certain level of spending until the budget is adopted (see attached).

- Representative Silber seconded the motion.
- After a considerable amount of discussion, Representative Silber withdrew his second.

Representative Howard made a motion to ask the Commissioners to retain legal counsel for the most recent legal claim received.

- Rep Sylvia made a motion to authorize the Commissioners to expend fund to defend the law suit.
- Rep Silber questioned the proper procedure for engaging legal counsel. Specifically whether the responsible body is the delegation or the commissioners.
- Rep Lang moved the motion.
- Rep. Spanos asked: Who is suing and about what?

- Chairman Vadney explained the basics of the suit.
 - Tardif is the plaintiff.
 - We were served this date.
 - The matter revolves around spending without an appropriation in place and public notice.
 - We have no legal opinion as yet as to merits or potential action.
 - The bills will be paid by the commissioners through the county.
- Commissioner Devoy asked if immediate response is required. Commented that RSA's imply we have until the end of March to approve a budget.
- Rep Huot commented on issues with the suit and response. Potential for statewide repercussions.
- Rep Frasier asked about carry forward?
- Rep. Howard inquired about counter suit.
- Rep Lang commented on History.
- Rep. Sylvia raised Rockingham County as an example of other counties that handle the budget differently.
- Rep. Fields cited Hillsborough County as using a continuing resolution.
- Rep. Lang seconded Howard's motion. T
- The motion carried unanimously.

At 2:00 a 30 minute recess was called. At 2:30, it was determined that a quorum was no longer present. The meeting was discontinued.

The next will be noticed to reconvene 1/20 and 1/23 at 9:00am.

Respectfully submitted,



Debra A. Shackett

