



Delegation Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2017 at 6:00 pm

Chair Herb Vadney called the Belknap County Delegation meeting to order at 6:11 pm on the above date at 34 County Drive, Laconia, NH. Representative Howard led the pledge of allegiance.

In Attendance: Representatives Abear, Aldrich, Comtois, Fields, Fisher, Fraser, Howard, Huot, Lang, Spanos, Sylvia, Vadney and Varney.

Absent: Representative Flanders, Maloney, Plumer, Silber and Tilton.

Minutes: M/Lang, S/Aldrich to approve the minutes of 2/21/17. Unanimous. **Motion passed.**

Rep Vadney asked for input from public. He stated he would allow 10-15 minutes.

Paula Twombly, Meredith asked what the tax impact have been with no cuts to the budget. Ms. Twombly also asked how much the tax impact would be with the proposed cuts to date. Rep Abear stated it depends on how much money would be applied from fund balance. He stated it would have been 7.5% increase as proposed based on fund balance usage in Commissioners proposed budget.

Barbara Howard Alton asked the Delegation to consider the impact of what they are doing on top of all other increases the tax payers are facing.

Commissioner Taylor stated the average tax payer who has a \$200,000 home under the Commission proposed budget would have a County tax of \$276.41. He stated if you take \$200,000 from the budget than that would take \$12 off the bill.

Rep Comtois stated a few years ago the board of Commissioners at that time stated they would look at automating payroll. She stated if they had automated payroll it would have saved \$30,000-\$40,000 per year.

Commissioner DeVoy stated he would like to see Rep Comtois costs analysis. Commissioner Waring stated outsourcing payroll has advantages and disadvantages. He stated that a proposal from ADP had been received and they were not cost effective. Commissioner Waring asked where the cost savings would be. Rep Comtois stated it would eliminate a person. Commissioner Waring stated that the information received that there is one employee that only does payroll is not accurate. He stated there is a department that processes payroll and accounts payable. Commissioner DeVoy stated the Delegation had approved Kronos which has the ability

to move forward with mobile time entry. Rep Comtois stated part of the savings was the annual cost for Kronos and the fee for Munis payroll. County Administrator Shackett stated there are 42 different pay codes where most companies have 5 or 6. Rep Comtois asked if the new system had GPS tracking. Accounting Manager Lori Sharp stated she would need to look into it to get a definite answer but she thought it did. Rep Vadney suggested that we look into not having so many pay codes. County Administrator Shackett stated a lot of the pay codes are due to the union contracts. She stated they are trying to fix this through negotiations.

Rep Huot stated none of this is going to have an impact on the budget. He stated we should focus on getting through the budget tonight.

Rep Lang stated he was struggling with the last half to take money from. He stated there is not a lot of fat on the bone to scrape off.

Rep Vadney stated the County should not hire people for the new jail and look at contracting staff instead. He stated he was not sure he had been told what the staffing levels would be with the new building. Commissioner DeVoy stated there is a lot more ground to cover in the new building. He stated we are at the bottom 1% for staffing levels in the Country. Commissioner DeVoy stated the County has paid a lot in medical expenses for attempted suicides in the last year. Commissioner Taylor stated at the public hearing for the Bond there was a slide show that went over the number of staff needed for the new building.

Rep Comtois asked if the 2015 numbers had been audited. County Administrator Shackett stated they were finalized in May or June 2016. Commissioner DeVoy stated the auditors have been very impressed with our financial records.

2017 Budget:

M/Howard to approve the 2017 budget of \$27,681,889.00, inclusive of the schedule A adjustment. With estimated revenues of \$14,718,449.00 and the amount to be raised by taxes to be \$12,963,440.00 and it decreases the Commission budget by \$516,602.00.

Discussion on Rep Howard motion:

Rep Lang stated we already voted on $\frac{3}{4}$ of budget and asked if this would be undoing all the votes already taken. Rep Howard stated it would not.

Rep Howard reviewed the Schedule A 2017 Belknap County Budget Adjustments that he prepared. He stated he was trying to level fund and not cut departments. S/Varney Rep Howards motion.

Rep Fisher asked if this was one motion. He stated it would make sense to break it up between expenses and revenues. Rep Howard stated this is how I'm making my motion. He stated if this motion passes I would reconsider Rep Lang motion to amend the transfer policy.

Rep Abear asked what the current fund balance was. County Administrator Shackett stated the estimated unaudited is \$3.4million. Rep Abear stated the Board of Commissioners just passed a fund balance policy and asked what the high and low ends of the policy. Commissioner Waring

stated \$3.5-5 million. Commissioner Taylor stated not to use any more than the surplus from the previous year. Rep Spanos stated the Commissioners have submitted a budget of \$28million and would make a slight increase in property tax bill. Commissioner Taylor stated that was correct. The average increase would be \$18.

Rep Lang asked if this motion overrides the previous votes taken. He stated this motion would be out of order. Rep Vadney stated all previous votes were not final.

Rep Howard stated we have brought a lot of new technology into the nursing home to help with residents. He stated right now we have 5 staff in the activity department and no other nursing home in the state has this many staff in their activity department. Rep Huot stated the nursing home has not been discussed at all. He stated he would like to know what the nursing home thinks. Rep Howard stated we had three public hearings and each department presented. He stated we now assume what we don't know.

Rep Vadney stated we could do this 17 more weeks in a row and never come to a conclusion. He stated he would like the lady who runs the nursing home to speak to losing two staff. Nursing Home Administrator Shelley Richardson stated activities run 7/days per week from 8am-8pm. She stated when they take out residents 2 staff need to go so it would leave one staff member to cover the entire building. Nursing Home Administrator Richardson stated technology helps but we still need the staff to help the residents. Rep Comtois asked if there were volunteers. Nursing Home Administrator Richardson stated there are volunteers. Rep Lang stated he was pretty sure that if we left our kids in front of the TV all the time we would be considered bad parents.

Rep Vadney asked about the upgrades to the internet access in the nursing and if it was for staff or residents. Nursing Home Administrator Richardson stated the hotspots went to the residents. County Administrator Shackett stated the residents were using the employee bandwidth.

Rep Howard stated a lot of what is being described sounds more like therapy than activities. Commissioner DeVoy stated activities are therapy. Rep Fields stated to Rep Howard when you gave the figure for the final budget you took out Genesis but they help the nursing home. Nursing Home Administrator Richardson stated Genesis for the Nursing Home is Physical, Occupational and Speech therapy.

Rep Abear stated he is struggling with the fund balance and applying the fund balance policy. He asked if it was correct to say the current number that is in the existing proposed budget from Commissioners is about 12% increase and it would be a 19% increase in taxes. County Administrator Shackett stated in order to get to a zero tax increase and not use fund balance than \$2 ¼ million would need to be cut or add more revenue to the budget.

Donna Hepp, Belknap County Conservation District Chairman stated the agency is an IRS recognized governmental agency. She stated they are an all-volunteer board with one full-time staff member. Rep Howard stated there is nothing in the RSA's that state we have to have a Conservation District.

M/Abear, S/Spanos to adjourn at 7:45pm. Need to have a motion to table current motion before a motion to adjourn.

M/Abear, S/Lang to table current motion. 6-7 **motion failed** by hand vote.

Celia, Genesis stated the money Genesis asks from towns is for emergency services. She stated the money from the County is to help the under insured. Rep Vadney asked if they see people from Barnstead. Celia stated they see people from every town in Belknap County.

Rep Huot spoke about the cuts in Rep Howard proposed budget. He stated the outside agencies provide a tremendous service to Belknap County. Rep Huot stated we need to focus on the needs of the residents in Belknap County. He stated he didn't know how taxes could go down when everything else is going up. Rep Huot stated he remembered in 2013-2014 talking about the cost to run a new jail. He stated he thought if they tweaked the Commissioners budget a little they could meet the needs of the residents. Rep Huot stated he strongly objects to this budget.

Rep Fisher commended Rep Howard for his effort. He stated he would vote against the motion and review the expense items.

Rep Sylvia stated Rep Howard numbers is spending more than he is comfortable with. He stated he would support even though it spends more than he is comfortable with.

Rep Fields stated there are four members missing and that they should have the right to give their input. He stated he has faith in Administration and the Commissioners that they are doing a good job. Rep Fields stated he couldn't vote for a budget that is going to cut these services.

Rep Comtois asked Rep Sylvia and Fisher if they had other recommended cuts. Rep Sylvia and Fisher stated they do.

Rep Abear stated they still have a ways to go to balance this budget. He stated whether we adopt this budget as proposed we still have some significant work to do.

Commissioner Taylor stated the biggest line item in this budget is the HHS that originates from the Legislation. He stated that line item has gone up over 30% since 2010. Commissioner Taylor stated this is still the smallest budget in the state of NH. He stated that you talk about Conservation look at the MS-42 it has a line in it for Conservation and Coop Extension and Outside Agencies and to think about the overall impact you are making with these cuts.

Rep Fraser asked if this would not increase taxes. Rep Abear stated there is a gap of \$2.25 million that needs to be found to not increase taxes. He stated this helps to close the gap.

Commissioner DeVoy stated the more you put down income the more fund balance we use. He stated the problem is we are down 10% in taxes when the other counties are going up. Rep Vadney asked about the pay raises that were mentioned for contracts. Commissioner DeVoy stated that was to get employees off the Cadillac health plans not knowing what was going to happen with the Presidential Election.

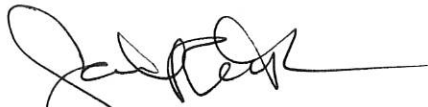
Commissioner Waring stated the way I understands Rep Howard motion if it passes it would be a zero tax increase and would use almost \$2.25 million in fund balance. Rep Howard stated that was correct. He reiterated that on the schedule A the only cut to County function is the nursing home activity aides and the other cuts are to outside agencies.

Rep Abear called roll: Abear-N, Aldrich-Y, Comtois-Y, Fields-N, Fisher-N, Fraser-N, Howard-Y, Huot-N, Lang-N, Spanos-N, Sylvia-Y, Vadney-Y and Varney-Y. 6-7 **Motion failed.**

The Delegation will meet on the following dates at 6:00 pm to continue the 2017 Budget Review: March 10th, March 13th, March 20th, March 24th and March 28th.

Adjourn: M/Huot, S/Fields to adjourn at 8:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Ellsworth', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jamie Ellsworth
Administrative Assistant

