



Delegation Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2017 at 6:00 pm

Chair Herb Vadney called the Belknap County Delegation meeting to order at 6:15 pm on the above date at 34 County Drive, Laconia, NH. Representative Varney led the pledge of allegiance.

In Attendance: Representatives Abear, Aldrich (6:38 pm), Comtois, Fields, Fisher, Howard, Huot, Lang, Maloney, Plumer, Silber, Spanos, Sylvia, Vadney and Varney.

Absent: Representative Flanders, Fraser and Tilton.

Rep Vadney stated the Delegation is not required to appropriate money, if we don't appropriate then the Commission budget passes.

Rep Lang objected.

Rep Vadney stated he was out of order. He made the following statement. The Commissioners have nothing to lose. They know if they delay long enough than their budget passes. We have asked for information and are not receiving it.

Rep Fields stated the Commissioners do give what you ask for but you are never happy.

Rep Vadney made the following statement. We are asking for line item information. If the Commissioners don't give us the correct information in effect they are hiding a football. The apparent withholding of data is not allowing us to make informed decisions. Give credit to Rep Abear for doing analyzation. Request has been made of Commission Chair and County Administrator for history of line items and have not received accurate information. The Delegation frustration level has been amplified by the changing of information. Budget request is \$28 million. The only tools we have are to close the gap between spending and revenue are an increase in property tax and using the fund balance. Could inflate our revenue but we don't want to do that. Lastly we have spending reductions. How do we close the gap?

Rep Howard stated about half way through the budget process the Commissioners attempted to add \$135,000 to the budget that wasn't approved by DRA.

Rep Huot made the following statement. I don't share any of the thoughts you have provided. Don't know what information you don't have. The budget was set out in December with specific line items. I don't recall any of the analysis that you speak of or any of the discussions you talk about. If you continue this process with people submitting their numbers the clerk will not be

able to complete the MS42 in accordance with the law. We don't have to accept the Commissioner budget but it is not up to them to decide where to cut. It's our responsibility and we are in charge.

Rep Lang made the following statement. I don't agree with the representations of the Commission or Ms. Shackett. All my requests have been made and they have given me everything I have asked for. Department Heads have agreed to meet with me. Everyone has been very open and forthcoming. I think that we have made progress going through department by department. These global changes confuse people. We should continue reviewing by department.

Rep Howard stated briefly the departments were already covered and voted on. There is no indication in the minutes that the line items were cut. Rep Lang stated there was discussion and the video of the meeting is available to watch.

Minutes: M/Lang, S/Fields to approve the minutes of 2/28/17. 14-1 Rep Silber abstained.
Motion passed.

Rep Huot stated he didn't think the minutes are required to include the line item cuts. He reviewed the required items to be recorded on the MS42.

2017 Budget:

M/Abear to approve for 2017 budget \$27,487,463.00 inclusive of schedule A with revenues of \$12,886,170.00 and \$12,963,440.00 to be raised by taxes. S/Plumer.

Rep. Silber asked if it included a tax increase. Rep Abear stated it did not.

Rep Spanos asked how this would impact the fund balance. Rep Abear stated he tried to do this with all stakeholders in mind. He stated the motion respects the tax payers and the County; it holds the tax rate constant and we are recognizing the current economy of the County. Rep Abear reviewed his Schedule A and stated he would not go through the line item detail as time does not permit but would answer questions.

Rep Howard read the RSA for the Conservation District. He stated this was originally intended to help landowners work with government. Rep Howard stated it is all voluntary with no mandate for staff. Rep Abear stated the \$60,000 does cover the out of pocket expenses and they are largely funded by grants.

Rep Plumer asked if it is known what services would be lost in the conservation district. Rep Abear stated it is not known.

Rep Lang stated we cut \$65,540 for the HR Director Position and you think that number should be \$9200 higher. Rep Abear stated it is the cuts in addition to the \$65,540. Rep Lang stated he thought they already cut everything associated with the HR Director. He stated this is a budget we already voted for and this is a binding vote and asked how do we go back and undo a vote

already taken. Rep Vadney stated he disagreed and that those were works in progress votes. Rep Lang stated that was not how the motion was made. Rep Vadney stated the entire evening was a work in progress.

Rep Silber stated as a chair for the Gilford Budget Committee we go through a process and votes are not final until process is complete. He stated what he hears from constituents is the dissatisfaction with tax increase and government growth. Rep Silber stated tax payers don't show up to these meetings usually only the people sucking the money of the county. He stated very few say they want to see an increase in taxes.

Rep Plumer stated he comes from a very poor district and many of his constituents are fighting for survival. He stated his position is to try to keep the tax increase as minimal as possible. Rep Plumer stated he thought the departments are doing a good job but he is trying to represent his constituents.

Rep Sylvia stated he roughly figured we are spending 5% more than last year and that is more than inflation but somewhat understanding with the new jail.

Rep Lang stated the difference in the HR Director Position is in the Commissioner budget it starts 5/1. He asked if anyone has spoken to the Sheriff about the effects of the cuts. Rep Sylvia stated the opportunity for attrition came and went. He stated we don't get to choose attrition and that is something that the Commissioners decide. Rep Sylvia stated we need to slim the budget down somewhere and it is nothing personal he thinks new Sheriff will do a great job.

Rep Fisher requested to hear from the Sheriff. Rep Vadney stated he doesn't intend to open meeting to the public but would allow comment from the Sheriff.

Sheriff Moyer stated the last time a new deputy sheriff was hired was in 2005. He stated he has been going out and delivering papers to people because the department is short staffed. Rep Abear stated the last time you were here we had a conversation about the overtime budget. He stated you had \$40,000 in overtime for dispatch and add a full time dispatcher and didn't want to decrease overtime in order to get the new dispatch position. Rep Abear stated this is how I see the approach to do the budget. Sheriff Moyer asked how you cut a dispatcher, deputy and overtime.

Rep Spanos addressed Rep Lang and stated if we agree and vote on a budget than that would supersede any votes taken previously. He stated he is a tax payer in Gilford, Meredith and Tilton and is sensitive to the need of Genesis and the Nursing Home activity department. Rep Spanos stated he didn't know how deeply we can cut. He stated he would be willing to add some back and take more from fund balance and put this matter to end.

Commissioner DeVoy stated he thought that he had been very helpful. He stated we have not stonewalled and there are a lot of serious problems with this Rep Abears' budget. Commissioner DeVoy stated increasing revenues by \$850,000.00 is a serious concern. He stated to cut food by \$40,000.00 for inmates what do we do if we can't feed the inmates. Commissioner DeVoy stated we are the lowest staffed jail in the state and nursing home activity department in the state.

He stated if you want to cut taxes than you need to change policy. The war on drugs is costing money. We are responsible for county residents in other nursing homes. We are required to provide these services and the costs are going up. There will be a lot of consequences to the local people. The County Commissioners budget is a good one. Commissioner DeVoy asked that we continue the process of voting by department that was previously being done.

Rep Spanos stated at some point we are going to pass a budget and not everyone is going to walk away happy. He stated he is fully prepared to use fund balance.

Rep Abear stated the comment from Mission Creek came from how the conservation district was approaching fundraising. The RSA that governs the Conservation District specifies what they can do. Rep Abear stated their mission is overlapping with other agency groups and the \$60,000 is for personnel related issues. Jan Hooper spoke on behalf of the Conservation District stated there are requirements to have an employee and the cost is \$76,000.00.

Rep Vadney stated the entire Country has been overspending for a while and it's very hard to cut people and programs.

Rep Howard stated the audit for the Conservation District is required by the State conservation district not the County.

Rep Maloney stated he has a problem with the staffing cuts. He stated he is open to cuts of the outside agencies but can't see cutting a position.

Rep Varney stated we represent 60,000 constituents. He stated when he presents his budget for the fire department it never passes at 100%. Rep Varney stated we need to decide what is mission critical. He stated he is all for the Commissioners to be allowed to move money around in the departments.

Rep Howard asked to call roll.

Rep Fields asked to amend the motion.

Rep. Huot stated there would be no more amendments once motion passed.

Rep Lang stated if we vote than we can't hear from Rep Spanos.

Rep Abear called roll: Abear-Y, Aldrich-Y, Comtois-Y, Fields-N, Fisher-N, Howard-Y, Huot-N, Lang-N, Maloney-N, Plumer-Y, Silber-Y, Spanos-N, Sylvia-Y, Vadney-Y and Varney-Y. 9-6
Motion passed.

M/Lang to allow the commissioners to do line item transfers within the same department. S/Aldrich. Rep Sylvia asked if this includes the \$1000 limit. Rep Lang stated it would do away with it. Rep Abear called roll: Abear-Y, Aldrich-Y, Comtois-Y, Fields-Y, Fisher-Y, Howard-Y, Huot-Y, Lang-Y, Maloney-Y, Plumer-Y, Silber-Y, Spanos-Y, Sylvia-Y, Vadney-Y and Varney-Y. Unanimous. **Motion passed.**

Commissioner DeVoy stated we can't fill out the MS-42 without where the increase in revenue will be coming from, it needs to be articulated. Commissioner Waring stated he had been asking since the start of the meeting where the revenue increase was coming from. He stated this information is needed for the DRA form. Rep Abear stated we will give you a list. Commissioner Waring stated you voted on something that you don't have all the information for. Rep Howard tore off a sheet of paper and passed it to Rep Abear to show his suggested revenues.

Gunstock Memorandum of Agreement:

Rep Huot asked about the Gunstock agreement. Rep Howard stated we haven't heard back from the Gunstock Commissioners. Rep Huot stated he didn't want to discuss until we have our questions answered. Rep Howard stated the Gunstock Commission is reading the statute different.

Rep Lang stated he is still trying to understand how we adopted a budget without knowing the revenue.

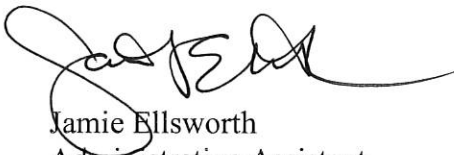
Rep Field asked if he could amend the vote.

Rep Vadney stated there is a meeting scheduled Monday.

Rep Lang suggested that the vote could be taken again on the budget at Monday's meeting. Rep Vadney said that would be unlikely.

Adjourn: Rep Vadney adjourned the meeting at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Jamie Ellsworth
Administrative Assistant

