



BELKNAP COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Minutes of the Belknap County Commissioners and the Executive Committee February 5, 2009

Commissioner Boothby called the Belknap County Commissioners meeting to order at 7:04 PM on the above date at 34 County Drive, Laconia, NH.

In Attendance: Chairman Christopher Boothby, Vice Chairman Edward Philpot Jr., Clerk Richard Long, and Debra Shackett, County Administrator.

Also in attendance: Representative Dennis Fields, Gil Schohan, Alan Robichaud, Brian Loanes and members of the press.

Invited guests: Senator Kathleen Sgambati and Senator Deborah Reynolds. Judge Willard Martin was also an invited guest, but was unable to attend due to a prior commitment.

1. Introductions: Commissioners introduced themselves and their invited guests. Commissioner Boothby also introduced the chair of the County Convention, Alida Millham. Chair Millham then introduced the other Executive Committee members Representatives Stephen Nedeau, David Russell, James Pilliod, Donald Flanders, Elizabeth Merry and Beth Arsenault.

2. Discussions: Commissioner Boothby opened the meeting by stating that the Commissioners and County Convention feel that it is important for everyone to be on the same page as far as legislative issues and policy agenda. Commissioner Boothby and Chair Millham had lunch in an effort to start to open up a dialogue and better communications. It is important to be one team with one mutual agenda and carry our ideas back to Concord. We are all doing the people's business and must work collectively together.

3. Acknowledgement: Even though his schedule would not permit him to attend tonight's meeting, the Commissioners wanted to publically thank Judge Willard "Bud" Martin for the efforts that he has put forth in addressing Juveniles Services and meeting with the Senators, etc. to open up the dialoged in an effort to come up with a more efficient system in handling our youth.

4. Elderly/Juvenile billing/costs: Discussions ensued around the issue of elderly and juvenile services and the role change between what the County is now responsible for and what the State is now responsible for. Everyone present owns the responsibility of keeping our kids safe and our elderly taken care of. Senator Sgambati indicated that HB2 was never meant to divide Nursing Home responsibilities and Juvenile responsibilities; only the billing factor was changed to try and simplify the system for how services are billed. It was not for the County and the State to fight over who pays the bills.

Commissioner Boothby pointed out that if that were the case and there was no change in the county's responsibility then payments for the county would not have changed. There were discussions.

5. Juvenile Services: Senator Reynolds complimented that Belknap County has a robust Restorative Justice Program that other counties do not have. These programs save tax payers money in the long run making it very valuable to taxpayers. Belknap County Restorative Justice is a role model for the State. It provides a direct service and benefit to our communities. Senator Sgambati, Senator Reynolds, Judge Martin, Alan Robichaud and others met to try and ratify some short term solutions to keep these programs going while a long term solution and solid plan is achieved. They are working to help with supporting grants, (STAR Grant) etc. They are all trying to join efforts to create a system that makes sense all around. The system needs to be reshaped.

6. Funding: Mr. Robichaud spoke to the fact that he went to a meeting in Concord today on the committee for diversion programs. There are no bills being passes right now that have a fiscal note attached. There are discussions around the fact of whether or not diversion funds will even exist with all the budget cuts. The State is having financial difficulties and the Governor will be releasing his budget soon.

There is a clash in funding services. The purpose of everyone present here tonight is to try and create a bridge that will help continue to allow Restorative Justice, Citizens Council continue to serve their purpose until a better funding mechanism is in place. We are all trying to fix the problems in the long term with strategic programming. Rep. Millham remarked that the Citizen's council brings all the players together in paving the road for this system. We need to protect that in the short term.

7. Public input: The Chair asked for public input twice. There was none.

8. Legislative bill relative to Gunstock: Commissioner Philpot spoke to the Executive Committee members and asked that they support the amendment to the proposed legislative bill relative to Gunstock. (HB 253 amendment)

9. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela A. Bovill, Administrative Assistant