

Carroll County Delegation  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, October 3, 2011

Present: Rep. Betsey Patten, Rep. Joe Fleck, Rep. Karen Umberger, Rep. Chris Ahlgren, Rep. Steve Schmidt, Rep. Harry Mellow, Rep. Norm Tregenza, Rep. Mark McConkey, Rep. David Babson, Rep. Laurie Pettingill, Rep. Frank McCarthy.

Others Present: Comm. David Sorensen, Comm. Dorothy Solomon, Comm. Asha Kenney.

Public Present: Daymond Steer, Ed Comeau, Ann Hamilton, Will DeWitte, Ann Aiton, Kathy Garry, Maureen Spencer, Melissa Seamans, Carol DeLaurier, Steve Brown.

Rep. Patten convened the meeting at 9:05am.

Pledge of Allegiance

Delegation is meeting today to let the Commissioners know what they want and don't want to see in the upcoming budget for this year.

No Public Input.

Rep. Umberger: The overall budget should not exceed the overall inflation rate this year. There will be no social security or pension increases for citizens this year. Rep. Fleck agrees, the CPI remains flat again this year. The entire budget needs to stay at a flat rate. Rep. McCarthy also agrees. The increase in the County budget over the last several was 29% and last year it was at 17% according to Rep. McCarthy's figures.

Rep. Mellow asked how the current union contracts play into to the budget. Do we have raises built into it?

Comm. Sorensen: The Sheriff's contract is the only contract it is a two year contract. We are under negotiations with the jail and the nursing home contract. I have met with the attorney and we are looking at a 1% increase.

The Delegation can appropriate any amount of money. The Commissioners are bound by the contract.

Rep. Ahlgren: We need to keep the budget as low as possible especially on general fund spending. We won't have the stimulus money we had last year.

There was a million more last year to put into the budget to offset taxes. The nursing home budget could be one area to look at. Their deficit should be less than one million dollars.

Rep. Babson: A flat budget is a lofty goal. A 1% or 2% increase because there are things we have no control over.

Rep. Schmidt would like to get into the discretionary side of the budget. Rep. McConkey agrees and be as close to level funded as possible.

Comm. Solomon if we level at what we think it should be and we go above that, take the fuel line for example, we will have a problem.

Rep. Patten: With all due diligence don't add any new projects. I received a call from the County Atty. He has lost another Asst. County Attorney to another county earning \$40k more in salary. There is another one looking to leave for a better position. To look at these salaries and make adjustments will be a negotiation. You can only do a level funding for so long before you start losing part of your infrastructure and services. We need to be reasonable and err on the conservative side.

Rep. Fleck: The budget should reflect the CPI. Level it at what the CPI is expected to be at and then look at what we don't have control over.

Rep. McCarthy stated it is the responsibility of the Delegation to set the pay scale for all county offices and there are several Dept. Heads that are underpaid. The Superintendent of the jail is one, and the Sheriff and the County Attorney and some of his people. There should be room in the budget to give them pay raises when the time comes.

The Delegation meets in June to determine salaries for Elected Officials.

Rep. Babson during the last budget season made a motion to increase the Asst. County Attorney's salaries and it was voted down by the Delegation. He would like to know if the increased inmate day's is due to the lack of attorney's time or the courts being closed on Fridays.

Rep. Patten: We need to make sure we aren't down shifting these issues to the county from the state when voted in Concord.

Rep. Umberger: The courts should be back to five days a week as that was how they were funded. If they are not, I need to know that.

Discussion on the CPI and how it works. It is the best tool we have to rely on and should be used to determine the rate. The NE CPI is geared more toward the Boston region. Carroll County is more reflective of the National CPI. Need to decide which one to use.

Comm. Sorensen: The union contracts were based on the CPI on April 1. I would rather have it based on CPI in November so it can be budgeted accordingly.

It is Commissioners role to make that change.

Rep. Patten: What we have so far is inflation rate close to the CPI as low as possible, difference between discretionary and non-discretionary and 1%-2% increase, close to level as possible. We don't want infrastructure to suffer.

Pellet boilers due to be installed in October.

Rep. McConkey: Due to the pellet operation we could see a 20% decrease in fuel

costs. What would it cost for the County to own its own propane tank so the county could negotiate its price of fuel going forward.

Take energy out of the CPI and it is flat 0.2%.

Delegation will let the Commissioners set the CPI. Commissioners will set the rate and bring forward an explanation to the Delegation. They will not support an across the board increase on the budget. Need to view it line by line.

**MOTION:**

Rep. Babson made a motion to direct the Commissioners to hold the line, as a guideline for a 1% increase for the total budget. Rep. McConkey seconded the motion for discussion.

Rep. Patten accepted the motion stating that the amount to be raised by taxes that Rep. Ahlgren discussed is a different issue.

Comm. Sorensen asked for clarification if that 1% could be offset by revenue. Discussion of the issue and does it include the rainy day fund or is it just a 1% increase across the board. This is to be the grand total of expenditures that was appropriated. This is not offset by any revenues. The grand total of appropriated expenditure should not exceed 1%.

Rep. Patten: Amendment to the motion would be; we would hold the line with the guideline of 1% increase to the total appropriations. Rep. Babson and Rep. McConkey in agreement. Going through the budget process, heat and medical will go up this year, as well as unemployment. Rep. Merrow stated with a 1% to bottom line you're limited. He agrees with doing this, but some of these need a leeway in case they go out of sight. That is why the word "guideline" is added into the motion.

Discussion of what line items could present fluctuation, example Sheriff's grants for patrol and DUI stops. The Sheriff's Dept. took revenue and spent it instead of turning it into the County.

Rep. Ahlgren discussed the option of raising taxes incrementally, instead of making huge tax increases. The amount raised last year was 12.8%. This was after the infusion of \$2.5 million from the rainy day fund.

Discussion of how this happened last year.

Rep. Merrow stated that Rep. Babson made a simple motion that has been discussed in detail and these issues should be handled by the commissioners. He requested to move the question. All in favor.

**MOTION:**

Rep. Patten: There was a motion by Rep. Babson, seconded by Rep. McConkey to hold the line with a guideline of 1% increase for total appropriations.

10 in favor of motion, 1 opposed (Rep. Tregenza).

**MOTION:**

Rep. Ahlgren made a motion that as a guideline the commissioners bring forth in

the new budget that the income to be raised by taxes be as close to this 1% increase as possible to last years amount. Rep. Umberger seconded the motion. 10 in favor of motion, 1 opposed (Rep. Babson).

Rep. Patten: We have a guideline of total appropriations at 1% and we have a guideline for income by taxes to as close to 1% as last year. Rep. Ahlgren we would like to see a plan on what to do with the leftover money from the nursing home.

#### MOTION:

Rep. Umberger made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2011 meeting, Rep. Schmidt seconded the motion. 9 in favor, 2 abstained not at meeting that day (Rep. Babson and Rep. Pettingill).

Rep. Umberger thanked April Carpenter for her diligence and accuracy to the minutes over the past year. Rep. Patten brought up the fact that the Delegation may have to increase their fee for a recording secretary during the next budget process. They are currently paying \$100 per meeting plus mileage. If anyone is interested in taking the minutes for the Delegation should contact Robin Reade at the County offices.

#### INTO CONVENTION:

Rep. Umberger motioned to go into convention, Rep. Fleck seconded the motion. All in favor.

In Convention:

Rep. Patten calls for a motion to ratify the three previous motions made.

Rep. Merrow ratified the three previous motions, motion seconded by Rep. Fleck. All in favor.

Rep. Umberger motioned to come out of convention, Rep. Fleck seconded the motion. All in favor.

Comm. Sorensen spoke about a Sheriff's Deputy, Brian Argue that graduated top in the Policy Academy. He read a thank you letter from Deputy Argue. Deputy Argue did an outstanding job in the Academy.

Comm. Sorensen is in agreement of increasing the wages of the Asst. County Attorneys and the commissioners will be coming in with a recommendation for salary increases. There are other employees that don't fit in to the 1% category and should be recognized.

Comm. Sorensen had handed out a letter from the Supreme Court. It was about video teleconferencing equipment that they would be installing in seven counties.

This should save on transportation costs for inmates that are housed in other locations. The jail is already wired for this service. The RFP hasn't gone out for this yet so the fees are estimated. Comm. Sorensen is still waiting for information about the technology for this service.

Discussion of bandwidth and the project with Co-operative Extension and how it

relates to this teleconferencing project. Rep. McConkey stated they are two different things.

Rep. Patten: The Commissioners are asking us if we are interested in participating in this program or opt out. They are asking for a commitment without having all the figures for what it will cost.

Rep. Umberger stated that she was convinced it would save money for the county and the inmates. Having this technology will help reduce the number of days an inmate is waiting for trial.

Rep. Umberger made a motion to support the MOU for video teleconferencing for the Dept. of Corrections. Rep. Schmidt seconded the motion.

Discussion and questions regarding the letter and MOU. Rep. Umberger stated the cost for the equipment is being covered by the State and the County will be responsible for the internet connection costs. Other counties using this service have boasted significant savings. Rep. Patten maybe we should specify a not to exceed amount of \$5k. Amendment made to motion.

#### MOTION:

Rep. Umberger made a motion to support the MOU for video teleconferencing for the Dept. of Corrections, not to exceed an amount of \$5k. Rep. Schmidt seconded the motion.

On the MOU, page 1 under section C Rep. Babson would like it changed to read; pay for maintenance, **support and licensing** of the videoconferencing equipment for 12 months following installation.

The commissioners need to ask the Supreme Court to change the MOU to reflect that accurately.

Discussion of how this is working for other counties and what the savings would be for Carroll County and the number of transports being done. There is a room in the jail to accommodate for this. Many of the Representatives expressed their agreement in this project.

All in favor of the motion for supporting the MOU for video teleconferencing.

Vote 11-0.

Comm. Sorensen stated there have been preliminary talks with Co-op Ext. and BPS regarding the old nursing home. The Co-op Ext. has agreed to the lay-out with some minor construction, it would increase the square footage to about 4500sq. ft. There is no cost on that yet.

DHHS is trying to regionalize and expanding their service area from Rochester all the way to Jackson, also incorporating part of Laconia. They are looking for office space in either Tamworth or Ossipee. They need 10,000 sq. ft. and will have 45 full and part time employees in this office. The RFP will be going out soon and they are looking to move in the spring of 2012.

Discussion on whether or not to rent space to DHHS, and the several representatives gave their opinions on whether or not to entertain this proposal. Delegation and Commissioners would like to speak with someone from DHHS just look at the 8 to 10 sq. feet that is left in the core. The Delegation is not looking to reconsider the position of rehabbing the old nursing home.

**MOTION:**

Rep. McConkey moves not to reconsider to open the past motion on keeping the core only. Rep. Schmidt seconded.

Rep. Patten: The motion is not to reconsider our motion to keep the core only. Rep. Patten recognizes those that don't agree.  
Rep. Ahlgren: We did not vote to keep the core. We made a motion to be presented a plan for consideration and not to exceed \$1 million.

Discussion and confusion on the original motion for the old nursing home. Comm. Solomon reads the original motion from minutes:

**MOTION:**

Rep. Fleck makes a motion to retain the core of the old nursing home with the cost not to exceed \$1 million. Rep. McConkey seconded the motion. Motion carried with vote of 6-4.

More discussion on the motion and the core and the plan for the old nursing home. Rep. Fleck stated the intent of the motion was to tear down the wings, retain the core and whatever modifications were to be made would have to be done for less than \$1 million. The commissioners were enabled to move forward on that.

Request to move the question. All in favor.

Rep. Patten clarification of motion from Rep. McConkey and seconded by Rep. Schmidt to not to reconsider our motion to keep the core only.  
If you agree not to reconsider you would vote "Yes".  
If you want to reconsider you would vote "No".

Rep. Babson requested that Rep. Patten make it a role call vote.

**ROLE CALL VOTE:**

Rep. Ahlgren	Yes
Rep. Babson	No
Rep. Fleck	Yes
Rep. McCarthy	Yes
Rep. McConkey	Yes
Rep. Mellow	No

Rep. Patten	Yes
Rep. Pettingill	Yes
Rep. Schmidt	Yes
Rep. Tregenza	Yes
Rep. Umberger	Yes

Vote passed 9-2, not to reconsider the motion about the core.  
Rep. Patten requests a 5 minute recess.

Comm. Sorensen brought up the need in maintenance for a  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton truck with a plow and sander. The lowest bid was from DiPrizio for \$35k. Another bid for a walk behind snow-blower for \$3k. The total is \$38k. He would like it to come out of the contingency fund for the new nursing home, because it is principally for the new home.

Discussion on whether to purchase or not and perhaps have someone plow the complex. There is a backhoe and Will is not comfortable using that in tight places. The sand truck is falling apart and his feet go through the floor boards. Rep. McCarthy: Is there a particular reason we need a truck? For half the price you can get a Kabota tractor with a front end loader and a 50" snow plow on the front for less than half the price of what you are talking about, and you could still add a trailer with a sander on the back.

Will asks for assistance where he could find something at that price, because the dealers he worked with. Rep. McConkey doesn't feel it is appropriate to come in the middle of a session to ask to spend this money. He also stated that Will does a great job and shouldn't be put in the position to ask for more equipment after the new building was built. We have a higher need than before. We were told that the inmate population would be removing the snow.

Comm. Sorensen: Rep. Ahlgren had said that anytime we wanted to use contingency funds that weren't budgeted for we were to come to the Delegation.

That is why we are asking for this today.

Rep. Ahlgren: Do we want to vote to let them take the money out of the contingency fund or find it within the current budget, or do we want them to do it at all. Rep. McCarthy suggested taking the money out of the nurses over time and he would vote for it.

Discussion ensued on what to do about the equipment and how to fund it.

MOTION:

Rep. McConkey made a motion to deny the request for \$38k out of contingency, Rep. Umberger seconded the motion. Discussion. All in favor of denying request.

MOTION:

Rep. Babson made a motion to approve \$4,000.00 for Will to purchase a snow blower from his budget to do the job. No second motion. The Delegation doesn't need to motion to purchase from the Farm budget. Motion not carried.

County Attorney Dewhurst addressed the Delegation regarding one of the Asst. County Attorney's leaving employment with the County, stating another Asst. is also looking for work elsewhere. This is all because of the salary compensation for the Asst. County Attorney's. Atty. Dewhurst is looking to find a way to offer more compensation to potential candidates coming in.

Rep. Patten: The County Attorney is looking to take \$6k from another line item and put it into salaries. They have the authority to do that, but this is a salary and if we approve it, then we need to be cautious as we move ahead in the budget process on increasing salaries for the other Asst. Attorney's. We are looking at other County's salaries to see where they are at.

Comm. Sorensen: What line item would the additional salary come out of?

Atty. Dewhurst: Most likely the civil commitment line.

Discussion and questions on this topic. What should be approved is what he needs through the end of December. Discussion of the civil commitment line and what is appropriated and using that money for salaries. Atty. Dewhurst shared salaries from other counties and local police agencies.

#### MOTION:

Rep. Umberger made a motion to allow the County Attorney to offer a salary range between current salary and \$51k for advertising for a new Asst. County Attorney, and any change in the salary will be absorbed within his current budget.

Rep. McConkey seconded the motion. All in favor.

#### INTO CONVENTION:

Rep. Umberger made a motion to go into convention, Rep. Fleck seconded. All in favor.

Rep. Umberger ratified the motion to allow the County Attorney to offer a salary range and change in the salary to be absorbed in the current budget. Rep. McConkey seconded. All in favor.

Rep. Umberger motioned to ratify to support the Commissioners in entering the MOU with the Supreme Court and Dept. of Corrections for video conferencing equipment, not to exceed \$5k. Rep. Fleck seconded. All in favor.

Rep. McConkey motioned to ratify not to reconsider the motion to keep the core only for the old nursing home. Rep. Schmidt seconded. 10 in favor, 1 opposed (Rep. Babson).

Rep. McConkey motioned to ratify denying taking \$38K out of the nursing home contingency to purchase a sand truck and snow blower. Rep. Umberger seconded. All in favor.

Rep. Fleck motioned to go out of convention, Rep. McCarthy seconded. All in favor.

#### PUBLIC INPUT:

Mr. Steve Brown talked about the fuel situation and it should be separate from 1%. County size should be considered when taking salaries into consideration.



Mr. Brown asked for an explanation of how the Delegation could come up with saving the core of the old nursing home, but tear down the wings. Rep. Patten explained that the discussion had been going on for minutes and invited Mr. Brown to look at the past minutes for those discussions. Mr. Brown's recommendation was if you're going to save one sq. foot of the building save it all or get rid of it all. Mr. Brown stated as a taxpayer of Carroll County he was appalled at what happened at the meeting today, it was a disgrace. He told the Delegation they are what needed to be renovated, not the old nursing home and they do not represent the people of Carroll County. He stated he was disturbed and appalled at what happened at the meeting today.

Maureen Spencer told the Delegation that Will did in fact bring up during the Building Committee meetings his need for a snow blower and he also brought up the issue of the truck last year, but he made it work. He is obviously very frustrated because he needs this equipment to do his job, to keep the residents and employees safe. For the last five years the previous County Attorney sat here and begged for money for her Assistants and we need to pay people what they are worth in order to keep them, otherwise, you will have a continuous revolving door.

MOTION:

Rep. Umberger motioned to adjourn, Rep. Fleck seconded. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned 12:52pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Robin Reade