

Coös County Commissioners
Budget Work Session
Meeting held remotely in accordance with the
Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04,
November 4, 2020

As Chair of the Coös County Commissioners, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Coös County Commissioners have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-646-558-8656 or by clicking on the following website address: www.zoom.us/join . The meeting ID is # 826 0484 2777 passcode 524448.

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Coös County Commissioners at: www.cooscountynh.us

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-331-5670 or email at: jennifer.fish@cooscountynh.us
In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

The following individuals were in attendance remotely: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede; County Treasurer Sue Collins; County Attorney John McCormick; Whitney Lewis and Haven Neal, Coös County Conservation District; Brendan Prusik and Scott Losier, UNH Cooperative Extension; Coös County Register of Deeds Leon Rideout; and Administrative Assistant Linda Harris.

Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:01 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. ***Approval of the Agenda:*** A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the agenda, as presented. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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2. Approval of the Minutes from the October 13, 2020, regular meeting, as presented: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the October 13, 2020, regular meeting. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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3. Hearing of the Public: There were no members of the public.
4. Review of the Proposed 2021 budget:
- a. County Attorney John McCormick stated that several increases in the County Attorney's budget were related to step increases and benefits.

The County Attorney did request salary increases for the deputy/assistant attorneys. Coös County salaries are some of the lowest in the state. He needs to retain attorneys with competitive salaries. The Investigator/Discover Coordinator was included in the budget. The position would serve as a liaison between departments to ensure discoveries are complete. Under new equipment, a request was made for a ThinkPad/laptop to be used strictly by the attorneys for arraignments. The department needs video capability. The department has applied for a VAWA Grant to offset 20% of the cost.

Commissioner Grenier noted that the Assistant Attorney is not a constitutional office. A request for salary increase must go through the Commissioners for approval. At this time he was not ready to give raises until the budget has been completed. The request will be reviewed in February and he added that going retro was not an issue.

The County Attorney also noted that he needed a grant authorization signed by Commissioner Brady for the VAWA Grant. The one previously approved in October will not do. The County Administrator stated that the authorization was included on the next Commissioners' agenda. Commissioner Samson noted that since the Board approved the grant authorization previously and the only change is the date he suggested taking action at this meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to authorize the Chair on behalf of the Board to sign the VAWA Grant authorization. The document read as follows:

I, Thomas Brady, Chair of the Coös County Board of Commissioners do hereby certify that:

- 1) The Coös County Commissioners voted to accept funds and enter into a grant agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Justice;*
- 2) The Coös County Commissioners further authorize the Coös County Attorney to execute any documents which may be necessary for this contract;*
- 3) This authorization has not been revoked, annulled or amended in any manner whatsoever, and remains in full force and effect as of the date hereof;*
- 4) This authorization will remain in full force and effect until December 31, 2020, or until County Attorney John G. McCormick ceases to hold the title of Coös County Attorney; and*
- 5) The following now occupies the office indicated above:*

John G. McCormick

The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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There was no discussion on the Victim Witness and Medical Examiners' budgets.

- b. Coös County Conservation District - Haven Neal & Whitney Lewis presented the budget which showed a decrease from the 2020 budget.

The County Administrator questioned the request for property and liability insurance and education workshops. Ms. Lewis explained that the property and liability insurance would cover two things: educational workshop attendees and the tool rental program. Ms. Fish asked if the county would be sued or the conservation district. Typically, the county has funded salary and benefits only. Commissioner Grenier asked why there was no revenue to offset the costs. He also asked why the program could be part of the county blanket policy. Ms. Lewis stated that education line item was to compensate the individuals who provide services at workshops. The funding remained in the budget but will be discussed again in February.

- c. Register of Deeds: Commissioner Grenier stated that he had met with the Registrar previously. This budget showed a decrease of -\$5,640. Mr. Rideout requested an increase of \$330 in the equipment maintenance and lease line item.
- d. UNH/Cooperative Extension - Scott Losier & Brendan Prusik presented the budget which showed a decrease from the 2020 budget. Commissioner Grenier inquired about the 15% increase in the contracted services line item. Mr. Prusik explained that the two employees transferred from County employment to UNH employment mid-year. The 2021 budget includes a full year of employment for both employees. The budgeted figure is the amount that was stated at last year's meeting.
- e. Sheriff's Department: Commissioner Grenier reported that he had met with Sheriff Valerino last week to discuss the department's proposed budget. The budget showed a decrease of -\$23,895.
- f. Coös County Nursing Home & Coös County Nursing Hospital: Commissioner Grenier reported that he had met with both nursing home administrators and reviewed their budgets in detail. Because everything is currently in a flux due to COVID, he proposed that both budgets as presented by submitted to the Delegation. Revisions will be made in February. Both Commissioner Brady and Commissioner Samson agreed.
- g. Department of Corrections: Commissioner Grenier reported that Superintendent Champagne had flat lined the expenses except for those out of his control.
- h. County Administration: The County Administrator reported that the budget showed an increase of \$89,265 due to the following:
- The HR Coordinator's retirement;
 - COVID testing for county employees;
 - Budgeted Health Insurance for the incoming Commissioner; and

- An increase in outside legal services.

A new section was created in the budget for the County Administrative Building which includes building expenses totaling \$59,200.

- i. County Treasurer: There were no changes to this budget.
- j. County Finance: There were no questions.

County Treasurer Sue Collins asked if requests for health insurance rates were requested from HealthTrust as there is a possibility of savings. She noted that the Town of Colebrook had substantial savings by switching to HealthTrust. Commissioner Grenier stated that it was worth a look.

Ms. Fish stated that both she and the Director of Finance have been approached by NACO to participate in the NACO leadership academy. Would the Board approve their participation in the program? The program begins in January. Commissioner Grenier asked if they had the time to participate and still accomplish the duties of their positions. Both replied that they would make it happen.

- k. The County Administrator and Director of Finance stated that they were still working on the Unincorporated Places budgets.

Commissioner Grenier asked that funds be included in the Dixville and Millsfield budgets for the appraisal of the wind turbines. He asked Ms. Fish if she had contacted Mr. Sansoucy to engage his services. She had not contacted him.

There were no further revisions made to the budget as presented. The Director of Finance noted that the only change to the budget was the increase of \$330 in the Register of Deeds budget. Commissioner Grenier replied in the affirmative.

Both Commissioner Samson and Commissioner Brady thanked Commissioner Grenier, the County Administrator and Director of Finance as well as all of the department heads for making the budget process work.

5. Other Business:

The Director of Finance reported that she had previously emailed information to the Board to explain an overtime issue that the payroll departments have been working on since March. According to the Department of Labor, overtime must be paid on longevity pay, perfect attendance and most recently the COVID stipends. In order to bring the County to current DOL compliance, staff have been working with Steven J. McKinney of the US Department of Labor. The County is using the PAID (Payroll Audit Independent Determination) program that the DOL provides, which helps to self-audit to improve compliance. The County is currently completing a 2 year look back. Payroll personnel have worked many, many hours on this process, which has been very tedious. By participating in the PAID program, the County has resources to guidance through the process. The good news is the work is almost done and the County is getting ready to submit to DOL PAID program. The bad news is there will be a cost. The cost for the Berlin Nursing Home will be

\$20,096.60 and the cost for WSNH & the County will be approximately \$14,000. The Director of Finance noted that there should be funds to cover this cost in the 2020 budget at this time.

Staff has also worked with BMSI to update the payroll system to accommodate the changes. Once approved, the BMSI Payroll software will be changed to compute overtime in the new method and checks will be issued to the employees for the 2 year look back.

Commissioner Grenier stated that the longevity bonus is earned income not based on hours worked. He also noted that if overtime will be paid on the COVID stipends, GOFERR would need to reimburse the County. The Board agreed that this was outrageous to pay overtime on compensation not worked and made no sense. The Board requested further information. The Director of Finance offered to ask Steven J. McKinney of the US Department of Labor to join the November 12 meeting. The County Treasurer agreed with the Board.

The November 12, 2020 Regular Meeting will also be held remotely beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Rick Samson, Clerk