

Coös County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH
February 8, 2012

Present: Commissioners Bing Judd, Paul Grenier and Tom Brady; County Administrator Suzanne L. Collins; Director of Finance Jennifer Fish; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Superintendent of Corrections Craig Hamelin; Sheriff Gerry Marcou; Chief Deputy Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; County Treasurer Fred King; Larry Gomes, White Mountain Ridge Runners; Wayne Frizzell, North Country Chamber of Commerce; Grant Killian, Untamed Adventure; Sandy Young and members of the press.

Commissioner Judd opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

1. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2012 meeting. All approved 3-0.
2. The Board reviewed the Payrolls and Disbursements for the month of January 2012. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the Payrolls and Disbursements for the month of January 2012. All approved 3-0.
3. Hearing of the Public:
 - a. Larry Gomes, White Mountain Ridge Runners: Mr. Gomes stated he was present on behalf of the club to request support for a project to purchase a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV). The club was asking for a donation of \$1,500. He explained that this is a rescue vehicle that would be available to respond to medical emergencies in Success, Cambridge and Kilkenny. Commissioner Judd replied that the Board would take this request under advisement. If the request could not be funded, Mr. Gomes asked if the Board would provide a letter of support. Commissioner Judd noted that the club would be provided with a letter of support. Commissioners Grenier and Brady both stated they were in favor of the project but indicated that the budget had to be reviewed and approved first.
 - b. Wayne Frizzell (*North Country Chamber of Commerce*), Grant Killian (*Untamed Adventure*) and Sandy Young attended the meeting to request economic development funds for the North Country Endurance Challenge which will take place on September 8, 2012. The race will begin in Pittsburg and continue through Clarksville, Dixville and finish in Colebrook. The request was for \$7,500. Commissioner Judd stated that he was not opposed to the idea as it was for economic development purposes. Commissioner Grenier stated that the Board would discuss the request further during the budget revisions later in the meeting. He also added that the Delegation is looking at the County's core businesses in regard to the budget.

Mr. King added that if part of the race is going through the Unincorporated Places of Dixville and Millsfield possibly funds could be appropriated from those budgets. In his opinion, the two requests made will be beneficial to the Unincorporated Places.

- c. Sheriff Marcou reported that he had been asked for deputy coverage to supervise IEA's in local hospitals when needed. IEA's are involuntary emergency admissions to the State Hospital and oftentimes a bed is not available and the Sheriff cannot transport until a bed opens up. There was discussion on what the Sheriff needed to add to his budget and it was decided that an appropriation and revenue of \$3,000 each would be set up for this purpose.

4. Report of the County Administrator Suzanne L. Collins. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:
- a. Sarah Lineberry, Bureau of Court Facilities, reported that the State of NH Long Range Capital Planning & Utilization Committee approved the Courthouse renovation project and lease on January 31. The next and last approval needed is Governor and Council which meets on 2/8/12. Sue has contacted Councilor Burton requesting his support.
 - b. Budget revisions based on input from Public Hearing in December, items recommended by the Board to be brought back to February meeting, the unaudited fund balance and other requests/considerations (such as the decrease in the 1/1/12 Medicaid rates) submitted were prepared and sent to the Board for consideration. Chairman Tholl verified that the Annual Budget Meeting will be held at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 10, 2012 at the Coös County Nursing Home in Berlin. In addition to Board deliberations on these items, Sue requested to meet in non-public session for an update on labor negotiations with AFSCME & SEA (RSA 91-A:2 (b) *Strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining*). Sue also requested non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (d) *Consideration of the acquisition, sale of real or personal property which if discussed in public would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community*.
 - c. Commissioner Brady, Treasurer King and Sue attended the NH Association of Counties Executive Board meeting on 2/3.
 - The Association budget that is being recommended to the Commissioners' Council will result in an 8% reduction in dues that counties pay to the NHAC. The dues assessed to Coös County in 2011 totaled \$12,984.
 - Several NHAC Board members will attend the National Association of Counties Legislative Conference in March in Washington and will be meeting personally with Senators Shaheen and Ayotte as well as Congressmen Bass and Guinta. The contingency from the NHAC will bring to their attention the Commissioners' letter sent last June urging a 4-year moratorium on any further purchase of land by the federal government in the unincorporated places. Another item of concern to all counties in New Hampshire is that individuals held pre-trial at the Department of Corrections lose any Medicaid or Medicare benefits. The counties nationally are collectively urging Congress to change laws whereby the benefits would continue until such time as individuals are sentenced.
 - There was discussion about the recent decision in Merrimack Superior Court upholding the claim that employees vested in the NH Retirement System are not subject to the 2% increase in the employee share assessed on wages that was implemented last July. The Group I employee rate had increased from 5% to 7%. It is expected that this decision will be appealed to the NH Supreme Court. Should the Supreme Court uphold the Merrimack Superior Court decision, then the NH Retirement System would have to refund the additional 2% withheld from vested employees.
 - d. Sue has been compiling a report for the Delegation in order to fulfill the resolution adopted at the Delegation meeting on November 14 whereby ***"The County Administrator will develop an analysis of all non-constitutional programs run by the County, excluding the two nursing homes and the County Correctional Process, to determine if there are any non-essential programs, property or equipment that can be divested or disposed for the purposes of county budgeting."*** Sue hopes to have the report completed by February 17.

- e. The Annual County Administrator's Report that will be published in the County Report is essentially "Coös County Government 101" and was provided at the meeting. It too addresses the resolution above.

Report of the Unincorporated Places:

- a. The Town of Gorham sent the renewal Emergency Medical Services Agreement for the Unincorporated Places of Pinkham's Grant, Green's Grant and Martin's Location. The service cost increased from \$17,984.72 in 2011 to \$18,758.68 in 2012. The revised budget for the Unincorporated Places includes the adjustments. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the EMS Agreement between Coös County and the Town of Gorham. All approved 3-0.
- b. Pursuant to RSA 227-H:23 the unincorporated allocation of National Forest Reserve Funds of \$122,839.47 was presented on 2/6/2012 to the Delegation. The distribution of the allocation will be used in its entirety this year for tuition. A copy of the allocation was distributed to the Commissioners and the budget revisions for Millsfield and Wentworth Location reflect the use of National Forest Reserve Funds to offset tuition in the Berlin, Colebrook and Errol School Districts. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the proposal of the National Forest Reserve Funds. All approved 3-0. Commissioner Grenier questioned if it was necessary for the Commissioners to consider this motion as the statute clearly states that the allocation is a Delegation responsibility.
- c. Sue reported that the 45th Parallel EMS had provided an updated budget which showed an increase of \$538.63 in Dixville. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the 45th Parallel EMS budget. All approved 3-0.

Other Items:

- a. A meeting of Nursing Home Administrators, Superintendent of Corrections, Director of Finance and human resource staff from each nursing home was held on February 1 on revisions to the Coös County Employee Policy Handbook. Sue's goal is to get a copy to the Board for review well in advance of the March Commissioners' meeting.
 - b. Representatives of NH Grand have asked to meet with the Commissioners on March 14, the next scheduled meeting. Cathy Conway of NCIC and Scott Tranchemontagne of Montagne Communications in Manchester will present updates on the NH Grand efforts and program.
5. Report of the Superintendent of Corrections Craig Hamelin. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	23
PRETRIAL	20
TOTAL IN FACILITY	43
STATE PRISON INMATES	1
ELECTRONIC MONITORING	1
WORK RELEASE	0
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	1
HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES	15
	BELKNAP DOC: 1 PT MALE
	CARROLL DOC: 2 PT MALE
	GRAFTON DOC: 1 PT M, 1 HOC F, 3 PT F
	HILLSBOROUGH DOC: 1 PT MALE
	NHSP: 3 HOC M, 2 PT M, 1 HOC F
HOC= House of Corrections PT= Pre-Trial	

AVERAGE DAILY POP. DECEMBER	37
AVERAGE DAILY POP. JANUARY	41
FEMALE DAYS SERVED JANUARY	115
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY JANUARY	1,261

- a. Congratulations to Officer Reno Gilbert for successfully completing the 8 week Field Training Program. Officer Gilbert has been assigned to work on Second Shift.
- b. Employment applications are being screened for a vacant Third Shift position. Aptitude testing has been completed on one candidate, but physical fitness testing was cancelled due to inclement weather. Further testing is currently being rescheduled for next week.
- c. The scheduled “go live” week for the new Archonix XJail jail management system is Monday, March 5. Archonix technicians and trainers will be at the facility for the entire week to make sure the transition is successful. This will include three separate 3 hour staff training sessions on Monday. Tuesday is dedicated to additional staff training and cutting over to the new system in the morning. The rest of the week is dedicated to implementing software features, using the system and technical issues.
- d. The Department of Corrections has started the process of implementing the submission of DNA collections into the CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) database. Per RSA 651-C, all convicted felons and sexual offenders are required to provide a DNA sample for inclusion in CODIS. The database, accessible by all 50 states, is designed to provide investigative leads for unsolved criminal cases. Since New Hampshire began participating, it has had over 178 investigations aided within the state due to matches arising from CODIS searches. The New Hampshire State Police Forensics Lab will provide upcoming on-site training, as well as provide the postage-paid CODIS collection kits which are quick and easy and require no medical training.
- e. Rick Alpers and Robert Barry of Primex³ toured the facility on January 25. Robert Barry, former Police Chief of Concord, commented that the facility, staff and operation immediately exude a high level of professionalism he has not seen in many other facilities. He particularly noted that the cleanliness and order of the facility was outstanding, as well as the appearance and energy of staff. It is clear that Coös County’s Corrections Department sets the bar high and staff members deserve thanks for making this apparent to each and every person who visits.

Superintendent Hamelin reported that he had received a letter from Mr. Barry commending the Superintendent and his staff on their professionalism and on the appearance of the facility. *(A copy of the letter is on file.)* Commissioner Brady noted that facility has improved greatly since he began serving as a Commissioner.

6. Report of the West Stewartstown Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:
 - a. Census: The census is 72. The average census for January was 71; occupancy for January was 73.5%. In January, there were five (5) admissions, one (1) discharge and one (1) death. Of the 72 residents, twenty (20) are Private Pay and ten (10) residents are Vermont Medicaid.
 - b. Gastrointestinal Illness: The Nursing Hospital has had a gastrointestinal illness, a norovirus, on second floor for the past two weeks. This floor is closed to admissions at this time, but an admission is ready to go as soon as the facility is cleared.

- c. Cable TV: Cable TV is back up and running.
- d. Internet Access for Residents: There has been some feedback on the internet access cards. A resident's family member purchased a card from the Business Office and used it to Skype with a family member in Kuwait. They reportedly were thrilled with the results.
- e. Nursing Hours at the Department of Corrections:

2011	MINUTES	Hours	2012	Minutes	Hours
January	3,907	65	January	2,206	37
February	4,035	67	February		
March	3,930	66	March		
April	4,427	74	April		
May	4,280	71	May		
June	4,446	74	June		
July	4,529	75	July		
August	4,307	72	August		
September	4,358	73	September		
October	4,086	68	October		
November	1,750	29	November		
December	1,711	29	December		

The Corrections census has been up this month and Med Pass times reflect this increase in inmates.

7. Report of the Berlin Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting is as follows:
 - a. Census: The current census is 97. Twenty residents are Private Pay at this time. The average daily census for January was 96.7. In January, there were 3 admissions and 5 deaths.
 - b. Sewer Pipe leak: On January 23 at 7:00 a.m. a leak was discovered in the ceiling of the dry food storage area. It turned out to be a sewer pipe and it leaked into various boxes in the storage area. The total cost of the items that needed to be discarded was \$715.98. The cost of the repair was \$10. The Maintenance Department was able to replace the section of pipe very inexpensively. The total cost of damage and repair did not exceed the County's deductible of \$1,000.
 - c. Bequest account: The residents have decided to join in with the decorating and updates that have been taking place over the past year. The residents will be focusing on the second and third floor dayrooms. They will start by addressing the amount of heat and excessive sunlight that enters the room from the large windows. Currently the blinds are too heavy for residents to open and close; the staff also has a difficult time. Window tinting will be applied to the windows after the correct shade of tinting is selected. The tinting is not permanent and can be removed.
 - d. A staff member from the office of Senator Jeanne Shaheen will be available at Coös County Nursing Home from 10:00 to 12:00 on February 21. The purpose of the visit is to be available should a resident, resident family member, employee, or visitors want to discuss benefits and

how to navigate through the federal agencies. Veterans' benefits, health care and social security benefits are a few of the topics that will be discussed. The last visit to the facility was November 5, 2010.

- e. Slips, Trips and Falls: In addition to the Risk Management Committee, the Nursing Home has formed a sub-committee to focus on identifying and decreasing the hazards that can contribute to a fall of a resident or an employee. Committee members have been touring the facility and educating the staff on the prevention of slips, trips and falls. The main focus at this time is the de-cluttering of resident rooms that have excessive belongings. Another focus has been the use of oxygen concentrators in the dayrooms and sitting areas. The concentrators are used for residents in need of a high liter flow. The oxygen concentrator must be plugged into an electrical outlet and the cord adds another trip hazard when used outside of the residents' room. The use of small oxygen tanks on wheelchairs is an option and has been attempted; unfortunately it causes an increase in workload. The small tanks average 4 hours then must be changed. Several months ago, the Nursing Home was using 80 tanks per week. The Nursing Home will switch to liquid oxygen in March. The canister units are small, lightweight, and last 8 hours. The cost for the liquid oxygen is projected to be slightly less than the current oxygen costs.

Commissioner Brady asked about the status of the telephones due to the change in policy. Louise replied that staff is working on it but some families are hesitant on switching the phones due to the big numbers on the dial pads for the residents.

- 7. Report of the Finance Director Jennifer Fish. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting is as follows:

- a. The County received from Brookfield Power a payment in lieu of taxes for the unincorporated places of Dixville and Millsfield. The total amount received was \$420,000.
- b. Letters were sent out to 6 banks with branches in Coös County requesting bids on a tax anticipation note of \$10,000,000. Two banks submitted bids, Passumpsic and Laconia Savings Bank. Northway, Citizens, TD Bank and First Colebrook Bank declined to bid on the TAN.

County Treasurer Fred King presented the two bids: Laconia Savings Bank 1.09% and Passumpsic 1.23%. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the bid from Laconia Savings Bank of 1.09% for borrowing of Tax Anticipation Notes up to \$10,000,000. All approved 3-0.

- c. John Lyford, CPA, arrived on Tuesday, February 7 in West Stewartstown to begin preparing year-end financial statements.
- d. Several proposed revisions to the 2012 Budget were presented at the meeting for consideration. These revisions were summarized on a separate report.
- e. The unaudited surplus at December 31, 2011 was \$2,441,439.92. This number is inclusive of the \$2.70 reserved from the 2010 fund balance. The surplus determination included several encumbrances that Jen asked the Board to approve:

1. Interest on Sick Trusts 2011 (\$ NHPDIP \$216.47, \$740.34 NB)	\$ 956.81
2. Interest on Facility Fund 2011	52.16
3. Agrimark Investment	4,432.98
4. WSNH: Security Cameras	600.00

5. CCNH: Engineer for Main Entrance	2,600.00
6. County: Potato Program purchase	<u>500.00</u>
Subtotal Reserves and Encumbrances	\$9,141.95

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the encumbrances and reserves for 2011. All approved 3-0.

8. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:2 (b) Strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining and under RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale of real or personal property which if discussed in public would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community at 10:40 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to come out of non-public session at 11:25 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady recommending no raises for all County employees for this fiscal year, excluding step increases. All approved 3-0.

Prior to the review of the budget, Sue stated that many of the changes presented had to do with worker's compensation and unemployment. The Board discussed the revisions to the proposed 2012 budget and the major changes made were:

- Nursing Hospital:
 - The administration communications line item increased by \$500;
 - The medication nursing assistant salary line item was reduced \$36,200 with a reduction in related benefits of \$16,550;
 - The housekeeping new equipment line item was increased by \$500 for dehumidifiers instead of the \$650 requested;
 - The plant operations building repairs line item was increased by \$6,000 to soundproof the family room;
 - The activity director salary line item was increased by \$3,600 due to a reclassification; and
 - The activity aides' salaries line item was increased by \$9,400 to fund a 24-hour activity aide position in the special care unit.
- Nursing Home:
 - The assistant dietary supervisor line item was increased by \$1,500 as the position was awarded to an in-house candidate with experience;
 - The Nursing Home had requested \$13,100 for 3 additional hours for 4 RNs for 9-months. This item was not approved as requested. The Board approved 4 additional hours for 2 Clinical Coordinator positions costing \$8,700 in wages as well as \$9,200 in NH Retirement. It was also decided that the Clinical Coordinators positions would now be salaried positions based on 36 hours per week;
 - The nursing assistant salaries line item was increased by \$24,000 for payment of accrued time to an LNA who is retiring;
 - The plant operations outside services line item was increased by \$2,500 for a NFPA required change to the sprinkler system;
 - The plant operations equipment line item was increased by \$1,000 which has a grant funded revenue offset; and

- The activity aides' salaries line item increased by \$11,700 for replacement hours for an aide out on a long-term medical leave. Louise stated that she hopes to get a volunteer provided by Tri-County CAP for no cost to the County.
- County Administration:
 - The outside legal service line item was reduced by \$2,000.
- County Finance:
 - The education and conferences line item was increased by \$700 to provide funds for a course for the Finance Director to become a licensed nursing home administrator and learn more about nursing home administration and finance; and
 - The office supplies & expense line item was reduced by \$300.
- County Attorney:
 - Based on the earlier motion of no salary increases for County employees this budget year, the proposal to increase the Assistant County Attorney's Salary line item was not approved.
- Victim/Witness Program:
 - Based on the earlier motion of no salary increases for this budget year, the 8 additional hours requested for the Clerk Salary line item was not included in the budget revision. Jennifer also noted that the County Attorney had submitted a list of additional furniture which will be needed once the two departments move to the courthouse. There were no prices included with this request. The County Attorney had planned on being at the meeting but was unable to attend due to sickness. The Board questioned what furniture was currently being used. Jennifer replied that they were using furniture from the old bank as well as the furniture moved from the Courthouse in April. The Board questioned where some the previous furniture had gone. The Board deferred the furniture request to the Delegation as no estimates had been provided for budget purposes.
- State Assistance Programs:
 - The HCBC line item increased by \$12,500; and
 - The Intermediate Nursing Care line item increased by \$48,300.

Both these line items increased due to the long-term care CAP for counties going from \$105 million to \$107 million in HB2.
- Corrections:
 - The corrections officers' salary line item decreased by \$3,250 due to new hires earning less at Step 1;
 - The in lieu of health benefit line item decreased by \$1,200 due to a resignation;
 - The health insurance line item increased by \$17,600 due to the health plans selected by new employees;
 - The training expenses line item increased by \$5,000 due to new employees;
 - The nursing services line item decreased by \$5,000 due to adding new RN hours; and
 - The food/meals line item increased by \$10,000 due to the increase in inmate population.
- Cooperative Extension:
 - The educator salaries line item was reduced by \$4,750 as recommended by UNH Cooperative Extension.

➤ Debt Service:

- The interest-short term notes line item was reduced by \$38,700 due to more favorable interest rates.

Revenues:

➤ Nursing Hospital:

- The Medicaid line item was reduced by \$76,400 due to a rate decrease;
- The private pay line item was increased by \$51,800 to a rate increase;
- The Medicaid other states line item was reduced by \$6,300 due to a rate decrease;
- The sale of meals – inmates was increased by \$10,000;
- The nursing services line item was reduced by \$5,000; and
- The Quality Incentive Payment was reduced by \$50,000 due to a reduction in funds paid by the State.

➤ Nursing Home:

- The Medicaid line item was reduced by \$151,700 due to a rate decrease;
- The private pay line item was increased by \$31,100 to a rate increase;
- The grants line item was increased by \$1,000, which is an offset for an expenditure;
- The Quality Incentive Payment was reduced by \$100,000.

➤ County:

- Agrimark equity line item increased by \$3,000. Sue explained that AgriMark would be paying out the investment in the cooperative over 7 years and not 10.
- Surplus to reduce taxes increased by \$600,000.

➤ Unincorporated Places Appropriations:

- Sue reported that the tuition line items had been reduced in Millsfield and for the NH student in Wentworth Location. The state education tax was revised based on the warrants that were received in December from the Department of Revenue Administration. Contracted services were increased in the unincorporated places based on the new EMS agreements. Contracted services line items for land use change tax assessments for the wind turbines in Dixville and Millsfield were increased.

➤ Unincorporated Places Revenues:

- The GRP payment in lieu was reduced by \$18,760 in Dixville;
- The GRP payment in lieu was increased by \$18,760 in Millsfield.

These changes were made on the basis of the number of turbines located in each place.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to donate \$1,500 to the White Mountain Ridge Runners. \$500 will be appropriated from the Unincorporated Places of Cambridge, Kilkenny and Success budgets. All approved 3-0. Commissioner Grenier requested that an SOP on the use of the emergency vehicle be provided to the Board prior to granting the payments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to donate up to \$5,000 to the North Country Chamber of Commerce. The sum of \$2,500 will be appropriated from the Dixville budget. If the route of the challenge goes through Millsfield, \$2,500 will be paid from the Millsfield budget. All approved 3-0.

Commissioner Judd noted that the Pittsburg Fire Rescue may request funds for emergency all-terrain vehicles that respond to Atkinson & Gilmanton Academy Grant and Dix's Grant in the near future.

Commissioner Brady stated that the above motions are pending budget approval by the Delegation on March 10.

Edith Tucker, *The Coös County Democrat*, asked if the motion regarding the raises also included administration. Commissioner Grenier replied it was for all county employees.

The Commissioners' recessed for lunch and Commissioner Brady left. The meeting reconvened at 1:20 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Judd to accept the revisions of the proposed budget. All approved 2-0.

The next regular monthly meeting will be held March 14 at the North Country Resource Center at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Judd to adjourn the meeting at 1:20 p.m. All approved 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas M. Brady, Clerk