

Coös County Commissioners
Budget Work Session
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH
November 5, 2014

Present: Commissioners Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Sheriff Gerry Marcou; County Treasurer Fred King; County Attorney John McCormick; Registrar of Deeds Tanya Batchelder; Larry Barker, UNH/Cooperative Extension; Rob Darling, 45th Parallel Emergency Services; Norm Brown; Robin Frost, Gorham Town Manager; Chad Miller, Town of Gorham; Paul Kuhn, Patrol Agent in Charge, US Border Patrol; members of the press and public.

Commissioner Grenier opened the Commissioners' Budget Work Session at 9:42 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He announced that Commissioner Brady was unable to make the morning session due to a scheduling conflict and anticipated attending the afternoon session. He asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Approval of the Agenda:

A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to approve the agenda as written. All approved 2-0.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the October 8, 2014 meeting:

A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to approve the minutes of the October 8, 2014 meeting. All approved 2-0.

3. Hearing of the Public:

- a. Rob Darling, 45th Parallel Emergency Services: Mr. Darling reported that he had recently met with Beverly Raymond of the TRI CAP Long Distance Medical Transportation. The two will be working together on transportation issues. Mr. Darling stated that he receives several calls weekly from individuals seeking transportation to doctor's appointments outside of the area. He provided the Board with a tentative budget.

Commissioner Grenier stated that if the Board recommends the purchase of the van, the final decision would be made by the Delegation in March. Commissioner Grenier also asked for written commitments from the organizations who have indicated that they will make donations. Mr. Brown stated that if the van is funded he will obtain the funding commitments.

Commissioner Samson stated that he had strong reservations with this request. In his opinion, Beverly Raymond has a strong program and he does not want a duplication of services. Mr. Brown stated that the program is nonexistent in this part of the County. Mr. Darling reiterated that he had met with Ms. Raymond and both agreed that there is a need in this area.

- b. Robin Frost/Chad Miller, Town of Gorham: Ms. Frost informed the Board that the Town of Gorham had requested increases in both the EMS contract and the Public Safety Agreement. The Emergency Medical Services Agreement in 2014 was \$18,758.67 and the 2015 request was \$25,000. The Public Safety Agreement has been \$5,400 for several years which included the Unincorporated Places of Green's Grant, Martin's Location and Pinkham's Grant. The proposed

new amount of \$12,600 included Bean's Purchase, Low & Burbank's Grant, Sargent's Purchase and Thompson & Meserve's Purchase.

Commissioner Grenier asked for data that would support the request. The report indicated that there were 57 calls in the Unincorporated Places in 2013. Commissioner Grenier inquired about the actual costs and third party reimbursements. Mr. Miller said he would do his best to provide more detailed information.

Mr. King noted that some of the Unincorporated Places noted did not have property taxes. Mr. King added that maybe the State should consider hiker licenses. It would help offset some of the costs. Commissioner Samson agreed.

4. Review of the 2015 Proposed Budget:

- a. County Attorney, Victim/Witness & Medical Examiners: County Attorney John McCormick announced that the current Assistant County Attorney Steven Murray will be leaving in December. The position has been advertised and he is currently interviewing.

County Attorney McCormick also reported that Chief Justice Tina Nadeau's "Felonies First" and Early Case Resolution may be implemented by the end of 2015 or the beginning of 2016. He has requested a new position of Deputy County Attorney.

Commissioner Grenier noted that the total county budget increased \$2,000,000 which in his opinion will not pass the Delegation. He added that all departments will need to cut their budgets. Commissioner Grenier asked that the budget be cut by \$35,000.

No budget changes were made to the Victim Witness Advocate and Medical Examiners' budgets.

- b. Register of Deeds: Tanya Batchelder noted that the file cabinet requested under new equipment was purchased. The line item was reduced to zero.

Commissioner Grenier asked if the anticipated revenues could be increased. Ms. Batchelder suggested leaving the revenue as is and increase the surcharge line item to \$10,000. The Board agreed.

- c. UNH/Cooperative Extension: Larry Barker noted that the total budget increase was .25%.
- d. Coös County Conservation District: Mr. Haven Neal, representing the Conservation District supervisors, asked that the Board recognize the original budget request of \$42,370 and not the revised budget request of \$47,383. The supervisors did not support the revised budget request. The budget was adjusted per Mr. Neal's request.
- e. Sheriff's Department: Sheriff Marcou noted that he had items to discuss with the Board which have arisen since the submittal of his department's budget.
 - As administrator of the Stone Garden Grant, the Sheriff's Department will need to apply for licensing for a new repeater which will be installed on top of Magalloway. Paul Kuhn, Patrol Agent in Charge US Border Patrol, explained that the grant will pay for the equipment and

installation of the repeater but the funds cannot be used to pay for the licensing fees. The Commissioners agreed to increase the communications line item by \$2,000 for the FCC license.

- Commissioner Grenier noted that the Delegation created a vehicle fund at the annual budget meeting and asked for the total amount of the fund. He also asked that the Sheriff's vehicles purchases come from this fund.

Commissioner Grenier stated that a revenue line item will have to be created for the transfer of the vehicle enterprise funds to the Sheriff's budget.

- Sheriff Marcou asked if the Clerk's title could be changed to Legal Secretary and also asked for a \$1/hour pay increase. Commissioner Grenier replied that he could not support the request. There are several individuals who work in the nursing homes and do similar functions and will not get an increase in wages.

Jennifer explained that the individual is at the top step and no longer gets step increases but does get the COLA increase each year.

- Sheriff Marcou stated that since Fairpoint employees have gone on strike; the deputies have been providing security. The special details salary line item will be out of funds shortly and he will be requesting budget transfers. The special detail is \$1,200 per day; however Fairpoint has not made a payment for any of the details. Commissioner Grenier suggested that the Sheriff's Department contact Fairpoint requesting payment and to notify them that if payment is not received, once the line items are out of money the special detail will stop.
- The Sheriff Grants line item was corrected to reflect an appropriation of \$10,000.

f. Department of Corrections: Superintendent Hamelin noted two increases in the budget:

- Prisoners: Other Institutions increase of \$50,000; and
- Corrections Specials: Paving of the Parking Lot \$40,000.

Superintendent Hamelin inquired if the \$25,000 set aside in the 2014 for possible retirements was necessary as there were no imminent retirements. Commissioner Grenier asked Carrie for total amount of the Sick Leave Trust Fund.

The sergeants' salaries line item was reduced by \$25,000.

Commissioner Grenier questioned if the upgrade of the parking lot was necessary. Mr. King stated that the parking needs to be repaired. The elderly come to visit and someone could fall and hurt themselves. He suggested borrowing the funds through a long-term note. Laura Mills noted the two options provided by the vendor for the repair of the parking area: option A which was an extensive repair \$91,100; and option B which was an overlay \$55,684. Commissioner Grenier asked for the total amount of the facility fund. Carrie replied \$172,000. Commissioner Grenier asked that the entire project be placed in the Nursing Hospital. The \$40,000 appropriation was removed from the Department of Corrections Specials. Commissioner

Grenier also noted that a revenue line item noting the transfer from the facility fund would be required in the Nursing Hospital budget.

Commissioner Grenier asked Superintendent Hamelin to reduce his budget by an additional \$25,000.

- g. Nursing Hospital: Commissioner Grenier asked that Laura cut her operational budget by one percent / \$100,000. Laura noted that there was \$90,000 in personal and sick time payments due to a few retirements. Commissioner Grenier asked that \$45,000 be transferred from the sick leave trust to the Nursing Hospital budget. He asked that Laura cut an additional \$55,000 from the operational budget.

Jennifer noted that the not to exceed rates for the health insurance would be available the first week of December. Jennifer also stated that the County will need to offer various health plans in order to comply with the federal guidelines. If new health plans are not in place by 2018, the County would incur a Cadillac health plan tax.

Laura also asked for input on the water system. The current water system is in compliance. Commissioner Grenier stated a meeting will need to be held with the Delegation to discuss the project further. The Board will need to come up with a recommendation. Laura stated that she still had not received any quotes from vendors. Commissioner Grenier asked that the 2014 budgeted figure be placed in a special fund at the end of 2014.

- h. Nursing Home: Commissioner Grenier also asked Louise to cut one percent/\$100,000 from the Nursing Home's operational budget. Louise did not have impending retirements.

Louise provided the Board with suggestions from some members of the Delegation regarding upgrades to the Nursing Home: air conditioning house wide and a new roof. Louise stated that a contractor had looked at the current roof and stated that the roof was in good shape. Commissioner Grenier stated that it made no sense to replace the roof if there are no issues.

- i. County: Jennifer stated that the County Administrator's Salary had been reallocated from 50% County/50% Unincorporated Places to 70% County/30% Unincorporated Places. Commissioner Grenier asked if this was a fair and equitable distribution. Jennifer replied that it was. Commissioner Grenier questioned if Linda's salary should also be reallocated. He also asked that Jennifer make cuts in the budget. Commissioner Grenier and Commissioner Samson both stated that their Commissioners' salaries remain at the current rate and did not want the new salary set by the Delegation at the May 12, 2014 meeting.
- j. County Treasurer: Mr. King also stated that he did not want a raise and asked that his salary remain at the old rate.
- k. County Finance: Carrie reported that the increase in the budget reflected positions removed from the Nursing Hospital budget and placed in the County Finance budget.
- l. Land Management: Jennifer reported that the figures in the budget could change based on the new barn lease.

Commissioner Samson stated that the Board would discuss timber sales for 2015 at the November 12 meeting.

m. There were no changes made to the Unincorporated Places budgets.

A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 p.m. All approved 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Rick Samson, Clerk