

Coös County Commissioners  
Special Meeting  
Coös County Nursing Home - Berlin, NH  
February 26, 2014

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Donna Lane, CDBG Consultant; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; County Treasurer Fred King; and members of the press.

Commissioner Brady opened the meeting at 10:07 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Approval of the Agenda:

Commissioner Brady asked to amend the agenda to include budget transfers. The item will now be part of the future agendas so as the budget transfers are part of the public record.

Commissioner Grenier stated that he had requested the non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(d). Some of the items are public documents and do not qualify for non-public session. He requested that item 6 be changed to Balsams Land Matter Discussion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to amend the agenda to include 5c. Budget Transfers and change item 6 Non-public session RSA 91-A:3, II(d) as requested to Balsams Land matters. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the agenda as amended. All approved 3-0.

2. Donna Lane-CDBG Consultant -Bartlett School Site Visit:

Ms. Lane reported that members of CDFA were doing a site visit of the Bartlett School in regards to the CDBG application. She introduced George and Nina of CDFA. She reported that there were 17 applications competing for the funds in this round of CDBG applications; \$6.6 million has been requested and \$5.5 million is available for distribution. She anticipates an announcement from the Advisory Board by April 17.

3. Bid Opening - Jason Ross, HEB Engineers:

Louise Belanger announced that all bids were received 15 minutes prior to the meeting and the times of receipt were noted on the envelopes. The Commissioners were given the bids and verified that the packets were all sealed. Mr. Ross stated that all bids should include a base bid and a bid with added alternate #1. The bids were opened in order of receipt:

| Contractor              | Base Bid   | Bid with Added<br>Alternate #1 |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| Gordon T. Burke & Sons  | \$222,100  | \$233,100                      |
| Glen Builders           | 241,550    | 254,550                        |
| Project Resource Group  | 266,852    | 286,594                        |
| AR Couture Construction | 234,587    | 248,147                        |
| AB Logging & Trucking   | 315,044.90 | 328,022.90                     |
| Ray's Electric          | 233,645.66 | 247,522.09                     |
| GW Brooks & Sons        | 223,349    | 236,259                        |

Mr. Ross stated that the apparent low bidder was Gordon T. Burke & Sons. All packets will be reviewed at the office for completeness, bond information and make sure that all figures add up. A recommendation will be made to the Commissioners by March 4. Mr. Ross also explained that Alternative #1 was for repaving a portion of the parking lot entrance.

Commissioner Brady stated that in the future all bid openings will follow the procedure used at the meeting. The Commissioners will verify that the bids have not been opened; the bids will be given to the County Administrator and opened by her.

4. Hearing of the Public:

- a. County Treasurer Fred King provided information pertaining to a discussion at the February 19 meeting regarding the water system. He explained that he was the County Administrator in 1988 when the gravity system was replaced with the two dug wells. There were two issues to be dealt with: cleaning the reservoir and dealing with the water supply. In 1988, the County Delegation granted permission to prepare a grant application with the North Country Council for Community Development Block Grant and an engineering study for the water system in West Stewartstown. A \$12,000 grant was received for a study and it went out to bid. The engineering study was performed and a recommendation was made. In June 1988, the Delegation passed a resolution which authorized the Coös County Commissioners to transfer from the 1989 Coös County operating budget surplus, \$70,000, to be used as a matching funds to apply for a \$210,000 Community Development Block Grant. The estimated cost was \$280,000. An emergency CDBG was obtained and three things were completed: the reservoir was lined; a cover was placed on the reservoir; and the wells were dug as recommended. The reservoir is the source of water for the sprinkler system mandated by the federal government.
- b. Commissioner Samson reported that he had met with the Stewartstown Selectmen on Monday, February 24. The Selectmen are looking into a study of the town's water supply. There are four alternatives which are available: hook up to the Canaan, VT Water System; use existing wells; buy the County's water system; or dig new wells and ask the County to purchase the water. The town's water department met with the engineer and has obtained a proposal. Commissioner Samson suggested meeting with the town and its engineer and look into this further. It could save the town and the County some money. Commissioner Samson will obtain a copy of the study for the Board and for the Delegation. Commissioner Brady asked Jennifer to contact the Selectmen and set up a meeting. Commissioner Grenier suggested keeping the appropriation as part of the recommendations to the Delegation. No matter what is decided the County will need the funds.

Commissioner Grenier stressed that the changes that were made to the budget are recommendations to the Delegation as the budget is in the Delegation's hands. Commissioner Brady agreed. He added that some Delegation members were upset that they were not aware of the changes and read about them in the newspaper.

Commissioner Grenier stated he has no issue with any option. The capital costs may be high for the limited tax base in Stewartstown. If the costs can be shared by both the County and the Town of Stewartstown, for a reasonable price on the water, it would be worth looking into. The County could help and work out a lower cost for water in the future. Mr. King urged that the County continue with the CDBG application. Commissioner Grenier stated that in order to obtain

the emergency CDBG funds it must be a unanimous vote of the Commissioners to single source a project. He did not believe that there was a unanimous vote at this time.

5. Other Business:

a. *Chapel Hill Road Permits:* Commissioner Samson reported that the permits were granted with Representative Th  berge's assistance. DES was not planning on issuing the permits until the end of the month. The permits arrived on Friday, February 21, 2014 by email. Mr. Thompson plans on blasting in the next few days. He has spent \$4,000 on engineering fees. The blasting and moving of the ledge and rocks needs to be done prior to the spring thaw as the road will be shut down. Mr. King stated that an emergency permit might be available to haul the rocks for a short period.

b. *Groveton LNG Project:* Cathy Conway, on behalf of NCIC and Clear Energy, requested a letter from the Board supporting the LNG project for the EDA application. LNG is proposing fueling stations in Gorham and Groveton. The grant deadline is March 14 and NCIC hopes for a reply in a couple of months. Commissioner Grenier stated that Senator Ayotte is intrigued with the project. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to endorse the project.

Commissioner Grenier asked if a letter of support from the City of Berlin would be of assistance. Ms. Conway stated it would be appreciated. Ms. Conway will provide the information to Jennifer. Commissioner Grenier asked that Jennifer email a copy of the letter to Jim Wheeler. Commissioner Brady asked that the County Delegation and the Congressional Delegation receive a copy of the letter. All approved 3-0.

c. *Budget Transfers:* Louise Belanger, NHA-Berlin, presented a budget transfer for the Board's approval. The budget transfer was signed by the Board.

|                                  |          |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| To: Contract Nurses              | \$15,000 |          |
| From: Registered Nurses Salaries |          | \$15,000 |

6. Balsams Land Matters:

Commissioner Grenier reported that he had spoken with Les Otten regarding the development of the Balsams Ski area. The development will be done in three phases. Phase 1 is the most complicated because it redevelops the Wilderness Ski Area. The proposal would be to quadruple the size of the ski area. There is a potential of 1,000 full time/part time jobs. The goal is the winter of 2015. All State agencies have been helpful and enthusiastic with the proposed project. There is one issue that could derail the project. There are 7 or 8 wind turbines which are located in Dixville. On page 57 of the NH FSAC, the County asked for a setback requirement of 1,350'; however the minimum requirement is 500'. The towers are on leased land owned by Bayroot. The setbacks are not to prohibit the use of the land but to discourage people from venturing on to the land. Mr. Otten has asked if the County would support a communication to agree to discuss trimming the 1,350' setback. Mr. King asked if 500' would be agreeable. Commissioner Grenier replied he would be tickled pink with that suggested setback. Mr. King stated that it is a Planning Board decision. Commissioner Samson stated that there is a gate 500' from the wind turbines. The greatest concern is shield ice. In his opinion, the 500' is a reasonable request. Commissioner Grenier stated that Mr. Otten can live with the 500' but not the 1,300'.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to send a letter to Balsams View LLC supporting the setback reduction to 500' with a copy sent to Brookfield Power. Commissioner Brady urged that as soon as Mr. Otten is ready for a presentation he should contact the Commissioners and Planning Board. All approved 3-0.

Mr. King urged that the County move slowly with this project as there are many naysayers. These people have the knowledge and the resource to push this project through.

7. *Any Other Business:*

Commissioner Samson provided an update on the Supreme Court hearings held February 20 relating to the DRA valuations. The County will be called on the carpet for not having its own valuation. One of the justices hammered the DRA lawyer for not providing the information to the County on how the DRA came up with the valuation. Attorney Frizzell did a great job and was able to answer all their questions. The attorney from the City of Berlin, Chris Boldt, did a good job as well. Jennifer watched it online and concurred with Commissioner Samson.

Barbara Tetreault stated that one of the justices stated that the ruling would come down based on the confidentiality clause. Justice Lynn found it bizarre that the appraisal information was not provided to the County. She stated that Attorney Frizzell was hammered about the County not having its own appraisal and that the County continued to use zero values on the inventory forms.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:18 a.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk