

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
Friday, August 10, 2012 - 10:00 a.m.  
North Country Resource Center - Lancaster, NH

Present: Representatives John Tholl-Chair; Herb Richardson-Vice Chair; Yvonne Thomas-Clerk; Duffy Daugherty, Larry Rappaport, Bill Remick, Robert Théberge and Marc Tremblay. Also present: County Commissioner “Bing” Judd; County Administrator Suzanne Collins; Director of Finance Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; County Treasurer Fred King; Sheriff Gerry Marcou; Bill Fortune, NH Clean Energy and members of the press.

Chairman Tholl called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. and requested all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called by the clerk, Representative Yvonne Thomas. There were 8 members present. Representatives Coulombe, Hatch and Merrick were absent.

Hearing of the Public:

Bill Fortune, NH Clean Energy, requested the Delegation’s support for a renewable energy plant in Bethlehem. Chairman Tholl informed Mr. Fortune that Bethlehem was located in Grafton County. Mr. Fortune left the meeting.

Review & Approval of Minutes: Chairman Tholl asked if any changes or corrections needed to be made to the minutes of the May 21, 2012 meeting. A motion was made by Representative Tremblay, seconded by Representative Théberge to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2012 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Review & Approval of the Second Quarter Financial Statements: The Coös County expenditures and revenues for the second quarter were reviewed.

Representative Richardson asked if there will be a problem with the Berlin Nursing Home Specials line item being expended at 95.01%. Sue replied that the Specials line items cannot be over expended.

Representative Rappaport asked why the County Attorney Special line item was high and Sue replied that it related to the renovation of offices for the County Attorney at the Coös County Courthouse. Representative Richardson asked Sheriff Marcou for an update on the in-car cameras. Sheriff Marcou reported that the cameras had arrived and have been installed. Chairman Tholl reported that all officers are currently learning how to use them. Representative Tremblay did note that the Sheriff’s car did not have a camera. Sheriff Marcou replied that was correct; however his cruiser is not used for transports.

While reviewing other special appropriations, Representative Richardson reported that Peaslee’s will no longer be selling potatoes. Commissioner Judd replied that the Commissioners were aware and are looking at other alternatives.

After reviewing the revenues for both nursing homes, Jennifer reported that the Medicaid Quality Incentive Payment (MQIP) for both facilities had been received bringing the revenue for the Nursing Hospital at 50% and the revenue for the Nursing Home at 52%. Jennifer also reported that the County will be receiving an additional \$1.5 million in ProShare funds from the State.

Representative Richardson noted the surplus of \$2.2 million used to reduce taxes. He thanked the County Administration for watching spending and assisting in reducing taxes.

In regards to the federal funds line item, Representative Remick asked when funds are to be expected. Sue explained that the Dean Brook Village Project is ongoing, \$500,000 was budgeted as contingency and another \$500,000 has been earmarked for the Notre Dame project in Berlin.

Representative Remick asked if the revenue to date for the Unincorporated Place of Millsfield had to do with the Payment of Lieu of Tax for the wind park and Sue replied in the affirmative.

Representative Tremblay asked why the revenue for the County was low and Sue replied that the County taxes are not paid until December.

The Coös County second quarter expenditures were approved by a roll call vote 8-0.

The Coös County second quarter revenues were approved by a roll call vote 8-0.

The Unincorporated Places second quarter expenditures were approved by a roll call vote 8-0.

The Unincorporated Places second quarter revenues were approved by a roll call vote 8-0.

Old Business:

Representative Daugherty asked for an update on the progress of the survey and appraisal on the County Administrator's house that was requested at a previous meeting.

Sue presented the following options discussed at the August Commissioners' meeting:

1. Subdivide and sell the property:
  - Current housing market in Stewartstown is poor;
  - Water is part of county system;
  - Property line would have to exclude county cemetery;
  - A similar property in value on Route #3 in Stewartstown constructed in 1993 was originally listed for \$239,000; now priced at \$159,000 and on the market at this low price for 10 months;
  - A similar property in value on Fort Hill Road in Stewartstown constructed in 1995 currently listed for \$259,000. It has been on the market for at least three years.
  - Selling the property will add this parcel to the Stewartstown property tax rolls.
2. Rent the property:
  - On July 18, 2012, Sue contacted Paul Kuhn, Agent in Charge of Border Patrol Operations, asking if any agent would be interested in renting the house. Rental consideration of a similar property in Stewartstown is \$800 not including heat and utilities. This could provide up to \$9,600 rental income.
3. Use the property for county government purposes:
  - With the major changes to Medicaid (Medicaid Managed Care) that is forecasted to require additional clerical staff in the Nursing Hospital, the house could be used for County office operations such as County Administrator/Unincorporated Places Administrator, Director of Finance, Administrative Assistant/UP Tax Collector, Payroll, Accounts Payable, Commissioners' office space and meeting space. There is ample parking and moving those functions out of the Nursing Hospital would relieve the current crunch for office space and parking.

Office space at the Nursing Hospital is at a premium and moving the above functions off site would create better working conditions for Nursing Hospital operations:

- Dietary Manager and Assistant Dietary Manager share an office;
- Laundry/Housekeeping Director's office is located in a storage area;
- MDS Coordinator and Clinical Coordinator are located on the third floor sun porch making it inaccessible for resident use;
- Director of Nursing, QA (who also serves as Assistant Director of Nursing) and Scheduling Coordinator would benefit from proximity to one another in office space - the current offices occupied by County Administrator, Director of Finance, Commissioners could be used as a centralized location for the Nursing Department;
- Activities Department needs more space.

Sue reported that the Commissioners have met with a consultant to discuss managed care. This consultant indicated that there will be a lot more paperwork and more staff will be needed. There will be three separate billing systems with three different companies and more clerical work will be required. The Commissioners support further exploring the use of the house as the center for County Government. The unincorporated places would pay for a decent share of the utilities at the house. The move would be positive for the Nursing Hospital. Sue asked the Delegation for more time to research this option further.

Representative Richardson asked for a cost analysis of refurbishing the house for the next Delegation meeting.

Representative Daugherty stated that the existing appraisal on the house is overstated. The house needs to be reappraised. He did question the request for relocation of administrative space at the Nursing Hospital after space had been delegated to administration when the addition was built. Sue explained that the focus of the addition was to provide space to the nursing hospital residents. An area was converted to office space but the Delegation added the position of Director of Finance and a small office area was provided for the Commissioners. Representative Rappaport stated that the Delegation had requested an appraisal and regardless of what the Commissioners decide he felt that an appraisal was needed in order to know the value of the house. Commissioner Judd stated that staff has been instructed to come up with floor plans for the Commissioners next meeting. It should not cost much for renovations. It would be a plus to keep the house and separate the county functions from the Nursing Hospital. He did agree that a new appraisal was needed.

Representative Thomas asked for a list of the house expenses. Sue explained that the information was provided to the Delegation last spring when Representative Daugherty had requested information on the nonessential programs of the county. Representative Thomas acknowledged that she has this information.

Representative Daugherty added that a survey of the property is also needed. Sue stated that the Delegation did not appropriate funds for an appraisal and survey. Representative Rappaport suggested using funds from the sale of the 104 acre woodlot. Representative Daugherty noted that whether the house is sold or refurbished for offices, the house needs to be surveyed and appraised. Sue will obtain quotes and provide them to the Delegation. Sue stated that the Delegation could approve a budget transfer to a line that does not exist. Representative Th  berge said that some members of the Delegation were a little frustrated that after the delegation voted in March to sell the house, the Commissioners included living in the house as one of the conditions in the job description of the County Administrator.

County Treasurer Fred King stated that deciding what to do with the house is a significant issue but does not need to be done overnight. "The world won't come to an end if the house does not get sold this year". Managed care is a bigger issue and the representatives' phones will be ringing off the wall once this system is put into place.

Commissioner Judd recommended selling 5 acres, without the cemetery, if the house has to be sold. Representative Richardson asked that a price be obtained for both: an appraisal and a survey of the property. Representative Daugherty agreed with Commissioner Judd's suggestion. A motion was made by Representative Daugherty, seconded Representative Th  berge to obtain costs for a survey and appraisal of the County Administrator's house for the next Delegation meeting. The motion was approved by roll call vote 7-1.

New Business:

- County Real Estate 104 acre woodlot: Sue presented to the Delegation a copy of the tax map which showed the 104 acre lot in Stewartstown. The steep parcel is landlocked and the County cut the timber on the lot. The Board of Commissioners recommended the sale of the lot to the high bidder, Timothy Bailey of Boscawen for \$21,500. Mr. Bailey is an abutter to this lot. A motion was made by Representative Th  berge, seconded by Representative Daugherty to approve the sale of the 104 acre lot in the amount of \$21,500 to Timothy Bailey of Boscawen. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.
- Chairman Tholl reported that he had signed the budget transfers prior to the meeting. Representative Rappaport requested that he be able review them prior to signing. Jennifer requested that the budget transfers be returned to the office after being signed.
- Representative Richardson requested that the County obtain an estimate to tear down the county barn and sell the wood from the structure. In his opinion, the barn is a fire and safety hazard. The barn doors are currently kept open and there is a 30-foot drop. Sue explained that the area is being used for hay storage and the doors need to remain open. The inmates are not allowed in that specific area. Commissioner Judd stated that David Santamaria signed a one year lease for use of the barn and a 5 year lease for the use of the county lands. *(Except from the minutes of the May 16, 2012 Commissioners' meeting, A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Judd to allow David Santamaria to lease the barn for three (3) years with a 60-day exit clause with the stipulation noted. The motion passed 2-1.)*
- Representative Richardson reported that he was informed that talks have been initiated between Carroll County and Co  s County to discuss the closing of the Co  s County jail and transferring the inmates to Carroll County. He asked who had authorized the Delegation to do so. Chairman Tholl replied that he had been approached by members of the Carroll County Delegation and he told them that Co  s County was not interested. The Carroll facility is too far away and transporting the inmates would be a nightmare for the Sheriff's Department.

County Treasurer King stated that Carroll County built a new jail that is oversized and they are trying to fill it. Superintendent Hamelin has been contacted by Carroll County Superintendent Johnson for census information after being urged to do so by his Delegation. Chairman Tholl suggested that a letter be sent stating that Co  s County is not interested in discussing the issue. A motion was made by Representative Daugherty, seconded Representative Th  berge that Chairman Tholl send a letter to the Carroll County Delegation thanking them for the interest but Co  s County had no desire to close its facility and transfer its inmates to Carroll County. The motion was approved by voice vote. A copy of the letter will be sent to Superintendent Hamelin.

- Chairman Tholl and members of the Delegation congratulated Jennifer Fish on her new position as County Administrator.
- Mr. King updated the Delegation on the work he is doing on behalf of the County Commissioners and the Co  s County Planning Board in regards to the impact of the Umbagog Refuge in Co  s

County. The Board of Commissioners has requested an independent study on the economic impacts of the Umbagog Refuge on the local economy. Mr. King is working with North Country Council, who will assist in preparing the request for proposal. The Trust for Public Land has indicated that they are willing to cooperate in assisting with funding the study. Mr. King has requested that the Refuge also assist with the cost. Mr. King reported that in June a letter was sent from the County Commissioners to the Congressional Delegation requesting a four-year moratorium on federal land purchases in Coös County. Representative Thériège suggested that a letter be sent from the Coös County Delegation supporting the Commissioners' request. Mr. King stated that he was in the process of writing to the Congressional Delegation and was more than happy to include that request in his letter. A motion was made by Representative Thériège, seconded by Representative Rappaport supporting the Coös County Commissioners' request for a four-year moratorium on federal land purchases in Coös County. The motion was approved by voice vote.

A motion was made by Representative Thériège, seconded by Rep Daugherty to send a letter to encourage the Congressional Delegation to look into fully funding the payment in lieu of tax. Sue explained that the payment in lieu of tax for the national forest has been fully funded for the past 6 years. The issue is with the revenue sharing payments and the national park service payments. Thomas and Scott Dillon sold land to the National Park Service in Success and payments from the National Park Service are not fully funded. Representative Thériège amended the motion to state "fully funding the revenue sharing and national park service payments", the amended motion was seconded by Representative Daugherty. The motion was approved by voice vote.

With no other business to discuss, a motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Tremblay, to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m. All approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Yvonne Thomas, Clerk