

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION
KENO PUBLIC HEARING/MILLSFIELD
& QUARTERLY MEETING
Thursday, September 6, 2018 - 10:00 a.m.
North Country Resource Center - Lancaster, NH

Present: Representatives Robert Théberge-Chair; Wayne Moynihan-Vice Chair; Larry Laflamme-Clerk; John Fothergill, Bing Judd, Troy Merner, Yvonne Thomas and Edith Tucker. Also present: County Commissioner Paul Grenier; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Sheriff Brian Valerino; Captain Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Commissioner Meyers, DHHS; Nancy Frank & April Allin-Mottram IDN Region 7; Suzanne Gaetjens-Oleson, Northern Human Services; and Haven Neal, Chair of the Conservation District Supervisors.

Chairman Théberge requested all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Clerk, Representative Laflamme, called the roll. There were eight members present. Representative Hatch and Richardson were excused.

PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman Théberge opened the public hearing to allow Keno in the Unincorporated Place of Millsfield at 10:03 a.m.

Chairman Théberge asked if there were any members of the public who wanted to speak for or against Keno in Millsfield. There was no public comment.

Representative Moynihan questioned where the notice was posted. Linda Harris replied the notice for the public hearing and the quarterly meeting was published in the four local newspapers, posted at both nursing homes, the courthouse and on the county website.

Chairman Théberge closed the public hearing at 10:05 a.m.

Chairman Théberge opened the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Review & Approval of the Minutes of the May 18, 2018, quarterly meeting and the July 23, 2018, joint meeting, as distributed: A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Tucker to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2018, quarterly meeting and the July 23, 2018, joint meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously by a voice vote.

Hearing of the Public:

- Commissioner Meyers of the Department of Health & Human Services attended the meeting to present a proposal (*copy on file*) requesting that half of the excess, not budgeted, amount of proshare for each of the nursing homes be sent to the Department of Health & Humans Services for the IDN programs that provide services for mental health and substance abuse programs. These funds would be matched by CMS for distribution to seven IDN Regions throughout the state. IDN 7 represents the North Country along with Grafton and Carroll counties. Commissioner Meyers stated that he is meeting with every Delegation from each county asking if they would be willing to take

half of the additional amount (excess) of proshare and send the funds to the IDN networks. Five counties have agreed to do so: Cheshire, Grafton, Merrimack, Strafford and Sullivan. He is hoping to have responses of the other counties by the end of September.

Commissioner Grenier thanked Commissioner Meyers for his presentation. He asked that the Delegation consult with the Board of Commissioners prior to making a decision. The nursing homes have been operating on existing budgets by the skin of their teeth for the last five years due to the 21% budget neutrality and the state education funds reduction of five percent.

The proposed funds request for three years amounts to about \$700,000. These funds can be used for stability in Coös County. He noted that half of the excess is a lot and proposed 25%. He stated that he had to think about the residents of Coös County.

Superintendent Champagne asked how Coös County would be affected if the total funding was not received. Commissioner Meyers stated that if total funding is not received services would need to be reduced in Coös County.

Louise Belanger, NHA, stated that Coös pays \$250 per hour for mental health services whereas other nursing homes do not pay for these services.

Commissioner Grenier added that both nursing homes have been operating a \$7 million deficit and the pool of money keeps shrinking. Representative Tucker asked if Coös would be getting its value in services. She asked for assurance of services to Coös County. She added that the representatives of Coös County need to think of the fiscal problems in Coös County. Setting up this type of system will be difficult to explain to the residents with high county taxes.

Representative Fothergill stated that services to Coös County falls well below one million.

Commissioner Meyers reiterated that he was not asking for budgeted funds. Representative Moynihan noted that the extra funds are being asked to be used to help mental health and substance abuse addictions. He added that recently Senators Shaheen and Hassan obtained funds for this purpose. Commissioner Meyers replied that this particular grant will be used for medicated assistance treatment. It is a complimentary program with strict restrictions using a formula of impact over a period of two years. Some portion of the grant will come to Coös County. Representative Moynihan stated that Coös County is a high impact part of the state but does not receive extra funds to deal with its crisis.

Representative Laflamme stated that issues have been raised at the state level in regards to the delivery of services for mental health in the North Country. He was having difficulty with the concept of donating funds from nursing homes to help support substance abuse programs.

Representative Thomas stated that this was a very clever way of requesting funds. She stated that this does not work for Coös County and she did not believe in taking funds from the elderly.

Representative Fothergill questioned if IDNs are doing anything for this area. There are several individuals who need mental health assistance who cannot drive to Littleton.

Commissioner Grenier stated that \$287,234 was being asked from Grafton County; \$166,209.75 from Carroll County; and \$695,770.75 from Coös County. He also noted that if Coös was to agree to 25% of the funding, Coös County will still be contributing about \$350,000 which was still more than what is requested from Carroll and Grafton.

Representative Moynihan noted that the economic viability of the southern region cannot be compared to Coös County. Representative Thérberge concluded by stating that the Delegation was not prepared to vote on the issue. He noted that a special meeting will be required to discuss the matter further. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the Delegation would vote on the matter at the end of the Joint Meeting on September 12.

- Haven Neal, Chair of the Conservation District Board of Supervisors, provided a brief presentation on the Conservation District. *(a copy of the report is on file.)*

Representative Moynihan inquired what funding did the County provide to the Conservation District. Mr. Neal replied that the County pays the salary and benefits for the administrator. The administrator is also good at writing grants in order to obtain additional revenue.

Review & Approval of the Financial Statements of Coös County and of the Unincorporated Places for the Period Ended June 30, 2018: Chairman Thérberge reviewed the appropriations and revenues of the Coös County Financial Statements. There were no questions.

Chairman Thérberge continued with the Unincorporated Places Financial Statements. There were no questions.

A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Merner to approve the financial statements of Coös County and of the Unincorporated Places. The motion passed by roll call vote 8-0.

Old Business:

- a. Keno - Unincorporated Place of Millsfield: Chairman Thérberge noted that since there were no comments opposing Keno in Millsfield that a vote approving Keno in Millsfield was required. Representative Moynihan asked if the vote was for all of the Unincorporated Places. Chairman Thérberge replied only Millsfield. He explained that if any other business in another Unincorporated Place requests Keno a public hearing will be required. A motion was made by Representative Fothergill, seconded by Representative Judd to grant authorization of Keno in Millsfield. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.
- b. Update on Drug Court: Superintendent Ben Champagne spoke of his discord with the program. He also noted that he and County Attorney John McCormick disagree on the matter.
- c. Electronic Device Policy: Chairman Thérberge stated that he had previously attended a conference where his tablet as well as others were stolen. The policy approved by the Delegation does not cover desk tops. He asked if the Delegation would allow the purchase of the desktop conditional on his being re-elected. Representative Tucker asked if he was looking to amend the policy. Representative Moynihan suggested that the policy be addressed at the organizational meeting of the new Delegation in December. Representative Fothergill noted that the original purpose for the purchase of the tablet was to carry them to the State House. Representative Tucker suggested that

the policy designate a specific amount instead of the type of device. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Tucker to keep the electronic device policy on the agenda under old business to be discussed at the organization meeting in December. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The next quarterly meeting will be held in conjunction with the organization meeting on Monday, December 10 at 10:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Hospital in West Stewartstown, NH.

The Public Hearing on the 2019 budget will be held on Saturday, December 15, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Home in Berlin, NH.

A motion was made by Representative Fothergill, seconded by Representative Merner to adjourn the meeting at 12:42 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Larry Laflamme, Clerk