

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION
2013 ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING
Saturday, March 16, 2013 - 9:00 a.m.
Coös County Nursing Home - Berlin, NH

Present: Representatives Robert Th  berge -Chair; Larry Rappaport-Vice Chair; Yvonne Thomas-Clerk; Gary Coulombe, Marcia Hammon, William Hatch, Wayne Moynihan, Herb Richardson and Leon Rideout (*arrived at 9:40*). Also present: County Commissioners Thomas Brady and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; County Attorney John McCormick; Chief Deputy Keith Roberge; Registrar of Deeds Tanya Batchelder; County Treasurer Fred King; Larry Barker, UNH/Cooperative Extension; Diane Bennett, Co  s County Conservation District; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Chris Diego, CEDC; representatives of agencies supported by the County, members of the press and the public.

Chairman Th  berge called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. He asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Th  berge wanted it noted that all future Delegation meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Chairman Th  berge, seconded by Representative Rappaport to enter into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 9:15 a.m. The motion was approved by voice vote. The Delegation members returned to the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

The roll was called by the Clerk, Representative Yvonne Thomas. There were 9 members present. Representative Enman was excused.

Chairman Th  berge announced that no one was allowed to speak unless recognized by the Chair, and he began reviewing the budget appropriations.

Representative Moynihan noted that all salary line items increased. County Administrator Jennifer Fish replied that all salary line items were increased by 1   percent based on the proposed salary increases for all county employees including both union memberships.

Chairman Th  berge inquired about the salary and health insurance decreases in the County Finance budget. Ms. Fish explained that the budget was initially prepared with a family health insurance plan. However, Ms. Klebe selected a two-person plan. Chairman Th  berge stated that Delegation's originally request of the position was as Chief Financial Officer. He asked Ms. Klebe if she was okay with her title and she replied yes.

Chairman Th  berge inquired if there were plans to reduce the amount of county reports printed as he has been informed by several towns that the books are thrown away. Commissioner Brady replied that the amount of County Reports printed for 2012 was reduced, and the figure would be revisited again in 2013.

While reviewing the County Attorney's budget, Representative Moynihan questioned the contracted services line item. County Attorney McCormick has expressed concern that the amount currently budgeted of \$15,000 along with the encumbered funds of \$17,000 will not be sufficient for the explosion case. County Attorney McCormick requested an additional \$18,000 in the line item.

Representative Moynihan stated that it will be more difficult to request additional funds at a later date and asked if \$18,000 was sufficient or would \$25,000 be better. County Attorney McCormick replied that \$25,000 would be better. He added that the funds would not be spent unnecessarily. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Hatch that the contracted services line item in the County Attorney's budget be increased from \$15,000 to \$40,000 with the understanding that \$17,000 was encumbered from the 2012 budget. All approved by voice vote.

Representative Richardson reported that the Sheriff's Department experienced severe computer problems over the past week. Chief Deputy Roberge briefly updated the Delegation on the computer problems. He requested an increase of \$24,000 to the new equipment line item for a new software program. The software license will be purchased in 2014. The Sheriff's Department will use the server at the Corrections Department. Representative Hatch asked how old the computers were and if any were being replaced. Chief Deputy Roberge replied the computers were a few years old. Chairman Théberge urged that the computers be updated in order to be compatible with the new software program. A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Rappaport that the new equipment line item in the Sheriff's Department budget be increased from \$7,620 to \$42,620. All approved by voice vote.

Chairman Théberge reported that he has asked the members of the County House Subcommittee to also review options for the barn. Would it be cost effective to keep the barn and maintain it or would it be more feasible to tear it down? Representative Coulombe questioned if the \$5,000 budgeted will be enough for the repairs currently needed. Commissioner Brady replied that there are enough funds for the repairs but not for painting of the barn. Representative Richardson stated that there are no reasons to keep the barn. Representative Rideout stated that the lease should have included that the lessee would be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the barn. He suggested that the lease be terminated and renegotiate a new lease where the barn pays for itself. Chairman Théberge stated that the appropriation would remain at \$5,000, and options for the barn will be reviewed at the July quarterly meeting. Commissioner Samson inquired if the Delegation would consider opinions from outside sources. He explained that several people from District 3 have expressed that the barn should not be torn down. A group has been formed to see the viability of keeping the barn. Chairman Théberge stated that the group should contact Representative Rideout as he is the Chair of the subcommittee. Commissioner Brady added that all the citizens of the County should be considered when making the decision not certain towns.

Chairman Théberge continued with the budget review. A motion was made by Chairman Théberge, seconded by Representative Thomas to create a contingency line item under the County Delegation budget in the amount of \$15,000. All approved by voice vote.

While reviewing the line items under Other Special Appropriations, a motion was made by Representative Rappaport to increase the economic development line item to \$50,000, remove the ATV Coalition and rename the line item Coös Economic Development Corporation with the understanding that \$10,000 of the appropriation will be used for the development of the Coös County website. Any economic development requests, including the ATV Coalition, will be directed to CEDC.

Chris Diego, on behalf of the CEDC, provided a brief history of the CEDC's relationship with the County. He explained that the CEDC has written its by-laws and has an all-volunteer Board which includes a CDFA member. CEDC is not requesting any money but will be providing a service to the County. The County will know where the funds are being spent. Mr. Diego is hoping for good communication between CEDC

and the County. Chairman Th  berge stated that the Delegation's objective is to have one economic development focus. The ATV Coalition was directed to work through the CEDC. The Chair also asked if it would be possible to adhere to Representative Rappaport's schedule when scheduling meetings. Mr. Diego replied that the meetings are at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Representative Richardson stated that he supported Representative Rappaport's motion. He has nothing against the ATV Coalition but if funds are given to one club all clubs will request funds. This motion will direct all requests to the CEDC. Representative Moynihan also supported the motion. However, he asked if the relationship with the CEDC were to end, will the website still belong to the County? Mr. Diego replied it could be arranged that the website is owned by the County. Representative Rappaport added even though this proposal came from the Delegation, it is expected that in future years the CEDC will need to request funds through the County's budget process. Mr. Diego agreed. Commissioner Brady stated for clarification purposes that all future requests for economic development projects should be forwarded to CEDC. Chairman Th  berge replied that was correct. Commissioner Brady also inquired who will be responsible to maintain the County's government section of the website and Representative Rappaport replied the county staff. Chairman Th  berge stated that CEDC is responsible for the funds but cannot design and maintain it themselves. An entity will need to assist them. Commissioner Brady stated that County staff currently updates the website weekly; he asked who will be responsible in the future. Representative Rappaport stated that whatever Co  s County officials do now will continue to do by uploading to a site selected by CEDC. A motion was made by Representative Rappaport, seconded by Representative Thomas to increase the Economic Development website from \$30,000 to \$50,000 which includes \$10,000 for the County's website and to delete the ATV Coalition line item. The ATV Coalition will be directed to work with the CEDC. All approved by voice vote.

Rep. Richardson asked that the Food Pantry Potato Program line item be changed to Food Pantry Program.

Ms. Fish presented a recommendation from the Board of Commissioners to appropriate \$40,000 for the Co  s County Utility Valuation Defense fund. These funds will be used to assist the legal fight with the utility tax appraisal value battle on behalf of the communities in the County. Chairman Th  berge asked if the Unincorporated Places also had an appropriation. Ms. Fish explained that the request is county-wide and the Unincorporated Places pay county taxes. Representative Moynihan did not disagree with the request but suggested that the unincorporated places also have a portion. He suggested splitting the appropriation 50/50. Representative Hatch stated he was not opposed; however he has worked with the Department of Revenue and spoke to Stephan Hamilton, Director of the Property Appraisal Division. Mr. Hamilton has requested to meet with the Board of Commissioners and the Delegation to explain the DRA's perspective. Both Commissioner Brady and Commissioner Samson agreed they were in favor of this meeting. Commissioner Brady also noted that the Commissioners would come to the Delegation for prior approval of any expenditure from the fund. Representative Rideout liked the idea that the County was willing to help the towns in the County. His concern was that prior to meeting the budget had a relatively small increase, but several increases have already been made to the budget. Ms. Fish stated that the Commissioners had voted to use funds from the cost savings of the health insurance. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Hatch to add a line item under Other Special Appropriations for the Co  s County Utility Value Defense Fund in the amount of \$20,000 for Co  s County subject to the Commissioners' discretion on spending and prior discussion with the Delegation. All approved by voice vote.

Commissioner Samson stated that the Board unanimously agreed with the motion.

The changes in appropriations totaled \$100,000. The total appropriations for the County budget were \$32,095,780.

The budgeted revenues were reviewed with no changes.

Review & Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Théberge asked if any changes or corrections needed to be made to the minutes of the February 4, March 6 & March 13, 2013 meetings. A motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Rideout to approve the minutes of the February 4, March 6 & March 13, 2013 meetings. The minutes were unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Ratification of AFSCME/Coös County Nursing Home Negotiated Cost Items:

Ms. Fish reported that the AFSCME membership had formally approved a three-year contract on March 7, 2013 with the following cost items:

- Switching to Interlocal Trust Harvard Pilgrim Plan from LGC Matthew Thornton. The new plan is comparable to the current plan. There will be no increase in premium for July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 with a cost savings for six months of \$36,562.50.
- Wage increase of 1.5% effective January 1, 2013 with a total cost of \$63,750.

Ratification of SEA/Coös County Department of Corrections Negotiated Cost Items:

Ms. Fish reported that the SEA membership had formally approved a three-year contract on February 26, 2013 with the following cost items:

- Switching to Interlocal Trust Harvard Pilgrim Plan from LGC Matthew Thornton. The new plan is comparable to the current plan. There will be no increase in premium for July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014 with a cost savings for six months of \$6,910.39
- Wage increase of 1.5% effective January 1, 2013 with a total cost of \$11,250.

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Moynihan to approve the AFSCME/Coös County cost items and the SEA/Coös County cost items. The motion was approved by roll call vote 9-0.

Allocation of National Forest Reserve Funds:

Ms. Fish explained the state law (RSA 227-H:23) requires that the Delegation vote on the distribution of National Forest Reserve Funds to independent school districts. The total to be allocated in 2013 is \$123,665.48. This year she recommended that \$90,813 of the funds be used for the education of the children in Millsfield and Wentworth Location. The balance of \$32,852.48 will be equally shared by the school districts that maintain schools for books and education materials. A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Hatch to approve the distribution of the National Forest Reserve Funds per the County Administrator's recommendation. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 9-0.

Unincorporated Places:

Chairman Théberge inquired where the funds were located in regards to the Planning Board Clerk. Ms. Fish replied that the funds would be appropriated in the Professional Services line item. Chairman Théberge asked for the breakdown of the Contracted Services line item. Ms. Fish explained that the line item included funds for the completion of the revaluation of the Unincorporated Places and for

consultant services of Suzanne Collins in the amount of \$17,500. Chairman Théberge replied that the Delegation had issues with the consultant services. The Delegation felt that Ms. Collins was retired for five years and knew she was leaving. She should have trained someone prior to her departure. He also added that Ms. Collins benefited quite nicely from the County. Ms. Fish stated that there is a lot to the Unincorporated Places and Ms. Collins has 30 years of knowledge. A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Richardson to cut \$17,500 from the consultant services line item. Representative Hatch asked what other resources are available to assist Ms. Fish. Ms. Fish stated that the unincorporated places are each unique. She added that everyone will need to be patient with her while she learns this part of her job. Representative Hatch stated that the Delegation has confidence in her and are available to assist her in any way possible. Representative Rideout added that the last 26 years may not have been the best way. Ms. Fish may put on a new twist. Chairman Théberge reread the motion: A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Richardson to cut \$17,500 from the consultant services line item. The motion passed by roll call vote 9-0.

Chairman Théberge asked who would be the Planning Board clerk. Commissioner Brady replied that Planning Board Chair John Scarinza would be attending the next Commissioners' meeting to discuss Planning Board issues. At the last Planning Board meeting, members of the Board recommend hiring Sue Collins to record and transcribe the minutes. Commissioner Brady explained that Sue Collins' ex-officio seat went to Jennifer Fish and Bing Judd's ex-officio seat went to himself.

Fred King, Vice Chair of the Planning Board, stated that the Planning Board meets on significant issues. Sue Collins has been clerk since the existence of the Planning Board which he considers very important. Ms. Collins has requested payment for taking the minutes and the work afterwards. Representative Rideout asked if payment would be a flat fee or an hourly rate. Commissioner Brady stated the base rate would be \$12.48 per hour. Mr. King added that the Clerk is usually a Planning Board member. Representative Richardson asked what amount was appropriated for the position. Ms. Fish replied no funds had been appropriated. Chairman Théberge inquired if Ms. Fish could record the meetings and Linda Harris could transcribe the minutes. Representative Rappaport asked if the position could be put out for bid. Representative Rideout asked how often the Planning Board met. Mr. King replied that in 2012 the Planning Board met four times. He anticipates the number to increase in 2013 because of The Balsams project. A motion was made by Representative Rideout to fund \$50 per meeting to take and print the minutes of the Planning Board. Representative Moynihan asked if any other funds could be used to cover the hourly cost per meeting and the distribution of the minutes. There was discussion as to where the appropriation should be placed in the Unincorporated Places budget. A motion was made by Representative Richardson to appropriate \$600 in the Planning & Zoning line item. There was no second to the motion. A motion was made by Chairman Théberge, seconded by Representative Rideout that a line item be placed under Delegation expense for Planning Board Services in the amount of \$2,500 which includes \$1,000 for a transcribing system.

Representative Hatch questioned the necessity of a Clerk of Works for The Balsams project. Representative Rideout explained that the developer will pay for the expense. Representative Rappaport stated that funds had to be appropriated for a Clerk of Works. Mr. King stated that if the Delegation authorizes the Commissioners to hire a Clerk of Works for The Balsams project, the developer is responsible for the expense. The cost is zero to the taxpayers. The motion and second were withdrawn by Chairman Théberge and Representative Rideout.

Commissioner Brady requested that a small amount be appropriated for a Planning Board secretary and the Board of Commissioners will discuss the issue with Mr. Scarinza. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Richardson that under all of the Unincorporated Places budgets planning and zoning section, that a line item be added for Planning Board Secretarial Services. The amount of \$4,000 will be distributed by allocation to all Unincorporated Places. Representative Moynihan explained that the motion will enable the Planning Board to have a secretary available at all meetings. The Planning Board should have confidence in the person that is hired. The motion also allows the Commissioners to hire a person that is appropriate on the County's pay scale. Representative Rideout stated there was too much money for the position. The motion passed on a roll call vote 6-3.

Representative Rappaport requested that the Planning Board meeting of March 26 be moved as he could not make it. Mr. King replied that he would pass the information on to Chairman Scarinza.

A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Hammon to add a line item for the Coös County Utility Value Defense Fund in the amount of \$20,000 for the Coös County Unincorporated Places subject to the Commissioners' discretion on spending and to be discussed with the Delegation. The motion passed on a roll call vote 9-0.

The Unincorporated Places revenues were reviewed with no changes.

A motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Richardson to adopt all appropriations and revenues for all funds. The motion was approved by a roll call vote 9-0. The total increase to the County's budget was 2.2% or \$314,198.

The Delegation recessed for lunch.

The meeting reconvened and Chairman Théberge announced that Diane Bennett of the Coös County Conservation District was retiring at the end of April. The Delegation thanked her for her many years of service.

Chairman Théberge announced that the appropriation for Coös County Utility Value Defense Fund in the amount of \$20,000 which was previously approved could not be done. The whole amount of \$40,000 will need to be appropriated in the County's budget. A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Rideout to reconsider. The motion passed by voice vote. A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Richardson to increase the appropriation for the Coös County Utility Value Defense Fund in the Coös County budget up to \$40,000. The motion was approved by roll call vote 9-0.

Budget Resolutions:

Chairman Théberge read the following resolutions:

RESOLUTION #1

Be it resolved by the Coös County Delegation duly convened on this sixteenth day of March, 2013, that the sums hereinafter detailed in this resolution are hereby appropriated and the total amount for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2013, shall be \$32,115,780 for the County budget not including the Unincorporated Places.

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Hammon. The motion passed by roll call vote 9-0.

RESOLUTION #2

Be it resolved by the Coös County Delegation that the sum of \$32,115,780 is hereby adopted as the estimated income from sources indicated for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2013.

A motion was made by Representative Rappaport, seconded by Representative Rideout. The motion passed by roll call vote 9-0.

RESOLUTION #3

Be it further resolved that the total appropriation being in excess of the total estimated income in the amount of \$14,438,133, the Treasurer shall issue his warrant to the Towns and City in the County for this amount.

A motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Coulombe. The motion passed by roll call vote 9-0.

RESOLUTION #4

Be it resolved that \$3,024,222 of the operating surplus for the year 2012 be appropriated in the 2013 Budget for the purpose of reducing taxes for 2013.

A motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Coulombe. The motion passed by roll call vote 9-0.

RESOLUTION #5

Be it resolved by the Coös County Delegation duly convened on this sixteenth day of March 2013 that in order to comply with Department of Revenue Administration instruction, the Delegation separately approves an appropriation of \$1,147,011 and revenues of \$1,147,011 for Coös County's Unincorporated Places for calendar year 2013. The Unincorporated Places Budget for 2013 is adopted separately from the Coös County Budget.

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Hatch. The motion passed by roll call vote 9-0.

Other Business:

Chairman Théberge stated that the following meetings will need to be scheduled:

- A joint meeting of the Delegation and Commissioners with Governor Hassan in April or May.
- A meeting with Stephan Hamilton of the Department of Revenue. Representative Hatch will work on scheduling this meeting.

Representative Hatch announced that the rest area in Shelburne will be repaired and reopened. Representative Richardson asked on the status of the Colebrook and Littleton rest areas. Representative Hatch replied that issues are still being worked on.

With no other business to discuss, a motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Rideout, to adjourn the meeting at 2:25 p.m. All approved by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Yvonne Thomas, Clerk