

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION
2016 ANNUAL BUDGET MEETING

Friday, March 11, 2016 - 10:00 a.m. (*corrected 5/2/16*)
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH

Present: Representatives Robert Th  berge-Co-Chair; John Tholl-Co-Chair; Yvonne Thomas-Clerk; John Fothergill, Alethea Lincoln Froburg, William Hatch (*arrived at 10:15 a.m.*), Wayne Moynihan, Larry Rappaport, Herb Richardson and Leon Rideout. Also present: County Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Sheriff Gerald Marcou; Chief Deputy Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Registrar Tanya Batchelder; County Treasurer Fred King; representatives of outside agencies; a member of the press and the public.

Representative Th  berge called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. He asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Review & Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Representative Rappaport, seconded by Representative Rideout to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2016 meeting, as distributed. The minutes were unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Subcommittee Reports:

Representative Th  berge reported that there were no issues at the Berlin Nursing Home. He suggested that in the future a committee be set up to review benefits to attract nursing staff (housing and daycare). Representative Fothergill noted that it should be a regional approach with the local hospitals to attract healthcare workers in the North Country.

Representative Moynihan noted that the increase in the County Attorney's budget was due to the felonies first program. The County Attorney may hire a new assistant with the budgeted funds.

Opening Remarks:

County Administrator Jennifer Fish welcomed everyone to the 2016 Annual Budget Meeting.

When the preliminary 2016 budget was presented at the Public Hearing, the estimated amount to be raised by taxes was \$15,414,564. After all the recommended revisions to various revenue and appropriations line items were made the recommended amount to be raised by taxes is \$14,386,245; an increase of .32% over the 2015 county tax. The Commissioners have recommended a net total of \$520,407 increase to appropriations and a net total of \$1,548,726 increase to revenues. The County ended the year with a \$4,019,531 surplus. The Commissioners have recommended encumbering \$85,729 of the surplus and recommended applying \$3,745,687 of the surplus to reduce taxes.

The Commissioners have also requested that the committed tax relief funds in the amount of \$306,500 held in reserve be transferred to the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Ms. Fish noted the following items in regards to the 2016 budget:

- The budget included a \$560,000 appropriation for the Coös County Nursing Home Roof with an offset of \$560,000 in revenue. The Commissioners anticipate obtaining a bank note to finance the project for up to 10 years. The first loan payment of \$65,000 was included in the budget.
- The budget did not include a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for employees. The budget did include step increases for employees who have not reached the top step on the salary schedule. Longevity and sick time payments on hours accrued over 720 hours were also included.
- The Commissioners have reached a tentative collective bargaining agreement with the SEA, the Correction officers' union.
- Negotiations are still ongoing with AFSCME, the Coös County Nursing Home union.

The total proposed 2016 appropriation budget (excluding the Unincorporated Places) was \$34,924,608 compared to the 2015 approved budget of \$34,120,410 which was an increase of \$804,198 or 2.35%.

The total proposed Unincorporated Places budget for 2016 was \$1,471,141 compared to the 2015 approved budget of \$1,499,190.

Budget Review:

Representative Thérberge began the review of the Nursing Hospital budget by department and continued with the Nursing Home budget. Representative Fothergill inquired about the increase in the RN Salaries line item. Louise Belanger, NHA, replied that the amount included a retirement.

Upon the review of the County Administration budget, Representative Thérberge proposed that the title of the current line item "Human Resource/Payroll Coordinator" be changed to Human Resource Assistant. He proposed allocating \$100,000 for a full time Human Resource person as well. He has spoken with other individuals within and outside of the county and it would be better to hire a full time person.

Representative Moynihan stated that he has heard of only a couple of times where an HR person was needed. He has not been made aware of issues which lead him to believe a full time person is needed. The Commissioners are working with the County Administrator to gradually move someone into the position. He would not support the proposal at this time.

Representative Richardson stated that at the joint meeting the Commissioners asked to give the current proposal a one year trial. He agreed with the Commissioners' request.

Representative Rideout stated that there have been issues over the past year. He suggested appropriating the funds which allows the Commissioners flexibility. However, he added that the Delegation cannot force the Commissioners to hire someone.

Representative Hatch noted that if the funds are appropriated it would affect the tax rate.

Commissioner Brady stated that the proposal as presented by the County Administrator has the least affect on taxes. It is not prudent for a tax increase if not necessary. Not all of the Commissioners were in agreement with the proposal and a one year trial was suggested. If the proposal does not work, the

Commissioners will request a position. However, the Commissioners will not override the County Administrator's recommendation.

Representative Th  berge stated that he had spoken with Delegation Chairs from other counties and they were shocked that Co  s County did not have a human resource department and was advised that it would be prudent to do so. He also added that the Delegation had not been provided with a job description to warrant the requested salary increase.

Commissioner Grenier stated that currently there are revenue issues with the nursing homes which is the reason for the slow process of the proposed position. He also added that allocating the \$100,000 would be a waste as the Commissioners would not spend the funds.

Representative Rappaport asked who will determine whether the proposal is successful.

Commissioner Brady added that the Commissioners were given a job description by the County Administrator. He agreed with Commissioner Grenier that the funds will not be spent.

Representative Froburg stated that potential litigation should not be the criteria for a new position. She asked if the County Administrator's proposal could be reviewed in 6-8 months. If at that time the conclusion is that a full time position is needed, could unencumbered funds be used to fund the position. Representative Rideout replied that unencumbered cannot be used but funds from other line items would have to be transferred. Representative Richardson agreed with Representative Rideout's suggestion.

Representative Fothergill added that the human resource duties are already being provided at some level. There should be a meaningful study of what is needed in the county.

Commissioner Samson stated that he was the dissenting vote. He advocated for a full time position.

Representative Tholl also preferred a full time position. However, for the Delegation to appropriate the funds at this time would be wasteful. The Commissioners should look at the position thoroughly and if funds are required they will ask the Delegation. The part time person may be willing to work but may not be qualified. It is ultimately the Commissioners decision who to hire.

Representative Hatch noted that everyone had valid points. He suggested that the Commissioners proceed with the proposed plan but should meet with the Delegation in the future to discuss human resources. Ultimately both sides are looking for the same thing. Representative Rappaport agreed with Representative Hatch.

Representative Rideout stated that he is one that resists most growth in county government. However, he was concerned with the constant change in state and federal laws. He agreed that Jennifer does a great job and that her job is more complex. Someone is needed to handle all of the human resources. If the \$100,000 is not spent funds may be needed from other line items.

Representative Froburg asked for a firm commitment from the County Administrator and the Board to meet with the Delegation in six months with an assessment and analysis of what has happened.

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Richardson to create a line item of \$1.00 for a full time human resource position. If the position is required, the position will be funded by transfer of line items.

Commissioner Brady agreed with the motion.

Commissioner Grenier stated that the person in question has been doing this job all along. Representative Tholl added that hiring from within is a great idea but needs extra education. Commissioner Grenier replied that extra funds were budgeted in the education line item.

Representative Thomas stated that the full time position should be an advertised position. Representative Hatch stated that the advantage to advertising is qualified people may apply.

The motion was approved by roll call vote 10-0.

Upon reviewing the County Attorney's budget, Representative Moynihan noted that the County Attorney could not attend the meeting as he was picking a jury. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Froburg to authorize the County Attorney to expend up to \$4,000 for law school loans from the education line item.

Representative Fothergill asked if this was something done for other attorneys. Representative Moynihan stated he would encourage it in the future. Representative Rideout stated that this request came under unique circumstances. Representative Richardson stated that this request did not set precedence.

The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-2. (Representatives Rappaport, Richardson)

While reviewing the Department of Corrections budget, Commissioner Grenier requested a \$20,000 increase to the medical services line item because of an inmate's medical care. Representative Rideout asked if there were any other programs that could pay. Superintendent Hamelin replied that it did not involve hospitalization but outpatient care. A motion was made by Representative Thomas, seconded by Representative Tholl to add \$20,000 to the medical services line item. The motion was approved 9-1 by roll call vote. (Representative Rideout)

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Tholl to create two line items of \$500,000 (an appropriation and revenue) for drug court in order to begin the planning process. The Commissioners will bring forth information to the Delegation. The motion was approved by roll call vote 9-1. (Representative Richardson)

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Hatch to approve the proposed 2016 budget expenditures in the amount of \$35,965,016. The motion passed by a roll call vote 10-0.

The revenues were reviewed. The County tax figure was changed to \$14,406,246 to reflect the changes to the budget.

A motion was made by Representative Tholl, seconded by Representative Froburg to approve the total revenues of the proposed 2016 budget in the amount of \$35,965,016. The motion was approved by roll call vote 7-0.

A motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Froburg to approve the total Unincorporated Places expenditures and revenues in the amount of \$1,498,483. The motion was approved by roll call vote 10-0.

Representative Moynihan left at 12:30.

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Tholl to transfer the committed tax relief funds in the amount of \$306,500 held in reserve to the Undesignated Fund Balance. The motion was approved by roll call vote 9-0.

Carrie Klebe read the Proposed Reserves and Encumbrances:

1. Interest on Sick Trusts 2015	\$ 899.00
2. Interest on Facility Fund 2015	\$331.52
3. Interest on Decommission Fund 2015	\$261.03
4. Interest on Vehicle Reserve Fund 2015	\$37.67
5. Energy audit	\$5,000.00
6. Berlin Nursing Home - Duct Cleaning	\$7,200.00
7. WSNH/DOC Water System	\$72,000.00
Subtotal Reserves and Encumbrances	\$85,729.22

A motion was made by Representative Tholl, seconded by Representative Richardson to approve the proposed reserves and encumbrances. The motion was approved by a roll call vote of 9-0.

Commissioner Brady took a moment to report that Primex³ had met with department heads at both facilities following an employee survey. The Commissioners were informed that Coös has a very well-run county and overall the employees are satisfied. He asked that all of the county staff be thanked. Commissioner Grenier added that the County Administrator does a great job.

Budget Resolutions:

Representative Tholl read the following budget resolutions:

RESOLUTION #1

Be it resolved by the Coös County Delegation duly convened on this eleventh day of March, 2016, that the sums hereinafter detailed in this resolution are hereby appropriated and the total amount for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2016, shall be \$35,965,016 for the County budget not including the Unincorporated Places.

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Tholl to approve Resolution #1. The motion passed by a roll call vote 9-0.

RESOLUTION #2

Be it resolved by the Coös County Delegation that the sum of ~~\$35,965,016~~ \$17,813,083 is hereby adopted as the estimated income from sources indicated for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2016.

A motion was made by Representative Froburg, seconded by Representative Rideout to approve Resolution #2. The motion passed by a 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 \$14,406,246 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 Rappaport to approve Resolution #3. The motion passed by a roll call vote 9-0.

RESOLUTION #4

Be it resolved that \$3,745,687 of the operating surplus for the year 2015 be appropriated in the 2016 Budget for the purpose of reducing taxes for 2016.

A motion was made by Representative Tholl, seconded by Representative Froburg to approve Resolution #4. The motion passed by a roll call vote 8-1. (Representative Richardson)

RESOLUTION #5

Be it resolved by the Coös County Delegation duly convened on this eleventh day of March 2016 that in order to comply with Department of Revenue Administration instruction, the Delegation separately approves an appropriation of \$1,498,483 and revenues of \$1,498,483 for Coös County's Unincorporated Places for calendar year 2016. The Unincorporated Places Budget for 2016 is adopted separately from the Coös County Budget.

A motion was made by Representative Hatch, seconded by Representative Rideout to approve Resolution #5. The motion passed by a roll call vote 9-0.

Other Business:

The Representatives discussed various house bills.

A motion was made by Representative Tholl, seconded by Representative Hatch to adjourn the meeting at 12:54 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Representative Yvonne Thomas, Clerk