

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
Monday, October 30, 2017 - 10:00 a.m.  
North Country Resource Center - Lancaster, NH

Present: Representatives Robert Théberge-Chair; Wayne Moynihan-Vice Chair; Larry Laflamme-Clerk (arrived at 10:05 a.m.); John Fothergill, Bing Judd, Troy Merner, Herb Richardson and Edith Tucker. Also present: County Commissioner Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Sheriff Brian Valerino; Captain Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Deputy Chief Buteau, Berlin Police Department; Heidi Barker, UNH/Cooperative Extension; and a member of the press.

Chairman Théberge requested all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. The roll was called by the Vice Chair Moynihan. There were 7 members present. Representatives Hatch and Thomas were absent.

Review & Approval of the Minutes of the July 21, 2017 meeting: A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Judd to approve the minutes of July 21, 2017 meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved by a voice vote.

New Business:

- a. Sheriff Brian Valerino began by noting that the opioid epidemic in Coös County is a serious issue. He and Chief Morency have discussed a possible collaborative effort between the Sheriff's Department, the City of Berlin and the NH Drug Task Force. The City of Berlin and the Sheriff's Department are looking to secure a \$40,000 grant for the position. The balance of the salary would be split between the City of Berlin and Coös County which was estimated at \$25,000 each. Sheriff Valerino reported that the tentative start date would November 1. He added that if the Delegation approved the appropriation there were funds available in the Sheriff's budget for this fiscal year.

Representative Judd asked about the length of the grant as he did not want the County to pick up the tab after the funds are depleted. Sheriff Valerino replied that the grant renews in July 2018. If there are no funds available, he will not be asking for additional funds from the county.

Representative Moynihan was concerned if the appropriation was a worthwhile investment of county funds. He has not seen any data regarding the opioid crisis in Coös County. He stated that he could not support the request unless he sees data to convince him otherwise. The county has denied programs for children.

Representative Tucker was willing to support the request through June 30 but asked for data to be provided in executive session.

Representative Richardson asked that the drug czar from Concord come and speak to the Delegation. He noted that his constituents have expressed that it seems Berlin gets everything. He would like them to get the same services as Berlin residents. He continued that it seems that a lot of money is being spent on drugs and the senior citizens, who are on limited budgets, are being forgotten. He could not support the request. Chairman Théberge agreed that citizens are frustrated that funds are spent on drugs instead of other programs.

Commissioner Samson stated that the Board voted to recommend the appropriation in the next fiscal year. Several questions were asked during the Delegation meeting that were not asked by the Board. Commissioner Samson asked the Sheriff what happens to forfeiture funds. The Sheriff was not sure as laws change.

At the end of the discussion, three members would support the request for a six month trial, two did not support the request and two supported the request. No vote was taken.

Review & Approval of the Financial Statements of Coös County and of the Unincorporated Places for the Period Ended September 30, 2017: Chairman Théberge reviewed the appropriations and revenues for all funds. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Judd to approve the third quarter financial statements. The motion passed by roll call vote 8-0.

Representative Tucker asked that the Berlin Nursing Home Administrator provide a report to the Delegation prior to the December 11 meeting that should include startup costs for skilled nursing, the number of residents and income.

Hearing of the Public:

- a. Heidi Barker of UNH/Cooperative Extension provided an update on her new position and programs that she is working on. *(A copy is on file.)*

Old Business:

- a. County House: Chairman Théberge noted that the house has been on the Delegation agenda for some time and he wanted the issue resolved. Representative Moynihan stated that in his opinion the Delegation had done their part. A subcommittee of the Delegation prepared a detailed report which was presented to the Delegation and Commissioners with recommendations. The subcommittee was not in favor of selling the property and asked that the Commissioners continue to make good use of the house. The report brought the Delegation's part of the house issue to an end. The determination of what to do with the house at this point falls with the Commissioners.

Representative Richardson noted that the Department of Corrections uses the house for training. However, he was informed that the training facilities at the Border Patrol station are available for use. Superintendent Champagne replied that he was not aware of any agreement with the station. He noted that all resources that are needed are available at the house. The house is used once a month. One eight hour class may take three weeks since three shifts must be trained. He did not support using the station.

Representative Judd stated that he had spoken with Agent in Charge Paul Kuhn and the facility may be used at any time. In his opinion, the house needs to be sold. It has cost the county \$34,000 over the last five years to maintain. He added that the house also needs a septic system since it is currently located across the road. Representative Tucker stated that an easement could be included in the deed in regards to the septic.

Commissioner Samson stated that there were different options for the house: sell, rent, day care for employees or housing for traveling nurses. He was not in favor of moving the county offices to the house as unincorporated places funds were used for the current location of the offices. He also added that \$10,000 of the \$34,000 was for a new well.

Representative Tucker moved that the house be placed on the December 11 agenda.

Representative Richardson left the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

New Business:

- a. Approval of the reappointment of Planning Board Members: Edwin Mellett, Rick Tillotson and alternate Mark Frank. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Moynihan to approve the reappointment of Planning Board Members: Edwin Mellett, Rick Tillotson and alternate Mark Frank. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.
- b. Approval of Authorized Representative for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and Authorization to Borrow: County Administrator Jennifer Fish presented a resolution for authorization to file an application and authorization to borrow funds in the amount of \$824,000. A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Tucker to authorize the County Administrator Jennifer Fish to proceed per the resolution. The motion was approved by roll call vote 7-0. The Clerk, Representative Laflamme signed the document.
- c. Commissioner Samson inquired if any of the Delegation sub-committees will be meeting with department heads prior to the budget meeting. Chairman Th  berge reported that he and Representative Thomas have met with the Berlin Nursing Home Administrator in the past.

Commissioner Samson also noted that several outside agencies have requested funds that do not benefit all of the county. He will once again ask for reductions of these budgets.

There were no subcommittee reports.

Chairman Th  berge noted that the Public Hearing on the proposed 2018 budget will be held December 11, 2017 in West Stewartstown at 10:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Tucker to adjourn the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Larry Laflamme, Clerk