

COÖS COUNTY  
QUARTERLY DELEGATION MEETING  
Tuesday, August 12, 2014 - 10:00 a.m.  
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH

Present: Representatives Robert Théberge-Chair; Larry Rappaport-Vice Chair; Leon Rideout -Acting Clerk; Larry Enman, Wayne Moynihan and Herb Richardson. Also present: Commissioner Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; County Treasurer Fred King; and a member of the press.

Chairman Théberge called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and requested all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called by the acting clerk, Representative Leon Rideout. There were 6 members present at the time of roll call; Representatives Coulombe, Hatch and Thomas were excused and Representative Hammon was absent.

Hearing of the Public: There were no public comments.

Review & Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Théberge asked if any changes or corrections needed to be made to the minutes of the May 12, 2014 meeting. A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Moynihan to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2014 meeting. The minutes were approved by roll call vote 6-0.

Review & Approval of the Second Quarter Financial Statements:

The Coös County expenditures and revenues for the second quarter were reviewed.

Representative Moynihan asked why the percent expended in the Federal Funds line item was only .01%. Jennifer Fish, County Administrator, explained that the line item pertains to the Community Development Block Grants. Funds have not been received or expended for the two grants: Brookside Apartments and Bartlett School in Berlin. Jennifer also reported that the County's CDBG application for the water system was denied.

There were no other questions pertaining to the second quarter expenditures.

Chairman Théberge continued with the second quarter revenues. Representative Rideout noted that the largest revenue, the County Tax, will not be received until December.

Representative Moynihan asked why the Medicaid Proportional Payment received was greater than anticipated. Carrie Klebe, Director of Finance, explained that an estimated amount is used to prepare the budget. The County does not know the actual amount until it is received from the State.

Chairman Théberge continued with the review of the Unincorporated Places expenditures and revenues.

Representative Richardson asked for an update of the riverbank repair in Wentworth Location. Commissioner Samson replied that the project has been completed and \$88,000 was paid to the contractor. The contractor also paid \$5,631.07 out of pocket for engineering fees. The Board discussed the payment of the additional fees at the last meeting.

Representative Moynihan noted that the percent expended in Dixville and Millsfield was very low and asked if the numbers would be changing due to the passage of HB1590. Jennifer replied that the County's appeal to DRA for the 2013 equalization values was withdrawn because of the new law. Jennifer has requested the revised figures and has received no responses to her requests. Chairman Théberge stated that he had spoken with Mr. Hamilton about the revised values. He did not understand the reason why it was taking so long but the values are being worked on.

Representative Moynihan also asked if the reserves used to offset the 2013 taxes for Dixville and Millsfield will be reimbursed. Jennifer replied that the funds are gone and will not be reimbursed.

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Rideout to approve the Coös County and Unincorporated Places second quarter financials. The motion was approved by roll call vote 6-0.

Old Business:

Update of the Utility Valuation Defense Fund Disbursements: Jennifer provided a breakdown which showed the amounts disbursed to the towns who have requested assistance. Jennifer stated the current balance of the fund was \$14,733.43 and there were no further requests at this time.

Representative Richardson asked if other towns would be submitting requests. Jennifer replied that a letter was sent to each town in Coös County.

5/14/2014	City of Berlin	\$15,000.00
5/14/2014	Town of Gorham	\$10,000.00
5/14/2014	Town of Lancaster	\$15,000.00
6/11/2014	Town of Dalton	\$5,000.00
6/11/2014	Town of Stark	\$1,920.57
6/11/2014	Town of Stratford	\$2,346.00
6/11/2014	Town of Whitefield	\$7,000.00
6/11/2014	Town of Colebrook	\$5,000.00
6/11/2014	Town of Pittsburg	\$3,000.00
7/30/2014	Town of Dummer	\$1,000.00

Representative Moynihan noted that some towns received 100% of the requested amount and other towns did not. He asked if a formula was used to determine the amount. Commissioner Samson replied there was no formula. The amount spent on legal fees and the tax base of each individual town was taken into consideration. No town was reimbursed the total amount it has spent on legal fees.

New Business:

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Rappaport to enter into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 10:40 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call vote 6-0.

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Rappaport to come out of nonpublic session 10:50 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call vote 6-0.

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Enman to seal the minutes. The motion was approved by roll call vote 6-0.

a. *Approval of Planning Board Reappointments: Edwin Mellett & Rick Tillotson (Current Members):*

A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Rappaport to approve the Planning Board Reappointments of Edwin Mellett and Rick Tillotson per the Coös County Commissioners' recommendation. The motion was approved by roll call vote 6-0.

b. *Approval of Planning Board Alternate: Luc Cote (Vacant Seat):*

A motion was made by Representative Rappaport, seconded by Representative Richardson to not approve the Board's recommendation of Luc Cote as Planning Board Alternate.

Representative Moynihan stated that he did not have any information on Mr. Cote. Chairman Théberge stated typically the Planning Board Chair, John Scarinza, will present nominations to the Board of Commissioners for consideration. Jennifer explained that an ad was placed in the local newspapers by the Commissioners in order to fill the vacancy. Mr. Cote was selected by the Board of Commissioners.

The motion was approved by roll call vote 6-0.

c. *Invitation to tour Northern Pass sites:*

Chairman Théberge reported that he had met with a PSNH CEO and discussed the possibility of the Commissioners and Delegation touring the Northern Pass sites. A meeting would also be held to obtain clarification from the Northern Pass on certain issues.

Representative Moynihan stated that a presentation should be held in a public session at the nursing home.

Representative Rideout agreed to a tour. He disagreed with a presentation. He added that it would be the same presentation that has been given throughout the County. A frank discussion on where the power lines will cross is needed. The Northern Pass people need to listen to the Delegation and Commissioners.

Chairman Théberge noted that it would not be a typical presentation. The tour will be for the County's benefit.

Representative Richardson, Representative Rappaport and Representative Enman also agreed to a tour.

Chairman Théberge will contact the Northern Pass representative to express the Delegation's concerns and set a date.

d. *Briefing on USDA/Cooperative Extension "Healthy Kids Program" / summer of 2015:*

Chairman Théberge reported that this is a new program that has not been tried in Coös County. The federal government likes the idea of combining this program with the nursing homes. He continued that the Board of Commissioners have expressed that children will be running around the nursing homes. Chairman Théberge stated that this program will have children interacting with the elderly. It will be educational. He is also negotiating to obtain funds for upgrading kitchens and playgrounds. Chairman Théberge requested that a USDA presentation be added to the Board of Commissioners September agenda. There are questions on whether there will be a cost associated to the County. The presentation will determine whether the County participates or not.

Subcommittee Reports:

Report of the Farm Subcommittee: Representative Rideout and Representative Moynihan presented its report and recommendation as to the sale or use of the County House and Barn.

The recommendation read as follows:

*It is the recommendation of the subcommittee that, based on the information obtained in public hearings or otherwise received and reviewed by the subcommittee, the Delegation should support the County continuing to own and control the properties referred to as the "County House and Barn"; and that the Delegation should presently oppose any request to put said properties on the market for sale.*

The new short-term lease of the farm land is a positive development.

The subcommittee urged the Delegation and Commissioners support a proposed county barn/lands committee. Chairman Th  berge asked if the committee would tell the people who lease the land what they can and cannot do. Representative Rideout replied it would not tell the lessees what they can and cannot do but it would serve as guidance for the Commissioners and Delegation. By having individuals with business and farming experience on the committee the mistakes that were made which led to the closing of the dairy farm will not happen again. Representative Rideout believed that one of the reasons the dairy farm was closed because the people who ran it did not know how to run a farm. Representative Moynihan added that such a subcommittee has been proposed to the Commissioners. Grafton County has this type of subcommittee to handle the farm and land. County Treasurer King wanted it noted that the former farm manager was an expert in his field and did a great job.

Commissioner Samson added that the proposed committee would include:

- Two people currently or formerly successful farmers.
- One person with knowledge of farm and business experience.
- One person from each district with a desire to contribute to the success of the farm & land.
- One Commissioner to coordinate and oversee the advisory board.
- One member of the Delegation as their representative on the board.

The advisory committee would report to the Commissioners and Delegation. The County Administrator and the Board of Commissioners would still make final decisions.

Commissioner Samson added that the current lessees have a short-term lease but are looking for a long-term lease.

Representative Rideout noted that the original house proposal was to lease the house with the farm. The County Administrator has presented a proposal to the Delegation which would use the house for administrative offices. Representative Moynihan noted that the use of the house was not focused upon but the consensus was the house should not be sold. It should be used. Ultimately, it is a jurisdictional thing and it is up to the Commissioners on how the properties should be used.

Chairman Th  berge noted that he was in favor of the administrative offices moving to the house and the use of the basement by the Department of Corrections for training purposes. There will be costs associated with the move and renovations and he asked that Jennifer gather the costs involve and present them to the Delegation at the Third Quarter meeting in October at which time a decision will be made. A decision will need to be presented to the Commissioners prior to the budget season.

Representative Richardson has been in favor of the move for a long time. In his opinion, administrative staff should not be in the Nursing Hospital.

Representative Rideout noted that the Delegation wants to retain the barn and house but does not want additional costs to the taxpayers.

Representative Moynihan noted that there was a dollar figure included with Jennifer's proposal. Representative Richardson added that fire safety and handicap accessibility were not addressed in the proposal.

Any Other Business:

Chairman Th  berge announced that a date was set for the Delegation's Organizational Meeting on December 8, 2014 in Lancaster and the Public Hearing on the 2015 Budget will be on December 12, 2014 in West Stewartstown.

Representative Richardson reported that there will be a special session on HB1244 on September 17.

Representative Richardson also reported that he has been contacted by the Whitefield Selectboard in regards to the lack of ATV activity. Chairman Th  berge suggested that the town contact the Trails Bureau. Both Representative Richardson and Representative Rideout will work on this issue.

There was a discussion of the need to upgrade the Co  s Loop and Phase 3 power by PSNH in Co  s County.

A motion was made by Representative Rideout, seconded by Representative Rappaport to adjourn the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Leon Rideout  
Acting Clerk