

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION
QUARTERLY MEETING
Friday, May 18, 2018 - 10:00 a.m.
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH

Present: Representatives Robert Théberge-Chair; Wayne Moynihan-Vice Chair; Larry Laflamme-Clerk; Bing Judd, Troy Merner, Herb Richardson, Yvonne Thomas and Edith Tucker. Also present: County Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Sheriff Brian Valerino; County Attorney John McCormick; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; and a member of the press.

Chairman Théberge requested all to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Théberge called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

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

Review & Approval of the Minutes of the March 10, 2018, meeting: A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Laflamme to approve the minutes of March 10, 2018, meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved by a voice vote.

Hearing of the Public: There was no public comment.

Review & Approval of the Financial Statements of Coös County and of the Unincorporated Places for the Period Ended March 31, 2018: Chairman Théberge reviewed the appropriations and revenues of the Coös County Financial Statements.

Representative Tucker inquired why the Berlin Nursing Home revenues were three percent higher than the West Stewartstown Nursing Hospital. Director of Finance Carrie Klebe responded that the census, private pay and Medicaid pending residents were all factors that would affect revenue.

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

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

Representative Moynihan asked what the difference was between absent and excused. Chairman Théberge responded that if a Delegation member notifies him (the Chair) that he/she is unable to attend the meeting it would be excused. If a member is not present at a meeting without notification, it is considered absent.

Old Business:

- a. Keno - Unincorporated Places: Chairman Théberge reported that no decision had been made as the bill was being discussed in the Senate. Representative Richardson stated that the bill had been amended to include all of the Unincorporated Places and to include a public hearing.

- b. Update on the Coös County Drug Court: County Attorney John McCormick reported that the program was up and running. There are not as many candidates as he would like but several do not meet the criteria outlined in the policy and procedure booklets. He outlined the procedure to the Delegation members. Representative Moynihan asked for the difference between a high risk and low risk individual as it seemed that high risk individuals were provided all the services. What is provided for low risk individuals? County Attorney McCormick responded that a high risk individual was someone who has been in and out of the system for a long time. A low risk is provided an inpatient program or an intensive outpatient program.
- c. Update on naming the rest area in Colebrook after Fred King: Chairman Théberge reported that the dedication would be held on Friday, June 1, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. A reception will be held afterwards at the Black Bear. Commissioner Grenier noted that a local Colebrook businessman has offered to pay for the reception. The Delegation requested to pay for the sign. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Judd to spend up to \$200 on the sign and associated costs from the Delegation contingency line item. The motion passed by roll call vote 8-0.

A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Richardson to allow Commissioner Grenier to contact the local Colebrook businessman to prepare the reception at the Black Bear. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Representative Tucker asked that name tags be available. Sheriff Valerino stated that a deputy would be available and obtain cones from the DOT for parking purposes.

New Business:

- a. Approval of National Forest Reserve Funds per Board of Commissioners' Recommendation: A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Moynihan to approve the Coös County Commissioners' Recommendation for the distribution of the National Forest Reserve Funds. The motion was approved by roll call vote 7-1. *(Representative Richardson)*
- b. Approval of Reappointments of Planning Board Members John Scarinza, Michael Waddell and alternate Thomas McCue. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Thomas to approve the reappointments of Planning Board Members John Scarinza, Michael Waddell and alternate Thomas McCue. Representative Moynihan noted that as the Delegation's ex-officio representative, he has observed Mr. Scarinza at planning board meetings. The County is very fortunate to have him as Chairman. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.
- c. Salaries of Elected Officials 2018-2020: County Administrator Jennifer Fish distributed copies of the comparison salary schedules by counties as prepared by the NH Association of Counties HR affiliate.

The Register of Deeds salary is currently at \$45,000. There was no recommendation for an increase as the current Register of Deeds will not be running for office in the next election. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Judd to leave the salary at \$45,000. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

The Sheriff's salary is currently at \$56,000. A motion was made by Representative Richardson, seconded by Representative Moynihan to increase the salary to \$59,000. Representative Richardson noted that it was a fair increase. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

The County Attorney's salary is currently at \$76,000. A motion was made by Representative Moynihan, seconded by Representative Tucker to increase the salary to \$81,000. Representative Moynihan noted that the County Attorney's position has not had an increase in several years. He has expanded his office and is supervising two assistant county attorneys, drug court, the Victim/Witness Coordinator and staff. He is planning on seeking re-election. Representative Tucker spoke in support of the proposed increase. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

The County Treasurer salary is currently at \$4,000. A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Tucker to leave the salary at \$4,000. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

The County Commissioners' salaries are currently \$8,500/Chair and \$8,000/others. A motion was made by Representative Th  berge, seconded by Representative Judd to increase the Chair's salary to \$11,000 and others to \$10,500. He noted that the Commissioners' duties in the Unincorporated Places has become more demanding and there has been no increases for several years. Representative Tucker suggested that the portion of the Commissioners' salary allocation to the Unincorporated Places increase to possibly 25%. Commissioner Grenier stated that the County Administrator and staff are the ones who perform the work duties of the Unincorporated Places. He suggested \$10,000/Chair and \$9,000/others as contract negotiations will be forthcoming. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Moynihan to amend the motion on the floor to \$10,000/Chair and \$9,000/others. Representative Judd disagreed with the proposal. The motion was approved by roll call vote 7-1. *(Representative Judd)* A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Moynihan to approve the amended motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote 7-1. *(Representative Judd)*

Representative Tucker asked for a follow up in regards to a discussion held at the March meeting as to the best way to follow through with the County Attorney's tuition reimbursement. A request had been placed to obtain the auditor's opinion. The Director of Finance replied that she did not have the information.

- d. UNH Cooperative Extension Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Chairman Th  berge reported that the agreement is up for renewal every six years. A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Richardson to authorize the Chair to sign the MOU on behalf of the Delegation. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Subcommittee Reports:

Representative Moynihan provided a brief update on CEDC and noted that not enough small businesses in Co  s County are using CEDC.

Any Other Business:

Representative Merner expressed concern in regards to the new system that will be put in place at the Registry of Deeds office. No one was notified of the new software. Commissioner Grenier reminded everyone that the Register of Deeds is a constitutional position. Representative Tucker stated that she had read the 2017 County Report and the Register of Deeds had given notice of the AVID program from Fidlar Technologies. The upgrade is being provided at no cost to the County. Representative Merner stated that the program was not user friendly and not used by other counties because the program does not work. Chairman Th  berge agreed with Commissioner Grenier, it is a constitutional office and the Delegation cannot tell the Register of Deeds what to do.

Commissioner Samson stated that he understood the constitutional office; however when the proposal first came about he met with the Grafton Register of Deeds and since then has met twice to discuss it further. There were rumors of kickbacks and bribery of this company unethically trying to get their program in the State of New Hampshire. This could be one of the reasons why other counties have refused the system. He believed that as Commissioners, the Board has an obligation to look into the situation. This matter is time sensitive. Representative Tucker asked if Commissioner Samson's comments implied that the Coös Register of Deeds was offered kickbacks. He replied no; however, other counties were offered perks. Representative Tucker reminded him that this was the reputation of an elected official. Commissioner Samson asked if Representative Tucker was at the meeting as a representative or a reporter. Representative Tucker replied as a representative. Commissioner Samson asked that the issue at hand be looked at in a time sensitive manner. Chairman Théberge stated that if there are issues concerning kickbacks he was not sure who would authorize it or who would do it. Commissioner Samson reiterated that this did not involve Coös County. Representative Merner stated that the program does not work. The Registry of Deeds is supposed to serve the people and is not by obtaining this program. Chairman Théberge asked Representative Merner if he had a monetary stake. Representative Merner replied no as they hire an abstractor. Representative Moynihan noted that she provided a six month notice and is out of the Delegation's jurisdiction. If a user has an issue, they will have to approach the Register of Deeds.

County Attorney John McCormick expressed opposition to SB566 which the Senate passed. The Delegation members stated that they would look at it.

Chairman Théberge requested the Delegation's support in submitting a letter to the Governor to support the passage of HB577. Representative Richardson commended Representative Tucker on her work with this issue. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Thomas to authorize the Chair of the Delegation to send a letter to the Governor supporting SB577. All approved unanimously by voice vote.

Commissioner Samson reported that the Board had authorized Commissioner Samson to sign the Cell Tower Site Easement document granting Northern New England Telephone Operations LLC d/b/a Consolidated Communications and Public Service of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy to run and maintain a line for services at the cell tower site on county property. There is an anticipated installation date of June 1 and services by the end of June.

The next quarterly meeting will be held Wednesday, September 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the North Country Resource Center in Lancaster, NH.

A motion was made by Representative Judd, seconded by Representative Moynihan to adjourn the meeting at 12:31 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Larry Laflamme, Clerk