

COÖS COUNTY DELEGATION  
QUARTERLY MEETING  
Friday, February 21, 2020 - 10:00 a.m.  
Coös County Nursing Home - Berlin, NH

Present: Representatives Wayne Moynihan - Chair; Edith Tucker - Vice Chair; Larry Laflamme - Clerk; Kevin Craig; Michael Furbush; Troy Merner, Henry Noël and Yvonne Thomas. Also present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede; Sheriff Brian Valerino; Captain Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; a member of the press; and several members of the public (*list of attendees on file*).

Chairman Moynihan called the meeting to order at 10:14 a.m. Captain Keith Roberge led the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called by the Clerk, Representative Laflamme. There were eight members present. Representatives Fothergill and Hatch were absent.

Review & Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Representative Merner, seconded by Representative Thomas to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2019, quarterly meeting; the November 18, 2019, informational meeting; the December 7, 2019, joint meeting; and, the December 7, 2019, meeting / public hearing. The motion was approved in the affirmative by voice vote.

Hearing of the Public:

- a. Robert Larson distributed copies of 2019 Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance for Coös County New Hampshire and read the following prepared statement:

*Thank you Chairman Moynihan and delegation*

*I present to you a "peoples" resolution, originated from the people, by the people and for the people of Coös County.*

*This resolution is titled the "2019 second amendment sanctuary ordinance for Coös County, New Hampshire."*

*We find it necessary to come to you today to request a vote of passage of this resolution due to the recent displays of disregard of the NH Constitution by State Representatives and agencies.*

*Either by naivety or agenda, our NH constitutional rights are being compromised under the cloak of safety and security.*

*As President Kennedy said in his inaugural address of 1961: "...The same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe, the beliefs that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God. We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution..."*

*We live in the "live free or die" state, not the Live securely and be a slave" state.*

*These aggrievances will not be tolerated any further.*

*The power of this resolution need not be in the courtroom.*

*It solely lies within the Constitutional power of the people and enforced by the elected county sheriff's department.*

*This delegation has the power, at the request of its citizenry, to adopt this resolution today thus bringing to bear the full authority given to it. Of which includes:*

- 1. Stop funding enforcement activity of any such action brought through an unconstitutional law.*
- 2. Hold the sheriff's department harmless for actions required by them to stop the enforcement of unconstitutional laws.*

*I want to thank the representatives that voted for the so called "Red Flag law" and other such legislation pending the House. You have awoken the people. You have activated the individual. And now the individual has spoken.*

*Your oath of office dictates that you uphold and protect the NH constitution.*

*We ask you simply follow your oath here today and pass this resolution.*

*I relinquish the rest of my time to allow the board to deliberate and vote on the matter at hand.*

Additional comments were made by Robert Elwell of Lancaster, Seth King of Whitefield and Tiffany Hale of Berlin.

Commissioner Rick Samson explained that he was representing District 3 and not the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Samson asked the Delegation to consider the \$100 appropriation requested in the resolution on page 4. He explained that the requested appropriation had not been discussed previously with the Commissioners.

Chairman Moynihan explained that the item (resolution) was not on the meeting agenda for discussion. He added in order for the Delegation to take action on such items these items must be publicly announced and noticed. If the resolution is introduced by a member of the Delegation, the resolution would be placed on the next quarterly meeting agenda. A motion was made by Rep. Furbush, seconded by Rep. Merner to place the Second Amendment Ordinance on the agenda of the next quarterly meeting. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Holly Bachman, Shelburne, reported that she had submitted the resolution to the NH Firearms Coalition for legal review prior to the approval. Rep. Tucker stated that any changes made would be debated at the meeting.

*Review & Approval of the Financial Statements of Coös County and of the Unincorporated Places for the Period Ended December 31, 2019:* Chairman Moynihan reviewed the appropriations of the Coös County Financial Statements.

Rep. Noël questioned the status of the water system connection. The County Administrator replied that the project was not completed at this time. The water has been connected to the Stewartstown Water

Precinct. However, other items such as the sprinkler system and the demolition of the reservoir are still in progress. The first payment on the loan will not be until the end of 2020. A motion was made by Representative Merner, seconded by Representative Craig to approve the Coös County Fourth Quarter expenditures in the amount of \$36,641,810. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

Chairman Moynihan reviewed the revenues of the Coös County Financial Statements. There were no questions. A motion was made by Representative Noël, seconded by Representative Merner to approve the fourth quarter revenues of \$40,427,195. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

Chairman Moynihan reviewed the Unincorporated Places Expenditures. There were no questions. A motion was made by Representative Merner, seconded by Representative Thomas to approve the Unincorporated Places fourth quarter expenditures of \$1,245,807. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

Chairman Moynihan reviewed the Unincorporated Places Revenues. There were no questions. A motion was made by Representative Tucker, seconded by Representative Noël to approve the Unincorporated Places fourth quarter revenues of \$1,288,672. The motion was approved by roll call vote 8-0.

Old Business:

- a. Coös County 2020 budget, further discussion with the Commissioners:

Commissioner Grenier speaking on behalf of the Board stated that the only item not included in the budget was the request for IDN funding for 2019 which was received from Henry Litman after the budget had been approved by the Board. The request for funding of the IDN in the amount of \$192,000 will need to be added to the budget as the 2019 appropriation was not included in the 2019 budget.

Commissioner Grenier continued that the budget included a \$1/hour for all licensed nursing staff (RNs, LPNs, MNAs and LNAs) in both nursing homes; a 1.5% COLA for all employees; and a complete rebuild of the IT system county-wide.

The Board has recommended to the Delegation to sell the county house. The renovations are not a good long-term fit. The cost of the proposed repairs were removed from the budget.

The proposed amount of the surplus \$3,600,000 was also included in the budget.

The 2019 county tax warrant was \$15,573,805. The proposed county tax warrant was \$16,160,183; an estimated 3.63% county tax increase.

Chairman Moynihan requested that the Board submit the request to sell the house in writing with reasons stated and the Delegation will take action at that time. Commissioner Grenier added that the house will not be reappraised until the Delegation approves the sale.

Rep. Thomas inquired as to when the County would be getting funds back from the State from the IDN funding. Rep. Merner replied that funds are distributed to the IDN 7 and not directly to the County. It was noted that IDN funding is currently not funded after 2020.

Chairman Moynihan noted that in December there was a potential 13% increase to the county tax; however, the budget as presented indicates a potential three percent increase. He asked where in the budget was a significant change made or was it the change in surplus. Commissioner Grenier replied that the changes were made as a collective group.

Commissioner Grenier also stated that Medicaid rates of increased however the ProShare amount will decrease.

Rep. Merner questioned the increase in workers comp in all departments. The Finance Director explained that last year was a premium holiday whereas this year is the full rate.

Rep. Thomas stated that she would not be able to vote for the budget if the Department of Corrections budget remained at \$2,606,870 because that means that it cost \$113,636 per prisoner. She went on the internet and found numbers. Based on her calculations the cost per inmate is \$311 per day. The average cost per day at other county levels is average \$125. She continued that maybe Mayor Grenier believes that Berlin residents can afford this but she does not. It's just too much money. She would not mind being average with everyone else. Chairman Moynihan noted that the Superintendent could not be at the meeting because of issues at the jail. He will ask the Superintendent to attend the March 7 meeting. Rep. Thomas continued that she had obtained information on the internet about every county in the state. Belknap 43, Carroll 56, Merrimack at 103, Grafton 59, Sullivan 68 and Coös at 113. There are 23 inmates and 22 staff; so there is one guard per inmate. The average is 3.5 guards per inmate. She believed that staff could be below 22. This could be done by attrition. She concluded that this is more money than the people from Berlin can afford. She lives with these people. They are not rich and they cannot afford this cost.

Rep. Furbush asked if the population does not support the staff why not send the inmates to another facility. Rep. Tucker suggested that the subcommittee meet with the Superintendent to discuss the issues prior to the next meeting. Rep. Craig stated that he was on the DOC subcommittee. Chairman Moynihan urged all subcommittees to meet.

Commissioner Grenier stated that he took offense that a Delegation member would state that he was ok with people paying higher taxes. The statement was uncalled for. Rep. Thomas apologized. If there are any detailed discussions about reducing staff at Corrections, someone from the finance department will need to sit in on the discussion. It will cost the County a lot of money to reduce headcount. Chairman Moynihan noted that the Superintendent has been active in creating treatment programs and doing a great job.

Commissioner Brady noted that Commissioner Grenier and the administrative staff have done a superb job with the proposed budget.

Rep. Tucker stated that the budget includes positive things that provide for the future.

- b. HB 540, bonding for Balsams development, consider removing from active agenda: Representative Tucker noted that this is a viable project. The item will remain on future agendas.
- c. Discussion of development of County Delegation Handbook: Representative Noël will work on this project and will report back to the Delegation at a later date.

- d. HB 1119 Municipal deposits in OOS banks: Chairman Moynihan reported that the bill had passed the house and will be going to the Senate. He will be contacting Senator Starr.

New Business:

- a. Status of broadband access and coverage in Coös County. Chairman Moynihan stated that meetings are ongoing.
- b. Approval to transfer Greg Sipple, alternate to a regular member on the Zoning Board of Adjustment per the Commissioners' recommendation. A motion was made by Rep. Noël, seconded by Rep. Furbush to approve the Commissioners' recommendation to transfer Greg Sipple, alternate to a regular member on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The motion was approved by voice vote.

A motion was made by Representative Merner, seconded by Representative Noël to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 p.m. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Larry Laflamme, Clerk