

## GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Budget Reviews

Board of Commissioners' Office

North Haverhill, NH

Thursday, March 3, 2011

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, Omer C. Ahern Jr. and Ray Burton, Executive Director Julie Clough, Financial Coordinator Susan Cunningham and Secretary Jeri Martino

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Cryans called the Meeting to order at 9:13 AM.

### **MAINTENANCE**

Maintenance Superintendent Oakes presented the Maintenance budget which he stated was up 20% and due primarily to staffing and benefits. New staffing includes one Maintenance person for the new Jail. He also included step increases and accounted for the increase in health insurance. Supt. Oakes noted that the elimination of a step/cola for a second year will likely create some morale issues and because of the increase in insurance it's possible that people will be paying out more than they are taking home.

Supt. Oakes said that to calculate the fuel costs, he used the numbers that were presented in the bids which the Commissioners rejected.

Commissioner Cryans asked when the new staff was coming on and Supt. Oakes said that there will be one new staff member that was approved in fiscal year 2011, that employee will start in May to work with the current staff member at both the current and new Jail facility. There will eventually be a second staff member but that person won't join until April of 2012. Commissioner Burton asked if the two new members were included in staff that the Jail is requesting and he replied that they are separate and are in the Maintenance budget not the Jail's.

There was a discussion about bringing the first new person on and Supt. Oakes said he would like that person to become familiar with all the workings of the equipment. He said that once the Jail is online there will be three staff members who will be solely working at the Jail which Supt. Oakes said is due to the highly technical equipment and security restrictions.

Commissioner Burton asked if the new staff will require certifications and Supt. Oakes said he would like to bring on someone who does have refrigeration qualifications.

Commissioner Burton asked if there was anyway that the Jail could be up and running and then bring on staff and see how it goes and Supt. Oakes said he couldn't stress enough the importance of the need for the staff and for them to be here in advance.

There was a discussion about whether or not Maintenance uses inmates and Supt. Oakes said that it never works out for his department and listed the reasons why, which included lack of knowledge, time consuming supervision and sometimes lack of inmates. He said that it just becomes too cumbersome to meet the demands of having inmates on the job with them.

Commissioner Ahern said that it's important to learn the difference between the needs, the wants and the desires and said that he is coming at this from the point of the taxpayer. He asked Supt. Oakes about the possibility of consolidation to be able to keep the Maint. staff less stretched out. Supt. Oakes said there really is no way to do that with a campus this large. Commissioner Ahern asked Supt. Oakes to note certifications and mandated items that might make things more time consuming. Commissioner Ahern also noted his concern with the Freon at the Jail for the refrigeration and the hazardous problems that could occur from a leak. He asked Supt. Oakes if there were any alternatives available and Supt. Oakes replied that this is supposed to be "environmentally friendly" Freon but because of the amount there is still a potential hazard there.

There was a discussion about whether the Jail project was taking Supt. Oakes away from the regular responsibilities of the rest of the Complex and he replied that he has a great staff who are fully aware of what they need to do and that no matter what was going on he would always have a full plate of things to do and limited free time

Supt. Oakes said there is no fluff in the budget he is requesting.

Commissioner Ahern asked Supt. Oakes if Supt. Libby would agree to his assessment on inmate labor and Supt. Oakes said that he would probably say that the Maintenance staff have left the inmates for longer than the 15 minutes allotted time, which would be the truth, however, he said that he still feels that what he has been given for inmates has been less than stellar and the choices for better inmates are given to road crews for the towns. Commissioner Ahern asked if it would help if there was a directive from the Commissioners and Supt. Oakes said they would have to talk to Supt. Libby about that.

There was a discussion about inmate escapes and the possible use of electronic bracelets while on the property. Director Clough said there is a cost for the bracelets and though there have been some inmates who have walked off; there hasn't been an actual escape since 1999.

Commissioner Ahern asked if there are any things in the Maintenance budget that by statute or mandate that Supt. Oakes feels aren't necessary and he said that he has always resented having to pay the hydrant fee to Woodsville Water & Light, particularly since the water tank was put in. He stated that he didn't feel there was any reason to continuing paying that fee since the County owns the hydrants and the Maintenance Dept. maintains them.

Commissioner Ahern asked if all the office spaces are being used properly and Supt. Oakes replied that the only building that really has any additional space is the Admin building and that's in the basement.

Commissioner Cryans said that 2/3's of the Maintenance budget is beyond control and that the staffing for the Jail was explained earlier when the Jail project was first being discussed. He said that the new building needs to be properly staffed and properly maintained. Supt. Oakes said that the maintenance can occupy 50% of the time.

Commissioner Cryans said that in his opinion, he would like to see the old Jail dismembered once it's vacated.

Commissioner Cryans also wanted to note that he does not see the wisdom of getting into the water business.

Commissioner Burton asked Supt. Oakes if getting into the water business meant saying goodbye to the WW&L hydrant fees and he replied that it would.

Director Clough said that the property liability in everyone's budget is the same number as last year until the decision of a carrier is made. She said that a 20% increase was used for health insurance and that too may change. She said that when all the new numbers are decided upon then those can be put into the budgets. All budgets include step increases at this time.

Supt. Oakes said he neglected to put the cost of the opening and closing of the valve for the water tank in the budget which is another \$350-\$400 a month. He said that cost also sticks in his craw.

Commissioner Ahern asked Supt. Oakes if he had discussed the possibility of no increase with his staff and he replied he had not, but that he has overheard talk.

Supt. Oakes said the fuel bid needs to be kept in mind and in his opinion the prices may increase.

Commissioner Cryans thanked Supt. Oakes for speaking with the consultants the other day and said he did a wonderful job answering all the questions that were asked, so to him, it felt like the team was doing a good job.

Commissioner Burton said it was a very good review and you could tell that the team really enjoy what they're doing.

Director Clough said she appreciated the way that the people from VIS came in and handled the conversation and she thought it was a good exercise.

Commissioner Cryans thanked Commissioner Ahern for bringing the experts in and said he appreciated their candor.

Commissioner Ahern said he appreciated the team's cooperation but said he still has concerns that the job is impacting what the normal day to day responsibilities are and said he still feels it's unfair to put the three in this position.

Supt. Oakes said he appreciated all the support he has received from the Commissioners and thanked them for they allow him to do at the complex.

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Commissioner Burton passed around a letter from someone who was interested in purchasing some County land. The Commissioners agreed that there was no land to be sold.

Commissioner Cryans thanked Director Clough for all the work she does and for her help with the VIS consultants on Tuesday. He said there was a concern about additional work load but he feels more comfortable now about it. Director Clough said that the work is just a matter of priorities and trying to manage time well.

10:42 AM the Commissioners took a brief recess

10:52 AM the Commissioners resumed their meeting.

## **UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Deb Maes from UNHCE and Luther Kinney and Frank Hazen from the UNH Advisory Council were in attendance to go over the UNHCE budget.

D. Maes said the budget is up \$20K from last year and most of that is due to salary, retirement and health insurance increases.

Commissioner Cryans asked what the special project line is for and D. Maes said that it pays for the Agricultural Assistant and some of the things like the summer program, the master gardeners and various trials.

Commissioner Cryans asked if that line were level funded would that create an issue and Maes said that some of the hours would have to be rolled back.

Commissioner Cryans asked the two gentlemen with D. Maes if they had any comment and F. Hazen commented on the importance of UNHCE in the community and L. Kinney said that he has gained a lot of appreciation for what UNHCE does and added that they had worked on this budget quite a bit and said that if the money was cut from assistance, then those with master's degrees will have to do a lot of the clerical work.

Commissioner Burton asked how many people UNHCE touches and D. Maes replied about twenty thousand and there is a push to put out as much media exposure as possible.

Commissioner Burton asked if UNHCE goes after private money and D. Maes said they do go after grants and approximately \$3.6M in grants go into Cooperative Extensions.

Commissioner Ahern asked about sources of revenue and was told that UNH provides about \$8K to support the state specialist housed at the office.

Commissioner Ahern asked what contracted services were and D. Maes said it is there to be able to hire interpreters in the event of a special needs person. Commissioner Ahern said that the Grange services in NH has a deaf services component which may be able to help in the future and is worth looking into.

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Alex Nuti-de Biase from the Journal Opinion Newspaper arrived with his colleague Rebecca

## **SHERIFF/DISPATCH**

Sheriff Dutile and Communications Director Andross arrived to go over their budgets. Sheriff Dutile said that they had just received the new maintenance figures so those were not plugged into the amounts. The total increase to the budget is 3.91%.

The amount of Social Security has been reduced due to changes in the law and there is also a reduction in longevity because of a decision by the Delegation to eliminate longevity for elected officials. Overtime is down a little bit and the Dept. is no longer involved with SOU so there is a savings there.

Gas and oil are up because of the national increase.

## **CAPITAL EXPENSES**

There is a request for three cruisers this year as opposed to one, which have been requested for the last two years. Cost for the three is estimated at \$77,100.

Cruiser video equipment is being requested in the amount of \$56,000 which the Sheriff said is due to the fact that there have been a number of complaints about inappropriate behavior of an officer from back seat passengers. He said that the time it takes to investigate the complaints is using up a lot of manpower and noted that no complaints have been validated so far. With a video recording of the event it will just be a matter of reviewing the tape. NH Highway Safety has a grant program that will provide half the cost and the County must match the funds for this.

Commissioner Burton asked about towns without Police Chiefs and the Sheriff said they are Dorchester, Monroe, Benton, Orange and currently Warren and generally the state police respond to their calls.

There was further discussion about various practices in both the Sheriff's Department and Dispatch.

Commissioner Burton said that knowing the problems with vehicle breakdowns and age he would hope the Board would approve the purchase of three cruisers.

Commissioner Ahern asked if the Dept. was reimbursed for time in the investigation of the Chief in Warren and the Sheriff replied they were not. Commissioner Ahern asked about payments for duties at Plymouth State and Dartmouth for their student activities and the Sheriff replied that Dartmouth pays them but not PSU. Commissioner Ahern asked the Sheriff to provide a cost analysis for work done at the PSU event.

Commissioner Ahern asked if they could use different types of cars for different types of duties and the Sheriff replied that there aren't deputies that do just certain things and said that if they were in an area to serve a writ for instance, they could also pick up a prisoner if need be, without having to make two different trips.

There was a discussion about transports and the Sheriff said that his office does a lot of non required transports in order to help out the communities. 3100 transports were done last year to help out and these were not necessarily special trips each time. He said that quite often they had other business in the area at the time.

## **REVENUE**

Total revenue is up.

There was a discussion about alarm systems that the Dispatch Center monitors and Director Andross said that there are 21 accounts in municipal buildings which are not charged out and 3 commercial paying customers. Commissioner Burton asked how people would even know about the service and Director Andross said that a lot of the Chief's will let people know about the service which costs \$400 a year. Monitoring has been done since 2008 but paying customers have only been on for a year.

Commissioner Cryans asked if there were any revenue areas that the Sheriff could possibly increase and he replied that he might be able to bring up the fee line and will check and get back. The Dispatch budget is just over \$1M

Commissioner Ahern asked about education and conference and if some of that were out of state. Director Andross said that some can be and there is an increase to have full implementation training for missing and exploited children for which there is now a standard and for APCO which also has a standard and deals with public safety.

Commissioner Ahern asked if this is something that can be done online and Director Andross said most of the training is done online or in-house.

#### **DISPATCH CAPITAL RESERVE**

There is currently \$233K in the Capital Reserve account and the request is for \$38,200 from that account to be used for MDT replacements, electrical needs and a new mail server. In the Sheriff's Capital outlay account there is a request to pay for the CodeRed system and chair replacement.

12:35 PM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

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Raymond S. Burton, Clerk