

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Budget Reviews

3855 Dartmouth College Hwy

North Haverhill, NH

Monday April 23, 2012

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

Commissioner Cryans called the Meeting to order at 9:05 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

NURSING HOME – Administrator Craig Labore and Finance Manager Bryan Patanovich
(\$14,168,070 includes Nursing Home bond)

Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the Nursing Home budget pending any wage adjustments which was seconded by Commissioner Burton.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Ahern began by saying he was not in favor of any wage adjustments or grade increases in the budget.

There was a discussion about whether or not the Nursing Home should continue with the services of Fitz Vogt or perhaps consider taking care of Dietary in-house. NHA Labore said that topic had been brought up for discussion. FM Patanovich said the main reason NHA Bolander was in favor of Fitz Vogt is because they provide a Dietician which can be difficult to find. NHA Labore agreed with that.

The Nursing Home requested to purchase new steam tables and Commissioner Ahern suggested that perhaps they could use the steam tables that the Jail is currently using since they won't need them at the new facility. He said he would like to see that request taken out.

Commissioner Ahern went on to question other budget lines as follows:

He said that the Nursing supply line could be reduced by \$75K and the travel line in Nursing should be cut by \$500. Rehab supplies should be reduced as he does not feel the amount is justified.

Commissioner Cryans suggested that NHA Labore be allowed to speak to some of those suggestions before going further.

NHA Labore stated that the Nursing supply line takes care of items that are needed in the event that someone comes in with a more severe wound or other issue that needs to be treated with more advanced items. He said this allows the Nursing Home to deal with issues that otherwise they may have to rent equipment for.

There were discussions about the travel line and the need to attend certain events.

The Rehab supply line is intended by replace eight wheelchairs and cushions for the comfort of residents.

Commissioner Ahern reiterated that he is opposed to the grade increases and said the economy is still ailing, there are people who are having difficulty paying their taxes and the unemployment rate is edging up. He stated that County employment is a steady and reliable job.

Commissioner Ahern continued to say that the Activity supply line should be cut by \$6K NHA Labore said he would recommend keeping that line where it is. He said that the Activities program at Grafton County is fantastic and the Department is innovative and creative with their events. Director Clough said that line had been reduced in the past and NHA Bolander came back to ask for a special appropriation because the residents were slighted on their activities.

Commissioner Ahern thought the supplies in Environmental Services could be reduced. NHA Labore said these are general cleaning supplies and it's hard to cut back on those and still operate a sanitary Nursing Home. Commissioner Cryans said that one of the first things he hears from people who have visited the home is that it doesn't have a smell to it, which he attributes to the fine job the people do in keeping it clean.

Commissioner Ahern wanted the Linen purchase line reduced by \$3K

Commissioner Ahern said he also was confused by the Farm allocation which he said he thought was actually done by Community Corrections and inmates. He said he would need a better understanding of this figure. B. Patanovich said that there really is no monetary affect on the County with this line as it comes from one line and goes back to another. Commissioner Ahern said he's still not fully convinced that the Farm has anything to do with it.

Commissioner Cryans asked what NHA Labore's philosophy was for having money in the budget that may not be needed. NHA Labore said that if you don't need it, don't spend it. Commissioner Cryans said it was commendable for NHA Labore to bring in his first budget at almost 0% increase.

Commissioner Ahern said he didn't want to take anything specific away from the budget that NHA Labore is proposing, however, County taxes are a burden that is put upon people however small that may be. He said that he feels 100% confident that the suggestions he has made for the Nursing Home budget would have no adverse affect in the operation of the Home.

When the vote was taken, Commissioner Burton and Cryans were in favor while Commissioner Ahern was opposed.

NHA Labore and B. Patanovich left.

Director Clough said that the Nursing Home was requesting \$1800 for the installation of two fire alarm pull stations which would come out of their capital reserve fund.

Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the use of \$1800 from the Nursing Home capital reserve fund which was seconded by Commissioner Burton.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Ahern asked if this was a separate account and Director Clough said it was. He then asked why the money for the steam tables couldn't come out of that account and Director Clough replied that she would have to ask the NH Administrator that question.

When the vote was taken all were in favor.

The Sheriff's Dept requested that \$57K be taken from the Dispatch capital reserve and used for MDT replacements, UHF upgrades and Coverage improvement. Director Clough said they are trying to get a grant in the amount of \$20K for the UHF upgrades and if that happens they won't need as much money.

Commissioner Ahern asked where that money comes from and Director Clough replied that it came from Dispatch fees.

Commissioner Burton approved the use of \$57K which was seconded by Commissioner Ahern. All were in favor.

SOCIAL SERVICES –HSA Bishop

(\$552,000)

Commissioner Ahern went down the list of organizations and gave his opinion as to what he felt they should or should not receive for funding and why.

HEALTH

NANA –stated they could get along without the funding so the suggestion was not to fund them.

N.Co HH/HM – a \$2.5M organization that should not be taking money from the taxpayer.

Pemi-Baker – a \$2.3M organization that can get by without the money.

VNA/VNH – a \$19M organization that should not be taking money from the taxpayer.

MENTAL HEALTH

Friendship House - \$22M organization does not need the money

Commissioner Burton said that Friendship house is a stand alone organization inside of Tri-County Cap.

Commissioner Ahern said if the taxpayers want to give money to organizations they should do so of their own accord. He said he does not feel that money should be taken out of their pocket by the County and given away on their behalf.

Genesis - \$8.5M organization does not need the money.

Commissioner Ahern respectfully requested that Commissioner Cryans recuse himself on the vote for Headrest as the Executive Director of that organization, for what he would consider to be a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Cryans said that he sees making a decision to fund these organizations as role of government and does not think it's a burden on the taxpayer.

Commissioner Ahern went on to say that Northern HS-MH as an \$8.7M organization should not be taking money from the taxpayer. West Central is a \$10.2 organization.

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Pathways - is a \$19M organization that has 8 people on the payroll as quality assurance managers and a CFO that makes a \$108K salary.

Northern HS-DD is an \$8.8M organization that should not take tax payer money.

Commissioner Ahern said all the Developmental Service organizations should be zeroed out.

CHILD & YOUTH

ADAPT duplicates the services of CADY and the Franconia Children Center said they could get by without County money.

Kindercenter seems to be duplicative.

WOMEN

Wise - Commissioner Ahern said 45% of what they do is in Vermont and their paid salaries are all high. He said they should be zeroed out.

Commissioner Burton said the number of people employed by the agencies and the number of services they supply to the people is why he favors them.

Commissioner Burton asked Commissioner Cryans if he planned to recuse himself from the vote on Headrest and said if he was, then that agency should be voted on by itself.

Commissioner Cryans said he has been at the County for 15 years and at Headrest for 8 and has never recused himself from that vote. He said it is his belief that government plays a part in the social services and so his vote doesn't make a difference in regard to conflict of interest because it is his steadfast philosophy.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the Social Service budget which was seconded by Commissioner Ahern in the amount of \$522,000.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Ahern said that because of the overlap of many of the organizations the clients served could be duplicated or tripled. He said that he disagrees with Commissioner Cryans about the role of County government and said there is a statute which speaks to the role that County government should play. He said he felt it was corporate hubris for a multi-million dollar organization to take money from the taxpayers and said he thinks its abuse. He said he believes these organizations look at the County as "easy money" and aren't doing the best they can to raise money on their own. He suggested doing a complete evaluation of what the County funds in charitable donations.

Commissioner Cryans said from his perspective, the money these agencies need come from federal, county, state and municipalities. He agreed that perhaps people cross over and use a variety of services but said that there are some people who will need more services than others. He feels it is the role of government to help to fund the agencies. He said they could not get by with the help of churches and Rotaries alone.

When the vote was taken Commissioners Burton and Cryans were in favor while Commissioner Ahern was opposed.

Commissioner Burton said that he voted in favor of all the seniors, the younger people who may otherwise be heading toward the County Jail and to all those who need the services of those agencies.

Commissioner Cryans said that he spoke to Executive Director Scarano who approached him and asked him to increase the GCEDC budget by another \$10K, which would bump it up to \$50K.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the \$10K increase which was seconded by Commissioner Ahern.

DISCUSSION

Commissioner Burton said they will probably need the money since they plan to move into that new building in Plymouth and that he comes down in favor of job creation and stability.

Commissioner Ahern said that GCEDC is a very successful agency and they have just recently gotten a lot of money in the form of a grant for that new building. He said it's good to help an agency get on their feet but there comes a time when they should be weaned off government money. He said he's not trying to take away from anything they do.

Commissioner Cryans said they all agree that GCEDC does a great job and there is an excitement about what they're going to do in Plymouth. He feels its money well spent.

When the vote was taken, Commissioners Burton and Cryans were in favor and Commissioner Ahern was opposed.

There was a discussion about the finalization of the budget and Director Clough said she could have figures for the Commissioners tomorrow.

Commissioner Burton said there is a lot of talk in the area about what is going to happen to the old Jail once vacated. He asked Director Clough how much money might be left over from the new Jail project. She said she is trying to get a better idea of what the figures might be but doesn't have everything right now. She said she is also looking into the viability of setting up a capital reserve fund for the new Jail.

11:15 AM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk