

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING  
Department of Corrections  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH  
June 15th 2022

PRESENT: Representatives Sykes, Gordon, Abel, Murphy, Simon, Weston, Egan, Simon, and Greeson. Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Lauer, Commissioner Ahern, County Administrator Libby, Administrative Asst. Norcross,

OTHERS PRESENT: Register Monahan

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Budget Deliberations

Commissioners' Office

Rep. Gordon stated that in regards to the Finance Director position, his understanding that for a quarter of the year it is roughly \$27,000 inclusive of all expenses.

**MOTION:** Rep. Gordon moved to cut the overall expenses for the Finance Director by \$55,000 or the equivalent of six (6) months. Rep. Folsom seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Gordon stated that there would be some delay in hiring in any event. They initially considered delaying this position (3) months. He explained that the time that a Finance Director is needed the most is during budget season. Being familiar with what CA Libby does in both roles, Rep. Gordon asked if they need a separate position or if the job function could be done in less, with an assistant to CA Libby for financial work. Commissioner Piper stated that she thinks CA Libby could speak best to this.

CA Libby explained that she has filled both roles until a new County Administrator was hired in February 2021. Since the former administrator left, she has taken on both roles and there are substantial differences. She stated that there is a considerable amount of compliance with the ARPA funds and grants in general have become increasingly more complex. Grants bring a whole new life to what she needs to do. Commissioner Piper stated that the increased workload since December has been enormous. From a Commissioner's perspective, she does not know that another person would be willing to do the work and hours that CA Libby does once she is no longer at the county. CA Libby stated that she had this conversation with Commissioner Piper and discussed what this position looks like. She stated that she thinks it is fair to fund a position starting the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year and figure out what that position looks like. The salary and benefits for half the year is \$68,000.

**MOTION:** Rep. Gordon moved to amend his motion to reduce the Finance Director overall expenses by \$60,000. Rep. Folsom seconded the amendment. Rep. Weston called

the roll. Nine (9) Reps., Abel, Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Murphy, Simon, Sykes and Weston were in favor. With the vote being nine (9) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### Human Resources

**MOTION:** Rep. Simon moved to reduce the HR budget by \$92,532 for the new HR position. Rep. Folsom seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Simon stated that recruitment issues seem to be related to pay. Commissioner Piper explained that there was a full discussion regarding this position. It is a difficult question but the majority of the board would strongly disagree that pay competitiveness is an issue. What they could do in regards to pay is solved by the wage study and going forward this is a position dedicated to searching and networking on a more global level on recruitment and retention. She stated that they want to put as many tools in the toolbox for recruitment as possible. Rep. Gordon stated that there is not a large pool of people to hire and there is competition down the road. He was not convinced that hiring a person was going to solve the problem and there was no explanation on how this person was going to solve the problem. He did not get a sense that we would get a return on this position. Rep. Egan stated that they should be supporting programs that might be able to help nursing students receive financial assistance or tuition reimbursement. His concern is that the folks are not here and a new HR person fishing in an empty pond is not going to catch any fish. Commissioner Lauer stated that the county has a tuition reimbursement program as well as a program that hires Unit Aides and pays them to become LNAs.

Rep. Weston called the roll. Nine (9) Reps., Abel, Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Murphy, Simon, Sykes and Weston were in favor. With the vote being nine (9) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### Dispatch

**MOTION:** Rep. Gordon moved to reduce the Dispatch budget by \$77,253 for the new full time Dispatcher position.

Discussion – Rep. Gordon stated that Dispatch continues to grow and each time they have the budget process they see it grow. This year Dispatch is adding expenses and the revenues are not covering the increase. He does not feel they need to continue to add to the bureaucracy at Dispatch. Rep. Egan stated that Grafton County is covering for other counties and asked they are doing for us in return. They need to look out for Grafton County taxpayers. Commissioner Lauer stated that the towns in VT pay for the services that are provided. Director Andross and his assistant are sitting behind the desk dispatching because they need more help. Commissioner Piper asked the committee how much they want to starve county services. She explained that the same is true of the maintenance dept. There are licensed specialists and Directors doing entry-level positions. The majority of the board, over the last couple of budgets because of Covid,

have not addressed needs in staffing if that is continued, that will decrease the effectiveness of services they offer. Commissioner Piper stated that she hopes this committee brings the same eye to the growth in the Sheriff's Department with their digital forensic software. They are serving agencies all over the state and are not receiving payment for those services. She hope the committee will be consistent. Rep. Sykes stated that this item has had him thinking a lot. He feels that they should be looking at dispatching requests for services versus staffing, and how those ratios compare to other dispatch centers. He has a problem with a rational that suggest that people do not have time to train people. He will support the motion this year but will further look at those ratios for next year. Rep. Simon asked if our director is sitting at the desk in part, because they are providing services outside the county. He noted that he would find it helpful that when the committee meets with the Department Heads that more detailed information. CA Libby explained that it is very difficult to train and this committee needs to remember that is a public safety organization, if Director Andross is not training his assistant, it is because he is answering 911 calls and that is top priority. She went on to state that the county has contracts in place right now and they need to provide public safety. Commissioner Lauer noted that Dispatch answered 68,437 calls last year with a staff of 10 Dispatchers plus Director Andross and Office Assistant Paronto filling in.

Rep. Weston called the roll. Seven (7) Reps., Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Murphy, Simon and Sykes were in favor. Two (2) Reps., Abel and Weston were in opposition. With the vote being seven (7) in favor and two (2) in opposition the motion passes.

### Maintenance

**MOTION:** Rep. Greeson moved to remove the one (1) new maintenance assistant position. Rep. Folsom seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Greeson stated that he has not heard any real justification or need for this position. Rep. Gordon stated that this is another situation, where as he understands, there has been an inability to hire for current positions. They are having difficulty finding current positions before adding new positions. Rep. Sykes stated that he would support the motion because he has had some anxiety about adding ongoing costs with the concern that they have bigger issues the county is facing down the road such as courthouse and hiring nurses. He noted that they are watching the county get older and residents will have difficulty paying their tax bills.

Rep. Weston called the roll. Nine (9) Reps., Abel, Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Murphy, Simon, Sykes and Weston were in favor. With the vote being nine (9) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### Grafton Regional Development Corporation

Commissioner Piper stated that GRDC has expanded this year and that is very helpful. She noted that it has always been said that there is a strong tie between GRDC and the County and the county has significant input but she has never seen that to be the case. She reported that their

funding was cut to \$45,000 a couple of years ago and she suggested a 10% cut a number of years ago. There had been discussions regarding cutting their funding in the past because she thinks that there is a question, that this is not a statutory requirement of the county. There are many ways the Commissioners are working to enhance economic development. Ann Duncan Cooley would be open to hearing suggestions but Commissioner Piper stated that she has never seen any significant or noticeable sense that they have input.

**MOTION:** Rep. Greeson moved to cut \$45,000 from GRDC. Rep. Folsom seconded the motion.

Discussion – Rep. Greeson stated that Commissioner Piper has made it clear that they have not seen anything of benefit by paying \$45,000 to GRDC. Commissioner Piper stated that the county pays the loan officer’s salary. Grafton County Services tend to go towards the vulnerable and her belief in reading the reports is that these services do not go towards the vulnerable. Rep. Sykes stated that in the past the director has come in to discuss what they are doing. If they are providing economic growth, the young people have the ideas and they need to get them in the state. He stated that he has encouraged GRDC to look at the agricultural segment of jobs in the county. If they are going to continue to be a county that has an important component of agriculture, micro loans support that which is what GRDC provides. Rep. Greeson noted that this money is paying for a loan officer; it is not going to an actual project or economic development. Commissioner Piper stated that she was pleased with Ann Duncan Cooley’s growth and outreach in terms of educational programs but does not know if that is worth \$45,000. Rep. Murphy stated that he does not support the motion to cut it. Going forward they should have a measure of accountability, a report to the Executive Committee on what this money is doing to determine if they are getting a return on investment. Rep. Gordon stated that he would recommend that at the Delegation meeting next week, they put together a committee to investigate whether this is a worthwhile investment and report to the Executive Committee in September. Rep. Folsom agreed with Rep. Gordon’s suggestion.

Rep. Weston called the roll. Nine (9) Reps., Abel, Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Murphy, Simon, Sykes and Weston were in opposition. With the vote being none in favor and nine (9) in opposition, the motion fails.

### Farm

Rep. Folsom stated that when they come together at the Delegation meeting, she feels as though they should form a subcommittee to look into the farms future. The Committee agreed to discuss it at the Delegation meeting.

### Social Services

Commissioner Piper stated that in response to a question that the committee had asked at their last meeting, West Central did not specifically say that the increase in cost and services were a fallout of Covid. They noted that their increased client base was due to Covid.

Rep. Sykes stated that one of the agencies that requested more money was Twin Pine Housing. What got lost in translation is what they are actually doing. One of their goals as a county is to help people get into nursing homes or stay out of nursing homes when possible and to keep people out of jail. People who are homeless often fall into the legal system. Twin Pine Housing is an agency that creates affordable housing. They took on a building in the city of Lebanon with 19 units strictly for the homeless as transitional housing. They do this working with the Upper Valley Haven, a homeless shelter who does the social work. It would be his hope and goal that the county would think about how that effort could be expanded. Commissioner Piper stated that they funded Upper Valley Haven for the first time because of that connection and they fund many agencies to help the homeless. She noted that they also fund Visions who also work in conjunction with Twin Pines. She stated that Twin Pines is a robust organization. There are many vulnerable people in the county and she thinks about raising taxpayer dollars for organizations that already receive money elsewhere such as Twin Pines.

Tri County Cap – Commissioner Piper stated that Tri County Cap had applied for social service funding for fuel assistance a few years ago and the Commissioners could not figure out how that met their statutory mandates of keeping people out of jail and the nursing home. She stated that they received a letter from Tri County Cap this year asking the Commissioners to rethink the \$10,000 request for funding. The staffing needs have gone up to fill the other programs and they have asked if the county would rethink providing money for the fuel assistant. Commissioner Piper stated that the Commissioners made a motion to move the request forward to the Executive Committee and the Commissioners recommendation is not to fund it. The Committee discussed the request and agreed not to fund it. Rep. Sykes stated that he thinks they can look at this in the future but he is not in favor of putting this in at this point.

CA Libby stated that with the motions made today the budget is \$49,859,825 with \$26,532,050 to be raised by taxes or a 1.63% decrease from last year.

**MOTION:** Rep. Folsom moved to recommend a budget of \$49,859,825 with \$26,532,050 to be raised by taxes. Rep. Egan seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Eight (8) Reps., Abel, Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Simon, Sykes and Weston were in favor. With the vote being eight (8) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### ARPA Requests

CA Libby explained that during the budget process department heads have referenced items that they would like to purchase using ARPA funds. These are one-time projects or initiatives that need to be completed but the Commissioners did not want to include in the operating budget. She reviewed the following requests totaling \$168,972.00:

\$9,000.00	Nursing Home Computer Lifecycle
\$25,000.00	NCIC - Broadband Grant Opportunities
\$6,500.00	Heat Pump - DoC
\$5,700.00	Line Striping

\$23,794.00 Washing Machine - Nursing Home  
\$88,978.00 Sprinkler Project - Nursing Home  
\$10,000.00 Add'l Funds for Wastewater Treatment

**MOTION:** Rep. Gordon moved to approve the requested ARPA projects. Rep. Egan seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Eight (8) Reps., Abel, Egan, Folsom, Gordon, Greeson, Simon, Sykes and Weston were in favor. With the vote being eight (8) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

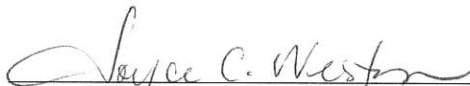
Rep. Simon asked if there was a reason why the \$172,000 for the Register of Deeds Microfilm Project is not coming out of ARPA funds as opposed to the Surcharge account. He asked if it would be more beneficial to take it out of ARPA. Rep. Sykes asked if this is a onetime charge. Register Monahan was present and stated that request predated ARPA but has not yet been expended. This \$172,000 is a onetime charge for two (2) copies of everything. Going forward it is now in the operating budget for \$2,000 a year. She noted that at the next ARPA meeting, she wanted to propose the \$500,000 plan restoration project and she could present this microfilm project to come out of ARPA funding as well. She stated that the microfilm project is complete and they are not in any rush for the payment, therefore she can bring it forward as an ARPA proposal. The committee agreed to discuss it further at a later date.

Rep. Gordon stated that with the agreements reached today, it puts the Executive Committee in a position where they can all recommend the budget to the Delegation. He stated that he is still going to express concern over the increase to Elected Officials because they are giving employees a 4.5% increase but a 20% increase to Elected Officials.

Register Monahan stated that in regards to the County Administrator's responsibilities, she told Commissioner Piper that with the potential of building a new courthouse that is going to create an extra burden on the County Administrator's workload. She also stated that in regards to Grafton Regional Development Corporation, there is a big movement in the nonprofit world to change 501c3 to include profits and she requests that the Executive Committee study that. She noted that she has also been requesting their financials for years.

11:10 AM with no further business the meeting adjourned.

Sincerely,

  
Joyce Weston, Clerk