

GRAFTON COUNTY DELEGATION MEETING
Department of Corrections
North Haverhill, NH 03774
October 12, 2023

PRESENT: see attached sign in sheet

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 10:41 am and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rep. Berezny.

MOTION: Rep. Morse moved to authorize the acceptance of the NTIA grant and further the Supplemental Appropriation of up to \$5,129,572, to be funded through fund balance, for the purposes of the County match required by the grant. Rep. Stavis seconded the motion

Discussion:

Rep. Sellers stated that several towns already have high-speed internet and taking this money out of the fund balance is taking money that belongs to all the towns. The County is asking towns who paid already for internet, to pay again. He hopes the County can make money on this without having to hire any employees.

Rep. Almy stated that this is a very valuable project for the parts of the County that need it. She asked about the surplus total. CA Libby reported that the overall fund balance at the end of FY23 was \$19.1 million. She explained that the overall fund balance is broken down into different pieces. What they are discussing is the undesignated fund balance, which, at the end of FY23 was just over \$10 million. Rep. Almy stated that in this case, there is \$5 million being spent out of the undesignated fund balance and it is going out over the course of a couple of years. She asked what this does regarding any problem that they could foresee in the future. CA Libby explained that the County has built the fund balance over the last five (5) years and hopes to continue that trend, which would replenish funds spent. Rep. Sykes added that the point of an undesignated fund balance is to have funds for unexpected or important events.

Rep. Sullivan explained that this is how it has always worked with all major infrastructure projects. There are reasons why certain areas do not get built out. He stated that if they want people in the rural parts of the County to have access to other parts of the county, they need to acknowledge that it is going to have to come from subsidies. The initial buildout of infrastructure projects the government's responsibilities. Rep. Sykes stated that they need to make sure areas of the County do not get left behind.

Rep. Murphy noted that as the Executive Committee was going through the budget, his understanding was the County was able to keep the tax rate level while still maintaining a healthy fund balance. He asked, with this drawdown, if this keeps the County within its target. CA Libby stated that it does. After this appropriation, the fund balance percentage would be at 9.33%.

Rep. Fracht stated that this is a public utility; it is open to everyone if they choose to use it. In response to Rep. Sellers' comment regarding making money, if the County were to make money that is fine but that should not be the goal, County Government should be providing this infrastructure, and he stated that this seems like a great way to do it without hitting the taxpayers with a large cost. Rep. Massimilla stated that if the opportunity is there, since it may not be offered again, the County should take advantage of it.

Rep. Sellers added that he does not want the constituents to think the County is going to build the middle mile, and that means they will have internet to their homes right away. It may still be years until communities are built out with the last mile. Rep. Sykes stated that an important thing to remember is that without the middle mile, that final mile could take years to build out. Rep. Morse added that Canaan has been working on building out broadband and originally the build-out looked like 10-15 years, and with this middle mile project, their final mile build-out looks around a year out. This is allowing the towns to move forward with something that is realistic and is a really important step to having a future that supports granite stateres. Rep. Stavis noted that if Grafton County wanted to build this middle mile themselves, it would cost \$17 million. She stated that the County could do it for a fraction of the cost and asked why we would not, as it is an opportunity to bring a public service to their communities. Rep. Hakken-Phillips stated that the federal money the County will be applying for is tax money that they have sent to the federal government that they are now receiving back. This is a long-term investment for the future, and she supports this project. Rep. Brown stated that part of this goes to Merrimack County. Rep. Sykes explained that this section is where the infrastructure was and enabled Ex2 Technologies to get from point A to point B.

MOTION: Rep. Hakken-Phillips moved to move the question. Rep. Morse seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy "yes", Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Berezny "yes", Rep. Bolton "yes", Rep. Brown "yes", Rep. Cormen "yes", Rep. Fracht "yes", Rep. Hakken-Phillips "yes", Rep. Lovett "yes", Rep. Massimilla "yes", Rep. Morse "yes", Rep. Muirhead "yes", Rep. Murphy "yes", Rep. Nordgren "yes", Rep. Rochefort "yes", Rep. Sellers "no", Rep. Stavis "yes", Rep. Stringham "yes", Rep. Sullivan "yes", Rep. Sykes "yes". With the vote being nineteen (19) in favor and one (1) in opposition the motion passes.

Rep. Morse repeated the original motion to authorize the acceptance of the NTIA grant and further the Supplemental Appropriation of up to \$5,129,572, to be funded through fund balance, for the purposes of the County match required by the grant.

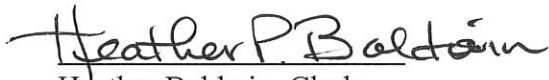
Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy "yes", Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Berezny "yes", Rep. Bolton "yes", Rep. Brown "yes", Rep. Cormen "yes", Rep. Fracht "yes", Rep. Hakken-Phillips "yes", Rep. Lovett "yes", Rep. Massimilla "yes", Rep. Morse "yes", Rep. Muirhead "yes", Rep. Murphy "yes", Rep. Nordgren "yes", Rep. Rochefort "yes", Rep. Sellers "yes", Rep. Stavis "yes", Rep.

Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sullivan “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being twenty (20) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

MOTION: Rep. Stringham moved to adjourn. Rep. Cormen seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy “yes”, Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Berezhny “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Brown “yes”, Rep. Cormen “yes”, Rep. Fracht “yes”, Rep. Hakken-Phillips “yes”, Rep. Lovett “yes”, Rep. Massimilla “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Muirhead “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Nordgren “yes”, Rep. Rochefort “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stavis “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sullivan “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being twenty (20) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

11:05 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk