

## Sullivan County Commissioners Discuss New Correctional Center

by Katie Richardson  
InterTown News Service  
NEWPORT - The Sullivan County Commissioners met at the county complex in Newport on August 6. Also in attendance were State Representative Sue Gottling (D-Sunapee), chair of the county delegation Executive Finance Committee, former state represen-

tatives Peter Franklin and Larry Converse and Department of Corrections Superintendent Ross Cunningham.

County Administrator Greg Chanis presented the most current drawings for the new community correctional center to be built in Unity. Approval was needed from the commissioners in order for the structural engineer to complete the foundation design, thus allowing the concrete and foundation work to go out to bid. Chanis reported that the project would come in at or under the \$5.5 million budgeted for the project. That number does not include the cost of renovating the existing correctional facility.

Cunningham stated he was satisfied with the plan, having had several sessions with staff to receive input as to the most effective design. The commissioners voted to authorize Chanis to sign the design review sheet, moving the project to its next phase. Details in the building itself are subject to change within the budget, however the footprint will remain as designed.

A point of contention was the proposed five-year lease of county-owned property in Unity. At a prior meeting, Chanis was asked to draw up a lease in the amount of \$1,000 a year for the .2 acre piece. The lease would be entered into with

an abutter of the property, who would use it to keep horses. Commissioner Ethel Jarvis felt strongly that the lease should be bid out, as it was not a governmental use of property. Commissioner Bennie Nelson disagreed, saying the agreement was acceptable as long as the property was zoned for agricultural use. Jarvis suggested the lease agreement did not follow the law. "It's not a good old boys network anymore," she said. It was agreed that Nelson would ascertain for what use the property is zoned and report back at the next meeting.

Chanis presented the possibility of the commissioners joining a New Hampshire Municipal Association lawsuit against the State of New Hampshire protesting the retirement system increase as a violation of New Hampshire Constitution Article 28-a. An increased contribution to the system was mandated in the new state budget, resulting in an additional and unplanned for \$20,000 from Sullivan County this year. The commissioners voted to kick in the \$2,619 for the lawsuit to come from unused county conference preparation funds.

The county commissioners next meeting is on August 20 at the county nursing home in Unity.