ORIGINAL

Executive Finance Committee Meeting
Public Session
5/18/12
Commissioners Conference Room, Newport

EFC Members Present: Reps. Philip "Joe" Osgood, John Cloutier, Charlene Lovett, Spec Bowers, Thomas Laware

EFC Members Absent: None

County Employees and Elected Officials Present: County Administrator Greg Chanis

Public Present: Former Comm. Ethel Jarvis

The EFC Chair, Rep. Osgood opened public session of the meeting at 9:10 am.

The chair indicated that today's meeting would be to discuss proposed county grants.

Rep. Bowers moved, Rep. Osgood seconded a motion to accept all the recommendations in the Commissioners proposed FY 2012 Budget for the county grants.

Rep. Bowers explained his reasons for supporting the motion.

Rep. Cloutier objected to the motion, and explained why he was opposed to the motion. Among other points he said the EFC should at least listen to all the grant agencies speak for their proposed grants before making a recommendation.

Rep. Laware then moved, Rep. Lovett seconded an amendment to Rep. Bowers motion stating that the EFC recommend supporting all of the Commissioners proposed recommendations except for Community Transportation's which would be raised by $5,000 from $25,000 to $30,000.

Rep. Osgood then indicated his support for the motion and said the county should solicit input on the county grants from the county's 15 municipalities during the next year. He echoed Rep. Bowers' belief that all county grants should be eventually phased out, but that he didn't want to phase the grants out this year.

Rep. Cloutier responded by stating that having some other entity such as Sullivan County United Way help the county determine the amount of grants would be helpful. Said that some of the county grants are important to his Claremont constituents, especially Community Transportation's.

Rep. Bowers said his intention was to listen to all the county grant agencies make their requests before voting on his motion and the mentioned amendment.

Rep. Bowers then moved, Rep. Cloutier seconded a motion to table Rep. Bowers earlier named motion. Motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

The county grant agencies then started their individual requests starting with the Road to Independence.

Road to Independence Margaret Coulter then presented her agency's $3,000 request and answered questions from the EFC (See attached information). Finally, she stated that at least for her agency going to all 15 Sullivan County municipalities to apply for municipal grants would be more costly and time-consuming.

Ellie Tsetsi of Good Beginnings then gave a presentation of her agency's proposed $30,000 grant. Said Valley Regional Hospital's recent closing of its Birthing Center has made Good Beginnings task more challenging, as well as recent decisions by State of N.H. to cut for maternity services for qualified low-income women. Answered questions from EFC about Good Beginnings (See Attached information).

Turning Points Deb Mozden then gave her presentation for her agency's grant request of $60,000. First, said while Turning Points would like $60,000 it could live with $55,000. (See attached information). Described Turning Points' various activities and what the grant would help fund. Also said going to all 15 of the county's municipalities for municipal grants would be difficult for her agency. Finally, declared that Turning Points has saved lives and money in Sullivan County. Answered questions from EFC.

Big Brothers/ Big Sisters of Western N.H's Peg Monahan then gave her presentation of her agency's proposed $5,000 grant request (See attached information). Stated that while Big Brothers/Big Sisters headquarters is in Keene, N.H. which is outside of Sullivan County, the organization has operated an office on Washington St. in Claremont. Then continued a description of her organization's various activities.

Then Ms. Monahan started answering questions from EFC, and was joined by organization's Joan Binder, who helped answer questions.

Ms. Monahan emphasized that the $5,000 being requested would stay in Sullivan County and used for Sullivan County programs.

Claremont Soup Kitchen's Jan Bunnell then made a presentation of her organization's $17,000 grant request. First, she stated that the amount of people being served by the Soup Kitchen has increased over the last fiscal year. Continuing she described the various services provided by her organization not all food-related (See attached information).

Then she answered questions from the EFC.

Among other answered questions, she said City of Claremont decided not to fund any human service agencies in this year's budget, including the Soup Kitchen.

Community Alliance's Barbara Brill then spoke first about the Community Transportation's proposed request of $40,000.

Described her organization's various services, the changes recently made to services previously offered and stated that ridership has grown 15% over last year.

Among other points indicated that if United Way funds any organizations then that organization can only fundraise during certain periods of a year – and not when the United Way Annual Appeal is underway. Also said that while her organization does receive federal funding currently, that such funding is contingent on the funds being matched with local grants or raised money.

Stated that her organization's proposed county grant is a very small part of the overall county budget and that Community Transportation strives to keep people independent and in their homes for as long as possible.

EFC Chair, Rep. Osgood, asked several questions and made several statements about Community Transportation's "wastefulness" that he now perceives. Questioning and statements to which Ms. Brill responded.

Among other points, Rep. Osgood suggested that Community Transportation riders pay some money for the rides provided, even if it is a small amount of money.

Rep. Lovett suggested that Ms. Brill contact the Neighbor Rider organization to seek help on how to raise more private funds thru fundraising activities.

Next, Ms. Brill also discussed the Community Alliance's Family Services Dept's proposed county grant of $30,000.

Described Family Services various services (See attached information) and answered questions from EFC. Said Family Services is the only diversion program in this region of the state.

The chair noted that Lake Sunapee Mediation and West Central Behavioral Health were not here today to make presentations on their proposed county grants of $7,500 and $10,000 respectively.

However, in regard to West Central Rep. Lovett said that information that she had received from the organization's President/CEO Suellen Griffin indicated that its organization proposed grant of $10,000 is worthwhile.

At the request of former Commissioner Ethel Jarvis, Mr. Chanis calculated that if all the grant proposals were funded at the levels as originally requested by the affected organizations then they would constitute 0.7% of the total county budget.

Discussion then ensued over county grants in general, and the EFC then returned to discussion about the amendment made by Reps. Laware and Lovett to the original motion of Rep. Bowers and Osgood in regard to the Commissioners proposed county grant recommendations.

The Laware-Lovett Amendment passed on a 3-2 show-of-hands vote: (Yes: Reps. Laware, Lovett, and Cloutier) (No: Reps. Bowers and Osgood).

Rep. Lovett then restated Rep. Bowers' original motion to recommend all the Commissioners proposed county grants, with the exception of Community Transportation for a total of $173,750 in recommended county grants.

Motion was defeated on 2-3 show-of-hands vote (Yes: Reps. Laware, Lovett) (No: Reps. Bowers, Cloutier, and Osgood).

Rep. Cloutier moved reconsideration which was supported on a 3-2 show-of-hands vote. (Yes for Reconsideration: Reps. Cloutier, Laware, And Lovett) (No for Reconsideration: Reps. Bowers and Osgood)

Rep. Cloutier moved, Rep. Laware then seconded a motion to support the proposed total county grants of $173,750 including an additional $5,000 to Community Transportation. Motion was approved on a 3-2 show-of-hands vote (Yes: Reps. Cloutier, Laware, and Lovett) (No: Reps. Bowers and Osgood).

Rep. Bowers moved, Rep. Cloutier seconded a motion to take an additional $300,000 out of the projected Fund Balance to help reduce taxes.

Discussion then ensued among the EFC and Mr. Chanis about the wisdom of taking $300,000 more out of the Fund Balance. Rep. Lovett again brought up the issue of establishing a Capital Reserve Fund, and no vote was taken on Rep. Bowers' motion.

Rep. Cloutier moved, Rep. Lovett seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion was approved at 1:23 pm.

The next EFC Meeting is tentatively set for June 1, 2012 at 8:30 am in Newport.

John R. Cloutier

Rep. John R. Cloutier
Acting Clerk

Date Approved: June 1, 2012