

Sullivan County NH

Type of Meeting: Sullivan County Full Delegation
Date / Time: 16 July 2008 / 8:00 am
Place: Sullivan County Jury Assembly Room

Participants

Representatives: Peter Franklin (Chair), Ray Gagnon (Vice-Chair), Ellen Nielsen (Clerk), John Cloutier, Larry Converse, Tom Donovan, Sue Gottling, Matthew Houde, Arthur Jillette and Carla Skinder

Commissioners: Ethel Jarvis

Other Elected Officials: Marc Hathaway, County Attorney; Michael Prozzo, High Sheriff

County Employees: Greg Chanis, Interim County Manager, Ted Purdy, Nursing Home Director, Ross Cunningham, Superintendent of Corrections

Public Participants: Former Commissioner Donald Clarke and Claremont City Councilor Jeff Goff observed the meeting but did not speak.

Press: none

The meeting was called to order by Rep. Franklin at 8:16 am. This meeting, like the meetings of 8 July and 14 July, was a continuation of the recessed county convention of 30 June, 2008, and the purpose of the meeting was to continue work on the county budget for fiscal 2009. Written copies of the draft minutes of the meeting of 14 July were provided to the delegation but these minutes were not discussed or approved during the meeting.

Rep. Franklin asked if the delegation was finished with reviewing the nursing home budget.

Rep Converse offered a motion to eliminate line item 550-21097, \$3500 for staff lockers, from the expenses for Fund 40. The motion was not seconded.

Rep. Skinder asked a question about an item for "care of grounds" at the nursing home. Mr. Chanis explained that this item included driveway maintenance and snowplowing as well as landscaping, and that the labor was provided by inmates at the correctional center and the only cost was for supplies.

Rep. Gottling suggested that the delegation move on to considering the Corrections budget, and specifically to a large capital improvements item, the security upgrades for the existing facility. Superintendent Cunningham described these upgrades, which include creating a secure open space 50 feet from the building to which inmates could be taken in case of a fire, replacing cell door locks which open manually with a key with locks which open electronically from a control panel, and which would make it easier for inmates to leave the building in case of a fire, and replacing and upgrading lighting in the cell block area. Currently, light bulbs in household type fixtures can be removed by inmates, creating a dangerous situation for staff and other inmates. These would be replaced with tamper proof fixtures. A sprinkler system is needed as well, but Mr. Cunningham said that he had made the decision that the security upgrades were the most urgent need. Spirited discussion by the delegation followed Mr. Cunningham's explanation. All agreed that the security upgrades were needed, but Rep. Franklin and Rep. Gottling said that they should be postponed until next year because of the county deficit.

Rep. Donovan moved that the delegation approve the capital improvements in line item 10-481-21096, totaling \$209,630. The motion was seconded by Rep. Skinder.

The discussion continued. Rep. Skinder said that we can't put things off when lives are at stake. Rep. Franklin said that he thought the danger of the current situation had been exaggerated. County Attorney Hathaway disagreed, and described an incident at the jail where some prisoners had thrown lighted pieces of paper into the hallway. He also pointed out that it will take at least three years for the county to clear the deficit left over from fiscal 2007.

Rep. Nielsen moved to call the question on Rep. Donovan's motion. Rep. Houde seconded the motion and Rep. Skinder requested a roll call vote. The motion to call the question passed 8-2, with representatives voting as follows: YES—Cloutier, Donovan, Gagnon, Gottling, Houde, Jillette, Nielsen and Skinder NO—Converse and Franklin

The motion to approve line item 10-481-21096, for a total expenditure of \$209,630 for the security upgrades to the jail passed 7-3 by a roll call vote, with representatives voting as follows: YES—Cloutier, Donovan, Gagnon, Houde, Jillette, Nielsen and Skinder NO—Converse, Franklin and Gottling.

Next, the delegation used a consensus process, rather than formal motions and voting, to set a time and place for a public hearing on the proposed corrections project to repair and upgrade the existing jail and build a new residential grade transitional housing and substance abuse treatment center. Rep. Cloutier proposed that the public hearing should be in Unity, since that is where the facility would be built, if approved. An alternative proposal was to have two hearings, one in Claremont and one in Newport. Representatives agreed that the Unity location would be appropriate, provided that the hearing was videotaped so that it could be on community TV in the other two towns. The date of Thursday, July 31 2008, was chosen, and the time was set for 7:00 pm. Mr. Cunningham also agreed to arrange guided tours of the correctional center for the public on the day of the hearing.

The delegation will be required to vote on whether or not to approve financing for the proposed project within 14 days of the public hearing, so a special full delegation meeting will be convened for that purpose on Tuesday, August 12, at 4:00 pm in the Newport county complex. The plan is that this meeting also should be televised. The delegation also agreed to meet to make final changes and approve the adjusted fiscal 2009 budget at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, July 30 at the Newport county complex.

Rep. Gottling asked several questions about the increased amount (\$281,000) for staffing for the Corrections Department. Mr. Cunningham explained that he had requested additional staffing for the transitional housing unit. At this time, there are only three staff members to cover this program, which should be supervised 24-7, but is left unsupervised at night. In addition to supervising the transitional housing unit, these workers monitor individuals who are in the community on pre-sentencing programs, and individuals who are electronically monitored rather than being incarcerated. The plan is to phase in four new staff positions over two years. County Attorney Hathaway and Sheriff Prozzo spoke in support of the need for more staff for this part of the corrections program. County Attorney Hathaway expressed concern about the management of female inmates and inmates with serious medical problems.

Members of the delegation asked Mr. Chanis, the Interim County Manager, about several budget issues. There was concern that, in light of rising fuel prices, enough money had been

budgeted for fuel oil for the nursing home. Mr. Chanis referred to a history of fuel deliveries over several years, and said that at some point he hoped that the county would be able to negotiate a locked in price. However, it is possible that the line item for fuel oil may need to be raised by \$45,000.

Mr. Chanis then moved on to a review of the potential reductions in expenses from the original commissioners' budget which had been identified in connection with changing the medical insurance plan for the non-union employees. By changing to a different Primex plan which has higher co-pays and higher out of pocket expenses, but slightly lower employee contributions, the county can save at least \$100,000. An additional \$78,052 can be removed from fiscal 2009 expenditures by making an arrangement with Primex to pay the health insurance run-outs. The county will repay Primex over time. Combined with the anticipated delay in paying the 15% increase to the state retirement system and the adjustments which have been made during the budget review process, the anticipated expenses have been reduced by about \$600,000, reducing the anticipated tax increase from 31.84% to 25.71%.

Rep. Gottling asked how much the county was likely to save in reduced interest rates. So far, savings of \$105,000 have been identified.

Mr. Chanis said that the audit process has just begun, but at this point it looks like the budget deficit for fiscal 08 will be about \$100,000. [Clerk's note: This compares favorably with the previous year's deficit of over \$2,000,000.]

Rep. Converse asked a question about a line item of \$8700 for printing and anticipated legal expenses in connection with the new union contract. Mr. Chanis said that since the contract was so new, it would not be prudent to delete the amount for legal expenses, but the printing could be deleted.

Rep Converse moved that line item 10-520-12020 be reduced by \$1200, leaving a total of \$7500. The motion was seconded by Rep. Gottling and passed 9-0, with representatives voting as follows: YES—Cloutier, Converse, Donovan, Franklin, Gagnon, Gottling, Jillette, Nielsen and Skinder.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 12:00 pm.

Next steps:

Wednesday, July 30, 1:00 pm—Full delegation meeting to act on the budget

Thursday, July 31, 7:00 pm—Public hearing on proposed corrections project

Tuesday, August 12, 4:00 pm—Full delegation meeting to act on corrections project

Respectfully submitted,


Rep. Ellen Nielsen, Delegation Clerk

SULLIVAN COUNTY NH—STATE/COUNTY DELEGATION

MOTION AND VOTING SHEET # 1

DATE: 16 July 2008

TIME:

MOTION: To approve line item 10-81-21096 totaling \$209,630—security updates for the Correctional Center

MOTION MADE BY: Rep. Donovan

MOTION SECONDED BY: Rep. Skinder

MOTION: CARRIED X DEFEATED TIED

WAS THERE DISCUSSION? Yes

VOICE VOTE:

ROLL CALL:

REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME	YES	NO
Rep. John Cloutier	X	
Rep. Larry Converse	X	
Rep. Tom Donovan	X	
Rep. Brenda Ferland		
Rep. Peter Franklin		X
Rep. Ray Gagnon	X	
Rep. Suzanne Gottling		X
Rep. Matthew Houde	X	
Rep. Arthur G. Jillette Jr.	X	
Rep. Ellen Nielsen	X	
Rep. Jay Phinizy		
Rep. Beverly Rodeschin		
Rep. Carla Skinder	X	

SULLIVAN COUNTY NH—STATE/COUNTY DELEGATION

MOTION AND VOTING SHEET #2

DATE: 16 July 2008

TIME:

MOTION: To call the question on the motion to approve line item 10-481-21096

MOTION MADE BY: Rep. Nielsen

MOTION SECONDED BY: Rep. Houde

MOTION: CARRIED X DEFEATED TIED

WAS THERE DISCUSSION?

VOICE VOTE:

ROLL CALL:

REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME	YES	NO
Rep. John Cloutier	X	
Rep. Larry Converse		X
Rep. Tom Donovan	X	
Rep. Brenda Ferland		
Rep. Peter Franklin		X
Rep. Ray Gagnon	X	
Rep. Suzanne Gottling	X	
Rep. Matthew Houde	X	
Rep. Arthur G. Jillette Jr.	X	
Rep. Ellen Nielsen	X	
Rep. Jay Phinizy		
Rep. Beverly Rodeschin		
Rep. Carla Skinder	X	

SULLIVAN COUNTY NH—STATE/COUNTY DELEGATION

MOTION AND VOTING SHEET #3

DATE: 16 July 2008

TIME:

MOTION: To reduce line item 10-520-12020 by \$1200, leaving a total of \$7500.

MOTION MADE BY: Rep Converse

MOTION SECONDED BY: Rep. Gottling

MOTION: CARRIED X DEFEATED TIED

WAS THERE DISCUSSION? Yes

VOICE VOTE:

ROLL CALL:

REPRESENTATIVE'S NAME	YES	NO
Rep. John Cloutier	X	
Rep. Larry Converse	X	
Rep. Tom Donovan	X	
Rep. Brenda Ferland		
Rep. Peter Franklin	X	
Rep. Ray Gagnon	X	
Rep. Suzanne Gottling	X	
Rep. Matthew Houde	X	
Rep. Arthur G. Jillette Jr.	X	
Rep. Ellen Nielsen	X	
Rep. Jay Phinizy		
Rep. Beverly Rodeschin		
Rep Carla Skinder	X	