

## Sullivan County NH

**Type of Meeting:** Sullivan County Full Delegation  
**Date / Time:** 15 September 2008 / 9:00 am  
**Place:** Newport County Complex

### Participants:

Representatives: Peter Franklin (Chair), Ellen Nielsen (Clerk), John Cloutier, Larry Converse, Sue Gottling, Arthur Jillette, Jay Phinizy, Beverly Rodeschin and Carla Skinder

Other Elected Officials: County Treasurer Cynthia Sweeney

County Employees: Greg Chanis, Ted Purdy and Ross Cunningham,

Public Participants: Jeff Goff and Anne Nilson

Press: Ben Bulkeley, *Eagle-Times*

The meeting was called to order by Rep. Franklin at 9:05 am.

### New Public Participation Policy:

Rep. Franklin announced that without objection, he would propose a new policy for managing public participation in delegation meetings. He proposed that the Chair will recognize anyone who wishes to speak and that each public participant will be allowed five minutes to speak. This proposed policy would be in line with the policy of the Claremont City Council, which allows public participants to speak for five minutes. Rep. Converse objected on grounds that sometimes delegation members may wish to ask questions and that the question and answer period might be longer than five minutes. Rep. Franklin agreed to a modification—the speaker or a member of the delegation could ask for another five minutes and this would be allowed unless a member of the delegation objected. If there were an objection, the delegation would vote on whether to grant the extension. Rep. Converse withdrew his objection. Rep. Rodeschin also objected to the policy—she said that she did not think that public participation in delegation meetings should be limited in any way. There was further discussion. Rep. Skinder also said that she was concerned about limiting public participation—however she thought that anyone who is disruptive should be asked to leave the meeting. Rep. Skinder said that she thought there should be some provision for public participants to get “another bite of the apple”—that is, another chance to speak later in the meeting.

**Rep Rodeschin moved that the proposed policy of time limits for public participant should not be adopted. Rep. Franklin ruled that since this motion was an objection it did not require a second. Rep. Franklin rephrased the motion, which then became a motion to accept the proposed policy to limit the time allowed to each public participant to five minutes, with the possibility of an extension. The motion (as rephrased by Rep. Franklin, not Rep. Rodeschin’s original motion) passed by a vote of 7-2, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Converse, Franklin, Gottling, Jillette, Nielsen and Phinizy NO Skinder and Rodeschin**

**Rep. Skinder moved that after all members of the public have spoken once, any public participant may be allowed to speak again. The motion was seconded by Rep. Phinizy**

**and passed by a vote of 8-1, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Converse, Franklin, Gottling, Jillette, Nielsen, Phinizy and Skinder NO Rodeschin**

**Approval of Minutes:** The delegation members were provided with copies of the draft minutes of 14 August 2008.

**Rep. Cloutier moved that the draft minutes of 14 August 2008 should be accepted, and Rep. Converse seconded the motion.**

In the discussion which followed this motion, Rep. Rodeschin raised an objection. She stated that the description of her challenge to the ruling of the chair on 14 August not to allow public participation by Mr. Goff was incomplete—she had stated that the reason that she was challenging the ruling of the chair was that the chair already had allowed public participation by two individuals who are not residents of Sullivan County, and this information was not included.

**Rep. Rodeschin moved to table the minutes of 14 August 2008. Rep. Skinder seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of 5-4, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Phinizy, Skinder and Rodeschin NO Converse, Franklin, Gottling, Jillette and Nielsen.**

**The motion to table having failed, the delegation voted by show of hands on Rep. Cloutier's motion to accept the minutes of 14 August 2008. The motion failed by 5-4.**

The clerk agreed to make corrections to the draft minutes, and to present them for reconsideration at the next delegation meeting.

**Public Participation:**

Claremont City Councilor Jeff Goff spoke to the delegation about the importance of maintaining transparency and allowing full public participation in delegation meetings. Mr. Goff said that he was surprised that Rep. Cloutier was the only Claremont representative who had voted against tabling the minutes of 14 August.

[Clerks note: Rep. Cloutier voted YES on the motion to table the minutes—see above.]

**Fiscal 2008 Audit Report:**

Mr. Chanis provided some preliminary information about the Fiscal 2008 audit report, which is not yet complete. Based on the information available, the county will end with a deficit of slightly over \$600,000 on a GAAP basis, but it should be noted that this figure includes estimated liability for health care claims not yet processed plus a large negative figure representing depreciation of the county's capital assets. After certain adjustments are made, the figure may be reduced to about \$300,000 (including the estimated liability. Another way of looking at the financial history of the county in Fiscal 2008 is to compare actual revenues with actual expenses, and when this is done, there is a surplus of about \$300,000. The final step in preparing an audit report is an exit interview with the commissioners. Mr. Franklin requested that the delegation be invited to the commissioners' meeting for the exit interview. Mr. Chanis pointed out that it would be a commissioner's meeting, and the commissioners would determine the format of the meeting. There was some discussion about what to do if the commissioners did not formally invite the delegation to participate in the exit interview meeting.

### **Revenue Anticipation Note for Fiscal 2009:**

County Treasurer Cynthia Sweeney arrived during the discussion of the audit. After an update from Mr. Chanis about the August revenue and expense reports, Rep Phinizy asked Mr. Chanis if the county might be able to save money on interest if the county fiscal year began in January, after the taxes were paid. Both Mr. Chanis and Rep. Franklin pointed out that the real problem is that there is no fund balance, and therefore borrowing always is necessary. Mr. Chanis was asked to look at the issue of changing the timing of the fiscal year. Rep. Nielsen asked if the county's bond rating would be affected because there may be a deficit for Fiscal 2008 and the county is borrowing money. Mr. Chanis responded that because our bonds would be bundled with other county and municipal bonds, this would not be an issue.

After more discussion of cash on hand, projected expenses and anticipated revenue, the county treasurer requested permission from the delegation to request bids from local banks on a revenue anticipation note for two million dollars. Normally this request would have gone first to the Executive Finance Committee, but since this committee had not met recently, the delegation, acting as a committee of the whole, considered the request.

**Rep Nielsen moved that the delegation authorize the County Treasurer to request bids for a revenue anticipation note and set up a line of credit for \$2,000,000. The motion was seconded by Rep. Phinizy, and the motion passed by a vote of 9-0, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Converse, Franklin, Gottling, Jillette, Nielsen, Phinizy, Rodeschin and Skinder.**

There was some question regarding what paper work would be needed and who should sign it in order for the county treasurer to demonstrate that she had been authorized by the delegation to seek bids for a new revenue anticipation note.

**Rep. Phinizy moved that the delegation chair and/or the delegation clerk be authorized to sign any paperwork which is necessary. The motion was seconded by Rep. Skinder and passed by a division vote of 7-1 (show of hands.)**

Rep. Phinizy asked to make a statement for the record: He said that he had been delegation chair for four years and that during that time he had made every effort to insure full public participation in delegation meetings. He also stated that during that time, Rep. Cloutier had served as chair and as clerk of the delegation and always had made diligent efforts to make sure that delegation meetings were properly warned and that the public had a full opportunity to participate in them.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:00 am and the next delegation meeting was scheduled for 9:30 am on October 15, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Rep. Ellen Nielsen, Delegation Clerk