

Budget issues are not new to Sullivan County

To the Editor:

In the Oct. 16 version of the *Valley News*, the headline on page 1 in large type read: "Audits Find Genesis Ran Home at Loss."

The article itself went into detail about the loss to taxpayers of \$2.3 million because of shoddy running of the "home" in Sullivan County and would lead one to understand that this is all because Genesis took over operation from mid-2005 until January 2007. A column of losses incurred was also enclosed.

It is easily seen that the total loss at this County Home from FY 2002 to FY 2007 was \$7,644,766. But, Genesis was only in charge from mid-2005 to about mid-FY 2007 and the losses incurred during this particular time was about \$2.2 million. On the other hand, with the county running the home before and after Genesis was about \$5.5 million. Who is going to hold them accountable?

The actual problem in Sullivan County is that their budget's prepared by County Manager de

Rubio and reviewed by the commissioners, and approved by the members of their delegation, have errors that have been often corrected by auditors. The budget is difficult to read and does not have the appropriate line items and has been accused of being optimistic on income. The story here is how all of this has been going on since FY 2002 with minimal oversight. The commissioners should be ashamed that they have permitted such poor handling of finances to occur. Any other organization would have held the county manager's feet to the fire and stopped some of this sloppy budgeting to cease early on. In Sunapee, we would have had someone's head on the appropriate stake if they had let things go south in such a manner.

This is really the big story. Why have things been so bad for so long? Who is responsible? We fire Genesis and the losses continue to occur. Why has Sullivan County carried encumbrances forward where there are no invoices from the vendor or service provider? Everyone knew there were shortfalls coming and they were just ignored until the bill reached the \$2.2 million found during a special audit by a public accountant hired by the Commissioners just a short time ago. The budget actually ended FY 2007 at the end of June and only then were losses seen. No one tried to mitigate these losses during the entire year by cutting back over-all, for example. And now Mr. de Rubio wants to expand the home, build a new jail

and build a totally un-needed Municipal Recycling Facility (MRF). Shame, shame, shame! Learn to run what you have now before you expand anything.

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