

State reps. take charge in county

Commissioners will need delegation approval for budget line transfers

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The county commission's powers were limited by the Sullivan County Delegation when it approved a new policy limiting the amount of money that can be transferred within the budget without getting prior approval from the executive finance committee or the full county convention.

Newport "A number of counties are doing these things routinely," Rep. Sue Gottling, D-Sunapee, said after submitting two resolutions that were eventually amended into a single policy.

The second part of the policy restricts the commission from creating any new positions in the county without the finance

See REPS - Page A10

REPS FROM PAGE A1

committee's or the convention's approval.

"I don't like this second resolution," said Rep. Jay Phinizy, D-Acworth. "I think we're treading on pretty thin ice. This is a relatively monumental policy."

Rep. Brenda Ferland, I-Charlestown, the executive finance committee chairwoman, opposed the new policy during Monday's meeting.

"You guys want to micro-manage every dime they want to move," Ferland said.

In response, Rep. Peter Franklin, D-Newport, delegation chairman and executive finance committee member made a reference to the \$2.2 million deficit from fiscal 2006-2007.

"Look what happens when we don't," Franklin said.

The new policy states that all funds within the budget shall be nontransferable without prior approval with the exception that the commissioners are authorized to transfer funds within a department from one line item to another in an

amount not to exceed \$5,000.

Additionally, each transfer below \$5,000 must be reported to the finance committee in writing within one week, to include the transfer's purpose, and may not occur more than one time without prior approval.

Commissioner Ethel Jarvis was the only commission member at the meeting. She said she would like the other commissioners to see the new policy before a vote was made, but added she did not oppose the measure.

"For myself, it doesn't bother me," Jarvis said.

A roll call vote was taken with Phinizy, Ferland and Rep. Carla Skinder, D-Cornish, voting no. The seven delegates who approved the measure were Franklin, Gottling, Rep. John Cloutier, D-Claremont, Rep. Ellen Nielsen, D-Claremont, Rep. Arthur Jillette, D-Goshen, Rep. Tom Donovan, D-Claremont, and Rep. Larry Converse, D-Claremont.

Near the end of the meeting Donovan made a motion to

make the finance committee a committee of the whole, which would include all 13 delegation members.

Ferland opposed the measure telling the delegates that she had a difficult time getting a quorum when only the finance committee members were scheduled to meet.

"I don't see this working," Ferland said.

Ferland also addressed Franklin, accusing him of attempting to remove her from her position as chair of the finance committee.

"I think what you're trying to do is eliminate me," Ferland said.

Franklin responded stating that his position as delegation chairman would not automatically make finance committee chairman.

After further discussion, the motion was eventually tabled until the next delegation meeting.

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