

County of Carroll
Delegation Meeting
Carroll County Administration Building
February 19, 2024

Meeting convened: 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Chmn. Lino Avellani, Vice-Chmn. Glenn Cordelli, Clerk Mark McConkey, Michael Belcher, Richard Brown, Tom Buco, Anita Burroughs, Michael Costable, Karel Crawford, John MacDonald, Chris McAleer, David Paige (remote), Katy Peternel, Jonathan Smith, Steve Woodcock

Others Present: Executive Coordinator Mellisa Seamans, Register of Deeds Lisa Scott, County Attorney Rich Leboeuf, CFO Bonnie Batchelder-Edson, Commissioner Chuck McGee, Commissioner Bill Nelson

Public Present and Participating: Ed Comeau (GovernmentOversite.com), Fred Cain, Dallas Emery Jr, Kevin Houle, Joy Gagnon (UNH Extension), Paul Chiarantona (UNH Extension), Liz Kelley-Scott (Child Advocacy Center), Christine Bertogli (Bearcamp School), Catherine DuFault (Carroll County Conservation District), Daymond Steer (Conway Daily Sun), Bobbi Boudman, Mitch Yeaton (White Horse Recovery), Matt Plache (White Horse Recovery)

Roll Call

Pledge of Allegiance

All votes taken during this meeting were done by roll call.

Public Comment

F Cain: Remains concerned about nursing home staffing level. Currently using 21 agency staff. Disagree with the commissioners considering addition of vehicle repair facility on campus. Disagree with the commissioners requesting a third full-time employee for DPW

K Houle: The County is not charging sufficient price for hay – “1980’s prices”.

Rep. Burroughs: How is hay advertised?

C. Bertogli: On board of directors for Bearcamp Valley School. Provide care to children from surrounding communities. Struggling to recover post-Covid. One of three non-profit childcare centers in the county. Ask the Delegation to reconsider the Commissioners’ decision to zero-fund their 2024 funding request

L Kelley-Scott Requested the Delegation support their full funding request (\$75,000). Federal funding has been reduced dramatically

Ratification of 2024-2027 Mountain View Communication Collective Bargaining Agreement

MOTION: **To ratify the contract** by Rep. Brown, 2nd Rep. Smith. Passed 15-0

MOTION: **Reconsider the MVC Union contract** by Rep. Burroughs, 2nd Rep. Woodcock. Failed 10-5 with Reps. Buco, Woodcock, Burroughs, McAleer and Paige opposed.

Rep. Burroughs: Question changes to MVC contract with removal of assistant director of nursing, hairdresser and physical therapy aide from the contract

Admn. Leboeuf: Physical therapy aide and hairdresser positions are contracted and not employees. The Director of Quality will implement ways to improve quality across all nursing home departments. The assistant director of nursing was more focused only on staff development

Hales Location 2024 Town and School Budgets

MOTION: **Approve Hale's Location budget at \$169,265** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 15-0

MOTION: **Approve Hale's Location school budget at \$105,967** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Crawford. Passed 15-0

2024 County Budget Approval

The executive committee reduced the Commissioners' proposed budget by \$330,068.

CFO Currently earning a higher percentage of bank interest than the interest rates of the long term debt so does not suggest paying off any debt early

Rep. Burroughs Does it make sense to take excess surplus and raise nursing salaries?

Chmn. Avellani Not allowed to do outside of union negotiations

Rep Burroughs Why is agency staffing budget line \$1 when \$1.8 million spent in 2023

Chmn. Avellani We kept it like this so the executive committee can monitor use of agency staff through funding transfers from salary line to agency throughout the year

MOTION: **To approve the Commissioners budget (100.4130) at \$249,531.82** by Rep. Cordelli, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 13-2 with Reps. Burroughs and Woodcock opposed

MOTION: **To approve the treasurer budget (100.4151) at \$12,297.56** by Rep. Cordelli, 2nd rep. McConkey. Passed 14-1 with Rep. Woodcock opposed.

MOTION: **To approve capital expense addition for tower road repair at \$8,750 bringing the new capital expenses (100.4901) total to \$362,864** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd rep. Cordelli. Passed 15-0

The \$8,750 represents the 25% match for anticipated FEMA grant for the road repair.

MOTION: **Add a line item 300.4411.027 (Retention and Recognition) and fund with \$10,000 bringing the new total for 100.4411 to \$3,489,191.70** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Smith. Passed 15-0

MOTION: **Approve MVC Nursing 300.4413 at \$7,926,016.75** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Belcher. Passed 15-0

\$10,000 from this budget (300.4413.017) was transferred to the new line in the previous motion (300.4411.027)

MOTION: **To accept the remainder of the executive committee recommendations** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Cordelli. Passed 15-0

Rep. Burroughs: Are we paying nurses a competitive wage? The State average for RNs is \$90,000 a year. Are we close to that?

Admn. Leboeuf: We are in the ballpark, competitive

MOTION: Approve the Mt View Community budget at \$18,025,260.68 by Rep. Smith, 2nd Rep. Belcher. Passed 15-0

Rep. Cordelli: The Administrator provided a comparison of other county nursing homes. MVC has highest occupancy rate.

Rep. Woodcock: Is there a waiting list

Admn. Leboeuf: Waiting list of five or six people; today's census is 101

MOTION: Increase anticipated Interest Income (100.3502.061) from \$10,000 to \$120,000 by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Cordelli. Passed 15-0

CFO: Bank of New Hampshire created a program that matches, on a weekly basis, the NH Investment Pool. The bank is a much safer vehicle. Collateralized by governmental funds.

MOTION: Approve UNH Cooperative Extension budget at \$313,627 by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 14-1 with Rep. Belcher opposed.

MOTION: Fund Bearcamp Valley School at \$10,000 by reducing funding for White Horse Recovery to \$118,000 and Mt Washington Valley Adult Day Center to \$32,000 by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 10-5 with Reps. Buco, Woodcock, McAleer, Paige and Cordelli opposed.

Rep. Cordelli: Opposed to reducing funding for White Horse

M Yeaton: Spoke about waitlist (about 20 people) and increased services provided at the jail

Rep. Woodcock: Spoke in support of MWV Adult Day Center

Rep. Paige: Bearcamp request was \$75,000 and they expressed concerns about keeping their program running. Will they still be able to keep their doors open with just \$10,000?

Chmn. Avellani: County policy is to appropriate no more than 2% of the annual county budget to the non-profits

Rep. McConkey: Spoke to the need for funding childcare facilities to support families and employers

Rep. Burroughs: Spoke in support of Child Advocacy Center

Treas. Costello: Spoke in support of MWV Adult Day Center

Rep. MacDonald: Think we should start focusing on families, kids, older adults. White Horse is running a business, competing with businesses in my community. They do a great job, expanding to Coos county. Consistently given a hefty amount to White Horse. Other non-profits are struggling

Rep Burroughs: Many nonprofits now forced to also run a for profit venture to raise money for their cause

Rep. Smith: The Delegation should honor the Commissioners executive authority to cap expenditures at 2%

Comm'r McGee: I was under the impression whatever the Delegation approves, we will spend

Rep Paige: If Conservation District is mandatory; why do we include it with the other regional appropriations. We are artificially limiting our funding for nonprofits by including this organization in the 2% cap

K Dufault: Conservation districts are governmental subdivisions established by State law RSA 432:12. Other counties provide funding for the district manager salary and benefits

MOTION: Establish a new line item (County Mandated organizations 100.4611.002) to place Conservation District by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Paige. Passed 15-0

- MOTION:** **Appropriate \$56,640 for the District (100.4611.002)** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McAleer. Passed 15-0
- MOTION:** **Restore funding for MWV Adult Day Care to \$35,000** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McAleer. Passed 13-2 with Reps. Belcher and Costable opposed
- MOTION:** **Restore funding for White Horse Recovery to \$125,000** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McAleer. Passed 13-2 with Reps. Belcher and Costable opposed
- MOTION:** **Fund End 68 Hours of Hunger at \$5,000** by Rep. MacDonald, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 12-3 with Reps. Cordelli, Belcher and Costable opposed
- MOTION:** **Fully fund Child Advocacy Center at its original ask of \$70,000** by Rep. Burroughs, 2nd Rep. Buco. Passed 13-2 with Reps. Cordelli and Belcher opposed.
- MOTION:** **Approve total Regional Appropriations at \$457,000** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McAleer. Passed 12-3 with Reps. Smith, Costable and Belcher opposed.
- MOTION:** **Approve the total expense budget at \$39,558,629.10** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 15-0
- MOTION:** **To approve \$25,500 unincorporated place revenue** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Cordelli. Passed 15-0
- MOTION:** **Allow the Executive Committee to make the revenue adjustment after Eaton town meeting for the Eaton agreement with Sheriff's department** by Rep. Smith, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 15-0
- MOTION:** **Reconsider the Commissioners budget (100.4130) to add \$75,000** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed with Reps. Cordelli, Belcher, Costable and Peternel opposed.

Rep. McConkey explained the addition:

For the purpose of securing grants and public outreach to 1) explore childcare and workforce housing to attract and retain County employees, 2) the current viability of the County's sewer system and 3) to expand our opportunity for county residents to farm our County land using surplus fund balance. Prior to the withdrawal of any funds, the commissioners must obtain approval by the Executive Committee.

The Lands Committee is making great strides on these items. We have talked about increasing childcare; not that the county would be paying for childcare but exploring grants and partnering with a provide. We are talking long range about possibly using acreage for workforce housing. We all understand the value of the prime agricultural land with a lot of conversation on how to move from government farming to opening it up to the community. Want to do large outreach program. If we were to move forward with grants, the County would have the match with this funding. We have commissioned a study on the water system to determine capacity. We need to also look at the centralized sewer system. We may have 7-8,000 extra capacity. The system is 20 years old and having problems. There may be planning grants but it will need some County involvement. Take \$75,000 from surplus and move into this line so we won't be held back by needing a supplemental appropriation. Rep. Paige thanked Rep. McConkey for his leadership on this.

Rep. Cordelli: I'm not sure where \$75,000 comes into play. If we want someone to farm the land, we can issue an RFP. We had someone come in years ago who wanted to start a hay cooperative but the County never followed up with that. In terms of workforce housing and childcare, it sounds like we are doing a survey. As for sewer, we've had discussions about that. We could put funding in capital reserve.

MOTION: **Create Land Grants line item (100.4130.087) and fund with \$75,000** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 11-4 with Reps. Cordelli, Costable, Belcher and Peternel opposed.

MOTION: **To approve the revised total Commissioners budget (100.4130) at \$324,531.82** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 11-4 with Reps. Cordelli, Belcher, Costable and Peternel opposed

MOTION: **To approve the total expense budget at \$39,633,629.10** by Rep. McConkey, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 11-4 with Reps. Cordelli, Belcher, Costable and Peternel opposed.

Use of Fund Balance

CFO: Cautioned against using too much fund balance, depleting it, to offset taxes. \$3.7 million was received in unclaimed property and extra ProShare in 2023 which we will not get this year

Rep Cordelli: Surplus is audited and unaudited. I like to be conservative when talking about unaudited numbers. Over the past decade I have been here we have overtaxed people – when you look at budget versus actual. I propose using enough fund balance to make a zero tax increase

Rep Crawford: Moultonborough pays about 23% of the tax obligation, I am looking at level impact or even less. Moultonborough retains 12% fund balance

MOTION: **To use \$4,001,675.81 to offset taxation** by Rep. Cordelli, 2nd Rep. Smith.

This will leave an approximate fund balance of 18.3% (\$7,272,580)

Rep. Cordelli This will leave \$7,510,760.19 in unaudited fund balance. Wolfeboro retains 10%. The 2019 audit we had recommended 16.7%. GFOAA recommends keeping two months' expenses (16.7%) so I am comfortable with this amount

The fund balance policy is 8-15%. The CFO has requested the policy be amended to maximum of 19%.

Coord. Seamans, after a phone call with Sheriff Richardi, clarified that the Sheriff income is not for the Eaton agreement as voted previously but for the Albany police coverage agreement. Albany town meeting will decide in March on the \$67,200 appropriation.

MOTION: **To allow the Executive Committee to reopen the budget to make a revenue adjustment if necessary after Albany Town Meeting** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Cordelli. Passed 15-0

Elected Officials Compensation (2025 and 2026)

Prior to the meeting, the treasurer, register of deeds, county attorney and sheriff provided written salary recommendations. Coord. Seamans provided a copy of the compensation package detail for each position prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **To approve \$9,000 for the treasurer stipend as requested by the treasurer** for 2025 and 2026 by Rep. Crawford, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 13-2 with Cordelli and Costable opposed.

MOTION: **Set District 2 Commissioner stipend at \$12,000** by Rep. Cordelli, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 15-0

Rep. Cordelli: The Commissioners also receive a stipend from Hale's Location in addition to this
MOTION: **Set District 1 and District 3 stipend at \$12,000** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Cordelli. Passed 15-0

MOTION: **Approve the Treasurer compensation package as presented** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 15-0

MOTION: **Approve the Commissioners' compensation package as presented** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 14-0-1 with Rep. Belcher absent for the vote.

Atty. Blair: The proposal is a 9% increase in 2025 and 4% increase in 2026 to keep the county attorney position economically competitive.

MOTION: **Approve the County Attorney salary at \$112,000 for 2025 and \$116,500 for 2026** by Rep. McAleer, 2nd Rep. Paige. Failed 10-5 with Reps. Burroughs, McAleer, Paige, Woodcock and Buco in favor

Rep. Costable: What is the total value of the full compensation package.
Vehicle allowance is \$4,800 per year, clothing allowance is taxable \$500 per year

Rep. MacDonald: I can't support 9% increase when giving people in the nursing home 3%

Rep. McAleer: 2023 was only a 1.9% increase

Rep. Blair: Trying to avoid a market adjust as what happened in 2022, raising it almost 20%. I'm trying to keep the County on a steady path so the position doesn't again fall into the unmarketable category

Rep. McConkey: Appreciate the job of the office but agree with MacDonald

Rep. Woodcock: Chief executive attorney for the county. I suggest this is a reasonable level of salary for the responsibility

MOTION: **Increase the County Attorney salary 3.5% for 2025 (\$107,640) and 5% for 2026 (\$113,022)** by Rep. MacDonald, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 13-2 with Reps. Woodcock and Paige opposed.

Rep. MacDonald: The county attorney previously did not have to work a set schedule and request leave time

Atty. Blair: It is required for participation in the NH Retirement system

Rep. Paige: The 1.9% in 2022, was that the same other county employees received? At 1.9% we may have catching up to do

Atty. Blair: I was an employee at that time and received 3% that year

Rep. Woodcock: My "no" vote on this motion is because I don't think it is sufficient

MOTION: **Approve the County Attorney compensation package as presented** by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McAleer. Passed 15-0

Rep. Crawford excused herself from the meeting

Reg. Scott: In comparison to other County department heads, elected department heads' salaries are very low. Really need to attract a qualified leader. The cost of living in Carroll County is extraordinary. The candidate needs to communicate well, be able to manage staff, have a

vision for the future, tech savvy, accounting abilities, understand, read and act on the laws, and understand the value of the land records and how to protect them. The register is on call 24/7, required by law to be available. The salaries for elected officials should be indicative of what we expect from them.

Rep. Paige excused himself from the meeting

MOTION: Set the Register of Deeds salary at \$80,000 (6.67% increase) for 2025 and \$85,000 (6.25% increase) for 2026 by Rep. Cordelli, 2nd Rep. Paige. Failed 9-5 with Reps. Cordelli, Bucu, Woodcock, Burroughs and Paige in favor.

MOTION: Set the Register of Deeds salary at \$77,625 (3.5% increase) and \$81,500 (rounded 5% increase) for 2026 by Rep. Costable, 2nd Rep. Belcher. Passed 12-2 with Reps. Cordelli and McAleer opposed and Reps. Crawford and Paige absent for the vote.

MOTION: Approve the Register of Deeds compensation package as presented by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. Belcher. Passed 13-0

Chmn. Avellani thanked Register Scott for bringing the department into the 21st century and making sure the records are preserved and taken care of.

MOTION: Set the Sheriff salary at \$87,975 (3.5% increase) for 2025 and \$92,375 (rounded 5% increase) for 2026 by Rep. MacDonald, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 13-0

MOTION: Approve the Sheriff compensation package as presented by Rep. MacDonald, 2nd Rep. Peternel. Passed 13-0

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Approve the January 12, 2024 meeting minutes by Rep. Woodcock, 2nd Rep. McConkey. Passed 12-0-1 with Rep. Belcher abstaining.

Public Comment

F Cain: Does moving the Conservation District into a new line mean she is a County employee now?

Chmn. Avellani: No it does not

F Cain: The Annex project estimate came in at \$8,783,057.88 which I think is exorbitant. I think the Delegation should watch that meeting.

D Steer: Will the County budget impact the June 2024 tax bill or the December 31?

CFO: It would have to be December 31

B Boudman: Asked for clarification about the funding move from nursing education to the new MVC retention and recognition line

Asked if the DPW Director position will be reduced if the County is no longer in the hay business

Thanks the Representatives present for listening to their constituents and voting against the book banning bill and upholding 1st Amendment Rights.

Appreciated the Safe Haven box vote

D Emery: Thanked Rep Cordelli for his presentation at the State House on the book banning bill

Comments

Thanked Chmn. Avellani for his work through the budget process. Others echoed agreement.

Meeting recessed to the Call of the Chair at 3:52 p.m.

Approval Date: _____

Rep. Mark McConkey, Clerk

DRAFT