

BARNSTABLE COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES
Standing Committee on Finance
Minutes
March 4, 2015

The Standing Committee on Finance met to review the 2016 proposed budgets of the Regional Commissioners, CIP, Finance, Shared Costs and Debt, Resource Development Office including AmeriCorps, and the Assembly of Delegates on March 4, 2015, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Chairman John Ohman, Teresa Martin, Suzanne McAuliffe and Deborah McCutcheon and Julia Taylor.

2:00 PM: Regional Commissioners and Finance

County Commissioners Sheila Lyons and Mary Pat Flynn, County Administrator Michael Brillhart, and Interim Finance Director Bob Lawton met with the committee to review the proposed FY 2016 budgets for the Regional Commissioners, CIP, Finance, Shared Costs and Debt.

Regional Commissioners

The section of the proposed budget for FY16 attributed to the Board of County Commissioners reflects a slight decrease. This is attributed to a change in salaries and a reduction in funding for the Arts Foundation from \$35,000 to \$5,000. The reduction in the Arts Foundation funding request was recommended because it does not represent an essential service for the County and cuts were needed for this particular fiscal year.

The County is reviewing and seeking a more specific legal opinion regarding the organizations it helps to support and the legality of continuing this practice. The committee would also like to receive this information.

The County recognized the fact that the Arts Foundation relies on the official “designation” from the County and it helps them raise money. The Commissioners are looking at ways to continue to provide the “designation” possibly through a proclamation in the future. This might also apply to other organizations that receive funding from the County such as Elder Services.

Michael Brillhart explained that he would like to see the existing part-time administrative assistant within the County Commissioners budget reclassified to a Human Resource Coordinator for now. A staff person is needed to assist with communications and paperwork that are directly related to this particular job function. Maggie Downey has left the position as the County’s Human Resource Administrator but there are still administrative tasks and day to day functions that are backlogged and need to be completed. This person would assist the County Administrator currently. The next County Administrator would determine whether or not a full or part time person is needed going into the future.

The food supplies account line is increasing from \$3,000 to \$4,000. This account line funds the annual employee holiday function. It may be a nice thing to do but consideration should be given as to whether it is appropriate as a government entity given the financial situation of the County.

Motion made by Julia Taylor, and was seconded, to recommend the budget of the Regional Commissioners, with the exception of the vacant position and Human Resource Coordinator position, pending merit system information, to the Finance Committee. Motion failed. 2-3-0. Deborah McCutcheon, Suzanne McAuliffe and John Ohman voted “no”.

Committee members are seeking additional information regarding the salary/merit breakdown report and the Arts Foundation “designation” and legal status within the County.

Finance

Salary and related fringe benefits are increasing: COLAs at 2%, health insurance at approximately 10%, and retirement at 5%. The software and hardware account line is increasing primarily due to upgrades of the Munis software operating system. Reference law books are increasing and annual report costs have doubled. There are no new positions but a vacant position is being changed from an Insurance Administrator to a Financial Assistant which will allow for staff backup and a larger scope of work duties.

Contracts with CLC and CVEC are being reviewed for consideration related to charges for administrative services. A proposal for billing purposes will be presented to CLC and CVEC that will address billing for County staff time that is used looking back over a six month period. This will probably start on July 1st. Payments received by the County in the past were for software, IT and audit services. The committee would like to see a review of all organizations and agencies for consideration of cost reimbursement for services provided by the County.

A 2% COLA is budgeted with the proposed budget for FY16. Eligible staff can receive an annual step increase (there are eight steps) of 3%. Once the maximum step has been attained (8) staff would be eligible for a one-time merit adjustment of anywhere from 0 to 4%. Bob Lawton estimated that approximately half of staff are at the top step. Everyone gets COLA.

The committee would like to know how many employees are on step versus off-step and of those who are off-step what dollar amount is budgeted for merit within the County budget for FY16.

Chairman John Ohman recognized the outstanding work being done by the County’s Chief Procurement Officer. All in attendance concurred.

Shared Costs & Debt Service

The Legal Services account line will remain at \$55,000 but in the future the Commissioners might be looking at law firms that will be capable of offering a suite of specialized services to the County. The Assembly requested a legal budget account line of \$20,000 but it was not approved by the Commissioners. The Commissioners were of the opinion that \$55,000 was sufficient for both governing bodies. There is some interest by the committee in having legal funds budgeted separately within the Assembly budget for special questions and issues.

General comments were exchanged regarding various account lines and recognition of the fact that there are over-arching issues that affect various departments. Workers compensation insurance has increased by \$20,000, public officials liability decreased, and automobile coverage increased. The increase in automobile coverage is being questioned with the carrier. Early retirement and hospital retirement are from bills from the County Retirement Board for previous years. The unfunded liability for the Sherriff has increased and is being researched and questioned by the Administration.

Motion made by Deborah McCutcheon, and was seconded, to defer recommendation of the Finance and Shared Costs budgets pending merit system information to the Finance Committee. Motion carried. 3-2-0. Teresa Martin and Julia Taylor voted “no”.

CIP

The capital plan and bonding requests for FY16 were discussed. Of particular concern are the items associated with the Fire Training Academy: HVAC replacement and new roof totaling \$90,000. The Facilities Director has recommended these if the County plans on keeping this facility. There are on-going issues associated with the current location of the Fire Academy and the County is working on a resolution. The County will be working with the Fire Chiefs to look at options. If the facility is closed there will be an impact. Towns use the current facility for on-going training and would be forced to go off-Cape at a big expense. The committee expressed concerns regarding spending funds on a building that might close in the near future. Commissioner Sheila Lyons indicated the funds would not be spent unless necessary and an amendment related to this issue might be necessary and proposed for FY16.

There are several changes that will be necessary to the proposed FY 16 capital plan. Bob Lawton reported that facilities is recommending the removal of the \$280,000 cost for Second District Court HVAC replacement (the State will do), and an increase of \$34,000 to the Superior Courthouse heating system (increasing from \$235,000 to \$269,000).

It was noted that a funding request of \$250,000, by the Cooperative Extension, for the purchase of development rights and conservation restrictions on the ARC property in Dennis, is part of the CIP for FY16.

No recommendation was made and no vote was taken.

3:00 PM: Resource Development Office (RDO) / AmeriCorps

Rescheduled to Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

3:30 PM: Assembly

Janice O'Connell, Assembly Clerk, met with the committee to review the proposed budget for FY 2016. The increases reflect include:

- a step adjustment in salary for the Assembly Clerk and associated fringe benefit increases; and
- a \$5,000 increase in miscellaneous contractual obligations for the codification of County ordinances.

A request for \$20,000 in legal funding was made but not approved by the Commissioners. The reason provided was the existence of legal funds within the County's budget structure (\$55,000) that could be requested if needed.

The Clerk verified that merit was not a part of the salary calculation.

Motion made by Julia Taylor, and was seconded, to recommend the Commissioners budget for the Assembly to the Finance Committee. Motion carried. 3-2-0. Suzanne McAuliffe and Deborah McCutcheon voted "no".

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Submitted by:
Janice O'Connell, Secretary/Clerk
Assembly of Delegates