

**BARNSTABLE COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES**  
**Standing Committee on Public Services**  
**Minutes**  
**March 8, 2017**

The Standing Committee on Public Services met to review the 2018 proposed budgets of Registry of Deeds, Facilities, County Dredge and the Fire Training Academy. The Committee met on March 1, 2017, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Chairman John Ohman, James Killion, Susan Moran, Thomas O'Hara, and Linda Zuern.

**1:05 PM: Registry of Deeds**

Present from the Registry of Deeds: Register of Deeds Jack Meade and Deputy Register of Deeds David Murphy.

**Background Information:**

- Reference materials provided to committee: Personnel schedules for department.
- Real estate sales have been picking up on Cape Cod over the past year.
- The medium real estate values on Cape Cod are now at about the 2005 level – an appropriate realistic level.
- Market on Cape Cod is driven by ability of individuals to buy second homes on Cape Cod.
- Staffing has changed at the registry since the downturn and boom times.
- 56 people on payroll in the 1980s and now there are 26 – a credit to technology and computerization.
- Registry budget is less now than it was in 2010.
- State share of excise tax is \$1.14 less than from any other County.
- State gets \$3.42 per thousand from Barnstable County and \$4.56 from Plymouth County.
- The County excise tax itself increased by \$.36 per thousand in 2016.
- 9 people servicing land court now and it may not be possible to operate with fewer people if e-filing is adopted by land court – because you still need to deal with employee benefits that effect presence in the workplace.
- Staff positions are not automatically filled when there is a vacancy.
- There is an effort now by various Register of Deeds to obtain a percentage of state excise tax. But this may not be likely for Barnstable County. Refer to House Bill 60.
- Some rumors that the state could consider move to take over all registries. But nothing in current state budget to reflect that position.
- Foreclosures are approximately 10 per month as compared to 70 per month a few years back.
- Revenue projections for FY18: County business revenue at about 2.55 to 2.6 million and County excise tax at about 10 million. There have been no changes to the numbers provided by the Finance Director.

Committee Inquiry:

- Fee structure – registry retains more of the fee for land court recordings.
- Fees retained by the County are the same as they were 1982.
- E-file costs recovered by fees charged limited by statute and are maxed out now.
- If e-filing is adopted by the land court costs might be reduced further.
- If there is no financial consideration involved with the transfer of property there will be no excise tax assessed. The law regulates when a tax is assessed.
- Revenues may be flat for FY18.
- Sales volume for FY17 at this point is up from FY16.
- Professional service costs have decreased in the budget due to less of a need for custom software services and microfilming.
- Retirement contributions are calculated by the Finance Office and are correctly reflected for proposed FY18.
- Business revenue and excise revenue figures for FY16 to FY17 will be forwarded to the Clerk for dissemination to the committee.

**Motion made by Linda Zuern, and seconded, to forward the Register of Deeds FY18 proposed budget, as submitted, to the Finance Committee. 5-0-0.**

**2:00 PM: Facilities**

Present from Facilities: Director Steve Tebo and Deputy Director Don Reynolds.

Background Information:

- Reference materials provided to committee: Personnel schedules for department and budget account breakdown.
- Facility costs for departments have been moved from the facilities budget to department budgets in order to track the true costs for each department.
- Budget based on 3-year average for costs.
- State reimbursement on building rents to County are: 96% for First District, 100% for Orleans, 76% for Superior and 46% for Registry of Deeds. Anticipate a higher average for Registry of Deeds once Cooperative Extension Service is relocated.
- Route 6 Rest Area will not be cleaned or handled by Facilities Department for FY18 – a resolution is still be worked out through County Administrator. It got stalled at the federal level but working with others and Chamber of Commerce to resolve.
- Department is stretched thin but able to handle it at this time especially related to the cleaning crew. There are no complaints.
- Union clothing allowance (\$200 per person) is being separately identified in the budget but is not a new expense.

Committee Inquiry:

- Facilities Department budget clarification - \$2,302,887 proposed for FY18.
- Telephones services are not included in the facilities budget – those costs are budgeted within the IT Department.

- Facilities department budget breakdown reflects section devoted to all exterior county complex 3195 address locations.
- Route 6 Rest Area was reimbursed by license plate fund but the money goes back to the general fund and not facilities budget.
- Entrance to the rest area is controlled by the federal government but the state owns the rest area land.
- Can't use inmates to clean rest area due to lockup restrictions and state would need to authorize.
- Snow plowing for county buildings is done in-house with the exception to Second District Courthouse in Orleans which is done by a contractor.
- Proposed FY18 budget appears flat with a few exceptions: increase in salaries reflects COLAs, steps and labor grade changes. There are no new employees.
- Bulk of overtime is related to snow plowing and more cost effective versus using a contractor.
- Facilities Department has 20 to 22 staff positions. All but three are union positions.
- Assembly meetings will relocate to the Old Jail – Harborview and then possibly to the renovated east wing of the Old Jail. Modular u-shaped units will be used for seating purposes. The trial court has a need for more space but land court is no longer in the budget for Barnstable County.

**Motion made by Linda Zuern, and seconded, to forward the Facilities FY18 proposed budget, as submitted, to the Finance Committee. 5-0-0.**

**2:50 PM: County Dredge**

Present for the County Dredge: County Administrator Jack Yunits and Facilities Director Steve Tebo.

**Background Information:**

- Reference materials provided to committee: Personnel schedules for department.
- Dredging operations take place between September and June.
- The County Dredge is an enterprise fund.
- The goal is to have two dredges operation next year and costs related to the second dredge have been estimated at \$171,774.
- There has been some difficulty with obtaining permits prior to the start of a dredge project. This creates difficulties with scheduling.
- The county is working with the Cape Cod Commission to resolve permitting issues with all involved.
- The County Dredge is developing a business plan that will provide an analysis to reflect the true cost of operating the dredge. This will justify the recapture of all operational capital and depreciation costs going forward.
- New dredge should be in service for the fall of 2017.
- Possibility that a third dredge may be needed in the future – there is a demand for pond and river dredging.
- Revenues for FY17 will fall short due to scheduling delays related to failure to obtain a timely permit.

- County has received requests for dredging services from town off Cape.

Committee Inquiry:

- Administrative costs are reimbursed to the county by the Dredge Enterprise Fund.
- Revenues were estimated for FY17 at approximately 1.88 million and could drop off due to a two month delay in dredging this past fall.
- There may be an opportunity to capture more revenue into the future based on a solid analysis of all costs.

**Motion made by Linda Zuern, and seconded, to forward the County Dredge FY18 proposed budget to the Finance Committee. 5-0-0.**

**3:15 PM: Fire Training Academy**

Present for Fire Training Academy: Deputy Director Paul Tucker and Facilities Director Steve Tebo.

Background Information:

- Reference materials provided to committee: Personnel schedules for department.
- No real changes to the FY18 proposed budget.
- \$311,000 in revenues expected for FY17 due to a large freshman maritime class.
- \$280,000 to \$300,000 revenues projected for FY18.
- Academy footprint limits opportunity to generate more revenue.
- The current on-going law-suit limits forward progression at this time.
- Desire to make the Fire Training Academy a destination training location.
- The Academy is working on a business plan but will depend on resolution of the law suit.
- There is no expansion plans at this time but may be proposed in future years based on a business plan that will fund it.
- More investment is needed at the Academy in order to draw more interest in programs. No one wants to make an investment now due to the pending law suit with the question - will the Fire Training Academy be around in the future.
- Efforts are being made to look for long term revenue support, grants, etc. that will encourage Cape based training versus going to Stow, MA. At a greater expense.

Committee Inquiry:

- Capital outlay reflected in budget of approximately \$115,000 related to cleanup and testing of the site based on estimates provided to the county.
- \$35,000 in the budget for the burn building for upkeep and repairs. It was neglected in the past but is now certified. The inside field should eventually be leveled and re-used for a maritime and municipal training programs.
- The Academy has the potential of becoming an enterprise fund in the future.
- Revenues fall short of department expenses.
- Benefits outweigh costs associated with fire training for firefighters, emergency response personnel and the Cape's population.
- Retirement related costs are low and mandated by state law.

**Motion made by Linda Zuern, and seconded, to forward the Fire Training Academy FY18 proposed budget to the Finance Committee. 5-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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