

BARNSTABLE COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES
Standing Committee on Natural Resources
Minutes
February 26, 2014

The Standing Committee on Natural Resources met to review the 2015 proposed budgets of Cape Cod Commission (excluding the Affordable Housing and Economic Development sections), the Cooperative Extension, Health & Environment, and the Cape Cod Water Protection Collaborative on February 26, 2014, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Vice-Chair Leo Cakounes, Ned Hitchcock and Alternate James Killion.

3:00 PM: Cape Cod Commission

Paul Niedzwiecki and Gail Coyne met with the committee and highlighted the major changes and priorities in the FY15 proposed budget. No County general funds are being requested with the exception of the Joint Initiatives with the County.

On the revenue side, the Commission's assessment is projected to increase 2.5% and an increase of 8% in grants is also expected. There is 1.4 million dollars available in reserve funds.

Personnel costs are about 8% of the budget. FY14 staffing levels will continue into FY15 with one position added: a Geo-spatial Software Architect who will work with the Strategic Information Office and on other projects. Steps, a 2% COLA, and a reserve for salary adjustments due to a wage re-classification study have also been included in the budget. Health insurance is only increasing 1.8% for FY2015.

I-Pads were purchased for all Commission Members, internet access costs have increased but meetings are now paperless. There is also a shift in costs from software purchases to subscriptions, planning consulting is increasing and legal costs are being reduced. Computer related equipment costs are still in the budget but the inventory and equipment is being stored at the IT Department.

The Commission is in the first extension of their lease agreement (2013-2018). This early extension saved \$92,000 over the life of the lease agreement.

Priorities for next year are wastewater, additional work with the Strategic Information Office (SIO) and Joint Initiatives with the County. The regional flyover will continue and is budgeted in FY15 and towns will be offered the opportunity to participate. Both the towns and County will save money by doing this jointly. Paul Niedzwiecki will map out the planned savings and forward this information to the committee once it is completed. Once this is completed the database will be updated and the annual savings will be significant for the towns.

Work with the E-Permitting process is continuing with a focus on bringing this forward to other towns. Open Cape and CapeNet will also give towns the opportunity to significantly save money on telephone service.

Salary reserves will increase from \$60,000 to \$150,000 based on anticipated changes associated with a wage and re-classification study that will be completed in the spring.

The Commission anticipates applying \$620,000 from the anticipated 1.4 million FY14 fund balance to FY15.

A member of the public, Mr. Ronald Beaty, read a brief statement into the record. In summary he requested that the committee recommend a level-funded budget for FY15 and the 2.5% tax increase for staffing be denied. A copy of his complete statement is available for viewing in the Clerk's Office. The 2.5% increase is allowed by statute is directly charged to the taxpayer. There were a few years back in the early 1990's where the 2.5% was not charged.

Paul Niedzwiecki stated that there are fewer full-time employees with the Commission now as compared to when he started seven years ago and said that statements read by Mr. Beaty are false.

No recommendation was made and no vote was taken.

3:30 PM: Cooperative Extension Service

Bill Clark met with the committee and indicated that the budget for FY15 is comparable to FY14. He is requesting a staff upgrade for a Deputy Director to help with project supervision and succession planning. Steps are also included but adjustments for salaries related to the re-classification study are located in the Commissioner's salary reserve budget. The budget also includes, for a full year, the half-time position that went to full-time in FY14 as a result of certification requirements and the fertilizer ordinance that was passed last year.

The equipment account line is increasing for desks, chairs and other equipment that will not be covered in the IT Department budget (items other than desk top PC's). This is typically a one-time expense request and does not repeat year-to year.

Bill Clark also spoke to the committee about his attempt to create two additional positions that were rejected by the Commissioners. A handout was provided and will be considered an addendum to these minutes and available for viewing at the Clerk's Office. He recommended a position titled "Barnstable County Community Rating System (CRS) Coordinator" that would assist communities in identifying regional issues of concern including the proposed dramatic flood insurance rate increases. The CRS Coordinator would write a plan for each town and the savings could result in a 5% -15% flood insurance premium reduction to taxpayers. There is interest by 12 towns for this position. Bill Doherty said it was a good idea but the legislative bill related to the flood insurance maps is still in play.

Bill Clark also proposed the creation of a Home Based Business Program Coordinator but it was not approved by the Commissioners. This was done previously (15 years ago) by the County, was grant funded, a big success, but did not receive continued funding. The Home Based Business Coordinator would provide regular workshops, programs, write newsletters and research grants that will provide funding of innovative projects. There are thousands of home based businesses on Cape Cod that could benefit from this and could be considered an economic opportunity.

Bill Clark also spoke about his interest in the County being involved in obtaining development rights to the Aquacultural Research Corporation (ARC) in order to preserve an extremely valuable business. Leo Cakounes said other properties should also be looked at and considered for this purpose.

The committee was supportive of the Commissioners FY15 proposed budget for this department.

No recommendation was made and no vote was taken.

4:15 PM: Health & Environment

George Heufelder met with the committee and indicated that the relocated health lab, public nursing, and emergency planning will get the most attention in the FY15 proposed budget. The changes in the budget reflect modest increases with the exception of the lab that will need some capital outlay for equipment. There are also some increases in supplies that are necessary due to new instrumentation and will be an ongoing expense from year to year. The capital

improvement request is \$96,100 and represents two pieces of equipment. The \$31,400 budget line request is for smaller pieces of equipment that need replacement because they have failed or are falling out of specification. George indicated that some expenses were not anticipated and now that the lab has moved there are adjustments that will be necessary.

The Nursing Division is budgeted to purchase a bone density instrument due to the high demand for use as it relates to a need and age based population on Cape Cod. A public health nurse (an LPN, part-time with no benefits) has been budgeted in FY15 and the revenues generated from vaccinations will easily pay for this position. This individual will also assist with scheduling and billing.

The Emergency Planning Division did not include a replacement vehicle for FY15 because it was purchased in FY14 as a supplemental funding request. Otherwise, the division expenses are self-explanatory. There is a split-position between the Emergency Planning Office and the Resource Development Office (RDO). This person will assist with emergency planning tasks and coordination with the towns (under Sean O'Brien) and grant writing.

Revenues are conservatively anticipated to increase by \$50,000 but George Heufelder expects it to be more. The six month delay in the relocation and move of the lab has affected this projection.

George Heufelder also requested a part-time sanitarian (no benefits) at an approximate cost of \$29,000 but the request was denied by the Commissioners.

Leo Cakounes indicated that hiring a temporary part-time person to fill a position may be more desirable than creating a permanent part-time position as situations that create the need tend to resolve themselves over the course of a few months.

No recommendation was made and no vote was taken.

5:00 PM: Cape Cod Water Protection Collaborative

Andrew Gottlieb met with the committee to discuss the water collaborative budget request. The proposed budget for FY 2015 remains much the same as previous years regarding salary and related expenses: \$102,000 of the total budget request. The municipal service budget account line is down from \$300,000 to \$250,000, and the Commissioners proposed an additional reduction of \$25,000 totaling a \$75,000 decrease. There is also \$100,000 in this budget account line for the south side water quality monitoring initiative bringing this account line request to \$325,000 (it was \$400,00 in FY14 which included \$100,00 in supplemental funding). The total budget request for both account lines is \$427,000. A cost share arrangement will be made with Eastham and Orleans to accommodate the reduction in funding.

The monitoring cost that was supplemented in the FY14 budget will be encumbered and carried over from FY14 for the seasonal work that will continue through October 2014. This type of activity typically crosses over fiscal years.

Leo Cakounes wanted to make people aware of the fact that these are continuing expenses that are increasing from year to year. He would also like to see expenses earmarked where possible.

Andrew Gottlieb provided a copy to Committee Members of his supporting budget memo dated 12/10/13 to the Water Collaborative Governing Board. This memo is available for viewing at the Clerk's Office. The Water Collaborative Governing Board has a spending policy that is also available for viewing on their web site.

No recommendation was made and no vote was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

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