

BARNSTABLE COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES
Standing Committee on Telecommunications and Energy
Minutes
March 16, 2015

The Standing Committee on Telecommunications and Energy met to continue its review of the FY 2016 proposed budget of the Information Technology Department on March 16, 2015, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Committee members present: Chairman James Killion, Suzanne McAuliffe (alternate), and Deborah McCutcheon.

4:00 PM: Information Technology

Billy Traverse, Chris Burt and Keri Peters from the Information Technology Department met with the committee to answer additional questions and continue with the review and discussion of the proposed FY16 Information Technology budget.

Chairman James Killion asked the Clerk to correct a reference made in the draft minutes of 3/4/15. The Clerk agreed to remove the reference because it was not made at the meeting.

Chairman James Killion provided a brief overview of the previous meeting discussions for the benefit of the alternate committee member present who was not present on 3/4/15. It was stated that a few staff positions were converting from contracted to employee status in order to comply with Massachusetts General Law, and staff positions were being added to help with the increase in work load due to an expansion of requests for regional services. Requests for additional regional services are based on a survey and actual requests from municipalities.

Revenue estimates tie to the requests for expanded services. Charges for services are estimated to cover the County's cost but not necessarily generate a profit. The models that are being applied continue to be a work in progress. The committee wants to make sure that an adequate assessment is being made of the services being provided and all costs are being recouped versus subsidized. The County may want to consider hiring a consultant to develop a business model to assure that direct and indirect costs associated with providing regional services are accounted for properly. A business model will help assure that the County is being competitive and can be compared to what towns are paying now.

The Director indicated that several towns have expressed interest in email and telephone support services. Their need is immediate and he has concerns about being able to deliver the services without staff support. Towns are trying to budget for these service costs based on estimates provided by the department. The committee recognizes this as an opportunity to offer and provide services to municipalities. However, it would be more advantageous to seek the services of a specialist in assisting with the business model, plans, and preparations before going forward.

The department's new staff requests for FY16 include: 2 contractors to part-time staff (per Massachusetts General Law which will decrease the contracted services account line), 1 contracted videographer to part-time staff, and a request for 3 full-time employees (FTEs) to assist with regional services and shared platform support on the County campus. These positions are budgeted for a full 12 months.

Committee discussed and asked questions relative to telephone support services provided to agencies and entities other than the County. The Deputy Director indicated the more users on the system makes it less expensive for the County.

The IT Department does not control who is granted services. Services that are currently being offered to agencies and organizations other than the County were in existence prior. The

committee thought the process was somewhat informal and could be better organized and structured.

The committee endorses the continued service arrangement between the County's IT Department and the Towns of Wellfleet and Truro provided costs are being recouped. A business plan is desirable prior to endorsing commitments with other communities.

The overall IT budget is decreasing as compared to FY15 but that is due to one-time expenses that are not repeating in FY16. Chairman James Killion would like to receive a spreadsheet that breaks out the personnel costs associated with the 3 full-time positions. The Administrative Assistant indicated that Finance computed the benefit and fringes associated with these positions.

The committee would like to receive copies of letters of intent from municipalities. These would be helpful for future requests for supplemental funding.

Motion made by Deborah McCutcheon, and it was seconded, to recommend the Information Technology FY16 proposed budget pursuant to amendments proposed by committee to the Assembly, and forward to the Finance Committee. Motion carried. 3-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

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