

Meeting Minutes for the Delegation – September 9, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Rep. Sylvia called the Belknap County Delegation meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. on the above date at 34 County Drive, Laconia, NH.

In attendance: Rep. Aldrich, Rep. Bean, Rep. Bordes, Rep. Comtois, Rep. Harvey-Bolia, Rep. Hough, Rep. Howard, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Lang, Rep. Ploszaj, Rep. Silber, Rep. Sylvia, Rep. Terry, Rep. Trottier, Rep. Varney

Absent: Rep. Lang, Rep. Mackie, Rep O’Hara

Pledge: Rep Bean

M/Rep. Silber S/Rep. Johnson to accept minutes of Aug 10, 2021 – remarks of Rep Lang to be included in minutes regarding of projected costs of \$50,000 – unanimous

Commissioner Dumais took the Oath of office on December 14, 2016, and Commissioner Wood would be sworn in at the Gunstock meeting on December 15, 2021 – without exception so moved.

Presentation by Commissioners on ARPA funds – total grant = \$11,907,389 with \$5,953,694.50 to be received in June 2022. – There is a deadline to expend the first half of the grant by December 31, 2021

Tonight’s request \$1,391,854

1. Compensation study
2. Premium Pay
3. Skylights in Nursing Home
4. Federal Audit – requirement for accepting money for 5 years – total cost \$25,000 - cost per year will be \$5,000
5. LPN Program - for 4 students – will require a 2-year commitment from students
6. Communication System – total cost \$1,800,000 -expenditure request for 2021 is \$500,000

There will be another batch of requests in the near future for the expenditure of the ARPA funds

Rep Howard – who put together the guidelines for this act – Current Washington DC administrative

Rep Terry – Audit & Communication system - 1. Audit is for any Federal Grant monies received – whenever we spend over \$750,000 an audit is required - prior to pandemic county had never had to perform single audit as they never received over \$750,000 – scope of the audit is for grant fund and expenditures only – 2. Communication system – were there bids received, how many, who drew the specification – two bids – Motorola currently has coverage for over 80% of the state – Were specifications drawn prior to the bid or in collaboration with the firms bidding? – Reached out to the companies who predominantly service this area – Representative from Motorola and Qualcomm – asked them to look at the current system to have the same coverage or better than what we have now – only received one bid back from Motorola – only received generic quote and will not share specifics until we commit – want to tie in to State system – goal is connectivity

Rep Silber – in the total estimate of \$1.8 million for the communication system is \$1.3 million to come from ARPA monies or taxpayers – ARPA funds – both revenue and expenditure

Rep Comtois – will we be beholden to Motorola – computer-based system will connect to another MCore & KCore system

Rep Johnson – will this give you the ability to send someone to Concord and vice versa with this system.
A. yes, we will be able to dispatch from an alternate site

Rep Howard – how if you do this total rebuild – how will affect the towns that you service, and will they need to upgrade their system – NO – This will not push additional costs onto the towns

Rep Trottier – with the upgrade will it have better coverage for towns that have issues now – YES – will it help improve dead spots – YES

Rep Silber – why is it that you do not have connectivity with Gilford and Laconia? Have they gone their own way? – Laconia and Gilford had both purchased new radio systems for their areas – if we upgrade, we should be able to connect with some degree

Public Section of Meeting

Anita Lantern – resident of Belknap Nursing Home – please support raise of staff – make a choice save the nursing home or pave the road at Gunstock

Barbara Howard – please replace the mikes – accepting this money tells me we cannot live within our budget – are we trying to keep up with the Jones by looking at other Counties who have different demographics than we do - I am against this as it will be passed onto my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. – The skylight issue did not just pop up – we should not take this money

Joe Chase – Laconia – wife is a patient at nursing home – Alzheimer’s – she can’t take care of herself in any capacity – staff is not paid enough – the home has lost a lot of good people over the past couple of years – delegation is responsible for the care of his wife

Ted Chastity – resident of nursing home – staff needs pay raise – we need the staff to help take care of ourselves

Brian Gallagher – point of clarification – Gunstock area commission – handout for fund request from the ARPA funds –

1. Enhancement to parking lot
2. Reimbursement of PPP expenditures due to COVID-19
3. HVAC
4. Auto Toll Road to Summit

This request is for one time spending only

Gary Kaidesch – Chairman of Gunstock area Commission

1. Economic engine for county
2. Enhances recreation
3. Gunstock is not a burden on the county and hasn’t been for years – paying County \$275,000 this year

Shelly Richardson – Nursing Home Administrator – we are at the proverbial fork in the road – in existence since 1835 – over 1,000 residents since 2004 – will maintain only 2 units to maintain standard of care we are known for – currently have 64 residents – 18 FT and 6 PT vacancies – employ approximately 100 staff and 30 contracted staff – Jan 2021 – 38 staff members leave – only gained 9 new employees – our private room rates \$300 – cost to take care of a resident is approximately \$345 per day

Casey, Deb, and other NH Staff – 5 words nurses need to remember – leverage, shortage, unite, advocate, and front line – written by Rita Rodgers on Facebook – we could work anywhere else and get more pay and benefits

Jim Brown – Silver Lake Association – ongoing battle for decades – water levels fluctuate – NHDES said it would cost \$1,000,000 to study the problem – RSA53 – Silver Lake needs a dam – study has already been done – needs constant water flow

John Miller – mother is a resident of Belknap nursing home – has vascular dementia – placed there for her safety not convenience – talks with Mom about how great staff is – how do you put a \$ amount of compassion commitment – please invest in the nursing home

Brent Bellevue – we don't want to put the burden on the taxpayers – in military for 21 years – this money has already been spent – our children and grandchildren will be paying for it anyway – the nursing home is at a cliff not a fork in the road – they will be facing more staffing shortages due to vaccine mandates – pay is not going to help at that point – money should not be spent on long term wage increases – thinks elderly gets pushed aside and this would not be a discussion if we were talking about schools – this is just a stop gap

Lisa Landry – sister works at nursing home – this is about funding a program that benefits our county – nation is dealing with this issue regarding health care staffing

Public section closed at 8:25 p.m.

Rep Silber – will Silver Lake request qualify as a proper use of ARPA funds? – A. Admin does not know – Is it accurate that the typical level of a nursing home employee is \$12.00 per hour -starting pay is \$12.76 for LNA – Housekeeping \$11.28 – LPN \$19.64 – RN - \$26.59

FT nursing home staff will receive \$200/ week, FT- lump sum payments of \$2,500 - PT employees \$1,000 in 2021 per Commissioner's policy

Rep Comtois – how much is for the Nursing Home – A. no idea

Rep Howard – Articles 6, 38, 9, and 3 Part first – you cannot enrich one class of people over another with taxpayer money – this is a violation of the constitution – really upset with commissioners with pitting county employees against delegation

Rep Terry – looking at slide premium pay – year 1 will be all ARPA funds – A. all that is being voted on tonight is the \$676,854

Rep Sylvia – budgeting 1 year at a time and this will be only for this year

M/Rep Silber S/Rep Bordes approve \$1,391,854 as presented by Commissioners – motion passes 11 to 4

Rep Trottier – can we add funds to the request – A. we can take out a section but cannot add

Rep Comtois – would really like to know how much is for the nursing home staff before I vote on this – cannot breakout

Rep Howard – I can only support 4 of the items in this request

Rep Trottier – compensation study \$60,000 – have we got estimates – A. very conservative number based on Rockingham County

Rep Comtois – can it be broken out by section for a vote – A. the motion was to approve as it was

Rep Terry – question on constitutionality by Rep Howard

Rep Trottier stated he has a conflict as he is a PT employee, but will be voting on the motion

Rep Bean stated he has a conflict as he has family that works for the county but will be voting on the motion

M/Rep Borders S/Rep Aldrich – to take the same monies from the ARPA funds received to offset expenses just approved – passes on a voice vote

Other Business

Brickwork at Courthouse – Silver Lake

Do they qualify for ARPA funds? – money is very flexible

Rep Silber – if we approve either or both and this does not qualify, will we have to pay back

Rep Comtois – refurbishing of books at registry of deeds can it be done with ARPA funds - does not qualify as it is an ongoing project

Rep Varney – Silver Lake project would be an ongoing cost – it will be a state-owned dam – the money is only for the study

Rep Sylvia – would the delegation like to put forth other projects

Rep Silber – supplemental appropriation for Gunstock Commission for HVAC system

M/Rep Howard S/Rep Silber to adjourn

9:05 p.m.

Barbara Comtois

Rep Barbara Comtois

Motion	Rep. Silber			
Second	Rep. Bordes			
	approve the expenditure of ARPA funds of \$1,391,854 as presented by Commissioners			
	YES	NO	Abstain	
Rep.Howard		1		
Rep. Aldrich	1			
Rep. Bean	1			
Rep. Bordes	1			
Rep. Harvey-Bolia	1			
Rep. Hough	1			
Rep. Johnson	1			
Rep. Littlefield	1			
Rep. Ploszaj		1		
Rep. Silber	1			
Rep. Terry	1			
Rep Varney	1			
Rep. Trottier	1			
Rep. Comtois		1		
Rep. Sylvia		1		
TOTALS	11	4	0	
Absent				