

Minutes
Extension Management Team
March 20, 2003

Present – Sue Buteau, Nory Parr, Peter Pohl, Tim Fleury, Nancy Berry, Lauren Bressett, Dan Reidy, Don Black, Karen Blass, Sumner Dole, David Foote, Holly Young, Steve Judd, Charlene Baxter, Wendy Brock, Jim Grady, Paul Bonaparte-Krogh, John Pike, Ed McAllister.

Opening & Introductions

Paul Bonaparte-Krogh was welcomed as Assistant Director, County Operations. Sue Buteau was recognized and thanked for her competent and conscientious leadership as Coos COA . Sue completes her term on May 1 when Sam Stoddard will assume the role.

National Leadership Seminar

Holly and Paul reported on this trip from which they returned late yesterday. Volunteers from seven County Advisory Councils participated. The seminar is an annual event sponsored by the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC). The seminar included visits to Capitol Hill on Wednesday where our delegation met with Senator Judd Gregg and Congressman Jeb Bradley in their offices (both reported they support Extension), and with legislative assistants in Senator Sununu and Congressman Bass's offices. During the seminar Paul participated in a separate track on advocacy training. He said the focus was on Extension speaking with a unified voice, and pursuing funding available through other federal and non-CSREES sources. Three programs the Extension System is highlighting are (1) university research supporting food safety & security, (2) health & safety, and (3) global environmental protection through agricultural sciences. The Extension System is advocating for a Smith-Lever base funding increase of 5% for next year with a 15% increase in competitive grants funding.

FY04-05 Proposed Biennial Budget and Deficit Reduction Plan

John described the biennial budget under development by the legislature. USNH requested \$88 million in FY04 (\$7.2 million for Extension) and \$93 million in FY05 (\$7.7 for Extension). The Governor has proposed reductions in biennial funding which would reduce the FY04-05 request by \$22 million. The budget will not be finalized until late June. Factoring in all FY04 budget influences (proposed salary increases, flat federal funding, fringe benefit increases, proposed reductions), the reduction in Extension funding could be as high as \$1.3 million. Level state funding is probably the "best case" scenario. Level funding with no salary increase would still result in a funding deficit of approximately \$500,000. Given this situation, the Leadership Team has approved a Deficit Reduction Plan. Jim reviewed and discussed the plan and it will be shared with all staff in tomorrow's issue of the Biweekly Update (March 21).

John used the following to illustrate how the \$22 million is calculated between what was requested and what the Governor proposed:

**STATE APPROPRIATION
– USNH**

	Actual	Requested	Governor	
FY2002	79,133,611			
FY2003	83,090,291			
FY2004		88,442,772	78,935,775	-10.7%
FY2005		93,922,056	81,303,851	-13.4%
Biennium Total	162,223,902	182,364,828	160,239,626	
Change from Prior Biennium		12.4%	-1.2%	
Change from Requested			-12.1%	

Other funding points discussed were:

- Fringe benefit costs are increasing from 37% to 39% in FY04, with another increase projected in FY05.
- Approximately 72% of our total annual budget is salary and fringe benefit costs over \$10 million of our \$15.3 million budget.
- Non personnel operating budgets total approximately \$500,000 (mostly federal Smith-Lever funds)
- Annual salary increases are determined by the USNH trustees for all USNH employees
- Cooperative Extension continues to seek new sources of revenue through grants, gifts, cost-recovery and other means.
- Under RCM, Cooperative Extension does not receive additional revenue when tuition is increased but there's a chance this could be reconsidered given Extension's potential FY04 funding loss.
- RCM General Facility and Administrative assessments are projected to increase approximately \$100,000 in FY 04
- Since 1988, UNH has covered the salary and associated fringe benefit costs (approximately \$200,000) not provided in county and federal appropriations. It's expected that UNH will not cover these increases for Extension in FY04-05
- Most of our forestry funding comes through the NH Division of Forests and Lands but Extension pays the cost of fringe benefits.
- Jim's projected budget models include salaries for existing staff but assumes no vacant positions will be filled. Any non-grant funded position filled at this time will increase the projected deficit.
- We have traditionally built our budgets on a 3% annual attrition rate but we've had few resignations or retirements in recent years

- Because of the 1988 cap in county funding for program staff salaries, county appropriations make up approximately 15% of Extension's total annual budget (although county funding is still significant and vitally essential)
- Towns and cities are beginning to carefully scrutinize the county portion of their local budgets, making it even more important for Extension to be known and valued locally
- Although Extension has the option to seek increased county funding in the future, there is some concern that this should not be considered at this time given the weak economy and projected state and municipal deficits

Road Sign Update

Holly reported she contacted the NH Dept. of Transportation last fall about directional road signs for county CE offices. They are still considering our request but indicated they're more likely to provide signs for isolated offices versus those in county complexes that already have signage. Holly does not expect Interstate signs will be changed but will forward any decisions forthcoming from the Transportation Dept.

President Hart's County Visits

President Hart will visit Merrimack County on April 14 in the first of a series of visits with Cooperative Extension staff and advisory councils in all counties over the next 2-3 years. Visits will be hosted by the county advisory council which will invite county legislators to an informal meeting with the president. She's interested in learning about the contributions and impacts of Cooperative Extension and UNH throughout the state. She also wants to create a forum for local leaders to identify needs and consider how UNH can better engage with NH people and communities to address them. John invited all COA's or other county staff representative to attend the April 14 session in preparation for upcoming visits in other counties.

State Advisory Council Meeting

All county advisory council members will be invited to an open meeting of the State Advisory Council on April 17. The meeting will be conducted via interactive video from 6:30-8:30 PM at all 6 Extension sites equipped with PictureTel and also at the North Country Education Foundation in Gorham. The purpose of this special meeting is to provide all advisory council members a comprehensive update on the potential impact of Governor Benson's proposed 5% reduction in FY04-05 biennial funding to USNH. It's important for councils to understand how reduced funding will effect programs and staffing, and support the strategies planned to reduce the deficit. It was suggested a list of talking points be shared to better prepare advisory council members to discuss the biennial budget with legislators.

May 20 State Extension Conference

Conducting annual conferences for staff development and recognition is a high priority in the Strategic Plan. Registration information for this year's conference will be forwarded on-line in early April. Due to our expected deficit a limited conference budget has been allocated. Guest speakers include Lew Feldstein from the NH Charitable Foundation and David Butler, UNH Vice President for Human Resources. Three workshops will also be

offered. President Hart will attend the luncheon along with Beverly Shadley from the UNH Foundation who will bring several potential donors.

Web Page Re-design

Steve Judd described efforts underway by the Comm/Tech Team to identify the content and functions for a re-designed web page. Criteria include accessibility, functionality and useability. The proposed front page will feature areas of interest versus program areas. The team is in the early stage of reviewing a prototype of a totally re-designed page and all staff will soon have the opportunity to review it and provide feedback. The re-design will occur over time with the look and navigation determined first. Next, changes will be made program by program over an extended period. Although we're unable to invest in new content management software due to high cost and reduced funding, the Comm/Tech team is considering other software that will allow limited direct access for web content management, such as county web pages.

Office Ergonomics

Pat Gaudet, UNH Environmental Safety, addressed the group on office ergonomics (handout of presentation provided). Ergonomics is the science of fitting jobs to people, and encompasses the body of knowledge about physical abilities and limitations as well as other human characteristics that are relevant to job design. She raised awareness of the importance of office arrangements and workstation design, and suggested many simple and inexpensive steps to make improvements. In some situations new chairs or other furniture may be needed. As a follow-up, Pat will conduct an ergonomics training for the ITDE staff on April 3 so they are equipped to work directly with Extension staff in conducting workstation evaluations.

County Reports

Hillsborough – Dan Reidy

FY04 budget request is \$2,317 less than last year's appropriation due to reduction of 3.5 support staff to 3. The commissioners' public hearing is April 16. Preparing for total relocation to the Goffstown office in June or July at which time the Milford office will be permanently closed. David Foote is working with Dan and county officials to include high speed internet and PictureTel capability in the Goffstown office renovation. The county has interest and David will be meeting with county reps in the near future to demonstrate Picture Tel and describe the many uses for both Extension and county government. The county may create a master plan for all county-owned lands and Extension will likely assist by conducting a profiles-type process. Brought on 5 new advisory council members in January including 2 youth.

Strafford – Don Black

Continuing efforts to increase Extension's visibility, including sending monthly reports to commissioners and advisory council members. Has a need for advisory council handbooks and an updated CE banner for public events such as the recent conservation easement signing. County is re-doing agricultural leases for county land with stipulations about protecting wildlife and land fertility. Don will make the signing a media event. The

budget was approved at \$102,000 without reductions. Don attributes this partly to their close relationship with commissioners.

Belknap – Sumner Dole

Budget has passed without any reductions or problems. Created a Powerpoint presentation about Extension for their 3 new legislators. It includes staff photos, program bullets, information about advisory council members, past and current budget comparisons and audience contacts by town. Extension continues to be considered an outside agency but Restorative Justice and the County Council for Youth & Families, both currently grant funded, will seek county funds next year. Sumner and Amy will conduct a series of 4 sessions titled “Thursdays in May” addressing insect threats, West Nile virus, Lyme disease, and other health issues, while also featuring Extension volunteer opportunities.

Carroll – Peter Pohl

Recently had an office ergonomics evaluation conducted by Pat Gaudet. County budget vote is tomorrow and Extension has requested a 2% increase for equipment. Peter is expecting it to pass. Seven of their 13 legislators are new and educators have met with them. County is building a new jail at cost of \$8 million. New ag educator Tina Savage has a number of programs underway.

Merrimack – Tim Fleury

County has a full delegation meeting and budget vote tonight. Extension budget as submitted has passed up to this point (\$307,430 with 2.5% increase). Paul Bonaparte-Krogh will also attend this session. President Hart is visiting the county April 14 for both a staff and council session. County staff have agreed to make improving their county web page a priority in the coming year. All library resource notebooks have been updated.

Cheshire – Lauren Bressett

Budget passed for \$189,296 with only \$1,000 increase. Their request to upgrade secretaries to administrative assistants has been put on hold by the county while their new HR person does a job classification/salary study for all positions. Nancy Bradford Sission received accolades for her recent ServeSafe training. Lauren and Carl Majeski have a workforce prep program underway with inmates involving the maintenance of the demonstration garden and nature trails. During budget hearings there was a proposal to sell the county farm property to fund a new jail. An attempt to put the land in farmland preservation last year failed.

Sullivan – Nancy Berry

Sullivan County is on a July 1 budget year and just submitted FY04 request of \$195,791. This is a 6.65% increase over last year. Most of the increase is for Picture-Tel monthly charges for 12 months rather than 6 months. Although commissioners like and use the system, it's not clear what savings are realized. Nancy was contacted by the NH Technical College in Claremont about their proposal to construct a building that would include Extension. A Building Committee made up of two Extension Council members

and Steve Wood will look into this and other building options. The county budget request also includes \$2000 for an architectural firm to study their current building to determine if the 3rd floor could become a meeting room with the addition of an elevator. Staff are creating resource notebooks for distribution to libraries. County newsletter has been shortened by 4 pages to an 8 page format.

Rockingham – Karen Blass

Karen reminded the group the COA position is shared until October. She's responsible for the EMT and is the administrative liaison, Rollie handles county government and Nada manages the advisory council. Currently have a full council with 4-5 new members, including legislator Jane Kelly. Budget proposal has been reviewed by the commissioners and asked about P-Tel. Currently Extension pays \$6000 in their budget and county telecommunications covers \$7,000 in theirs. Karen and Rollie met with the delegation sub-committee and informed new members about the role and purpose of Extension. Budget passed last night at \$468,315. This was a small decrease due partly to the county paying part of the P-Tel costs in another budget. County may get a new county phone system, including Extension, which would reduce costs. Karen is the civil right coordinator and created 2 large notebooks for collecting documentation. A council sub-committee led by Gerry Howe is identifying 4-H staffing needs and making recommendations for how to address.

Coos – Sue Buteau

Budget passed last week after commissioners increased the request by \$600. Staff are preparing for the May 9-10 Community Profiles in Dummer (population 300). Larry has been conducting training for the Great North Little League focused on sportsmanship and healthy competition. He also has a full shooting sports training planned and had a great county demonstration day. Sam's "Mud Breakfast" is coming up with a focus on forest soils. Steve is about to start a gardening series and high tunnel seminar. Sue is conducting a 12-part parenting program for the Coos Substance Abuse Coalition. She recently completed her work with the Coos County Family Health Services. Sue assisted with the development of their mission and philosophy, and facilitated strategic planning.

Grafton – Nory Parr

Budget of approximately \$250,000 (3.9% increase) has been submitted to commissioners. It includes PictureTel monthly charges (\$15,600) which commissioners support due to time/travel savings and benefits of high-speed Internet access. County passed a bond last year to expand the nursing home and high-speed Internet will be installed in both commissioners' and proposed new Extension offices. Discussions underway about future of the county farm property, particularly with the dairy operation in a deficit. A task force has been appointed to identify both short and long-term plans. "Counties are for Kids" is theme for county government day and appropriate information will be provided to the media to commemorate their county event. It includes displays, interactive activities and barbecue.

Next Meeting – June 12