

JOINT LEGISLATIVE FISCAL COMMITTEE

Legislative Office Building, Rooms 210-211

Concord, NH

Friday, May 17, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Kenneth Weyler, Chair

Rep. Keith Erf

Rep. Jess Edwards

Rep. Mary Jane Wallner

Rep. Peter Leishman

Rep. Gerald Griffin (Alt.)

Sen. James Gray

Sen. Jeb Bradley

Sen. Howard Pearl

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro

Sen. Cindy Rosenwald

(1) Acceptance of Minutes of the April 19, 2024 meeting

KENNETH WEYLER, State Representative, Rockingham County, District #14: It being 10 o'clock on the 17th, I will call the Joint Fiscal Committee meeting to order. And Item number one is the Acceptance of Minutes of April 19th.

****** LOU D'ALLESANDRO, State Senator, Senate District #20: Move.

JAMES GRAY, State Senator, Senate District #06: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Motion by Representative -- by Senator D'Allesandro, second by Senator Gray to accept the minutes of April 19th. Is there any addition or corrections? Seeing none, are you ready for the question? All in favor say aye? Opposed no. The minutes are adopted.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

PETER LEISHMAN, State Representative, Hillsborough County, District #33: I'll abstain, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't here.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you. One abstention.

(2) **Old Business**:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Nothing under Old Business.

(3) **RSA 14:30-a, III Audit Topic Recommendation by
Legislative Performance Audit and Oversight Committee**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Under Tab 3.

JESS EDWARDS, State Representative, Rockingham County,
District #31: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Yes.

REP. EDWARDS: I'm just curious. Given that we're likely to get a lot more volume from outside, what are your thoughts on shutting the window so that we can hear?

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: That's a good idea. They're going to just start the program right now. Okay. Tab 3, item number 24-192. Consider recommendation proposed to it by Legislative Performance Audit Oversight Committee, and I'll recognize Representative Rosenwald for that recommendation.

CINDY ROSENWALD, State Senator, Senate District #13: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were two -- two audits that were discussed that were both adopted unanimously by the Joint Performance Audit Oversight Committee. One was to look at the interplay between DCYF and the Bureau of Children's Behavioral Health. And the second was to do a performance audit of the Doorways Program.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: And is there a request from Senator Rosenwald to approve those items?

SEN. ROSENWALD: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: And a second by Senator Pearl. Further discussion. Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? That is adopted.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CONSENT CALENDAR

(4) RSA 9:16-a, II, Transfers Authorized:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: We have a Consent Calendar that includes Tab 4. All the items on Tab 4 through Tab 9. There are four items that have been requested to be removed. Under Tab 6, 24-154, Department of Health and Human Services. 24-179, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. And under Tab 8, 24-153, Department of Health and Human Services. And 24-183, Department of Administrative Services. And, also, I will note that item 24-181 under Tab 8 has been withdrawn. So how do you wish to proceed with the Consent Calendar?

****** SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Move to approve.

REP. EDWARDS: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator D'Allesandro moves, Representative Edwards seconds that we approve the rest of the items with the exception of those I just mentioned. Is there any further discussion? Seeing none, all in favor say aye? Opposed no? Consent Calendar is adopted with the exception of those items.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: First one we'll move to under Tab six will be Fis 24-154 and that's Department of Health and Human Services. Good morning.

NATHAN WHITE, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services: Good morning. Nathan White, Chief Financial Officer with the Department of Health and Human Services.

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IAIN WATT, Interim Director, Division of Public Health Services, Department of Health and Human Services: Good morning. Iain Watt, Interim Director, Division of Public Health Services.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Erf is recognized for a question.

KEITH ERF, State Representative, Hillsborough County, District #28: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you all for being here. So I wonder if you could just tell me a little bit about what the Newborn Navigator Program is. You indicated that it's not a federal program. So there's no Federal Law behind it. And also -- and yet it talks about source of funds or at least it talks about TANF funds, which is a federal program. So maybe just to discuss that and let me know how the funding is working and what the program itself is, and what -- where -- where it's based in law or whatever.

MR. WATT: Sure. So the -- the funding source is TANF, is a federal funding source. The program itself is -- is a service of best practice services for newborn support. So supporting families with supportive care services to ensure the perpetuation of two parent families and ensure safe practice with their families and ensure the family is well supported by community resources. So either birthing hospital or health care provider may refer a child into a home visiting services through the Newborn Navigation Program.

Newborn Navigator would then work with the family to ensure that they have knowledge of safe -- safe sleep or lead prevention programs. Maybe nutrition services and maybe a referral to other supportive care services. So it's a best practice in family care and -- and newborn support. The program itself is not, you know, federally regulated or federally specified.

REP. ERF: Follow-up.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

REP. ERF: Is there any place on the DHHS website that talks about. I tried to Google it and I found some information about it, but not specifically related to the state.

MR. WATT: So I am happy to follow-up with some resources on it. I don't have -- offhand I don't know if there's anything specifically on newborn navigator on our website; but I'm happy to follow-up with some resources.

REP. ERF: And links would be great. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Edwards for a question.

REP. EDWARDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um -- is -- is -- is there a differential in eligibility for this to where two-parent families are as easily made eligible as single-family -- single-parent families? I'm curious about what we're going to be doing in the future supporting two parent families more.

MR. WATT: Yeah, families in both of those scenarios would be supported and eligible.

REP. EDWARDS: And could you get closer to the mic. I'm just really deaf.

MR. WATT: And I talk softly, so maybe we are a bad combination. The -- both of those scenarios families with two parents, as well as single parent families, would be eligible so for services and there would certainly be no -- no bias or -- or edging towards either. Both would be available if -- if referred by providers or their hospitals.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further questions? Seeing none. I'll entertaining a motion to adopt 24-154.

****** REP. ERF: So moved.

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REP. EDWARDS: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Was that Representative Wallner move?

REP. ERF: I -- I did but you pick.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Erf moved, Representative Edwards second to adopt 24-154. Further discussion? Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? Okay. Thank you.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Next item will be from Department of Natural and Cultural Resources -- um -- Trails Bureau, I guess. Anybody here from that Department? Would you please come forward to answer questions and introduce yourself. Make sure when you get close to the mic push the red button so we know it's on. There you go.

ALEXIS RUDKO, Deputy Chief, Bureau of Trails, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources: Alexis Rudko, Deputy Chief for the Bureau of Trails.

CHRISTOPHER MARINO, Chief, Division of Administration, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources: Chris Marino, Chief Administration.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Rosenwald had a question.

SEN. ROSENWALD: I do. Thank you very much for being here. Um -- I know these are -- these monies are to build new trails in our State Parks, and I'm wondering why there's not a requirement that new trails be accessible to people with walking problems, i.e., wheelchairs? Why are we making -- not making it so that all of our residents have access to our State Parks.

MS. RUDKO: So that's a good question. Many of our trails that are built there's different types. There's OHRV trails,

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snowmobile trails, hiking trails and such. Many of the trails that are built, especially ones in city centers, are accessible and we do look for that in applications. Some trails, like a hiking trail up the side of Mount Washington, isn't technically accessible without an adaptive wheelchair.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Follow-up.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

SEN. ROSENWALD: So but to just contain accessible trails to cities doesn't really include all of our residents in the great beautiful New Hampshire outdoors. And I'm sure there's a middle ground between a city street and Mount Washington. Are these trails going to be at such a pitch that it's not possible to make them accessible?

MS. RUDKO: Many trails would be built to be accessible. The -- the -- the money is for every single type of trail in the entire state. So if somebody applied and wanted to build an accessible trail, they can build it. There's nothing preventing them from doing so. It's just that not every single trail in the state is capable of being an accessible trail without adaptive equipment.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Final question.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Final question.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Why -- why is the Department not requiring from the bidders that where appropriate the trails be built in such a way to be accessible to all of our residents?

MS. RUDKO: We actually do on the application we have a whole section that talks about -- um -- accessibility and community partners that they work with in order to build these trails. We just can't limit that -- that requirement to every single trail in the state, 'cause it would exclude many of our OHRV and snowmobile trails throughout the state, as well as the

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more difficult hiking trails that still need funds in order to be maintained and upgraded. These funds are not limited to just new trail building. It is for maintaining existing trails as well and nobody is restricted from those trails for applying.

SEN. ROSENWALD: I'm sorry, I thought it was the last question; but if I could have one more. So is the Department going to require that new trails be accessible or just score them more highly on an application?

MS. RUDKO: It depends on where they want to put the trail. For example, if they want to build a new hiking trail up the side of a mountain, we can't require them to make it accessible because it wouldn't fit the location and the type of trail that you're looking for. Many organizations like that that provide accessible devices to users, they can use that to get up the trail. They just wouldn't be able to do it with a motorized wheelchair because of the terrain. But when there are applications where it would make sense, and my example of like a city center, that's where we would look for it. We have denied some applications in the past where it was a location perfectly fit for an accessible trail. The -- the town did not want to put one in, and it didn't score high enough against other trail applications that had that accessibility component.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Do you have on your website a list of accessible trails?

MS. RUDKO: I don't believe so under the Bureau of Trails, but there are external organizations that do provide lists of web sites that -- I'm sorry, list of locations where accessible trails are available for the wheelchair bound.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: That might be a good thing to have on your website, at least the link to those places that have the list.

MS. RUDKO: Excellent suggestion.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. Senator D'Allesandro.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. But isn't the goal to -- to make trails available to the greatest amount of people in the state and -- and visitors so that they can enjoy them and they're accessible? Is that our goal in terms of when we offer these -- we offer grants? Okay. Is specifically the grant to take care of as many people as possible to provide the ability to use these facilities?

MS. RUDKO: That is exactly correct. So we look for applications specifically if they are going to upgrade an existing trail to be accessible, as well as if they are going to build a new one to be accessible. Those are the ones that we score the highest. So it is our goal.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further discussion. Representative Edwards.

REP. EDWARDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I -- I -- I'd like to think that what I've heard you say is that the policy on using these trail monies includes a very wide diversity of trail access and that way by having the diversity we're probably able to satisfy the interests and needs of pretty much all of our citizens. That not everything has to be for everybody. But that it's in the diversity and the wide availability that is sort of the beauty of our trail system.

MS. RUDKO: That is certainly correct, and many of our residents who do participate in OHRV riding say that it's -- it's wonderful because they can use the OHRV as they're adaptive device so they get to go to some of these more difficult locations that they wouldn't be able to do so in a wheelchair.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further discussions on the item? I'll entertain a motion to adopt.

** SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Move the item.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: 24-179, Senator D'Allesandro moves to approve, second by Representative Leishman. Further discussion? Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? The item is adopted.

*** {MOTION ADOPTED}

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to Tab 7.

MR. MARINO: Thank you.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN 2021
CONSENT CALENDAR

(8) RSA 14:30-a, VI Fiscal Committee Approval Required for Acceptance and Expenditure of Funds Over \$100,000 from Any Non-State Source:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you. And we'll go to item 24-153 or Tab eight rather. Excuse me. Tab 8. Tab 8, item 24-153, Health and Human Services. Excuse me. Representative Rosenwald for a question.

REP. ERF: Senator.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Rosenwald for a question.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you very much. Good morning. I notice in this item that there's \$50,000 for out-of-state travel. And we asked you about it in pre pre-Fiscal. But the response was that 17 APS staff are going to go to a three-day conference in Albuquerque. That works out to almost \$3,000 a

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person. That just seems like pretty high rate for travel costs. And I wonder if you could elaborate on why it's so expensive to get to Albuquerque and stay there for three days?

MELISSA HARDY, Director, Division for Long-Term Supports and Services, Department of Health and Human Services: Thank you for the question. Melissa Hardy, Division Director for Long-Term Supports and Services. So the 17 staff from APS would be travelling on a Sunday. So we still have to incur those costs for staffing from Sunday, and then they would return on Wednesday evening. So it is only three nights; but it is a -- a long extended period of time for 17 of our staff that would need to be reimbursed for that.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further question.

MS. HARDY: And there's also in that 50,000 there's -- we might have the opportunity if that cost does come down per person for additional staff to attend training -- um -- for financial exploitation there's a training that we want to send staff to, but all depends on, you know, the cost of per person for that annual training.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Anything further on the item 24-153? Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion to approve.

REP. EDWARDS: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Rosenwald moves to approve, Representative Edwards seconds to approve 24-153. Further discussion? Seeing none, are you ready for the question? All in favor say aye? Opposed no? The item is adopted.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to item 24-183, Department of Administrative Services.

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CHARLES ARLINGHAUS, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services: Hi. I'm Charlie Arlinghaus. I'm the Commissioner of Administrative Services, and we're in charge of bathrooms.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you for coming.
Representative -- let's see -- Leishman for a question.

REP. LEISHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for taking my question, Commissioner. I see you're looking to get at least a million dollars of ARPA funds and the total project's about 2.1 million. Just to question why not ask for additional ARPA funds because I guess the rest of the money would have to come from General Funds if you don't have another source of funds for the renovation of the bathroom.

MR. ARLINGHAUS: So this -- this is a project we are doing in cooperation with the General Court. As you might imagine, and my understanding is that the request for ARPA funds came directly from the members of the General Court or its staff to -- um -- GOFERR. And that -- um -- I don't know if they requested the whole amount. I suspect they did. And that GOFERR must have said we've got about a million bucks. So take it or leave it. It's my hunch, right. And I didn't ask questions. I just said, you know, it's 2.1 million, right. Yeah, yeah. And -- and a guy named Terry said -- um -- yeah, that's how much we have. And so I think what we're planning on doing is bathrooms are scalable. There are lots of bathrooms. We'll do as many as we can. It's that kind of thing.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: And you have a deadline that these funds must be or the construction must be finished by --

MR. ARLINGHAUS: We have to encumber the money fully, including a G & C contract, by the end of the Calendar Year. Um -- and as you might guess, I have regular updates with Public Works on all of the construction projects and are we going to make it or not. And -- um -- I would say that if you

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line -- line these up like the trains on a car this is the caboose, but I think the caboose is going to make it, too.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you.

REP. LEISHMAN: So just to follow-up if I could, Mr. Chairman. Seeing Commissioner Caswell in the audience, maybe he could answer why. Maybe they couldn't get the total amount or --

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right.

REP. LEISHMAN: -- whether that request was made.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: We'll ask him to come forward. Director Caswell, thank you for coming.

TAYLOR CASWELL, Executive Director, Department of Business and Economic Affairs: Good morning. I knew I should have sat in the back. Um -- good morning. So the request that we received was actually \$4 million. It was not for the \$2.1 million that we approved what we received from the General Court.

REP. LEISHMAN: I'll guess we'll have to check on it, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. Further discussion on the item? Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion to approve.

** SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Move it.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: 24-183, motion by Senator D'Allesandro, second by Representative Leishman. Further discussion. Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no. That item is adopted.

*** {MOTION ADOPTED}

REGULAR CALENDAR

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- (10) RSA 9:16-a, Transfers Authorized, RSA 9:16-c, Transfer of Federal Grant Funds, RSA 14:30-a, VI, Fiscal Committee Approval Required for Acceptance And Expenditure of Funds Over \$100,000 from any Non-State Source, and RSA 9:17-a, III, Limitations:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to the Regular Calendar on Tab 10. First item is Health and Human Services. Are there any questions on item 24-151? It's fairly routine re-apportionment. I'll entertain a motion to adopt item 24-151.

** SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Move the item.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator D'Allesandro moves.

REP. EDWARDS: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Edwards seconds to adopt item 24-151. Further discussion. Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? That item is adopted.

*** {MOTION ADOPTED}

- (11) RSA 162-H:21 Fund Established; Funding Plan - Site Evaluation Committee

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Tab 11, Site Evaluation Committee. Are there any questions on the item. Senator Rosenwald.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Yeah, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Introduce yourselves, please.

ANDREW BIEMER, Administrator, Site Evaluation Committee: I'm Drew Biemer, the Administrator of the SEC.

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LEONARD RAUTIO, Chief of Operations, Department of Energy: I'm Lenny Rautio, the Chief of Operations for the Department of Energy. We handle the administrative functions of the SEC.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you.

SEN. ROSENWALD: My question was just about the source of funds, General Funds, and I was wondering whether ARPA funds would have been usable and whether you made a request.

MR. RAUTIO: The -- uh -- the statute that funds the SEC provides for the General Funds in case that the SEC funds are insufficient. Um -- it was never contemplated to request Federal funds for this, ARPA funds.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further discussion. Seeing none. I'll entertain a motion to adopt the item.

** SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Move the item.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right. Motion to adopt item 24- 157. Motion by rep -- by Senator D'Allesandro, second by Senator Pearl. Further discussion. Seeing none. You ready for the question? All in favor say aye? Opposed no? The item is adopted.

*** {MOTION ADOPTED}

(12) Chapter 79:73, III, Laws of 2023, New Hampshire Pulp And Paper Manufacturing Industry, Stabilization Grant Program: Appropriation:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to Tab 12, item 24-175, Department of Business and Economic Affairs. Any questions on this item? Representative Leishman. We have Director Caswell.

MR. CASWELL: Good morning. Commissioner Taylor Caswell, Business and Economic Affairs.

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REP. LEISHMAN: So I guess just to get it out there 'cause you've heard rumors that we've heard about the status of the mill in Gorham, which I guess can be dispelled by what you have to offer and I just was glad to see Monadnock Paper Mill was also being a successful recipient of these funds; but if you could just tell us the status and get rid of that rumor that's been circulating about the mill up north.

MR. CASWELL: Yes, I'd be happy to, Representative. Thank you. So White Mountain Paper Company we did -- we worked with them very closely through this process. I think at this point they're employing around 73 individuals. They have just this year they expect to begin operating in the black, which has been something they've struggled with for a few years, given the age of the infrastructure and so on and that they do intend this Calendar Year to add another -- another line of paper manufacturing at that facility.

So in speaking with the -- with the ownership yesterday just to confirm these figures, they had the owners themselves in addition to the acquisition costs have invested \$9 million into this -- into their revitalization project. So that's going quite well. And I would say that if you happen to be in the Gorham area -- area it would be worth asking to come by and take a look. They've done some significant work there. And that place is probably looking about as good as it has over the last 15 or 20 years in my view.

REP. LEISHMAN: Very good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further questions. I'll entertain a motion to adopt the item.

****** REP. LEISHMAN: Move the item.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right. Representative Leishman moves, Senator D'Allesandro seconds to adopt item 24-175. Is there further discussion? Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? The item is adopted.

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*** {MOTION ADOPTED}

Late Items:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: We have several late items that we will now bring up. I hope everyone has them. I think I have them all in the same order, first one being 24-197, and that has some history that I observed Wednesday night at the public meeting.

So the -- one of the item was withdrawn, but this one still remains. This deals with the funds to -- to transfer the personnel. And we have Director White here to answer any questions, CFO. Representative Rosenwald, then Representative D'Allesandro.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Um -- my question really isn't about why we're switching providers. I understand that. I think it's great. Uh -- my question is why was Item 198 withdrawn, which would have repaid Hampton for some -- Hampstead for some extra cost. And, secondly, when does the Department plan to bring that item back?

MR. WHITE: Sure. Um -- so just -- just for context and awareness for everyone here. Apologize. Nathan White, Chief Financial Officer, Department of Health and Human Services.

Over the past two State Fiscal Years, in State Fiscal Year 23 and State Fiscal Year 24, the Department paid approximately \$178,000 to the Town of Hampstead for payment in lieu of taxes. Currently, SB 311, I believe, was just passed out of House Finance with -- with ARPA funds available for the appropriation of the equivalent amount of 154,000 and directing the Department to make a payment of 193,000 or 191, the reason for that being essentially the equivalent amount of tax loss to the town. We do anticipate bringing forward the item in June -- um -- from a process perspective. There is no impact because no payment would be made until the State Fiscal Year 25 at this point, so.

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SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Edwards for a question.

REP. EDWARDS: Thank you. I participated in the passing of SB 311. The question that was brought up that I was not able to answer while we were talking about it is -- is what is the Department's long-term vision on continuing that -- that payment in lieu of property taxes? Is the -- is this something we expect to do forever? Do we expect a five-year transition? What -- what are we -- what are we wanting to do with this?

MR. WHITE: Sure. And -- and I -- I -- I think I would just call back to the conversation that we had, I believe, during the public hearing with the full House Finance, as well as the work session with Division III, in the sense that -- um -- I think that's a larger policy discussion for the next budget process -- um -- because what occurred during this budget process was during the Senate phase. The Senate appropriated and directed the Department to -- um -- to make payments to the Town of Hampstead. That particular provision didn't make it to the final budget. There was no Committee of Conference. So there was never a discussion between the House and the Senate relative to that topic in question. Um -- so I would anticipate that -- that we would need to have a more longer term discussion relative to the long-term implications and direction of the State on that front.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

REP. EDWARDS: With us just starting the Governor's Budget process here in the next few weeks, if you wouldn't mind keeping a post-it note to ask the Governor's Office what they think they -- we ought to be doing from a policy perspective long-term.

MR. WHITE: Sure.

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REP. EDWARDS: I'd like to, you know, figure out what we need to do to, you know, support the -- the best policy or -- or -- or not but thanks.

MR. WHITE: Of course.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further discussion.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Just a question, Mr. Chairman, if I might?

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative -- Senator D'Allesandro.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Tell me about the transition between WellSense and the new provider. You got a June 30th deadline, right? That's when the WellSense leaves and Dartmouth comes in. How about this transition? How's it going to take place and is it going to be smooth in terms of the people -- the people that are involved? How many will remain? How many are going to be let go? What's the story there? And -- and -- and the service, because as we know the Town has been, let's say, quite vociferous in -- in terms of the entity.

LORI WEAVER, Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services: Good morning. Lori Weaver, Commissioner, Health and Human Services.

In regards to the transition, it is a short period of time to transition a hospital. Nathan is and team are working fastidiously to tie up all those details. 7:30 this morning I met with the Hampstead staff. I'll be down there this afternoon as well for two sessions with the staff, as well to talk about what it means and what it doesn't mean. But the main message is to keep doing the good work that they're doing and staying focused on running the hospital. Hospital's in running is in good shape under the leadership of Justin Looser who has been tremendous since he came on board. So leaning a lot on him for that transition. I would like to think that for patient care

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it's a seamless transition, and that the staff don't know any different, even though there's a lot of moving parts.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Okay. Just one further question.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further question.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: And have you communicated with the Town about the -- about the -- about the transition and sort of some -- in some way allayed their fears or that seemed to have manifested themselves at that meeting that took place in Hampstead?

MS. WEAVER: I will be 100% honest and say we did try to communicate with the Town. We have communicated with the Town. I think Wednesday night was a little difficult because we weren't given or afforded a lot of opportunity to speak. We were asked to listen and I think we did do a lot of listening. We've done a lot of listening. We'll continue to do a lot of listening.

The Town meeting was really to be focused on the new YDC build, and I think often we heard about issues or concerns about the hospital. But -- uh -- and those questions are answered, but there's ongoing communication with Town officials on a regular basis from Justin, from team, from my Department, from myself, from Marissa Henn. So I feel that, yes, we are open, we are listening, and we're trying to be heard as well.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Rosenwald.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can you tell us when the perimeter fence will be installed?

MS. WEAVER: As soon as -- it's State Government and paperwork, right? We have the funding. We're putting forth the -- Justin's putting forth the estimates, if you will. So

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what we attempted to present to the Town on Wednesday night was the -- the diagram of what the perimeter fence would look like and what the actual fence would look like so people could see what it would look like. We didn't, unfortunately, have the opportunity to do that. So I think we're expecting probably within the next three to six months. It's getting the bids and going through the process that we have to go through; but we're working on that as soon as possible.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: A question about the transition. Are you just matching the pay that the people are presently getting? Are you fitting them into a State system? Are you -- how -- how are you doing this? Is there a pay raise, a pay loss or equal pay?

MS. WEAVER: It would be equal pay. We're not looking to raise their pay or harm them by having pay loss. So we're trying to do comparable pay and benefits package for them, which is what we're working on right now.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Will it become problematic if someone that's, say, an RN with three years' experience ends up with more money on this deal than an RN with three years' experience somewhere else in the state?

MS. WEAVER: Those are the bumps that we're trying to smooth out right now. They are a represented environment so we will be looking at their bargaining pieces with that as well and where that falls in. But we have to outweigh -- weigh all of that. But, like I said, it's a quick transition. So we need -- we need a minute to smooth that out. I don't have all the answers of what -- what it is at this time.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right. We're pleased that it's moving forward. I'll entertain a motion to approve 24-197.

REP. EDWARDS: Second.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Rosenwald moves to approve, Representative Edwards seconds. Further discussion. Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? That item is adopted. Thank you.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to item 24-193. Again, the Governor's Office of Emergency Relief and Recovery. Director Coswell -- Caswell. Are there any questions on the item? I'll entertain a motion.

****** SEN GRAY: I'll move the item.

SEN. BRADLEY: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Gray moves to approve 24-193. Senator Bradley seconds. Further discussion. Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? That item is approved.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to Pease International Re -- International Development Authority, item 24-194.

****** SEN. BRADLEY: I'll move it.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: I've got a question.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right. We have a motion from Senator Bradley, a second by Senator Gray, and introduce yourself. We have a question.

MILES GREENWAY, Assistant Port Director, Pease International Development Authority: Good morning. Miles Greenway, Assistant Port Director.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator D'Allesandro for a question.

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SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: All right. Thank you. Thank you for coming. What is going on at -- at the Port Authority with regard to the Director Geno Marconi? We've heard nothing. And -- and I've had a brief conversation with him, and what -- what is -- what is his status at this point in time? Who's running the Port? Who's running it?

MR. GREENWAY: Sir, right now I've been selected to be the Acting Port Director. Director Marconi's been put on administrative leave with pay until further notice during investigation and that's really all the information I have as well, sir.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Just -- he's on -- he's on leave with pay pending an investigation?

MR. GREENWAY: Yes, sir.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Does the public know anything about this investigation?

MR. GREENWAY: Nothing more than that was put in the local newspapers and that our Executive Director has given a statement on, and that's the information I have as well, sir.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Okay. That's -- that's a questionable situation, I would think.

MR. GREENWAY: Yes, sir.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Marconi's been there for a long period of time. Been very involved -- been very involved with many of the -- with all of the operations and we had another item that's coming before us today, this late item for something that's happening at the Port Authority. When -- when will we know? When will the public know? When will the Legislature know what's going on at Pease?

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MR. GREENWAY: I don't have that answer, sir. I will say that this is something that Director Marconi has been in works with for a long time for the dredging project and to support the Army Corps of Engineer.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Right, I understand that. The dredging part is very important and completing it is very important. I understand that. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you. Justice delayed is justice denied. He should know by now why he's been removed.

MR. GREENWAY: Sir.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: So there's -- he's got a lot of support. He's come before us for many times in the years. We're all impressed with his knowledge, and we're distressed at what's happening. I hope you would bring that back to the -- to the Board.

MR. GREENWAY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: We would like to have a little more information when a valued employee is mistreated in our eyes.

MR. GREENWAY: Understand.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: I'll entertain a motion to -- okay. We have -- we have -- we have a second and a -- a motion and a second to adopt. Any further discussion? Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? Dredging item is adopted. Thank you.

MR. GREENWAY: Thank you.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: You treatment is better. Next item is FIS 24-195, Department of Health and Human Services again.

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** SEN. BRADLEY: I'll move the item.

SEN. GRAY: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Question.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: A motion by --

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Question. Okay. Go ahead.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Motion by Senator Bradley, second by Senator Gray to adopt item 24-195. Is there any further discussion?

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Just a question.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Question from Senator D'Allesandro.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Thank you. Here we have a situation where money is coming to Manchester for homeless, which is very important. Yet, this -- we needed this money -- uh -- a long time before today. What -- what -- what took it so long to get here?

KATJA FOX, Director, Division for Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Human Services: So good morning. For the record, I'm Katja Fox. I am the Director of the Division for Behavioral Health. This -- um -- particular request is coupled with SB 406, which was introduced and has gone through the legislative process, which was to increase the rates for shelters.

The Legislature and Governor did appropriate an increase for shelter bed rates through this biennial budget. This will further that rate increase this additional amount. It was identified through the legislative process for SB 406 that these

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funds could be made available to further increase those rates and that is what is before you today.

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Bradley, then Senator Rosenwald.

SEN. BRADLEY: So, Miss Fox, it's absolutely correct bed rate was --

REP. EDWARDS: Mic.

SEN. BRADLEY: -- I think about \$8. We increased it to \$20 in the budget last year. There was testimony that came in in the hearing process on Senate Bill 406 from different shelters that absent a second rate increase to about \$27 that shelters would have to close during the summer months. Um -- problematic.

So we in the Senate process, and we were all involved in this, amended Senate Bill 406 to change from a new program to enhanced rates for these beds. And in discussion with the Governor he thought it was a good way to fund this, and it can be done sooner with more certainty through this process, which is why I commend the Department for bringing this forward. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Rosenwald.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Um -- so I sometimes hear rumors about what's going on in Manchester. But I think I heard that the City of Manchester decreased its own funding for shelters. So could you please tell us to what extent this money is actually increasing shelter funding in Manchester, 'cause I also heard that one of the -- that one of the shelters, maybe the biggest one, might have to close during this summer.

MS. FOX: So thank you for the questions which I can't answer specifically about the City of Manchester and the level of funding that they currently have and any contemplation of a

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decrease in that amount. We do know that Manchester -- um -- does have -- um -- a burden of many people who are in their city who are -- um -- without shelter. And -- uh -- as far as closures go, there has been no direct contact with the Department about a potential closure.

Um -- however, we did hear from the shelters through the hearing processes that there are very -- they're very concerned about their ability to continue to serve the people that present before them, and that they are at capacity in the middle of right now they're at capacity. So this will help.

Uh -- one of the areas that they have concerns about is to be able to maintain staff -- um -- so that they can keep the capacity that they have and have that utilization stay where it's at.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you. Follow-up.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow question.

SEN. ROSENWALD: It's really more for Commissioner Caswell. Um -- I see that the explanation says if ARPA funds are not available, General Funds will be requested. And so my question is will ARPA funds be available or are we going to be appropriating General Funds?

MR. CASWELL: I don't have -- sorry. I don't have the item right in front of me. Um -- but for these items here, we did -- um -- add language that referred to the availability of funding to be reallocated from -- um -- oh, here we go.

Uh -- so this item and some of the others do have a line there at the beginning that refers to the availability of funding under the ARPA SFRF Program for reallocation. So we are at a point right now where we don't have all the reallocations to be able to fund these projects right out of the box. But what's happening right now is that -- uh -- one of the items, either you've already approved or -- um -- or is coming up

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extends the spending authorization for a large number of projects that are being funded using ARPA dollars.

There are some other projects that are not going to be extended and at that point those projects and those funds will lapse back to GOFERR, and that's when we'll be able to have an idea as to exactly how much funding will be available and then that would fund these items, several of these items that are on this list today.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Follow-up.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

SEN. ROSENWALD: So, I mean, we basically are at the point where we're making spending decisions in Committee. Do you know when you will know if ARPA funds will be available to cover this and there's a -- I think another item that's larger than --

MR. CASWELL: Yes. I can say that we would know once we pass the end of the Fiscal Year exactly which of those -- how much of those funds will be able to be reallocated. The reason is that the projects that are not going to be extended, but there's spending authority, and we did this quite deliberately to be able to have this room to be able to maneuver once -- before we get to the obligation deadline at the end of this year. Um -- the -- uh -- once we -- uh -- those programs will lose their spending authority, but they have between now and then to continue to spend those funds. So we don't know exactly what that amount will be until we reach June 30th.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Erf for a question.

REP. ERF: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple questions. So is this two and a half million dollars of ARPA funding in addition to the two and a half million dollars of ARPA funding in SB 406?

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MS. FOX: The 2.5 million authorization request here would fund SB 406. So it's not in addition to. It would support that bill.

REP. ERF: Follow-up.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

REP. ERF: And a separate question. I assume you have to basically enter into agreements with the various communities that would receive this boost in the -- in the funding. Do you anticipate those being one-time boosts in -- in the agreements?

MS. FOX: That -- that's a really good question. We do anticipate funding -- providing the funding to the current contracted shelters, and then would need to through the budget process to maintain those rates need to request those funds.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Edwards for a question.

REP. EDWARDS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been generally sympathetic to the request to increase funding for our homeless shelters. And -- um -- and I've been doing it on the hope that the homeless shelters will be able to continue the transition services that they've been offering during the daytime. And I had -- I was concerned when we were told that if they didn't get the money, one of the things that they would axe would be the transition support services during the day. And, to me, that's sort of the magic sauce of converting a cot at night to a transition program which would be better.

So having said all of that, now that we're giving the money, do we have any -- um -- expectations? Do we have anything -- any assurances really that these transition services are going to remain in effect?

MS. FOX: Again, a great question. Case management is such a key component to this, because we want -- uh -- people to be engaged in services and have these be just very short stays. The

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contractors are required to provide those case management services. So any contemplation of ending those services would need to go through the Department and -- um -- any negotiation or -- um -- for us to take action on.

REP. EDWARDS: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Leishman for a question.

REP. LEISHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for taking my question. So it says about 940 beds would be paid for through these existing contracts. How many more do we need? I gathered from your response earlier that this is a shortfall for what's needed out there. So I'm just curious if the Department has any idea of the number of shelter beds that are needed for those that are homeless?

MS. FOX: I do not actually have a number to be able to give to you. We do know that -- um -- capacity is a significant issue across the state, but in some communities more so than others. Um -- and that typically we have had to back into the number that we are provided to support these shelters, and for the systems to be able to respond to requests for proposals based on what they think is adequate to be able to stand up and maintain those services. So I do not have a number -- um -- of what is needed, but I know that we're currently at capacity pretty much across the state every day.

REP. LEISHMAN: Just to follow-up. Do you have any -- just a guess? I know you're always very tactful as far as your responses, but do you have like a guess of how short we are as far as providing shelters or, well, the applications that towns and cities put in there must be a number out there that --

MS. FOX: We do have our point in time counts and that determines how many people who are sheltered, unsheltered, et cetera, and I'd be happy to provide those numbers and then we can see where those match up. But there still is a delta. And as we know right now in New Hampshire with housing being so tight,

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it is really difficult. So what our needs are today may be different in a different economic situation.

REP. LEISHMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further discussion. Senator Rosenwald.

SEN. ROSENWALD: Thank you. So I'm just trying to get clarity on this. We go out of session on June 13th. The Commissioner told us that he won't know until after the end of the Fiscal Year if those ARPA funds are available. So if Senate Bill 406 goes forward and appropriates two and a half million dollars of General Funds, and we also appropriate two and a half million dollars today of ARPA and/or General Funds, what would happen? Is the Department's plan to spend \$5 million extra on homeless services or what would happen given the legislative calendar?

MICHAEL KANE, Legislative Budget Assistant, Office of Legislative Assistant: I can comment if you want, Nathan. I can --

MR. WHITE: Sure.

MR. KANE: So Michael Kane, Legislative Budget Assistant. So, Senator Rosenwald, Senate Bill 406 as passed or being proposed by House Finance has appropriation language in tiers. So, first, it would be ARPA funds, two and a half million dollars. So the Governor's first directed to look at ARPA funds and then any remainder would be General Funds. It's not going to be in addition to whatever is approved here, if it is approved. It will be -- um -- that will take the place of that.

In the event that this is not approved, and that bill still goes forward, there's an option at the Governor at that point to identify ARPA funds or to appropriate General Funds. So -- uh -- how that language is drafted is for two and a half million for this entire problem total. Yes.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further discussion.

REP. ERF: It's already been --

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. Motion and second has already been made. Are there any further discussions on item 24-195? Seeing none. Are you ready, I'll -- if you're ready for the question. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? That item is adopted.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to 24-196.

****** SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: Move the item.

SEN. GRAY: Second.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right. A motion from Senator D'Allesandro, second by Senator Gray to approve item 24- 196. Further discussion? Seeing none. All in favor say aye? Opposed no? That item is adopted.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: That completes our late item, I believe.

(13) Miscellaneous:

(14) Informational Materials:

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Moving on to the informational item. Are there any questions?

REP. EDWARDS: I'd like to ask one on the statistics page when we get to that. The --

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. Is that -- can you refer --

REP. EDWARDS: I think it's 160.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. 24-160, that be the Operating Dashboard.

REP. EDWARDS: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Health and Human Services.

REP. EDWARDS: So I'm going to continue a theme and that is my concern over the sizing of the Sununu Youth Services Center replacement. We put it at 12 with a maximum capacity at 18. And as I'm looking at the average daily sentences, we are running three-quarters of a year at 18 or above. Even on those 18 months we had to have days where we were over 18 in order to average out to be 18. So -- so -- so fundamentally, I think we have to ask a strategic question. Did -- did we undersize, underestimate the capacity of the replacement center and, if so, what's the smartest thing to do about that?

MS. WEAVER: Hello again. Just for the record, the census this week is 14. Just for the record, as of yesterday the census was 14 at -- at Sununu Center. So -- um -- you know, we're looking at the averages in the report here and we have seen it increase particularly in '23, which is different than when you're looking at anything in '22 and earlier than that.

Um -- I think, you know, we based at the time that we had the legislation on what the average was, and the average was around 12, and knowing that we could flex up to 18. We are seeing an increase in the amount of committed children versus detained children there. So right now more than 50% of that 14 is committed. So those kids are there longer.

So we are working on the system on the back end right now -- um -- with all of our stakeholders, including the courts, to look at why -- why is that happening. Why are more kids being committed and -- and are there other ways to divert them from the system rather than the committing or is it more that more detained and less committed? So we're actively engaged behind

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the scenes to try to systemically look at what's happening there and trend that in a different direction.

So it's hard to say did we under bed or over bed. We can only go with the numbers that we've had. We know that over the last two years we've had a 50% decrease in kids coming into the system overall in the Juvenile Justice system, not just YDC. So we know we're trending in the right direction for that; but, yet, we have seen an increase here. So that's -- that's what we're trying to work at right now and get our hands on.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

REP. EDWARDS: So -- so what I think I just heard you say is that we don't yet think, and we may not ever think that we've made a strategic error in under sizing the capacity that -- that we don't know yet. And if it becomes possible that we did -- um -- I would encourage you to try to engage the Legislature or earlier rather than later. And to -- that -- that's sort of my concern. I'm as accountable as almost anyone for the sizing of 12 to 18. And so I'm willing to own it if we undersized it. But I need -- I need you all to give us the red flashing light if it happens.

MS. WEAVER: Will do.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Yes. Did you want to reply?

MS. WEAVER: Oh, my reply was will do. I'm sorry.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. I missed it. Thank you. Further discussion? Any other questions on the Dashboard? Seeing none. What other items in the information groupings would people like to question? If that's not a problem, then I guess we're down to next meeting.

(15) Date of Next Meeting and Adjournment:

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: I have a -- I have a County meeting in June. That should be finalized on the 19th. However, the backup date, if we don't get a quorum, is the 21st in the morning, which is the third Friday. That -- that may never happen, but I have to be ready to have it happen if -- if I don't have a quorum on the 19th, which is 46 State Reps. So is there any objection to moving it to Thursday, the 20th? Is that a problem for anybody? Mr. Kane.

MR. KANE: We're okay with any date. Just you choose.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: I guess most of our legislative work should be done by then.

SEN. BRADLEY: I hope so.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All right. What time on Thursday? We want it later in the day. You want it about the same time?

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: 10 o'clock.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: What time?

SEN. D'ALLESANDRO: 10 o'clock.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: 10 o'clock. All right. 10 o'clock Thursday, the 20th, for Fiscal. Thank you very much. That will be our next -- next meeting. Is there anything further to come before the Fiscal Committee? Mr. Kane, anything you know of?

MR. KANE: No.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Wow! That was a quick meeting.

** REP. ERF: Move to adjourn.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Motion.

SEN. GRAY: Must be the skill of the Chair.

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CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Motion to adjourn.

REP. EDWARDS: So moved.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: All in favor? We are adjourned. Thank you very much. Thank you all for your attendance.

(Committee meeting adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Cecelia A. Trask, a Licensed Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the YouTube audio/video recording of the proceeding in the above-entitled matter. I was not physically present at the meeting and have transcribed the video to the best of my professional skill and ability.

Cecelia A. Trask, RPR, RMR, CRR
NH Licensed Court Reporter - #00047

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