

JOINT LEGISLATIVE FISCAL COMMITTEE - SPECIAL AGENDA

One Granite Place, Room 159
Concord, NH
Tuesday, October 28, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Kenneth Weyler, Chair
Representative Keith Erf
Representative Mary Jane Wallner
Representative Peter Leishman
Representative Maureen Mooney
Representative Karen Abel (Alt.)
Senator James Gray
Senate President Sharon Carson
Senator David Watters
Senator Howard Pearl (Alt.)
Senator Tara Reardon (Alt.)

**(1) 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 9:16-a, Transfers
Authorized:**

KENNETH WEYLER, State Representative, Rockingham
County, District #14, and Chairman: All right. Call the
Fiscal Committee meeting to order, and mention that we have
replacement members. We have -- uh -- welcome, Senator Pearl
replacing Senator Blaisdell.

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

SHARON CARSON, State Senator and Senate
President, Senate District #14: Birdsell.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Birdsell.

HOWARD PEARL, State Senator, Senate District

#17: You're going way back. I'm not that old.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: And Senator -- Senator Reardon replacing Senator Rosenwald.

We have before us one item, the approval required to accept and expenditure of funds. So the meeting -- the -- uh -- this is dealing with the transfer of funds within Health and Human Services, and you'll introduce yourself and introduce the item.

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

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

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: I'd like to just start off by saying thank you for all convening for emergency fiscal -- uh -- for -- uh -- this particular item, which is timely and of importance to the citizens in our state that receive SNAP benefits. The item that you have before you is basically to accept and expend money to allow the Department to create a contract, a specific contract with the Food Bank -- uh -- to meet the needs of our SNAP recipients during the federal

shutdown.

So as of November 1st, we were informed last Friday by USDA and FN -- FNS that we would not be receiving any funds -- uh -- for November 1st. So our contingency plan was then -- um -- activated which was to engage with the Food Bank to increase access to and supply of food. So this is particularly for SNAP recipients. So we know we have about 74,000 SNAP recipients within the state. That breaks down to about 45,000 adults and about 24,000 kids roughly. Um -- and there are -- obviously, there's other -- uh -- numbers in there; but roughly what we're looking at 74,000 households.

The amount of federal money that we receive on a monthly basis is about \$12.6 for SNAP recipients. Um -- that's a big stretch for me to find \$12.6 million. I'm still trying to work out some of my budget, back-of-the-budget cuts and otherwise; but it is far too important to not address. And so, therefore, working with our partners of what could we do to increase that supply, increase that access for \$2 million, we will be able to increase mobile food pantries just for SNAP participants. We have mobile food pantries currently. Those would continue. So this is in addition to that; but this would be specifically for SNAP recipients. So they will be required to show their card to prove that they are SNAP recipient.

Um -- we give the money to the Food Banks. They create the -- the marketing, the campaigning. We give them where the need is in the state, who the recipients are so we can target where those pantries should go. Um -- and pantries would be during the day but also during evening hours as well. So it's not an eight to four kind of thing -- um -- when families can have access to food. So it is not certainly the full amount, and we recognize that it falls short of what they typically would get; but it would, again, give -- meet them with being able to have access to fresh food as well.

We also will be looking at the quality of the food, the type of food, the dietary concerns that may exist for folks, and this is -- this is a band-aid. I mean, obviously, it's not a one-for-one. We're hopeful that this will carry us through the month of November. Um -- we have a contract. Should you choose to approve this today, we will go to Council tomorrow to approve your accept and expend, as well as to approve the contract with the Food Bank.

We have designed the contract. I can't -- because it hasn't been approved yet, I'm not allowed to officially speak about it, but I can tell you in generalities that we've designed it so that should the shutdown continue past the end of November, that we would still be able to have

some flexibility with doing this -- um -- doing the work that we're doing here with the contract.

So that is what we're here to ask for today -- um -- to be able to mobilize as of November 1st. And the last time I checked I think that's this weekend, right? I -- Saturday, right, because Halloween is Friday. Yes.

So that -- that time that -- that's -- that's the time sensitivity. So I'll stop there if there's any questions.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you. Questions from the Committee Members? Senator Watters.

DAVID WATTERS, State Senator, Senate District #04: Yes, thanks. I have two questions, if I may.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Go ahead.

SEN. WATTERS: So, first, let me say I really appreciate it, Commissioner, that you're, you know, trying to take action and protect these vulnerable folks and do everything we can given the mess in Washington. Um -- and I appreciate the Governor's, you know, work with you on this as well. Um -- so I had a kind of one more -- one question about the Feds, and then one about how we're going to do the program. You know, it's my understanding the start of the Fiscal Year 26 there's six billion in reserve fund at USDA for SNAP in case of

a shutdown. I guess there's about five billion in it now. Have you reached out to USDA about being able to access the reserve funding?

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: We received notice -- uh -- at the end of last week that we would not be able to access the contingency funding. But in regards to your -- your question of have we reached out to FNS and/or USDA, yes, multiple times. Um -- and sometimes we get people -- um -- and sometimes we don't. And so we've had to work with some of our national associations, organizations, to help advocate on behalf of staffs -- staff states -- states if we're not getting answers. So we've tried to exhaust, including our Congressional Delegation as well, every avenue to try to get that communication; but we did receive official word as of end of last week that they will not be tapping into those funds.

SEN. WATTERS: So I'm about -- if I may follow-up, Mr. Chairman --

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

SEN. WATTERS: -- about the program itself. So could you flesh out a little bit more around, you know, we were getting 12.6 and now we have two, and that you thought that could carry us through. And then, you know, maybe if we had to keep going because this is an important thing. Um -- but how

long do you think it'll take to set up to actually get the mobile vans out there -- uh -- so that -- that, you know, what date might it be that a family on SNAP would know about it and know where to go?

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: So I think it's -- Karen is saying it's going to take about one week to mobilize.

SEN. WATTERS: Okay. Yeah, if you wouldn't mind. Yeah.

KAREN HEBERT, Director, Division of Economic Stability, Department of Health and Human Services: Good morning. Karen Hebert, Director for the Division of Economic Stability. Uh -- so in communication with the Food Bank -- uh -- they should take about a week to deploy the mobile pantries and disperse food to a number of networks across the state. They won't order the food until a contract is approved, of course. So that's why they do need just a few days to set up.

SEN. WATTERS: And if I may? Could you kind of give us a little more sense of what the Food Bank is saying about where they'd go? I worry about the North Country and just even getting information out.

MS. HEBERT: Yes, absolutely.

SEN. WATTERS: There's a lot of families in Strafford County in my area, we have a pretty high rate of food

insecurity surprisingly.

MS. HEBERT: Yeah.

SEN. WATTERS: What are your thoughts about where they go and how they let people know?

MS. HEBERT: Sure. Thank you for that question. So, of course, the locations are very important to us. We've been able to identify where our SNAP recipients reside in each town, what those numbers look like. So in working with the Food Bank, we're able to also identify where do they already have mobile pantries scheduled for the month of November. So we know that. There are four of them. So this would add two additional pantries or mobile pantries per week. So we want to try to balance so that we're not duplicating the same location with new pantries. We're planning on touching -- uh -- the -- the mobile pantries to touch in multiple locations state-wide. Uh -- so it's going to be a little tricky because they are limited, and we want to be able to work with our partners if they need -- if -- if families need things like transportation, you know, or what are the community resources that may also assist them to get to the pantries.

So working with the Food Bank has been a very productive experience -- uh -- in making these plans. And, so, in addition to that, really identifying where the greatest need

is with the existing local pantries that they have networks with already, and where we would distribute the additional food to where really the -- the -- the greatest need is but trying to hit as many communities as we possibly can.

SEN. WATTERS: Thank -- thank you so much for your work, really.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Wallner.

MARY JANE WALLNER, State Representative,
Merrimack County, District #19: Thank you. I have a couple of questions, if that's all right.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Please.

REP. WALLNER: So, how are SNAP recipients going to be notified about where they can go now to access this food?

MS. HEBERT: We have an extensive communication plan that we are -- um -- working on right now. It includes -- uh -- notices directly to the SNAP recipients by mail, by text, by e-mail for those who have elected those latter options. We also have a web page -- uh -- specifically regarding the shutdown on the Department's web site. We end up communicating directly with our partners, not just our key partners, but as many different partners that we can think of, including the New Hampshire Grocers Association, a number of the family resource centers, child care, a number of -- of different partners that

we have to make sure that they're informed, that they can help us communicate to SNAP recipients themselves.

We also will be -- um -- putting out information on social media. We'll be asking the Food Bank to also publish the information on its web site, and its social media. Um -- that -- that's in a nutshell.

REP. WALLNER: And my other question is at the same time that people are losing their food stamps for November, possibly losing them for November, there are other programs that will also be affected and will also probably touch many of these same people. Um -- and I wondering about what other programs do you see that might -- might not be available? I'm thinking particularly WIC and Heating Assistance.

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: It's -- it's a great question. WIC is part of our conversation as well. It -- we received -- did receive money at the last minute from USDA that carried us through till November 10th for our WIC families. We're waiting to see if there'll be more money coming through. Um -- that is sort of like a day by day and minute by minute. The Energy Assistance is not with the Department. However, it's my understanding that they are carried -- they're okay until, I think, the end of the calendar year, end of December

-- um -- is -- is what I had been told.

REP. WALLNER: Are there any other programs that might be affected?

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: I can tell you that I know the breakfast and the free-and-reduced-lunch are not impacted. So those will continue at school. So Karen was mentioning, you know, all of our partners, DOE is and the schools are, obviously, are another partner where we are really trying to make schools encourage families to be aware of that resource at school as well and to take care of it should they need -- take advantage of it should they need it.

REP. WALLNER: Great. Thank you. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: We have one other person that wants to make an addition.

PATRICIA TILLEY, Associate Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services: Thank you. Patricia Tilley from the Department. No, I think the Commissioner covered it. I mean, I -- one of the things just for your -- um -- knowledge around WIC we, as the Commissioner noted, we are putting this together almost on a day-by-day basis. So we're going to need all of our partners to help us with that communication. We realize that it is not as clean as we would

like -- um -- but we're happy that we will have WIC benefits at least through the first week of November and -- and perhaps a little bit longer. Um -- we noticed that in spending and redemption of our WIC benefits, last Sunday was one of the highest days we've seen, which is great. We want folks to use their benefits while they have them and to make sure that they can stock up.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Carson.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. When you talk about Food Bank, which -- which Food Bank are you working?

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: The New Hampshire Food Bank.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Um -- Mr. Chairman, may I follow-up? Oh, I'm sorry. Sorry. Got to get in the habit of doing that again. Um -- may I follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Certainly.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Thank you. Um -- is there any question about the reimbursement to the State? Because we're expending this money, are we going to be reimbursed by the Federal Government when they decide they're going to open again?

MR. WHITE: So -- um -- one important thing to

understand about the SNAP Program is that we -- we do have a contract with -- with a contractor through which the SNAP benefits are distributed. So the SNAP benefits you actually do not see in the State Budget because it's drawn from a line of credit from the federal -- uh -- government. We're doing something outside of that. And I know that there are other states trying to do something similar. So, ultimately, the question of reimbursement will come down -- uh -- to what is in the final budget that passes at the federal level.

Again, this is something new that -- um -- at least in my short time with the State, I've never seen this before. Um -- so, ultimately, it will depend upon the details.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: May I follow-up, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Thank you. Um -- has the Department thought about doing a public service announcement that would go across all forms of media asking the people of New Hampshire to donate to the Food Banks, also? Um -- we have -- the citizens of this state are known for being giving, and in this time of difficulty we don't want to see our neighbors, our friends, different family members struggle. So it would be terrific if the Department -- um -- maybe working

with the Governor to do a public service announcement asking people in their communities to donate to their local Food Bank to help. Have you thought about that?

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: Thank you. It's a great question. I do think we have thought in terms of our communications plan to your very point is that New Hampshire pulling together all of our community partners, even though we're doing a contract with the Food Bank to be able to do that; but I think Karen might have a little bit more detail on how that's interwoven into the plan.

MS. HEBERT: Thank you. No, I just wanted to respond with the -- the work that we're doing with all of our partners and really asking our partners to be -- uh -- that voice for us to be able to express to people and try to solicit the support within each community, whether it's donations to individual pantries with actual food or it's funding or it's time. Uh -- so that we will continue to ask our partners to work directly with the Food Bank to be able to support all of these efforts.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: May I follow-up, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Thank you. Um -- with

the New Hampshire Food Bank -- um -- are they fed by other Food Banks in the state or is it if someone wanted to make a donation, it would have to be strictly the New Hampshire Food Bank?

MS. HEBERT: So the New Hampshire Food Bank has 417 partners state-wide in its network. So it's a bit of a two-way street, I think, for them to support each other. But it really is -- uh -- quite a -- an effort that they make directly with each individual community and based on which each community has for their needs that -- uh -- that that would serve and what other resources each community has to assist.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: May I follow-up, Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Follow-up.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Is there a way to get a list of these 417 partners, because what you want to do is to try to make it as easy as possible for a citizen -- um -- to make a donation. Um -- and so it would be great if we could get a list of those fourteen partners.

MS. HEBERT: Hm-hum.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: And the Senators and Representatives can put out into their communities, you know, if you want to donate, please donate to these communities

because they're going to go directly to the New Hampshire Food Bank. Um -- so just -- just an idea, because I'm thinking this is really an all hands-on-deck kind of project. Um -- we want to support you in what you're doing, and if there's one little thing that we can do, it would be great. And, like I said, New Hampshire people are very giving, very supportive, and we do not want to see our fellow citizens suffer with food insecurity during this time -- um -- when these pro -- when this program is essentially being shutdown. So I just, you know, we've got school kids that have food drives, churches. Let's -- let's try to get as many people involved as we possibly can to -- uh -- get us through this -- this -- this time.

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: No, we're just happy to share that with Mike the list of the 417 partners.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Okay. Great.

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: Thank you, Senator.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Gray.

SEN. GRAY: Just one comment on that. It may not be appropriate for the Commissioner or someone on her staff to actually do the request. Uh -- the Bishop of Manchester, the Catholic Bishop is involved in this because of Catholic Charities, and it may be more appropriate for he and some other

religious leaders or other leaders to actually be the ones that do the request. So, again, I just want to make sure that we touch base with the attorneys and make sure that we're not getting ourselves in a bad position.

SEN. PRESIDENT CARSON: Could even be the Governor.

SEN. GRAY: Could be the Governor, yeah.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Further from Committee Members? Director White, for the -- for the record, I think we should know what portion of this HHS budget this \$2 million amounts to so people will know. You, obviously, have a lot of flexibility within that to move this money around. So this is what portion of your total budget?

MR. WHITE: Um -- so from a -- so this -- the money that we're looking at here, it's -- it's currently not in the budget. So, what this action, just to walk folks through the -- um -- the specific action before you. So there's two parts to this. The first part is accepting money. The second part is transferring that into the appropriate class line. The funds that we are seeking to accept -- um -- this is part of the excess MET revenue from State Fiscal Year '25. This is -- um -- in past years, we've had a couple of items where we've accepted an additional -- uh -- \$11 million, \$39 million, and

\$31 million in State Fiscal Years '23, '24, and '25 or, yes, '25 respectively. And what -- where that money comes from is there -- there -- we collect the MET revenue and we make budget assumptions. Uh -- and at the end of the State Fiscal Year, we look at what we receive in rebate revenue. We look at what we receive in MET revenue, and we close out the year. And then the reason that we have historically accepted MET revenue later throughout the year is once we see things settled down, we see things, we look at where things ended up, those funds are available -- um -- to support the Medicaid Program. So these dollars are going into the Medicaid Program as other revenue, and this is allowable under State Law and in -- in -- in concert with SB 249 from the 2025 legislation -- legislative session.

So these dollars, again, go into the Medicaid Program, and what we're doing here is we're using those dollars to offset the general funds, which is allowable, and those general funds will be used to support the contract. The contract is anticipated to be cost reimbursement only. So we would only pay for the expenses that were incurred. And if the federal government were to start back up a week or two from now, we would only make those expenses. And then the -- the general funds would be freed up, which could potentially

benefit the larger lapse in the long run for State Fiscal Year '26.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: And, again, for the public spell out what M-E-T is.

MR. WHITE: The Medicaid Enhancement Tax revenue.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Thank you. Representative Wallner.

REP. WALLNER: Thank you. One thing that you just said brought up a -- a thought to me. I -- I'm wondering how are you going to be reimbursing the Food Bank? Is it going -- the \$2 million will go all at once to them or a little dribbled out during the month or how is it going to be sent to them?

MR. WHITE: Sure. So -- so the exact details of the contract are -- are -- are technically restricted under RSA 21-G:37 until it's been presented to the Council. But what we do anticipate is a cost reimbursement basis on a higher intent or a higher frequency than what we normally would do. Normally, it would be more of a 30 day. But given the time sensitivities and urgencies, we're probably looking towards a much tighter time frame and turnaround for payment.

REP. WALLNER: So if I'm following, they would

-- they would need to be ordering the food and pertain -- getting the food before they could get reimbursement for it. They won't have the cash to work with; is that correct?

MR. WHITE: So, again, the contract itself is not finalized. Typically, advance payment is something that we do not -- um -- engage in in any of our contracting. It's typically always cost reimbursement. But what our goal is to do is to limit that time frame so that once they put the order in by the time, you know, they receive the invoice we're ready to pay them.

REP. WALLNER: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Any other from -- Senator Gray, then Representative Erf.

SEN. GRAY: Um -- I was going to move the item. So you may want to take Senator -- Representative first.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Do you have a question?

REP. ERF: Yes.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Erf for a question.

REP. ERF: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for taking my question. It's a double question but they're related. Um -- what is the total amount of, for lack of better word, unappropriated funds in the MET account and what else can

they be used for?

MR. WHITE: Sure. So I would have to go back and just conduct an analysis to understand -- um -- where we currently are at, what we have expended year-to-date, look at outstanding liabilities. Um -- and then I think we would also need to take into account the anticipated rate changes that are currently aiming for December. Um -- and then we'll also have rate changes as well in July and then, ultimately, utilization will, of course, factor into that overall percentage. But we can conduct an analysis and -- and get back to you on what we're looking at. And -- and this, also, kind of feeds into those other items that we've seen in past years where we've accepted those MET dollars -- um -- into the budget. And what was -- I apologize, Representative -- what was the second part?

REP. ERF: Well, I'm curious what -- what else can these funds be used for? You're basically taking funds from this and using for the SNAP Program. What else can they be used for?

MR. WHITE: So -- so the MET funds are restricted to support the Medicaid Program. We're using them to support the Medicaid Program in this case, and we're pulling the general funds out which don't have those same restrictions.

REP. ERF: So -- so you can use them for other

Medicaid purposes. Is that --

MR. WHITE: Yes.

REP. ERF: -- essentially what you're saying?

MR. WHITE: Yes. Under the Medicaid Program under -- as -- as the statute articulates it, yes.

REP. ERF: Thanks very much.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Senator Gray.

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SEN. GRAY: I move item 25-257.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Motion by Senator Gray, second by Senator Watters to adopt FIS 25-257. Is there any further discussion?

MAUREEN MOONEY, State Representative, Hillsborough County, District #12: Yes.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Representative Mooney.

REP. MOONEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to take this moment to commend the Department, first of all, for acting quickly, creatively, and proactively -- uh -- to address this. It's good to know that New Hampshire is in good shape, despite a tough and tight budget season, unlike Washington, the reason why we're here today for a prolonged stand-off. So, with that, I'll be voting yes, and I appreciate the work that you're doing in this situation.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: There's no further discussion.

All in favor say aye? Any opposed no? It is unanimous. Thank you for your work and preparing for this.

COMMISSIONER WEAVER: Thank you.

MR. WHITE: Thank you.

***** {MOTION ADOPTED}**

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Okay. Date of next meeting.

We've already decided on November 21st at 11. Everybody's aware of that. Is there any further -- any further business to come before the Committee?

(Inaudible.)

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: Motion to adjourn.

** SEN. GRAY: So moved.

CHAIRMAN WEYLER: We are adjourned. Thank you all.

(The meeting concluded 10:29 a.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Cecelia A. Trask, a Licensed Court Reporter in the State of New Hampshire, do hereby certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate transcription of the YouTube recording. I was not physically present at said meeting and have transcribed the audio recording to the best of my ability, skill, knowledge and belief.



Cecelia A. Trask

Cecelia A. Trask, RPR, RMR

New Hampshire LCR #00047