



State of New Hampshire
Governor's Office
FOR
EMERGENCY RELIEF AND RECOVERY
(GOFERR)
LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

PUBLIC MEETING

FRIDAY MARCH 5, 2021

9:00 a.m.

Dial In: 800-356-8278

Access Code: 389388

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2020

1:00 p.m.

in
Legislative Advisory Board Members:
One Eagle Square

Concord, NH 03301

Senate President, Chuck Morse

Speaker of the House, Sherman Packard

Senate Minority, Leader Donna Soucy

House Minority Leader, Renny Cushing

Senator Lou D'Allesandro

Senator Ranking Member John Reagan

House Finance Committee Chairman, Ken Weyler

House Finance Committee Ranking Member, Mary Jane
Wallner

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order -Public Meeting Statement
- II. Attendance
- III. Welcome new members
- IV. GOFERR updates
- V. Advisory Board Discussions
- VI. Set next meeting date and time
- VII. Adjourn

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 * * * * *

3 TAYLOR CASWELL: My name is Taylor Caswell.

4 I am the Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency
5 Relief and Recovery, and I'll be facilitating today's
6 meeting. The GOFERR Legislative Advisory was created by
7 Executive Order #2020-06. That order is publicly available
8 on the Governor's website.

9 Today's meeting is an official meeting of the
10 Board. It is open to the public and will be run in a manner
11 compliant with RSA 91-A.

12 As I mentioned, today's call is being recorded.
13 Should you be a speaking participant and not wish to be
14 recorded, you may disconnect now. The recording from
15 today's meeting will be transcribed and posted on the GOFERR
16 webpage.

17 Because the Board is meeting by phone under RSA
18 91-A; there are a few initial logistics that we need to
19 establish. First, each of us must state our names, where we
20 are located, and who is with us in the room. I'll begin.

21 My name is Taylor Caswell. I am the Director of
22 GOFERR in the GOFERR Office. In the office with me is our

1 General Counsel, Nancy Smith; Rhonda Hensley and Hilary Ryan
2 [phonetic].

3 Senator Morse?

4 CHUCK MORSE: Senator Chuck Morse. I'm in my
5 office in Atkinson, and I am alone.

6 TAYLOR CASWELL: Speaker Packard?

7 SHERMAN PACKARD: I'm in my office at the State
8 house, and I am alone.

9 TAYLOR CASWELL: And welcome, Mr. Speaker.

10 SHIPPEN PAGE: Thank you.

11 TAYLOR CASWELL: Senator Soucy?

12 DONNA SOUCY: This is Donna Soucy. I am at my
13 home in Manchester, and I'm alone.

14 TAYLOR CASWELL: Representative Cushing?

15 [Pause]

16 Representative Cushing?

17 RENNY CUSHING: Yeah.

18 TAYLOR CASWELL: Are you there, representative?

19 RENNY CUSHING: Hello?

20 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yep!

21 RENNY CUSHING: Yes, I am. Am I unmuted? Okay.

22 Okay. I'm Representative Renny Cushing. I'm Democratic

1 Leader of the House. I'm at my home in Hampton. I'm alone
2 in the room. My wife is in the house someplace.

3 TAYLOR CASWELL: Very good. Thank you and
4 welcome, Representative.

5 TAYLOR CASWELL: Senator D'Allesandro?

6 LOU D'ALLESSANDRO: I'm Senator Lou D'Allesandro,
7 and I'm in my home in Manchester, and my wife is in the
8 house.

9 TAYLOR CASWELL: All right. Senator Reagan?

10 JOHN REAGAN: Senator Reagan, I'm at my office, by
11 myself.

12 TAYLOR CASWELL: Good. Representative Weyler?

13 KEN WEYLER: Ken Weyler, I'm here in Kingston.
14 I'm alone in this room. My wife is in the house.

15 TAYLOR CASWELL: Very good. And welcome to you as
16 well, Representative. And Representative Wallner?

17 MARYJANE WALLNER: Maryjane Wallner. I'm in my
18 home in Concord, and I am alone.

19 TAYLOR CASWELL: Very good. Okay, so as we move
20 through our agenda today, each Board member and anyone else
21 speaking is asked to identify themselves before speaking.
22 Should you choose to take any votes today, they must be done

1 in a roll call process, following the process we just used.

2 And finally, remember to hit 5* if you want to
3 raise your hand during the description at any point, and
4 that will allow us to unmute your line.

5 So this morning I wanted to begin with just a
6 brief update on -- and then we can move into some
7 discussions about anything members would like to talk about.

8 So just a brief update, as I mentioned, on what's
9 been going on with GOFERR since we last met. We had a very
10 hectic holiday season here, between federal reporting and
11 closing down most of the programs by the original CARES Act
12 deadline of December 30.

13 Also, as we all know, on December 27, the new
14 federal aid package was enacted, which included a new slate
15 of COVID relief. This included funding for vaccine
16 distribution, COVID testing, child care assistance,
17 substance abuse and mental health programming,
18 transportation and infrastructure, education and housing
19 rental relief.

20 And the deployment of most of these programs,
21 GOFERR has not taken a role, since they are flowing through
22 existing pathways through other state agencies.

1 The exception is the New Hampshire Emergency
2 Rental Assistance Program, which was announced just a few
3 weeks ago, and will be administered by the New Hampshire
4 Housing Finance Authority in collaboration with GOFERR.

5 NHHFA will work with five regional community
6 action partnerships, and will accept and process
7 applications and make payments for the program.

8 Full program guidelines and details and
9 application information will be available by March 15 at
10 NHHFA -- nhhfa.org -- and I believe they do have some
11 information up on their website right now, including the
12 ability to people to enter new notes as to get updates as to
13 when those applications will be available.

14 Beyond that, our major work has been with regard
15 to our own reporting back to US Treasury, as well as
16 receiving reports from grantees all over the state. That
17 recording has provided a clearer picture of how much COVID
18 Relief Fund -- or CRF -- resources remains available
19 following the closeout of all these programs.

20 Essentially what we are working through is like
21 any transaction. When we paid for a certain amount for a
22 program to be administered, and now we are seeing the change

1 and counting the change as it comes back to us. And based
2 on this, we are comfortable at this point with the
3 establishment of a new \$25 million-dollar fund that will be
4 held in reserve to allow us to cover any unforeseen COVID
5 recovery needs in the coming months.

6 As members of the Board know, CRF resources are
7 highly flexible. And with the deadline for expenditures now
8 pushed out to December 2021, this will allow us to fully
9 assess [_00:05:46_indiscernible guests/gas] that may merge
10 after deployment of the December relief package that I just
11 mentioned a moment ago, as well as the new stimulus package
12 that is being debated in Congress right now.

13 In conclusion, I think it is worth pointing out
14 that the funding provided by GOFERR in 2020, in partnership
15 with the Board, has put New Hampshire in an exceptionally
16 strong economic position, as we see COVID numbers decreasing
17 and vaccine numbers increasing.

18 Many of you know that I also cochair the state's
19 Economic Reopening Task Force. And like LAB, we are engaged
20 with that group in finding a path to move our businesses
21 back to normal operations as quickly as possible, while
22 continuing to protect public health and keeping consumer

1 confidence strong.

2 I want to thank the LAB for its ongoing
3 participation and role in helping New Hampshire be in the
4 position that we now find ourselves: with the reemergence of
5 a strong state economy, increasing revenue numbers for
6 businesses and state, a 3.6 percent unemployment rate --
7 which is down from 16 percent at the height of the pandemic
8 -- and the increasing likelihood that the summer of 2021
9 will feel a heck of a lot more or less normal than our last
10 summer.

11 So with that update, I'm certainly happy to turn
12 it over to members for any discussion on any subjects, or
13 any questions that the members feel. Please remember to hit
14 *5 to raise your hand.

15 [Pause]

16 5* -- I always get that backwards. I apologize.

17 [Pause]

18 TAYLOR CASWELL: Senator Morse, I see your hand's
19 raised?

20 SENATOR MORSE: Yeah, I guess a couple of things.
21 So everyone knows, I believe, our office has worked out with
22 the Governor's Office on Mascoma to work through this

1 committee to write one more check, try to get them to the
2 point where they wanted to be in the summer of this year.
3 And that's, you know, with the fact that they want to team
4 up with someone else for the future.

5 That's in the works, and pretty much I've been
6 assured that the number is probably going to be around
7 \$120,000. That was -- the intent was to cover six months,
8 and write a check out of the CARES Act money.

9 Beyond that, there were statements made late in
10 the fall about -- and that's why I think we wanted to have
11 this meeting -- that money which has been waterfalled into
12 unemployment that didn't get used.

13 Now, from what you're telling us today, the first
14 \$25 million may still be out there -- is going to be
15 dedicated to solving other problems. Is there more money
16 than \$25 million? And where does that go?

17 TAYLOR CASWELL: Okay, yes, Senator. I think,
18 first of all, that's the resource that we are confident that
19 we know we're going to have back -- would have otherwise
20 probably gone into the waterfall that we had originally
21 planned. Those resources now, as you know, the deadline has
22 been pushed out.

1 So with the combination of that money that's
2 coming in, and we are still in the closeout process with
3 several programs, so there could be additional resource, but
4 with the December 27 federal package as well as the pending
5 package in Washington right now, we didn't want to make any
6 decisions that would effectively be doubled up by any of
7 those programs.

8 And with this flexibility of these resources, I
9 think it does allow us to address gaps as we go forward.

10 In terms of what additional resource is out there,
11 as you know right now we're in the reporting process for
12 Main Street Relief Fund Program and the SELF Program. That
13 will not be complete until at least April 15, once the
14 reporting is done, probably several weeks after that before
15 we have a clear picture as to what that entails at the end
16 of the day.

17 So right now, it's at -- we have a number of \$25
18 million of the original CRF Fund that remains available, and
19 that we're recommending that it go into this relief fund --
20 I mean, I'm sorry -- this reserve fund.

21 And Taylor, just to follow up: Does that mean
22 that the only money you have right now is the \$25 million?

1 Or is there other money that came back?

2 TAYLOR CASWELL: I think that number represents
3 the amount that we know that will be coming back. We might
4 not have it in the account right now, but it is
5 representative sort of that analogy that I used about
6 receiving change back.

7 We don't -- there's a process that we have to do
8 to move money into those accounts. But at this point, \$25
9 million is the number we are sure will be coming back.

10 SENATOR MORSE: Okay. And then if there's any
11 more money than that, is the waterfall still in effect, and
12 it's going into unemployment?

13 TAYLOR CASWELL: Well, we haven't -- we never
14 actually executed the waterfall -- the waterfall fiscal
15 authorization.

16 But there is -- it really depends, I think, as we
17 move through the next couple of months, and whether it's
18 this Board or the Governor, to see those gaps and want to be
19 able to utilize some or all of that \$25 million dollars at a
20 point prior to the end of this calendar year.

21 That number may increase over time. I just don't
22 have a good sense, and I wouldn't be confident in giving you

1 a number that was more than \$25 million right now, but it's
2 possible. It could be more than that by the time we're
3 done.

4 SENATOR MORSE: All right. I guess what I'm
5 trying to get at, Taylor, is I've got plenty of meetings,
6 and I'll have a budget coming over on April 8. Is this
7 committee doing anything to benefit the process from here on
8 in, or -- you know, I guess I'm trying to figure out what
9 role we should be playing for the rest of -- you know, there
10 June, anyways.

11 And if we can't answer that question today, I
12 would think we should come back and answer that. Because if
13 everything's going to waterfall, we could come back, you
14 know, to update that for the fifteenth of April and things
15 like that.

16 If there's a need for us to come back and have
17 discussion, you know, it -- what I'm concerned about is all
18 this federal talk of what money's coming into New Hampshire,
19 that's going to happen sooner than later, and then, you
20 know, GOFERR's kind of a sideline at that point, to be
21 honest with you.

22 I mean, at anything I've looked at between county

1 government and city, they're getting a lot of money. So the
2 rest of it is -- you know, what's going to happen with the
3 rest of the money. But it doesn't sound like that's coming
4 to GOFERR.

5 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yeah. It's hard to say exactly,
6 but I would agree with that, Senator, that -- you know, as
7 we saw with the December 27 relief package, a lot of those
8 resources are flowing through existing funding pathways; so
9 whether it's through FEMA, or whether it's through HHS, or
10 whether it's through Education or Transportation.

11 Those have been showing up and flowing directly to
12 agencies, or other -- you know, partners around the state.
13 So the sort of flexible resource that we have under the
14 Coronavirus Relief Fund for state and local implementation
15 will probably be limited, if at all, in the final package
16 that we see coming.

17 SENATOR MORSE: Okay.

18 TAYLOR CASWELL: All right? I see Senator
19 D'Allesandro has his hand raised.

20 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Thank you. Really, just to
21 follow up on what Senator Morse said. The \$25 million we
22 know is available. You're going to hold that in reserve.

1 Will this committee have an opportunity to direct
2 some of that money in terms of needs that we see manifested
3 between now and the next time we meet? That's Number 1.

4 Number 2, Mascoma: Chuck, thank you very much. I
5 think that's a great effort on the part of GOFERR to keep
6 that thing going and keep the Health Care available for
7 people in that region. And I'm glad that it's set.

8 And my last question: How much money did go into
9 the Unemployment Fund, Taylor, was it the \$50 million? And -
10 -

11 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yes.

12 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: -- and is there some kind
13 of a plan to put more money in there when the waterfall is
14 established?

15 TAYLOR CASWELL: Let me hit all those. First, on
16 the Unemployment Trust Fund, yes, \$50 million is the amount
17 that went in and that currently stands as the total that's
18 gone to the Trust Fund.

19 With regard to your other question on the roll for
20 the Legislative Advisory Board, I mean, I'm not aware of any
21 change in the role that is defined for LAB. So as we kind
22 of see needs emerging, or as we sort of get to the point of

1 seeing the Main Street and SELF results after April 15, that
2 would be the next sort of -- I would say landmark or
3 milestone in the process here.

4 I don't anticipate much of that \$25 million being
5 necessary between now and when we see the stimulus package.
6 But, you know, there could be needs that come up.

7 So I don't know if I'm giving you a great answer
8 on that one, but I think overall the LAB role has not
9 changed, and that we're going to have at least \$25 million
10 dollars of reserve funds to address issues that maybe aren't
11 addressed in these other various federal packages.

12 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Okay, thank you. Okay.
13 So we're really on hold until some other decisions are made?

14 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yeah. I think we're waiting --
15 we are in some respects waiting to see what the stimulus
16 package -- and how that sort of manifests in its deployment
17 to the states.

18 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Right. And what it appears
19 is that will be direct distribution --

20 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yeah.

21 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: -- to cities and towns, et
22 cetera, rather than going through -- rather than going

1 through the Governor's Office. Is that -- that's how you
2 see it? I mean, that's how --

3 TAYLOR CASWELL: Well --

4 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: -- that's how it seems to
5 be happening.

6 TAYLOR CASWELL: -- I have to admit, I haven't
7 been tracking it, because it seems to change every other
8 day, but it does seem like that that would be likely that a
9 good portion of it would flow directly. I can't say for
10 sure that there's no role for GOFERR. You know, as we know
11 we're having this role with the housing program.

12 So there might be other opportunities where we can
13 help play a role, just based on the setup that we have. But
14 that will certainly be communicated to everybody if that
15 happens.

16 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Great. Thank you. And the
17 housing situation, I'm receiving a number of calls. As I
18 understand it now, that's going through the New Hampshire
19 Finance Authority?

20 TAYLOR CASWELL: That's right.

21 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: For rental assistance?

22 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yep.

1 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Okay.

2 TAYLOR CASWELL: Are any other discussion items or
3 questions? I don't see any hands raised. If you have
4 anything, just speak out.

5 [Pause]

6 Okay, well if not we have -- the next thing on our
7 agenda is really just to the point of Senator D'Allesandro
8 and Senator Morse, which is our next meeting time.

9 I mean, my suggestion would be that we wait until
10 after the April 15 tax deadline, and also, when we start to
11 see what we see coming out of the Main Street program and
12 any resources that might be able to be updated in terms of
13 that reserve fund.

14 But that's just my suggestion. Is there any
15 discussion from members on that point?

16 SENATOR MORSE: I agree.

17 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Yeah, I agree. I think
18 it's a good point, and by that time we ought to know how
19 much more money has come back.

20 TAYLOR CASWELL: Mm-hm.

21 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: So we should really know
22 what the bottom line looks like.

1 TAYLOR CASWELL: Yeah, we should have a much
2 clearer picture by that point. And Senator Morse, I see
3 your hand is raised as well?

4 SENATOR MORSE: Yeah. I would agree with the
5 April 15, but I wouldn't agree to set a time right now,
6 because I think what's going on with the federal government
7 is going to be a game changer.

8 You know, a lot of people are going to be able to
9 solve a lot of problems and the -- I just -- the only thing
10 I'd like to find out in the future is if we're needed on
11 this committee, because I'm sure we're going to be needed in
12 our local communities to go through all these discussions
13 about how the money is going to be spent.

14 So anyhow, I don't think we should set another
15 meeting, and I think we should see what happens in
16 Washington in the next couple of weeks, because they're
17 running out of time to -- I believe in what I saw -- to make
18 the decision. So once they make a decision, I think it's a
19 game changer for how this is handled. So --

20 TAYLOR CASWELL: Great. Yeah, that's fine. And
21 of course then it comes up that all of you -- we can
22 assemble as necessary, but I would say at this point let's

1 wait and see how that all works out. All of you know how to
2 get ahold of me or anyone here at GOFERR if any issues do
3 come up that you need answers on. I'm happy to help however
4 we can.

5 SENATOR MORSE: Okay.

6 TAYLOR CASWELL: SO we'll just hold off then until
7 a little bit deeper into April, and we'll be in touch with
8 everybody about when we might meet next.

9 SENATOR MORSE: Thanks.

10 TAYLOR CASWELL: Are any other issues or
11 questions?

12 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: No.

13 TAYLOR CASWELL: Okay.

14 SENATOR MORSE: I'm good.

15 TAYLOR CASWELL: Well, if not, thank you everyone.

16 SENATOR D'ALLESANDRO: Thank you.

17 TAYLOR CASWELL: Have a wonderful weekend.

18 COLLECTIVE: Thank you.

19 [End of Proceedings]