

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
North Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday October 11, 2011

PRESENT: Commissioners Cryans, Omer C. Ahern Jr. and Raymond Burton, Director Clough and Secretary Martino.

9:11 AM Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance

County Attorney Lara Saffo arrived with her report *(see attached) and reviewed the items with the Commissioners. She noted that burglaries were up almost three times over last year which she said is an enormous increase.

Atty. Saffo asked the Commissioners for permission to close the office on the 26th of October from 12:00 to 4:00 PM for a staff retreat which would be held off site. Commissioner Ahern voiced his concern about no one being available to the public if needed and Atty. Saffo said that any calls that came in that were of importance would be directed to the Sheriff's Office and staff could be reached by cell phone. Commissioner Ahern said that he is not comfortable with not having a public agency open when it was supposed to be.

There was some further discussion and Commissioner Cryans asked if there was another alternative to closing. Atty. Saffo said the only other alternative was to leave a staff member behind and she didn't want to exclude anyone but that it could be worked out if needed.

Director Clough said that this has been done before and there has never been any concern from the public.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve closing the Atty's Office on October 26th from 12:00 PM to 4:00PM which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. Commissioners Burton and Cryans were in favor while Commissioner Ahern was opposed.

Atty. Saffo said that there was a site visit from the Justice Center to the Mental Health Court which produced some very positive results. Atty. Saffo gave the Commissioners a copy of the report.

Commissioner Burton asked if there was any common thread amongst the increase of burglaries and Atty. Saffo said that they seem to be primarily committed by those age 20 something, out of work with some kind of addiction. She said that the numbers include a multitude of burglaries committed by the same person but she feels the public should be aware.

Commissioner Cryans agreed that it was important to alert the public and caution them as to what kinds of steps they should take to be safe.

Commissioner Ahern stated his concern about the residual costs of equipment purchase

via grants.

Register of Deeds Kelley Monahan arrived next at the table and said that there wasn't much more to report since reporting at last week's meeting. She said that she is continuing negotiations with the software vendor and that the office was making some changes in the way of efficiencies.

Commissioner Cryans asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes and if there were any changes or additions. Commissioner Ahern had emailed a change he wanted made and Sec. Martino read that to the Board. Commissioner Cryans had one edit.

Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes as revised which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Three students from Professor Ron Sheiko's research class at the Rockefeller Center, Dartmouth College, arrived at the request of Commissioner Cryans. The students, Rich D'amato, Marissa Grecko and Mike Sanchez, will look at what other counties have done with their old Jails when they move out of them. Maine, NH and VT will be researched.

Commissioner Burton said the Rockefeller Center has had a long history of research and that there will be an advisory committee which will be chaired by him, to gather information and discuss what should be done. He said he hoped that the students might be able to come to the meeting on the 1st of November and brief the committee on what they have found so far.

Commissioner Ahern suggested that it might be good to see if the building could be used for something else as it has some historical value. He said he appreciated the students doing this research.

The students commented that they look forward to working on this project and will give the committee a preliminary report of the 1st of November and a full report by the end of their term.

The students then left to tour both the existing facility and the new Jail which is under construction.

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander arrived with her report to the Commissioners. Census is 132. There are 5 residents with Medicare, 99 with Medicaid and 28 private pay.

NHA Bolander carried with her a written complaint from an employee who seems to be having a problem with continued vandalism in the parking lot, and shared it with the Commissioners. There are no other employees with this problem and NHA Bolander has questioned the employee to see if perhaps there is some personal issue which might be causing this and the employee said there was nothing she could think of.

Commissioner Cryans said if there is a pattern to this then perhaps law enforcement should be contacted and Commissioner Ahern agreed with that. There was further discussion.

NHA Bolander brought forth a request from the Assistant Director of Nursing who asked if there could be a dress down day on days other than Friday and if on that day, those who choose to dress down would pay a dollar to do so, which would go towards a charity of some kind.

Commissioner Burton asked if there was any policy regarding the collection of money for donations and Director Clough said there was not.

Commissioner Ahern said he didn't think this was a good idea and though the intent and cause are good, he thought it might put pressure on others to participate when they might not be financially able to. Commissioner Burton agreed with that sentiment.

Commissioner Cryans asked NHA Bolander if she could explain this to her staff so it was understandable.

*10:20 AM - Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of discussing the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee according to RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Cryans called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes"; Commissioner Burton "yes" Commissioner Cryans "yes"; Commissioner Cryans stated that a majority of the board voted yes and will now go into non-public session.

*10:50 AM– Commissioner Cryans declared the meeting back in public session

Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the non-public session which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Human Resource Director Michael Simpson wanted to review the employee handbook with the Commissioners and in particular, talk about the perfect attendance bonus. He said that his preference is that it be removed from the handbook altogether and that it had been eliminated from the Union contract as a benefit. He suggested that longevity be unfrozen for this year in its stead.

Commissioner Ahern said that he has gone over the employee handbook and feels that it is unworkable. He said first that the financial implications are great, particularly in these times and that there needs to be a way to simplify the policies.

Commissioner Cryans said you have to have policies that deal with different employees and that he didn't think that the policies should be driven by financial times unless you're considering adding benefits.

HRD Simpson said that he thought there could be some simplifications, such as having one bank of earned time to work from, but that would require a lot of work and discussions between the Union and the Employee Council

Commissioner Ahern said he thought that the employees should be able to easily read

and understand the various policies.

Commissioner Burton said he looks at the handbook as a work in progress and said if Commissioner Ahern has some things that he would like to see changed then he can always take some time to look things over and recommend changes and then bring those changes back to the Board.

Commissioner Cryans agreed that if things could be simplified and redundancies taken out that would be a good thing.

Director Clough said the handbook is a complex document and it is put together to manage a lot of different jobs and issues that need to be addressed. She said right now there is a policy in place which speaks to how changes to the handbook are made, particularly regarding benefits to employees. She said that process come through the budget and includes employee negotiations. She said there have been many meetings with Dept. Heads to review the handbook and there is more than one area of focus which included the Nursing Home, the Jail, Farm and the Sheriff's Dept. etc.

There was some further discussion.

Commissioner Burton asked how many question a week HR gets regarding the handbook and HRD Simpson said about two or three. Commissioner Burton then asked that based that, were there things that should be changed.

Director Clough replied that there may still be things that come up that have not been addressed in the handbook

The discussion continued.

Commissioner Ahern said he would like to see if there is anything in the performance audit that references the handbook and possible changes to it..

The discussion then turned back to longevity and the option of having it unfrozen for this fiscal year. Director Clough said that she believes there will be money in the budget to continue longevity as it is stated in the policies. She said that in regard to perfect attendance, anyone qualifying for it this year would still be eligible for it, but it would go away January 2012.

Commissioner Cryans said he still sees a benefit in perfect attendance but he's not averse to getting rid of it if that's what the Employee Council wants.

There was a discussion about what the Delegation said about longevity and Director Clough said their vote has no say in whether or not the Commissioners, who set the policies, pay out longevity or not. Commissioner Ahern said he didn't want to get into a disagreement with the Delegation. Director Clough stated that she hates to see the Commissioners continually giving up their authority to the Delegation and that according to the Delegation's own by-laws the Commissioners do have the power to do this if there is money available.

Commissioner Ahern said he feels he would like to see how the Executive Committee wanted to see this done and Director Clough said it was clear what they wanted because of the way they voted.

Commissioner Cryans said that the Executive Committee voted to take something away from the Employee Council even though at the time they knew they couldn't take it from the Union employees.

Commissioner Ahern said he is not inclined to get into a disagreement with the Delegation and he is not in favor of going against their vote. Commissioner Cryans said he was comfortable doing so but still doesn't want to give up perfect attendance.

HRD Simpson said that right now the handbook doesn't speak to the freezing of longevity so technically a case could be made for it.

Director Clough said she will gather up more information and bring that back to the Board to help them make their decision.

Commissioner Cryans said he is comfortable with the handbook and doesn't see himself coming to HRD Simpson with any other changes. Commissioner Burton said he felt the same way. Commissioner Ahern said he hadn't had time to go through things and still questions certain authorizations for certain rules.

A timber cut sale report from Forester Falkenham was given to Director Clough who then presented to the Commissioners. She said the final sale amount was \$35,892 which is less than the bid, but there was quite a problem with something called "spider heart", which affects the heartwood and is undetectable until the wood is cut. Forester Falkenham said he was very pleased with the job that Randy Cassidy did and would recommend him highly. The timber cut is complete at this juncture.

Commissioner Cryans signed the close out paperwork for the MicroCredit 2010 grant.

A NACo membership report was included with the invoice that was sent for the annual dues, and showed all the various things that NACo does for Grafton County *(see attached)

A letter was received from the Town of Hanover which voiced concern over the possibility that Grafton County planned to operate the Dispatch Center with money collected from County taxes. Hanover stated that they had no desire to be a part of the Grafton County Dispatch and asked that Commissioner Cryans and Director Clough attend one of their Selectboard meetings. It was noted that there was never any decision to change the fee structure of Dispatch although a survey did go out questioning what towns would like to see.

There will be a GED graduation tomorrow morning at 10:00 AM at the Jail.

Corrections Academy began yesterday here at the County and the graduation for that will be on November 11th.

The Drug Court Case Manager grant report was signed by Commissioner Cryans.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

A discussion was had about whether or not the County should have a written financial policy. Director Clough said there are particular protocols that are followed in both the Commissioners' Department and the Nursing Home which are done to eliminate the possibility of fraud but there is no written policy per se, nor has it ever been a recommendation from any audit firm.

Commissioner Ahern said there were two seminars that he would like to attend upon approval from the Board.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve attendance of the seminars by Commissioner Ahern which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. Commissioners Burton and Cryans were in favor while Commissioner Ahern abstained from the vote.

Commissioner Ahern said he was surprised to see a fuel discount flyer to employees as a paycheck stuffer from Irving oil which offered a ten cent discount on oil per gallon. He said it could give the public the perception that County employees were receiving a discount because the County has chosen Irving's bid for their oil and that there was a use of tax payer dollars to get this discount.

Commissioner Ahern will attend the Ellsworth Selectboard meeting on the 18th of October.

12:25 PM being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk

**Office of the Grafton County Attorney
Lara Saffo, County Attorney
October, 2011
Report to the Commissioners**

(1) Case management. We continue to see an increase of one third in the number of cases being handled by this office. We've added 653 cases to date January 1, 2011 to the present time, compared to 2010 at this time when we had added 450. Again for the entire 2010 calendar year we opened 596. Here is a list of some case types:

<u>Case type</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>
Assaults	24	14
AFSA	33	18
Burglary	91	31
Sex. Assault	8	8

When we pull statistics from our computer, our computer pulls the cases referred to us, so for example, we had 91 cases referred to us by law enforcement. I am going to try to pull these cases to see how many we indicted.

(2) Last month I provided a recent study on youth marijuana and alcohol consumption. In late September, I attended the Connecticut Recovery Conference (as a member of a drug court team). The room and conference fees were paid for by scholarship, and I utilized the county vehicle.

There was a significant amount of information on drugs and its impact on the brain. Speakers also discussed medication facilitated recovery (methadone and suboxone). As I believe you are aware, our concerns with youth using substances are in part driven by the fact that their brains are still developing, thus substance abuse is particularly dangerous at this time in a person's life. There appears to be a trend recognizing the negative impact of substance abuse on the brain, reflected in the new "short" definition of Addiction developed this year by ASAM, the American Society of Addiction Medicine:

Short Definition of Addiction: Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one's behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without treatment or engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death.

(3) Space.

We have been able to put the smaller room to good use. Our victim witness coordinator is using this space to meet with victims. Because the conference room is underutilized, we are going to encourage our interns to utilize this space when available to study.

(4) Karpel/Software for County

We have submitted the supplemental grant to cover the cost of one last laptop computer. The county otherwise had adequate hardware and software. Rockingham has been provided with our templates and we will learn by early November how many they have adopted.

(5) Interns/Externs/Special Assistant County Attorneys

We have a new extern, Mike Lynness from Vermont Law School, who will be externing with us three days a week. We are fortunate that Justin Hersch continues to extern with our office as well. Vermont Law School has already contacted us about a spring intern.

We have been invited to participate in the UNH School of Law intern forum, designed to explore non paying internships with students. I will be attending on December 6th. While distance wise, we are not competitive with other prosecutors while a student is in law school, I am hoping there is a student from this part of New Hampshire who is interested in summer internship.

(6) Staff Annual Retreat

I am planning our annual staff retreat for October 26, from noon – 4:00. We will be reviewing our numbers, the reorganization of our office, and the advent of KARPEL and how it can streamline case processing. I also want to hear from staff about how they are doing, in general, with this increase in caseload and solicit their input (which I will also do in advance) on any recommendations or suggestions. I hope to close the office for this event. As always, we will refer people to the Sheriff's Department in the event a person needs to reach us before the office reopens. The Court and most defense attorneys also have my cellular phone number.

(7) Public Safety Initiatives

a. Mental Health Court (A.S.S.E.R.T. and Halls of Hope)

We received the report of our site visit, which was well received.

Both programs are up and running, and accepting applicants. The New Hampshire Court system will be putting the forms on line at the State of New Hampshire, courts website. We are welcoming Rissa Meyer, an intern from Plymouth State University to assist Shelly Golden in December. I look forward to introducing her to you.

b. The New Hampshire Partnership for the Protection of Older Adults

We continue to be active in this initiative. Melissa Pierce is conducting the last of two trainings today. We will be then focusing on a Grafton County initiative.

c. Child Advocacy Center at DHMC

I will provide specific numbers next month, but it continues to be a busy, well received program. The children have been offered CAPP exams when necessary and the children and their families are offered mental health services.

d. Plymouth Area Sexual Assault Resource Team

We continue to circulate a Memorandum of Understanding to law enforcement, medical, advocacy and mental health agencies. For April (Sexual Assault Awareness month) we are planning initiatives to identify abusive behavior and promote bystander responsibility and safe behaviors.

e. Grafton County Drug Court Sentencing Program

Our next graduation is October 24, 2011. This graduation we have asked the parents of participants to speak about their experiences in the program.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions.