

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
February 9<sup>th</sup> 2021

PRESENT: Commissioners Lauer, Piper, Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross

OTHERS PRESENT: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Director of Nursing Porter, HR Director Clough, Farm Manager Nelson, Alternative Sentencing Director DePalo, County Attorney Hornick

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Director of Nursing Porter and HR Director Clough arrived and requested to go into nonpublic session.**

**MOTION:** \* 9:06 AM Commissioner Lauer moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes"; Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\* 9:18 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes" Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes". Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to approve NHA Labore's request regarding a personnel matter. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the minutes from the February 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The Commissioners signed check registers 35; 37; 1150-1151; 1153-1155; 1161-1164.

Farm Manager Nelson arrived and gave the following report:

1. We are currently milking 79 cows averaging 77 pounds per cow. Milk components are holding steady at 4.39 butterfat and 3.26 protein. 11,900 pounds of milk are being shipped every other day. \$18.92 per hundredweight was the last pay price for January milk.
2. The farm is fully staffed and with the continued help from Glenn Libby, there will be an opportunity to better manage earned time. Inmate labor is good until later March.
3. Farm stand plan for 2021. Hoping to operate similarly to last year but significantly improve potato production. He noted that he is looking to start the greenhouse with the same seeds as last year.
4. We have 2 possibly pregnant sows of 7 that were checked by ultrasound. The boar is with 2 additional sows that farrowed in late fall. Planning on borrowing a young boar to breed 2 gilts.
5. Joe and I should have time in our work schedule to start making repairs on tractors and other equipment.
6. I would like to have John Porter visit the farm to identify inefficiencies and create possible economical solutions.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he has suggested 4H kids and Master Gardeners to help with the crops on the farm. Commissioner Lauer stated that the Master Gardeners are short on help as well. She would not rule them out though but questions if having 4H kids working on the farm and possibly around inmates will be a liability. Commissioner Piper stated that the labor situation at the farm is scary. It can be very discouraging, and she wonders if FM Nelson has any feedback to what Commissioner Ahern has offered in his document. FM Nelson stated that he worries about consistency. It is hard to get quality labor for this kind of work and they need quality consistent labor there every day to maintain the Farmstand. He stated that he received a letter from Agrimark and they sold nearly \$350,000 worth of milk between January 2020 and December 2020 and he would hate to take away from that. Keeping the dairy going is a high priority for him but he also wants to support any other streams of revenue. He noted that the farm used to sell small dry square bales of hay. He stated this is what he knows how to do and they have the equipment to do it. It is something they could look into doing again. Commissioner Piper noted that it is important to invite FM Nelson's feedback so they can see what ideas may or may not have been addressed. She noted that immigrant labor fills a big agricultural need all over the country, and asked if this is something they should look into. FM Nelson said that Hatchland employs immigrant help. Commissioner Lauer stated that they had previously discussed in the farm committee focusing on crops that are less intensive to care for but bring in the most revenue. Potatoes and sweetcorn are their biggest sellers. FM Nelson mentioned a possible work-study program with a Riverbend Ag student. The Commissioners agreed the Farm Committee needs to be reconvened and thanked FM Nelson for his hard work.

## **Broadband Committee – Nik Coates, Michael Samson, Andrew Lassar**

N. Coates stated that the Broadband Committee is a five (5)-member committee and they are pushing through many topics at once. They have been meeting for about six (6) months now. There are five (5) or six (6) areas they are focusing on and he discussed those areas with the Commissioners. He noted that they are also getting ready to release a survey out to the towns to find out where there is internet service, where it is lacking and find out what the real problem is. He further discussed the work the Committee is working on and answered questions from the Commissioners. He stated that their next meeting is on February 24<sup>th</sup> and that he will be returning to the Commissioners after that to give them a further update. The Commissioners thanked the committee members for updating them and for all of their hard work thus far.

**AS Director DePalo arrived and requested to go into nonpublic session.**

**MOTION:** \* 10:40 AM Commissioner Lauer moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (c) Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\* 11:04 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to stop the contracts with Valley Court Diversion and CADY for Juvenile Restorative Justice Programs effective July 1<sup>st</sup> and take on cases in house. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**County Attorney Hornick arrived and gave the following update on her office to the Commissioners:**

Atty. Hornick stated that they have been the recipient of a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women through the Federal Department of Justice. She noted that former Atty. Saffo applied for this grant and it began three (3) years ago. This grant has given them a rural roving advocate and they are now at the start of the last year. She is requesting permission from the Commissioners to apply for this grant again. She stated that Karen Stewart is the part time Grant Administrator that she hired as part of the grant. She has managed the program and they have



worked with Voices Against Violence and Burch House. Atty. Hornick explained that this is a valuable resource and asking to apply again. Commissioner Ahern asked if this person require office space at the complex. Atty. Hornick stated that they do not. All expenses associated with this position, including any supplies they may need, are covered in the grant as well. Atty. Hornick answered further questions from the Commissioners.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to send the letter of intent to the Federal Department of Justice to apply for the Violence Against Women. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

PBK Discussion – Atty. Hornick explained that across the country and in every County Attorney’s Office in the state, there is a case management system they use called PBK, which is a Karpel Microsoft, based system. There is a glitch with the program working with Internet Explorer. This program will be kicked off Internet Explorer by April and there is no work around. She and IT Manager Ruggles met with the owner of PBK to see if there can be a technical work around and there is not one. She explained that PBK has given them a quote to purchase another operating system through Microsoft Office 365, which will cost \$6,000 for everyone in their office to work with. They are having a meeting tomorrow to work out the financial details. IT Manager Ruggles is involved in this process to make sure that the right questions are being asked regarding these changes. She noted that she wanted to bring this to the Commissioners attention, as it is something that may need to be added to the budget. She is not requesting anything at this time and as she gets more information, she will update the Commissioners.

Judicial Branch – Atty. Hornick stated that the Supreme Court made the order that no in person hearings would continue through the end of February. They are doing in person arraignments and Grand Jury is happening online. There have been many technical glitches and next month she will be requesting to go down in person to Concord for Grand Jury. She stated that she is hoping after June they will be going to in person. This month they are having their pilot trial project. It will be at the courthouse and they should have two (2) or three (3) jury trials going the last week of February. Once they get through the first trial, in March hopefully they can start to get to trials that have been backed up.

Attorney Hornick requested a nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \* 11:36 AM Commissioner Lauer moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with anybody or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (e) Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”

Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\* 11:45 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passed.

CA Libby submitted the following monthly report from the Register of Deeds for the Commissioners’ review:

**Grafton County Registry of Deeds  
Kelley J. Monahan Register  
Report to Commissioners  
February 9, 2021**

**January Revenue**

County Revenue 1/2009 \$ 52,410.89	State Revenue 1/2009 \$ 271,090.56
County Revenue 1/2010 \$ 57,423.27	State Revenue 1/2010 \$ 339,951.36
County Revenue 1/2011 \$ 68,696.84	State Revenue 1/2011 \$ 324,824.64
County Revenue 1/2012 \$ 62,139.27	State Revenue 1/2012 \$ 256,680.00
County Revenue 1/2013 \$ 64,370.72	State Revenue 1/2013 \$ 301,115.52
County Revenue 1/2014 \$ 55,361.36	State Revenue 1/2014 \$ 405,148.80
County Revenue 1/2015 \$ 54,735.50	State Revenue 1/2015 \$ 396,939.84
County Revenue 1/2016 \$ 58,411.93	State Revenue 1/2016 \$ 451,948.80
County Revenue 1/2017 \$101,075.90	State Revenue 1/2017 \$1,207,218.24
County Revenue 1/2018 \$ 64,041.41	State Revenue 1/2018 \$ 595,952.80
County Revenue 1/2019 \$ 63,278.54	State Revenue 1/2019 \$ 480,235.20
County Revenue 1/2020 \$ 98,990.11	State Revenue 1/2020 \$ 857,042.68

**Foreclosures**

2009	14 year to date
2010	21 year to date
2011	14 year to date
2012	12 year to date
2013	19 year to date
2014	15 year to date
2015	13 year to date
2016	14 year to date
2017	5 year to date
2018	4 year to date
2019	7 year to date
2020	9 year to date
2021	3 year to date

1. The higher than average figures from January 2017 reflect one large sale rather than an increase in document volume. Miracle Mile Plaza Lebanon.
2. I will be providing an update on behalf of the NH Register of Deeds Affiliate at the New Hampshire Association of Counties Commissioner Council meeting on March 15, 2021 at 1:00 via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley J. Monahan

Certificate of Authority – CA Libby stated that this is the grant that covers the Covid testing costs at \$100 per test. The grant is extended through June 30. She stated that the Certificate of Authority gives NHA Labore the authority to enter into and sign off on this contract. She noted that this certificate of authority needs to be renewed every thirty (30) days.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved That Craig J. Labore, Grafton County Nursing Home Administrator is duly authorized on behalf of Grafton County to enter into contracts and agreements with the State of New Hampshire and any of its agencies or departments and further is authorized to execute any and all documents, agreements and other instruments, and any amendments, revisions, or modifications thereto, which may in his/her judgement be desirable or necessary to effect the purpose of this vote. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Close out Documentation – CA Libby submitted the close out documentation for the CDFA 2018 Microenterprise grant for Commissioner Piper and Lauer to sign as well as three (3) close out certifications, one (1) for each of the programs.

CA Libby submitted the DoC Superior Court Report for the month of January for the Commissioners review.

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC Representative – CA Libby stated that Patricia Higgins' term is up as the representative on the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC. She asked Commissioner Piper if she followed up with P. Higgins to see if she wants to continue as the representative. Commissioner Piper stated that she will reach out to her this afternoon.

CA Libby requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \* 11:57 AM Commissioner Lauer moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a)



Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\* 12:22 PM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

FARMDOC – Commissioner Piper stated that she has read the document very thoroughly. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is hoping it speaks for itself. He is hoping to have the Commissioners’ approval of this document. Commissioner Piper stated that she feels that getting the committee together to discuss these ideas and develop a road map for them is a good idea. Commissioner Lauer stated that she agrees with wanting to start a study with the Farm Committee to look into these issues. Commissioner Piper stated that she wants to start the conversations and be very respectful of what the department heads bring to the discussion. She would like to encourage them to consider Commissioner Ahern’s ideas as she thinks it could be successful. The Commissioners discussed the document and its content in more detail and agreed that they want to get the Farm Committee together to start the discussions about the farm and how they can possibly move forward with some of the ideas Commissioner Ahern has presented. CA Libby stated that she will get ahold of the committee members and try to set up a meeting within the next couple of weeks.

### **Commissioner Issues:**

Commissioner Ahern stated that he attended a meeting last night, talking about the electric power situation, and what Eversource wants to do. He stated that during his last term, the Commissioners were trying to work with Woodsville Water & Light to get their power somewhere else. He stated that it looks like Eversource is trying to get that senate bill repealed. He asked where Grafton County is on this matter. CA Libby stated that is something she can put on the agenda to be discussed at a later meeting as it is a lengthy conversation.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he also attended an event for the NH Charitable Trust on homelessness in New Hampshire.

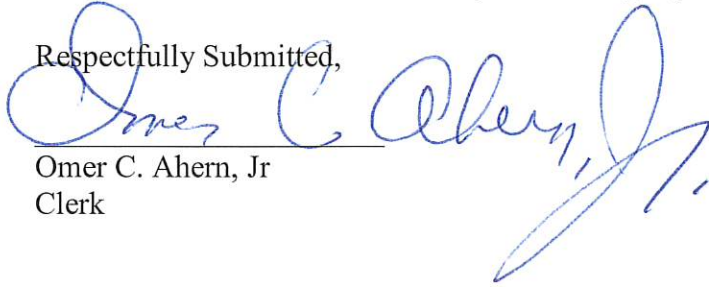
Commissioner Piper stated that she attended the Lebanon City Council meeting last week. The issue was Community Power and the possibility of the county joining. Lebanon and Hanover have joined.

NH Association of Counties Executive Committee – Commissioner Piper stated that dues have been decreased for this budget. They had a virtual orientation for new legislatures and were able

to save \$4,000. \$2,000 was taken out of the undesignated fund balance and therefore they had \$6,000 to put towards dues in order to lower the amount owed by the counties. She noted that there were updates on the governor's budget, which will be coming out as well as the salary survey that will be coming out. Chris Coates made a point to say regarding HB315, they met with Eversource and there are amendments in process.

12:57 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Omer C. Ahern, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Omer C. Ahern, Jr  
Clerk