

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday February 16, 2010

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, Ray Burton and Martha Richards, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Martino

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Brown

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:06 AM

Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop arrived and passed out a spreadsheet with the social services proposals for FY11 and who those entities served last year. She also brought along a request for support for HB1355. Director Clough said that she had emailed the request for support to the Delegation. HB1355 aims to prevent county revenue loss for Medicaid care to nursing homes.

Human Resource Director Michael Simpson arrived. He brought with him the updated revised Employee Handbook. He said that after working closely with Dept. Heads, the Employee Council and with legal assistance, the book is ready to roll out.

General changes made to the handbook include:

- Index in the rear with no front table of contents
- Separation of categories
- Combination of classified and unclassified
- Updated terminology
- Removal of repetition
- Legally compliant.

Items that were added:

- ADA policy
- Whistle blower policy
- Confidentiality
- Layoff policy
- Safety related items
- IT policies (computer/email)

Items that were revised:

- FMLA (to comply)
- Perfect attendance
- Compensation philosophy
- Termination
- Corrective action
- Sexual harassment (changed to "Harassment" as blanket coverage)
- Educational assistance
- Employment status

Commissioner Burton asked what form the book would be in and HRD Simpson stated that it would be spiral bound.

HRD Simpson said that he would like to see the handbook posted on the website so that anyone interested could read it.

Commissioner Burton said that he would like to see contact information in it as well.

Commissioner Burton asked if the handbook would stand the test of any court law and HRD Simpson replied that right now it would, however, laws change frequently.

Commissioners Burton and Richards agreed that it should be added to the website. HRD Simpson said that he had just considered that this morning and didn't get a chance to run it by Director Clough. He said that he would like her opinion. She said that he needed a chance to consider it.

Commissioner Burton asked if all the employees would be signing for the book and HRD Simpson said they would and explained how he would be going about that. HRD Simpson credited a number of people that helped with the handbook.

Commissioner Richards thought that there should be a table of contents at the front as opposed to having an index in the rear. She also noted that she wanted to make sure that the nepotism policy is made clear and agreed with Commissioner Burton that there should be contact info in there.

Commissioner Cryans asked both HRD Simpson and Director Clough if the termination policy was very clear and that the actions suggested in the handbook were compliant. HRD Simpson said they were. He said that regarding to the Employee Council's role in grievances; discrimination will be changed to a function of HR.

Commissioner Richards moved to accept the newly revised employee handbook which should also contain the added/changed suggestions by the Commissioners and the caveat that all employees sign for their handbook, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Commissioner Richards asked HRD Simpson if the handbook might be less expensive if it were done at a printers and he said that he would check into it.

HRD Simpson then presented the Commissioners with his standard report saying that there are two new openings for RN/LPN which makes a total of five right now.

- Colonial Life will be on campus this week to talk with interested employees
- Payroll files have now all been moved to the HR dept.
- Union negotiations are ongoing
- HRD Simpson is working on his budget
- HRD Simpson partook in a webinar on workman's compensation through Primex

HRD Simpson presented the Commissioners with a list of long and short term goals for himself and the department as requested by Commissioner Richards.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the minutes from February, 2010, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. An edit was made. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Commissioner Cryans took a moment to recognize the Olympic athletes from Grafton County beginning with Hannah Kearney, a Hanover graduate, who won a gold medal in the moguls, Bode Miller who scored bronze in the downhill, Nick Alexander who came in 41st in jumping, Hillary Knight, who plays on the women's hockey team, who beat China in the first game, Andrew Weibrecht, downhill and Laura Spector, both from Dartmouth, who placed 45th in the biathlon.

The Commissioners reviewed the DoC Superior Court Report.

CDFA has requested that the Commissioners amend the motion that they made on August 25, 2009, to have the Chair, as opposed to the Executive Director, be the person authorized to sign paperwork for the DRTC grant.

Commissioner Burton moved to amend the motion

“to approve the submittal of the application and to authorize Director Clough to sign and submit the application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize Director Clough to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract”

and moved to approve the submittal of the application and to authorize Commissioner Cryans to sign and submit the application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize Commissioner Cryans to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Commissioner Richards moved to accept the Resolutions regarding expenditure of County Funds on the Correctional Facilities Project, to be reimbursed from bond proceeds as follows

WHEREAS, on February 11, 2008 Grafton County (the “County”), acting through its Convention, authorized the issuance of up to \$38,000,000 in bonds (the “Bonds”) to finance the construction of certain correctional facilities (the “Project”): and

WHEREAS, the Bonds have not yet been issued; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners for the County wish to expend certain County funds to pay for Project costs on an interim basis and wish to be reimbursed for such expenditures from the proceeds of the Bonds, when issued;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, it is hereby:

RESOLVED: that the County is hereby authorized to expend its own funds on account of Project costs with the understanding and expectation that the County will be reimbursed for such expenditures from the proceeds of the Bonds, once issued;

RESOLVED: that this Resolution shall be deemed to constitute the “official intent” of the County with respect to the subject matter hereof for purposes of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, including, without limitation, IRS Regulation 1.150-2; and

RESOLVED: that all actions heretofore taken by the County with respect to the subject matter hereof are hereby ratified and confirmed.

This resolution was seconded by Commissioner Burton adding that the expenditure of monies would not be made unless and until there was a decision from the Court in favor of the County.

All were in favor.

Commissioner Richards noted that there was still no decision at all from the Court.

Grafton County Economic Development Council (GCEDC), Executive Director Mark Scarano arrived to give the Commissioners an update on what has been going on with GCEDC.

M. Scarano began by saying that the economy seems to be improving according to last quarter's GDP. He then discussed the global economy. Moving on, he relayed that the unemployment rate in Grafton County is low stating that it's about 4% in the Lebanon/Hanover area and around 6% in the Haverhill area. He said that unemployment in Grafton County is lower than any other county in the State.

In keeping with that, there will be a grand opening of New England Catheter at New England Wire in March and there are new biomed companies coming out of the Upper Valley. Commissioner Richards stated that she wants to support local manufacturing regardless of what things can be done overseas. She asked who would help with that effort. M. Scarano discussed manufacturing partnerships along with other entities that could help.

There would be an upcoming loan for a new hotel in the Hanover area which will produce 38 jobs and a recent loan has been given to Littleton Motor Sports.

The DRTC incubator is expanding and GCEDC is the fiscal agent for that. A future plan is to have an SBDC Councilor for the Plymouth area.

Barring any unforeseen complications, North Country Workplace Education project will begin which is a project aimed at trying to keep kids in the area after graduation.

On another note, M. Scarano said that PSU will no longer be able to commit an Executive Director or staff to the incubator project in Plymouth because of fiscal cuts. Commissioner Burton asked what kind of balance was available from GCEDC to fund that position and M. Scarano said they did not have the money as the average cost of an Executive Director was around \$75K.

Commissioner Burton asked if most of the loans that are carried are current and M. Scarano said that most were.

Commissioner Burton asked about Northern Borders and M. Scarano said it has great promise of getting underway. Commissioner Burton said that he would like to see it get moving.

Commissioner Burton said that it was a credit to M. Scarano and GCEDC to keep the Board of Commissioners apprised of how things were going.

Register of Deeds Bill Sharp arrived. He began by saying that the new hours in Deeds are working out fine and there have been no complaints.

Commissioner Cryans asked how it was working with the new company that merged with Connor and Connor and RD Sharp said it was fine.

The reason that RD Sharp was asked to attend the meeting was to go over an invoice for legal fees that he thought the County should pay and not him personally.

Originally the invoice was billed directly to RD Sharp and was returned to him by Director Clough because it was not made out to the County. RD Sharp had the attorney address the invoice to the County. It was his opinion that because he needed legal assistance on a matter that pertained to something in Deeds, that the County should pay it. RD Sharp came up with a few different ways of how that invoice could be paid and from what budget lines.

There was a discussion as to the correct way that that should have been handled and that RD Sharp should have brought his legal concern to a higher authority, the Executive Director, before any legal agreement was made. This is how it is generally done within the system. It was also noted at a previous Commissioner meeting, that RD Sharp speak with the County Attorney regarding legal assistance. RD Sharp claimed that he brought his issue to Attorney St. Hilaire and said that the County Attorney said he would have to investigate him, so he decided to look for outside council. Commissioner Cryans said that he didn't think it would be fair to penalize the attorney by not paying him so the County will do so, however, he said, the Executive Director should not be blindsided by this type of action in the future and any consideration of outside council should go through the proper channels.

The invoice will be paid from the County budget's legal line.

Commissioner Richards moved to pay the legal invoice in the amount of \$875. on behalf of the Register of Deeds, which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Burton said that he did not believe that the bill in question, where it came from and what it was for, was appropriate use of County money

When the vote came down, Commissioners Richards and Cryans were in favor, Commissioner Burton was opposed.

Commissioner Burton signed a resolution from Community Guaranty Bank and Commissioners Cryans and Richards signed attesting to that.

A letter was received from New Hampshire Charitable Foundation stating that Thomas Keirnan will be succeeding current president Lou Feldstein and will take over in July.

Director Clough read a letter from Corrections Commissioner William Wrenn responding to the letter that the Commissioners wrote to the Governor about a recent layoff of a person in Probation/Parole. The letter basically said that it was a fiscal decision.

A letter was received from the town of Wentworth regarding dispatch fees saying that they were a significant increase over last year. It was noted that their services had increased from last year and that is what the fees are based on. The town suggested that they may have to contract with another agency, though they didn't really want to and requested that the Commissioners find some kind of compromise to the increased fees.

Sheriff Dutile suggested calculating an average of the last three years and using that number for a one time compromise, adding that the town should do a review to see why there was such a spike in activity during the last year. This would result in a reduction of around \$2000.

Commissioner Cryans said that he appreciated the concern from the town of Wentworth, however, the formula was made and calculated on usage. He also suggested that if they considered changing

to another service then they would have to consider the technology that is provided to them through Grafton County, such as the mobile units.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the suggestion made by the Sheriff and noted that this should not be a precedence setting decision but would rather be done on a case by case scenario, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. Commissioners Burton and Richards were in favor. Commissioner Cryans was opposed.

A thank you was received from Nick Alexander for the donation made to his endeavor toward the Olympics.

Director Clough said the EECBG application has been submitted electronically and by mail last Friday and should meet arrival expectations.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton said that State Police F Troop had a new Lieutenant, Todd Landry and he suggested that a letter of welcome and an informational packet should be sent to him.

11:30 AM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk