

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH 03774
April 1st 2021

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer, Ahern, County Administrator Dorsett, Finance Director Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Finance Director Jurentkuff

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

Nursing Home – Administrator Labore, Finance Director Jurentkuff

Revenue

NHA Labore stated that they are proposing a census of 114. With the pandemic, it is a slower process to admit residents; therefore, they are airing on the side of caution by estimating a lower census of 114. As the vaccine rolls out, they are starting to see some leeway on how to handle residents who are coming in who are fully vaccinated. They still have a quarantine unit set aside with twelve (12) beds and as the vaccine is becoming more effective, he does not know if that will continue to be needed as well. If it is not needed this would also increase their admission capabilities.

NHA Labore noted that they are not proposing any increases in private pay for FY22. They will remain at \$315/day for a private room and \$295/day for semi-private room.

Proshare Payment – NHA Labore stated that they have budgeted \$1.4 million. He feels this is the best figure to work with right now not knowing what will happen with this payment going forward. This figure is based off the 2016 data before the increases came along. He noted they are also basing it off the census they had during the construction project in 2015-2016.

Expense

NH Admin

Education and Conference – NHA Labore stated that they have decreased this line in recognition with where they are. They do not foresee many in person conferences, but they do have webinars they will be participating in that will have costs associated with them

Contract Services – This line item includes vendors they are using for cost report preparation, review for audit, and their portion of the county audit done by Melanson & Heath.

Office Supplies – NHA Labore noted that this line includes copier service agreements and general office supplies.

Vehicle Repair & Maintenance – NHA Labore explained that they have been able to decrease this line due to having newer vehicles. They are not having as many repairs.

Computer Hardware & Maintenance – Their six (6) month figures are low because they had not replaced any equipment, but they have since replaced computer hardware that would show in their nine (9) month figures.

Dietary

Wages – Dietary – NHA Labore stated that there are the proposed shift differentials included. He stated that this would be included in the bargaining unit employees. It is not reflected for non-bargaining unit employees.

Nursing

Contract Nursing Services – NHA Labore stated that they are budgeting for a 40% rate increase and a 19% rate increase. He noted that they have to increase rates to attract traveling nurses. What they were paying prior to the pandemic is no longer competitive. Their prior contract price was \$49 and \$58. They are now looking at \$58 and \$80. Commissioner Ahern stated they need to find a way to get out of this position with traveling nurses. Commissioner Piper stated that the idea of increasing salaries to be competitive with traveling nurses has been mentioned in the past. She asked if it is possible to pay a nurse salary equal to what they might guess a traveling nurse would be earning, minus the agency fee. NHA Labore stated that anything is a possibility but that comes with increased costs. He stated that you have to factor in all of the increases in benefits if you increase wages. When you increase hourly rates, you are increasing all the benefit costs as well. Commissioner Piper stated that NHA Labore has mentioned a cultural difference with younger people working today versus previous generations. NHA Labore stated that you do see the willingness and desire for a set schedule to not be as popular while they are young. NHA Labore stated that when he was here at the beginning of March, they talked about in house LPN programs. He noted that while it is not a quick fix, growing from within is a solution to this problem. CA Dorsett stated that he is meeting with the President of White Mountains Community College next week to discuss their nursing program and possibilities to grow our own LPNs. Commissioner Piper noted that HR Director Clough had brought up utilizing more MNAs. HR Director Clough had stated that Kendall in Hanover on the evening shift utilizes all MNAs and only one RN. She understands that there has been resistance as well from RNs in regards to this idea and asked what the reason for that push back is. NHA Labore stated MNAs do help and fill staffing needs. The struggle is the nurse still has to supervise the MNA and all the residents they are caring for in addition to the residents the nurse is already responsible for. The workload increases for the nurse. He stated that he is not taking away from the work that MNAs do but that is what the push back is from the nurses, as it increases their workload. The Commissioners agreed that looking into growing LPNs in house is an option that they need to look further into.

Loan Forgiveness – NHA Labore stated that this program has brought in a number of nurses and they have increased this line accordingly.

Education and Conference – NHA Labore noted that their quarterly LNA classes are included in this line item.

Travel Expense – This fiscal year they had budgeted for their Infection Preventionist to attend a national conference but that did not pan out and therefore they have decreased this line item for FY22.

Restorative Nursing

Coordinator – NHA Labore noted that the new coordinator is making a higher wage than the previous one.

Contract Services

Therapy & Rehab – Medicare B – There are more Medicare B residents, which increases the costs. NHA Labore noted that this is offset with increased revenue as well.

Capital Reserve

FD Libby stated that there are not enough funds in the capital reserve to cover these expenses. The Commissioners would need to make a transfer.

NHA Labore stated that the Asphalt Paving and Line stripping were included in Supt. Oakes budget presentation. This is the allocation for the Nursing Home of those costs.

Commissioner Ahern suggested going to rotary clubs for fundraising as a potential source for funding for some of these capital reserve items. They discussed this topic with NHA Labore and he agreed to meet with the Plymouth and Littleton Rotary Clubs to further discuss.

Van Awning – NHA Labore explained that they need a way to keep snow and ice off the top of their van. He stated that it has been a concern as it poses a safety concern.

Ductless A/C System – NHA Labore explained that there is no ventilation in this office. This is an effort to get cleaner fresher air.

Awning – NHA Labore explained that they are looking to purchase two (2) retractable awnings that would attach to the Nursing Home. It would provide shade for the residents sitting on the front side of the building during the summer months.

Elite II Electric Beds – NHA Labore stated that this is the final year of the bed replacement project. There are 33 beds left.

Alternating Air Mattresses – NHA Labore explained that these mattresses have the ability to be a straight mattress or an air mattress to provide more comfort for the residents.

600lb smart lift, wheelchair and Shower chair – There is currently a resident who is approaching weight limits for their equipment and looking to purchase these items for their safety.

Human Services – Finance Director Libby

FD Libby explained that this budget is the county cap. When the Governor introduced his budget there was an 18% increase in the cap. An amendment to the bill proposes a 2% increase. This amendment is included in the house vote. The amendment also includes statutory language that the cap increase would never exceed 2%. The current cap total is \$126,923,933. The new proposed cap for FY22 is \$129,462,412, which is an increase of \$250,000 in the Grafton County budget.

Grafton Regional Development Corporation

Commissioner Piper stated that GRDC is requesting \$45,000, which is level funding. Commissioner Lauer stated that she is in favor of level funding them. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is in favor of not funding them at all. He explained that Grafton County has been providing money over the years to this agency. They are now established, well connected, and they do not need the County's money. Commissioner Piper stated that there is no question of all the work that GRDC does. FD Libby stated that her recollection is that this funding was supposed to be seed money to get them started but then it became an every year expense. Commissioner Piper stated that she does agree with Commissioner Ahern about how it is a very robust service. She is also worried about making sure the Grafton County employees are not being asked to make a sacrifice for a year and organizations are not being asked to do the same. She stated that they do not need to make a decision on this today and can further discuss it during their deliberations.

Social Services

Commissioner Piper stated that after reviewing all of the applications, she is recommending level funding for all organizations that received funding this fiscal year. She noted that many agencies asked for an increase. Former Commissioner Morris did a good job at narrowing down their focus for funding. Alternative Life Center is a new agency requesting \$25,000. Commissioner Lauer stated that Alternative Life Center is a peer-to-peer counseling program for recovery and the people who run it are all in recovery. She feels \$25,000 is too much to fund them and she does not know the effectiveness of their programs. Commissioner Piper noted that they did not list any other sources of income. Commissioner Lauer noted that she thinks it is ok to say this is a lean year and they will not fund new agencies. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is against funding Granite United Way. The County pays them \$7,800 in rent through Whole Village and pay them through Alternative Sentencing as well. The Commissioners discussed the Social Services requests and will further discuss their decisions during their deliberations.

MOTION: * 12:09 PM Commissioner Ahern 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

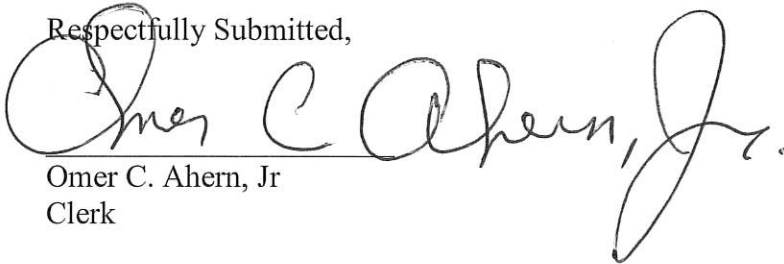
be open, in which case the request shall be granted according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes"; Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

* 12:33 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.

12:34 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Omer C. Ahern, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Omer C. Ahern, Jr
Clerk