

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Highway

North Haverhill, NH 03774

July 7, 2020

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Register of Deeds Monahan, Sheriff Stiegler, Captain Kelly, Sgt. Roberts, Deputy Hamilton, Tracey Secula, UVLSRPC, Denise Roy Palmer – Wentworth Economic Development Corp., Paige Wilson, UVLSRPC, HR Director Clough and Supt. Jim Oakes

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

Register Monahan arrived and read the following document:

**Grafton County Registry of Deeds  
Kelley J. Monahan Register  
June 7, 2020**

To: The Grafton County Board of Commissioners;

The following factors have led to the need for full analysis of the job descriptions, work flow and priority projects at the Grafton County Registry of Deeds.

1. Being an essential operation, representing a function of government that is a foundation of our economy, the COVID 19 crisis has led to an extreme amount of pressure being put on a very small, very experienced team of dedicated experts. We were fully staffed, working on site every work day of this quarantine period. The people who usually come into the office with questions turned to the telephone.
2. COVID 19 has put a great deal of pressure on the public. We usually try to be very helpful and professional in attempting to defuse frustration in the public who contact this office with concerns and questions. The public is upset which is leading to much more abuse than is normal. The attorneys and title researchers are working at full capacity. The public is attempting to navigate their own legal work to avoid the fees. More often we are being asked to guide people through processes that should be done by attorneys.
3. An unexpected departure of our Records Clerk in late February just before the quarantine after just two years of training combined with the planned retirement of a long term member of the team for December and the restructuring of public access due to COVID 19.
4. The method in which the Imaging Tech position (retiring member) position was scored and graded many years ago under a previous Register was unusual and problematic.

5. The refusal of the HR Director, County Administrator and Board of Commissioners to allow me access to read the professional scoring by outside consultant of the positions in this office has directly lead to one key position **NOT being analyzed.**

Due to budget concerns, year after year, the Records Clerk role was not filled when a member of the staff left unexpectedly just before the start of FY16. Instead of replacing that position, we made a group decision to enter into our cycle of years of file revision and training that lead to the launching all new systems with our core team and put off that hire until we were near completion. There was no room for error from a person in training. We were finally able to fund the position for 6 months for FY 18 and hired in 2/18. This position was never analyzed by the consultant because it was **vacant at the time of the study.**

I was not allowed access to that report, which was labeled a “work paper” and was considered property of the Human Resource Department, solely. The consultant who was hired and I spoke for 25 minutes and he was very interested in what I had to say, as he said our Department was one that had experienced a great deal of legislative and technological changes. Had I been allowed access to the report that analyzed my department, I would have flagged that omission and corrected it at the time. The 3 key members of my team and I assumed this role of Records Clerk in addition to our other core job responsibilities.

6. In 2018, I requested a meeting with the Grafton County Board of Commissioners to discuss the unusual work flow of these offices in the attempt to increase amount of earned time that could be accrued into their banks. My team has spent many years at the maximum level of pay scale and grade for the level of knowledge and skill. Their only chance at a raise is the COLA that is negotiated every year with the unions. The Register of Deeds team is not under a union contract.  
My team must sacrifice most chances at a 3-or more day holiday weekend due to increased work flow and pubic inquiries during all holiday periods. This is a hardship on their friends, families and morale. I was forced into a non-public session rather than an open discussion of how our operation is different. That session should have occurred in a public meeting. This non-public session was highly unusual and contentious.
7. At the beginning of the quarantine period, I had to hire a replacement Records Clerk. We received many applications and we brought in a new Records Clerk on May 11, 2020. I began looking ahead to the next hire and started restructuring. It is my responsibility to look ahead and plan for the next 10 years of staffing needs.
8. We could not work remotely from home as our home internet connections are not secure, dependable or powerful enough to handle the volume of data that must download for even one document. The risk of liability to the County is just too great.
9. One Monday June 30 2020. Deputy Register Beth Wyman and I met with the entire Human Resource Dept. team and made our case to restructure two positions. We requested to eliminate the Imaging Tech. position and to add a second Records Clerk position and also to have HR score the updated Records Clerk job description which I provided.

### **Motion #1**

With consideration of all of the above points and at the request of HR Director Clough, I request a motion to adjust the Registry of Deeds Record Clerk position from a grade 3 to grade 4.

**Motion #2**

With consideration of all of the above points, I request that the remaining balance of the Registry of Deeds Clerical line be encumbered into a hazard pay bonus for my **essential workers who actually came to work during this crisis**. This amount is to be distributed at 30% each for the three who work our systems and 10% for the retiring staff member who does not record into the system.

The encumbrance consideration period ends on July 13, 2020. There was no BOC meeting on June 30, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kelley J. Monahan

Commissioner Piper stated that RD Monahan read this document extremely quickly. They haven't seen this document until now and this is a big decision to make. Commissioner Piper stated that RD Monahan is making it clear she is having difficulty with the Commissioners and other department heads but her reading this so quickly is disrespectful to the process as she could have sent this to them ahead of time. She stated that if there is a delay today in their decision making process, she would advise RD Monahan to take this back to her staff members, the disrespect and quickness with which this request was handled by the department head is responsible for this delay. She stated that she is happy to look at this and make a decision but does not see any other time allotted on the agenda. She feels this was handled very badly and is disrespectful to the process that tax payers fund. Commissioner Lauer stated that they are supposed to meet with the Human Resources Director later in the meeting and they can discuss the position upgrade. Commissioner Morris stated that she questions why the position was not analyzed while it was vacant because normally a wage study is based off the position, not the person. RD Monahan stated that it was out of her hands. She stated that the position was not filled at that time as they were in the middle of an intense revision of their programing. She did not want a new employee coming into the office during that time and therefore divided up the responsibility between the other staff members. She has asked to fund that position again in prior budgets, but it has not been funded. Commissioner Morris stated that she would ask HR Director Clough for clarification on the position upgrade.

Commissioner Lauer stated that in regards to the hazard pay request she appreciates the Registry of Deeds staff, they have done a tremendous job did but early on the Board of Commissioners made the decision that there were two (2) buildings they were concerned about; the Department of Corrections and the Nursing Home. The Registry of Deeds staff were not in direct contact with the public, Nursing Home or DOC and she cannot support this as it would open this up to every employee at this county who also was here at work during this time and they cannot afford that. RD Monahan stated that they receive stacks of mail through UPS and FedEx and during these six (6) weeks they did not know how this virus was transmitted. Commissioner Lauer

stated that she is unable to support this request but will discuss the position upgrade request with HR Director Clough.

Sheriff Stiegler arrived to discuss two (2) bid waiver requests with the Commissioners. He stated that at this time they have concluded that the best all-around vehicle for the safety of people and personnel they are tasked with what are usually long transports, fuel economy, durability and price is the F-150 Police Responder 4WD/Crew Cab pickup. He stated that the one (1) they purchased last year has far exceeded the abilities, fuel economy and now price than the current Ford Interceptor SUV. He also explained that there is going to be a shortfall of availability of cruisers due to Ford making life saving equipment during the pandemic. He stated that currently a company that deals in new police cruiser sales out of Massachusetts that has three (3) of the desired 2020 models with the specifications they seek in stock for a price of \$36,643.95 per vehicle for a total of just under \$110,000. He has budgeted \$125,000 which leaves \$15,000 for the installation of equipment into these new cruisers. They are asking to waive the bidding process to avoid what will already be an extended waiting period for public safety vehicles in 2021.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to waive the bidding process based on availability of the cruisers. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Sheriff Stiegler stated that they are also requesting a bid waiver for the approved WatchGuard in car camera/body camera systems along with the new server for the entire WatchGuard program in place. These systems are critical and will enhance their ability to be even more transparent as well as archiving digital records. He stated that he is requesting the bid waiver based on the new equipment being compatible with their existing equipment.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Morris moved to waive the bid process based on compatibility with existing equipment. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Commissioner Lauer asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Commissioner Piper had a few edits.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**9:30AM Commissioner Lauer introduced the 2020 CDBG Microenterprise Grant COVID-19 Public Hearing.**

Tracey Secula of Lakes Region Planning Commission, Grant Administrator, explained that Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facility and housing rehabilitation projects and feasibility studies that primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. The purpose of the public hearings required for CDBG funding is to solicit the view of citizens on community development; furnish the

citizens with information concerning the amount of funds available and the range of community development activities which may be undertaken under the Community Development Act.

CDBG funds are awarded on a competitive basis in New Hampshire and may be used for housing, public facilities, and economic development which have primary benefit to low and moderate income persons. A community or County can apply for up to \$500,000 a year for public facilities, up to \$500,000 a year for economic development projects, up to \$500,000 for microenterprise program as well as up to \$500,000 a year in emergency funds. Planning grants are available for up to \$25,000. **SUPPLEMENTAL CDBG-CV FUNDS** - HUD has allocated additional CDBG funds (“CDBG-CV” funds) to New Hampshire through the CARES Act to address issues related to the impacts of COVID-19. CDFR has allocated up to \$850,000 of their allotted CDBG-CV funds statewide to augment the existing Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program.

Commissioner Lauer noted that handouts of CDBG Project Activities, Income Guidelines and Project Summary are available.

### **9:32AM Commissioner Lauer opened public hearing # 1 – Grant Submission**

Tracey Secula explained that this proposal to be considered by the Commissioners is a CDBG Micro Enterprise COVID-19 grant to be submitted by Grafton County on behalf of three subrecipients currently engaged in the 2019 CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program for the purpose of providing direct grants to microenterprises businesses (those with fewer than five employees and are low-moderate income) to cover costs to prepare for, respond to, or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Because a municipality (county) can only apply for up to \$500,000 for the program year of July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021, Grafton County will provide funds to entities in the northern half of the state. Cheshire County will provide funds to entities in the southern half of the state. Eligible applicants for CDBG-COVID 19 funds are existing grantees from the 2019 CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program funds and their respective subrecipients (Grafton County with Belknap Economic Development Council, North Country Investment Corporation, and Women’s Rural Entrepreneurial Network).

CDBG-CV funds may be used to support qualifying microenterprises that are clients/beneficiaries of existing subrecipient microenterprise technical assistance providers. Subrecipients may awards grants of up to \$2,500 per qualifying microenterprise beneficiary to cover costs associated with business stabilization and/or transition related to COVID-19. No more than \$1,999 may be used for construction. Subrecipients must document that there is no duplication of benefit with other Federal funds used by microenterprise beneficiaries (such as the Paycheck Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loans, NH Main Street Relief Fund, etc.).

Commissioner Lauer asked if there were any questions from the public. No members of the public were present.

### **9:35AM Commissioner Lauer closed Public Hearing # 1**

### **9:35 AM Commissioner Lauer opened Public Hearing # 2 – Anti-Displacement and Relocation Plan**

Tracey Secula explained that if any displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any displaced household or business in a project using any federal funds must be found comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. **There will be no displacement as a result of this project.** Under the certification section of the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-displacement & Relocation (RARA) plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds.

Commissioner Lauer asked if there were any questions from the public. No members of the public were present.

**9:36AM Commissioner Lauer closed Public Hearing # 2.**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to support submission of a 2020 CDBG Micro Enterprise - COVID 19 grant to provide funds to multiple entities throughout the state for the purposes of providing direct grants to microenterprises to cover costs to prepare for, respond to, or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to authorize the Chair to sign, submit and execute any documents that may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG application and contract. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to adopt the Grafton County Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan for this project. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

HR Director Clough arrived and gave the following report:

Grafton County Human Resources Report  
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director  
 July 7, 2020

**HR Activity Report (06/02/2020-07/06/2020)**

- **New Hires**

Department	#	Position(s)
Nursing Home	7 (3 FT, 3 PT, 1 per diem)	1 FT RN, 1 FT LNA, 1 FT LPN, 1 PT Housekeeper, 1 PT Unit Secretary, 1 per diem LNA
DOC	2 (1 FT, 1 PT)	1 PT Dietary Aide
Sheriff's Dept.	2 (1 PT, 1 FT)	1 FT RN, 1 PT RN
		1 Bailiff, 1 Dispatcher

- **Separations**

Departments	#	
Nursing Home	9 (2 FT, 6 PD, 1 PT)	1 PT Housekeeper, 2 FT LNA's, 6 PD LNA's
Maintenance	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Skilled Maintenance Asst.

DOC 2 (2 FT) 1 FT CO, 1 FT RN

**Reasons:**

- Resigned / other employer – 1
- Retired - 1
- Resigned Personal Reasons – 1
- Resigned /no reason given - 1
- Unable to meet Per Diem guidelines – 6
- Termination – 1
- Relocated – 1

- **Status Changes/ dept transfers: PT Dietary Aide to Cook, 2 FT LNA to per diem, 1 FT Custodian to PT**

**Active Leave of Absences as of July 6, 2020**

Department	#	
Nursing Home – Nursing	10	(9 are intermittent, 8 for self, 2 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	6	(4 are intermittent, 4 for family, 2 for self)
County Atty.	3	(3 intermittent, 3 self)
DOC	1	(1 intermittent, 1 self)
IT	1	(1 intermittent family)
Maintenance	1	(1 self)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>22</b>	

**Scheduled to orient 07/15**

- 1 FT LPN
- 1 PER DIEM LNA

**Current Jobs posted/advertised**

- LNA's (10.65 FTE's vacant)
  - RN/LPN (10.95 FTE's vacant combined)
  - CO's
  - RN -DOC
  - PT Dietary Aide
  - Director of Nursing
  - PT Housekeeper
  - Activity Aide
  - Skilled Maintenance Asst.
- Custodian  
Accounting Tech/PR Asst.

HR Director Clough noted that six (6) of the Nursing Home separations were per diem employees who weren't working. She stated that they are currently not allowing per diem staff to work at other facilities and therefore they have lost some who were not picking up shifts here because they are working elsewhere. She had a discussion with the Commissioners regarding the Director of Nursing position and stated that she is still working with recruiting agencies to help fill this position. She stated that they will not be able to find a perfect candidate and what they need to do is focus on which aspects of the job are the most important to them and which aspects they can train someone on.

Commissioner Lauer asked HR Director Clough about the Register of Deeds request to upgrade a position in her office. HR Director Clough stated that they evaluated the Deeds position, based on the revised job description that Register Monahan did and feels it is appropriate to adjust it. The Imaging Technician will no longer be in existence once the current employee retires and it will become a second Records Clerk position which would go from a Grade 3 to Grade 4. This position will combine the responsibilities of the Imaging Technician and Records Clerk. She stated that it seems like a good idea. The job descriptions have all been updated and gone through the scoring process. The next step is figuring out the financial impact as there is a current Records Clerk that would be upgraded as well. By policy they go to the step closest to what they are currently making as long as it results in an increase. The Commissioners discussed this with CA Libby and HR Director Clough and agreed that there is money within the budget to cover the costs of this upgrade.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to upgrade the Record Clerk from a Grade 3 to Grade 4 effective July 5<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion and all were in favor.

CA Libby stated that she understands what RD Monahan is saying in regards to hazard pay and agree they have people that are deserving of it but if it wouldn't have been for the State of New Hampshire saying certain people will receive a stipend no employees would have received bonuses. Commissioner Morris stated that she admires her advocacy. Commissioner Lauer asked if there was a motion to give hazard pay to the Registry of Deeds Clerical workers. There was no motion.

HR Director Clough stated that the Records Clerk position at the time of the wage survey was vacant with no determination that they were going to fill it. This is why it was not evaluated at that time. There is no basis to say that this position would have been upgraded in 2016. HR Director Clough noted that when the Records Clerk position was filled, RD Monahan was asked if she wanted to review and change the job description at that time and it was not changed.

Supt. Oakes arrived to discuss the Building Automation project that was budgeted for in his FY20 budget. He stated he has been in contact with the local building automation company that they use to develop a scope of work. Part of that involves putting Variable Frequency Drives on their supply and exhaust fans on all major air handlers. This will give them the capability to ramping these fans up or down which will have a cost savings. That then gets tied into the Building Automation System. This was going to be a part of the original scope of work that the contractor would take care of. He stated that this was before he had a Master Electrician on staff who is capable of doing this work. He has researched the cost of these VFD's from the contractor versus purchasing these themselves online. He stated that they can buy these products directly themselves from Patriot Supply, Home Depot and Amazon which would save roughly \$7,000. He is asking Commissioner approval to purchase these themselves. Commissioner Piper stated that she appreciates the creative and good work done by Supt. Oakes and his staff to save money.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to approve the recommendation of Supt. Oakes to purchase the VFD's from Patriot Supply, Home Depot and Amazon. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Commissioner Lauer stated that she appreciates Supt. Oakes always thinking outside the box to better the County. Supt. Oakes stated that his electrician on staff did a lot of work in researching these numbers

The Commissioners signed check registers: 59; 1192-1196

CA Libby submitted the DoC Superior Court Report for the Commissioners to review.

First Responder Stipend – CA Libby stated that this stipend ended on June 30<sup>th</sup>. The money that the County received from the state was just under \$169,000. The stipends that were paid out to the employees totaled \$165,192.64 and therefore the County owes the state \$3,621.00. She stated that they paid \$4,650 to the employees who not eligible from the state and but were still given the stipend from the County and she will be requesting reimbursement for those expenses through the GOFERR Fund.

Long Term Care Stipend – CA Libby stated that this stipend was extended through July 31<sup>st</sup> which follows the \$600 unemployment bonus. The cost incurred by the county for those not covered by the LTCS is \$24,300 through June 27<sup>th</sup>. This will also be included in the reimbursement request along with the taxes. They should be made whole by the CARES Act for all stipend bonuses.

Letter to Governor RE: Broadband – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners have had a chance to review the letter to the Governor that Sullivan County drafted regarding broadband. Sullivan County has asked if Cheshire County, Coos County and Grafton County were willing to sign off on the letter. The Commissioners discussed it and were all in agreement to sign off on the letter.

Evaluations – Appointed Officials – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners need to complete evaluations for the County Administrator, Human Resources Director and DoC Superintendent.

AP Position Resignation – CA Libby stated that their Accounts Payable position has resigned and her last day is today. She will be starting the interview process to fill that position soon.

CA Libby stated that they have received their PILT FY '20 payment in the amount of \$141,215 and their Abandon Property FY '20 payment in the amount of \$70,174.52.

Commissioner Lauer requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \* 10:35 AM Commissioner Piper 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. pursuant to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) Commissioner Morris seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Morris “yes” Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\* 10:45 AM Commissioner Lauer declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper 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 Morris seconded the motion. Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Morris “yes” Commissioner Lauer “yes”. Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

Commissioner Morris stated that it is time to invite Steve Whitman to come to a meeting to do a presentation on a space needs analysis and strategic planning. She will work with CA Libby to schedule a time for him to come to a meeting.

Commissioner Lauer stated that she met with the Littleton Town Manger to discuss the County budget and their concerns. It went very well and she stated they discussed the Broadband Committee as well.

10:50 AM with no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Morris,  
Clerk