

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Administration Building  
UNH Coop Extension Conference Room  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH  
September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

PRESENT: Representatives Sykes, Abel, Gordon, Greeson, Weston, Egan, Treasurer Hill, Commissioners Piper, Ahern, and Lauer, Finance Director Libby, County Administrator Dorsett, Heather Bryant, HR Director Clough, DoC Supt. Elliott, Heather Porter, Ed Wargo, Register Monahan, Angel Larcom – Littleton Courier

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Rep. Sykes stated that the Committee needs to approve the minutes from the May 24<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, June 8<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup>, June 15<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meetings and the June 28<sup>th</sup> Delegation minutes.

**MOTION:** Rep. Egan moved to approve the minutes from the May 24<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, June 8<sup>th</sup>, June 11<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meetings. Rep. Greeson seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Rep. Weston moved to approve the minutes from the June 28<sup>th</sup> Delegation Meeting. Rep. Abel seconded the motion. . Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**FD Libby gave the following Finance Directors Report and FY21 Financial Recap:**

Finance Director’s Report  
September 17, 2021

- ❖ Jail Census: 51 in-house; 6 on Electronic Monitoring; 1 in FIRRM; 22 Pre-trial Services
- ❖ Nursing Home Census: 104

Financial Reports

- ❖ Monthly Variance Report compares the budget on an equal monthly basis to actuals and looks at the positive (black) or negative (red) variances. These reports represent two (2) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2022 Budget	FY 2022 YTD Actuals
Medicaid	88	82
Medicare	3	1
Private Pay	22	24
Veterans	1	2
Total	114	109

- COVID and staffing levels continue to have an impact on the revenue at the nursing home. The chart above is as of August 31, 2021. We are below our budgeted census in two (2) of four (4) payer sources. Private Pay and Veterans are up slightly. Our Medicaid reimbursement rate is higher than was estimated at the time of the budget and will go up again October 1, 2021, which will help offset a lower census. Our current census is lower at 104. YTD revenue for the nursing home is currently showing a positive variance due to a final Nursing Facility Account (504) payment for FY '21 from the State of NH that was received after the close of the fiscal year so the revenue is booked in FY '22.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received all at once in June. Bed Tax is paid quarterly – no revenue has been received in FY '22.
- The Department of Corrections is showing a negative variance currently. This is not uncommon at the beginning of the fiscal year.
- The farm is a negative variance due to a late start for the farm stand. Receipts have really picked up in September as we now have potatoes for sale. There is also revenue budgeted for a timber cut that will not take place until the winter months.
- The Sheriff's Department is showing a positive variance currently.
- County Attorney/Victim Witness/Roving Advocate. These grants are direct reimbursement for expenditures. Reimbursements are requested quarterly therefore, no revenue has been received.
- The Register of Deeds revenue continues to be up in FY '22. Revenue continues to be above monthly projections.

## Expenses

- Through two (2) months we have a few departments that are showing negative variances. Most are typically overspent at the beginning of the fiscal year due to insurance, taxes and large annual contracts that are paid in July.
- ❖ Pro-rated Report: This report looks at the % of the year complete and then pro-rates revenues and expense based on known variates on revenues and expenses.
  - 16.67% of the fiscal year completed. On the pro-rated report, I factor in the revenue and expenses that are either over or under at this point in the fiscal year. Based on the August report, we are at 17.10%, which is slightly ahead for revenue and at 13.95% or under expended by \$1.3M. This all factors into the unassigned fund balance which at this point \$8,707,664.20.
- ❖ Over Expenditure Report – This report shows any line item that is over-expended at month-end.
  - We only have a few over-expended line items at this point. They are very minor and nothing out of the ordinary.

## FISCAL YEAR 2021 FINANCIAL RECAP

**Revenue:** The County finished the year over revenue projections by \$2,830,557.93. This was in part due to ProShare and Bed Tax revenues being over by \$1,037,379.02. The Register of Deeds revenues finished over by \$513,606.33. The other contributing factors are monies that the County received as a result of the CARES act. We received \$354,482.58 directly to the nursing home from the federal government for Provider Relief funding, which can be used for lost revenues. The County also received \$250,925.35 from the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR). These monies were direct reimbursement for COVID-19 related expenses that were made from July 1, 2020 through October 15, 2020. The County also received revenue for COVID Testing reimbursements and reimbursements for the Long Term Care Stipend program which were reimbursements for expenses made for these requirements. Other departments finishing the year above revenue projections were:

- Farm - \$46,602.33 – with milk and livestock finishing higher than anticipated.
- Alternative Sentencing - \$8,058.14 – due to the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Svc funding and finally receiving insurance reimbursements.
- Other – \$357,447.67 – Abandon Property \$86,249.11; Federal PILT \$31,641; Human Service Recoveries \$60,079.80; Un-anticipated Return of Surplus from HealthTrust \$179,477.76

Departments finishing below Revenue Projections are as follows:

- County Attorney's Office - \$64,734.88 – due to less grant funds spent
- Sheriff's Department - \$229,176.73 – most areas were below projections due to issues from COVID-19, several were the result of decrease expenditures that are reimbursed.

- Department of Corrections - \$32,577.31 – due to reduce inmate population as a result of COVID.
- Nursing Home - \$461,122.88 – actual operating revenue loss.

COVID created many revenue challenges but the County also received revenues from several sources to help offset those losses created by COVID.

**Expenses:** The County finished the year under expended by \$2,905,422.19. Most departments finished the year within their approved budgets. The following departments were bottom line over-expended:

- Medical Referee - \$3,915.70 – unpredictable expense.
- Overall the Nursing Home budget was under-expended by \$1,003,391.28. There were some large over-expenditures with regards to the COVID Testing and the Long Term Care Stipends. However, there were significant under-expenditures in many of the nursing department salary lines that offset the over-expenditures. The other large over-expenditure was Contract Nursing. A total of \$1,654,054.44 was spent in FY 2021, and the budget was \$1,300,000 over-spending the line by \$354,054.44. The following Nursing Home departments were over-expended:
  - Administration - \$241,309.03 – COVID Testing
  - Long Term Care Stipend - \$645,498.44

Overall summary – Despite the significant challenges faced by all departments, Fiscal Year 2021 finished financially very positively for the County, and we have finished with a very healthy Undesignated Fund Balance of \$7,878,498, which is 16.16%. The overall fund balance grew to \$13,096,755.

FD Libby answered questions from the Committee.

**MOTION:** Rep. Egan moved to accept the Finance Director’s Report. Rep. Gordon seconded the motion Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**Treasurer Hill arrived and gave the following Treasurers Report:**

**TO:** GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
**FROM:** KAREN LIOT HILL, TREASURER  
**SUBJECT:** TREASURER’S REPORT  
**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 20, 2021




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CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 8/31/21)  
**Grafton County General Fund**

## Commissioner Piper gave the following Commissioners Report:

Commissioners' Report  
September 20, 2021

The Commissioners are pleased to present this report to the Executive Committee.

- **Nursing Home update:**  
Completed the capital purchase of the resident dining room tables and chairs. The population is currently at 104. We are currently advertising for 18 LNA's, 14 RN/LPN's, 2 Dietary Aids, an RN House Supervisor, and a PT Housekeeper. Admissions have been frozen while we are waiting a pending CMS vaccine mandate. Staffing continues to be an issue. The stipend program is critical to stabilizing staffing and attracting new candidates.
- COVID Testing Update. There have been no positive cases identified since the last report. We continue surveillance testing.
- GCNH Vaccination Update: We are currently at 94% of all residents who are fully vaccinated and 76% of staff, with more being completed over the next two weeks.
- **Farm Resilience:** County Administrator requested that Mike Sciabarassi, a UNH Ag Business specialist, do an assessment of the dairy operation in comparison to other farms in the area. Farm Manager Nelson and CA Dorsett hosted John Porter of UNH Cooperative Extension to conduct an exploratory discussion to consider labor efficiencies and modernization of the farm. There is an ARPA request to conduct a feasibility study of those modernizations.
- You will recall from our earlier report that due to the inmate and labor shortage we were unable to plant a diverse vegetable offering. Grafton County farm hosted the Cover Crop demonstration this summer, collaborating with UNH Coop Ext. to show what farms can do with cover crops. Manager Nelson, Heather Bryant of UNH, and the Grafton County Conservation District held a well-attended twilight meeting titled "Getting Even More Out of Your Cover Crops", which highlighted the Cover Crop demonstration.
- **County Complex:** CA Dorsett and I will be meeting with the Bureau of Courts in late September to explore possible outcomes for the Court facility. As stated in the earlier report, the redevelopment of the existing Courthouse is determined to be costlier than a new building.
- CA Dorsett has submitted an ARPA request to conduct a feasibility study in preparation for the potential development of a micro grid solar project to provide power for the County Complex in Haverhill. CA Dorsett is coordinating with UNH, BEA, FEMA, DOE, NCIC and others on the project. Early conversations are exploring collaboration with CDFA and USDA as potential sources of technical planning funds. Director Oakes

and CA Dorsett have submitted a Water and Sewer project for funding consideration as well.

- **IT:** The IT security audit has been completed and operational, software and hardware changes are underway.
- **Jail:** The current in-house census is 51, the census is up from its all-time low over the summer with another 28 being monitored (6 electronically).
- **Broadband Committee Update:** At this point we have committed \$4,500 which was matched by a \$5,000 technical assistance grant through NCIC. These funds are being used towards the initial planning phase of the Middle Mile project. The Committee has engaged the services of two technical contractors to assist in the effort. Since the last report the CA Dorsett and NCIC prepared on behalf of the Commission, the Broadband Committee has applied for an NTIA grant and awarded an RFP to hire a consultant, EX2. Representative Eagan continues to dedicate time to assist the Committee in its effort and coordinate the efforts of northern Grafton Communication Districts. Broadband Committee Chair and Bristol Town Administrator Nik Coates celebrated Bristol's broadband project rollout last Thursday. His work in that project will connect to the County wide effort.
- **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:** Grafton County is confirmed to receive \$17,432,836 – and has received ½ of those funds, with the second ½ to be sent in about a year later. The funds are placed in a separate dedicated account when they are received. CA Dorsett created a process for proposals that allow the Commission and Executive Committee to partner in the decision-making process. The proposals are received by CA and considered by the Commission, which then provides the Executive Committee with recommendations. The important first round proposals being considered today.
- **The County Attorney:** Court is now in session!
- **Alternative Sentencing:** In-person client meetings have resumed with some telehealth visits continuing. Mental health and substance abuse issues with participants continue to increase. There are increasing therapeutic reentry program CARE sentences, and our program is working with Probation & Parole, identifying potential clients. CA Dorsett and Director DePalo are exploring the status of transitional housing throughout the County.

Rep. Sykes asked if there has been any discussion regarding a vaccine mandate for employees. Commissioner Piper stated that there have been discussions. Previously, NHA Labore had strong professional reasons as to why he did not want to mandate the vaccine. Among those reasons was the fact that the Nursing Home staff is still required to wear masks while at work, along with handwashing and other hygiene protocols. Those were the precautions were in place during the first virus, and they had only one (1) positive case in terms of residents.

Commissioner Piper stated that there is currently a policy being worked on by HR and the County Administrator. HR Director Clough had received inquiries from staff regarding quarantine and what the policy is. She explained that the original draft policy, that was not released, stated that there would be a difference in compensation that would provide an incentive for employees to become vaccinated. Those folks who are vaccinated would be paid for quarantine time out of the ARPA funds, and those who were not vaccinated, given the staff shortages, would be on their dime.

HR Director Clough stated that the County Administrator and she have been working to get guidelines in place. Previously, if staff were out to quarantine, they were paid for that time. The Commissioners voted to end that policy at the end of June, once everyone had the opportunity to be vaccinated. The Committee further discussed this topic, and Rep. Sykes stated that he appreciates the fact that the Commissioners have been discussing it.

**MOTION:** Rep. Greeson moved to accept the Commissioners' report. Rep. Egan seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel "yes", Rep. Egan "yes", Rep. Gordon "yes", Rep. Greeson "yes", Rep. Sykes "yes", Rep. Weston "yes". With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### **ARPA Funding Requests**

CA Dorsett handed out a three (3)-page overview of the ARPA requests to the Committee. He explained that, after the Delegation voted to authorize the Executive Committee to have final say over the ARPA funds, the Commissioners got together and developed a procedure with some timelines put in place. He stated that the process was much like a grant process. The Department Heads needed to apply for the funds, providing details on cost, how it intends to meet the Commissioners priorities as well as how it fits into the ARPA criteria. The process was adopted in July with the first round of applications being due to the County Administrator September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Commissioners reviewed these requests in detail on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> and are bringing forward their recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Rep. Sykes stated that he is thinking of how the Executive Committee is to structure their process for review and approval of these requests. This is a significant amount of money, and they want to make sure they are doing right by the taxpayers, the county complex and the employees.

Rep. Abel stated that one of the difficulties he has is understanding the overall strategy for using these funds. He does not believe they had been presented with some kind of strategy moving forward. He stated that a \$20,000 request could lead to something larger down the road. He asked if the Executive Committee could be told how far the Commissioners have gone in this direction.

Commissioner Piper explained that the primary umbrella for their proposals would relate to resilience. They had their departments submit proposals, and their primary projects were ways of creating and strengthening the county complex infrastructure in a way that would benefit taxpayers. There are requests for feasibility studies for water, sewer and electric, broadband and

assisted living. The Commissioners are also looking to maintain a healthy complex on the part of their staff, as there is a proposal for premium pay for employees who worked on site during the stay at home order and a stipend to boost the pay for the departments who are experiencing extreme staffing shortage.

CA Dorsett stated that to answer Rep. Abel's question in a broad way, they discussed at a Commissioner meeting, developing an overarching concepts on how these funds should be used, especially in the first phase. He further discussed those concepts with the Committee.

Rep. Greeson asked — in regards to the money that can be used as premium pay for employees — could money be set aside for those employees who are required to stay home to quarantine, rather than creating a system that divides vaccinated and unvaccinated employees. He stated that he could not tell between an unvaccinated sick employee and a vaccinated employee who is sick. He stated that they are all essential workers, regardless of their personal philosophy. He feels they should respect their personal philosophy and compensate them if they do get sick. He asked if they would be able to do something like that rather than incentivizing, so the county does not lose staff one-way or the other. CA Dorsett stated that this is part of the discussions that they have been having, not only possibly creating a morale issue but he is looking into, if by removing a potential benefit, would they be causing a labor liability issue. Rep. Greeson stated that instead of creating that issue; why not compensate everyone out of these funds. FD Libby stated that she does not believe they can use premium pay for that but believes it could come out of the response to the public health emergency category.

Rep. Gordon asked if they are going to be asked to authorize these expenditures today, and if so, how are they going to decide to do that. Rep. Sykes stated that he does not feel that they need to rush this and feels it could become an old business topic for their next meeting, if they do not get through them all. He stated that he wants to make sure we get to the Broadband Committee today. As far as the other requests, he is in no rush. Rep. Egan stated that their hesitancy in voting on these is due to the fact that they did not receive the information ahead of time. CA Dorsett stated that he had sent the packet to Rep. Sykes last week. He was unaware of the technical difficulty and that it had not been relayed to the Committee. He stated that there are several items that are critical to take up today, as they have an immediate impact on operations or future planning of a project. CA Dorsett noted which projects were critical to be approved today.

Rep. Gordon asked for an explanation for the campus-wide cyber security upgrades. CA Dorsett explained that an audit of the IT department was done, and there were significant operational changes made. The County currently is outsourcing IT, while changes are being implemented. Critical changes are being made over the course of the next 12–18 months. These funds will mitigate some of the identified risks.

### **Broadband**

CA Dorsett stated that the Broadband Committee has been able to take the \$4,500 that the Commissioners approved and matched that with NCIC's technical assistance grant. This took them to the point where they could get an overview of an estimated project to complete the backbone and also start communications with municipalities and coordinate grant applications.



This next round of funds would help the committee get more into final design and construction documents and move them forward, as well as potentially have a small amount of matching funds for other grant opportunities that do not have a restriction of using federal funds as a match. Rep. Egan stated that as the Executive Committee's representative to the Broadband Committee, he would thoroughly support this item. The key is that there are matching programs available through foundations, programs that are timely to have match funding for, especially in the research and design. There is a willingness of the Broadband Committee to engage with all partners that could help move this project along.

Rep. Greeson asked what is the total cost of the project, how long it will take, and how far \$250,000 will take them. CA Dorsett stated that the overall project is roughly \$25 million. If the Broadband Committee were to receive the NTIA grant that they applied for, they would be under construction next year. If the committee does not receive the grant, they would still like to be under construction next year and this \$250,000 would help keep things moving. CA Dorsett further discussed and answered questions.

**MOTION:** Rep. Egan moved to authorize Grafton County to utilize \$250,000 in American Rescue Plan funding for Broadband. Rep. Greeson seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel "yes", Rep. Egan "yes", Rep. Gordon "yes", Rep. Greeson "yes", Rep. Sykes "yes", Rep. Weston "yes". With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### **Nursing Home/DoC Stipend Program**

HR Director Clough explained that this proposal is working collaboratively with NHA Labore and Supt. Elliott. They are experiencing critical staffing shortages within these two (2) departments, and it is very important to keep the staff that we have. Applications are not coming in for these positions. They are proposing a stipend program rather than a base rate pay increase because, as a part of budgeting process, they had a wage study audit and they are beginning that process. In anticipation of what that audit will bring, they do not want to change base rates of pay at this time. This proposal would give full time employees \$300 per week meeting certain qualifications, paid on productive time. Part time employees need to work 24 hours. At this point, they feel it is a stopgap measure to get these departments through to the wage study. They anticipate having to make some changes because of that study. HR Director Clough stated that the employees here are stepping up to the plate and need management to recognize that they can leave and go elsewhere and this gives them an incentive to stay. She noted that they are having trouble filling entry-level positions.

Rep. Weston asked when will the results of the study would be available. HR Director Clough stated that they just awarded the bid, and the study should be completed by February. Rep. Gordon stated that once you start paying people more it creates an expectation that they are going to continue to receive it. FD Libby noted that these employees have all received stipends twice before and are aware that there is an end date. The Committee further discussed the request and HR Director Clough answered questions

**MOTION:** Rep. Abel moved to authorize Grafton County to utilize \$1,887,367 in American Rescue Plan funding for the expenditure of item #3 and #4 for Premium Pay for employees. Rep. Egan seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Gordon “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### **Cyber Security Upgrades**

Heather Porter from SNS explained that this request not only includes cyber security upgrades but it would produce taxpayer savings as well by replacing physical equipment. This deals with critical county services. Some of the recommendations are to improve the network and reduce the risk of crippling the critical services. She noted that the cyber security requests are to meet the basic minimum of standards for cyber security.

Rep. Sykes stated that, in earlier administrations and Executive Committee meetings, the county made a decision to separate the IT needs of the Registry of Deeds from the IT needs of the rest of the county. He asked if this is still being looked at. Register Monahan stated that she has been in office 11.5 years and that was one of her first concerns. She welcomed Kevin Low and Heather Porter when the IT audit was taking place. They had extensive conversation, and K. Low commended her on her actions. She stated that she appreciates H. Porter and K. Lowe’s expertise and professionalism. She has asked them to vet through Fidler and what her department is doing but noted that what they have is the best of the best, and she is ready to defend it. H. Porter stated that their role is to act as the IT department and continuing on the budget. They will also make recommendations to include the Registry of Deeds in items that change, but they do not need to accept those recommendations. Register Monahan stated that she welcomes their recommendations. CA Dorsett stated that this is critical and timely and appreciates the Executive Committee’s support.

**MOTION:** Rep. Greeson moved to authorize Grafton County to utilize \$670,955.35 in American Rescue Plan funding for the expenditure of line item #12 to upgrade the cyber security system of the county complex. Rep. Weston seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being five (5) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### **Micro Grid Feasibility Study**

CA Dorsett explained that this project is something they started looking at with Supt. Oakes. Supt. Oakes had shown him electrical usage charts and the increases in costs, which was about 100% increase over the last ten (10) years. He stated that they started exploring this with UNH Extension as they have a specialist that deals with alternative energy. He said the conversation started by asking if they could have solar power to offset the county’s minimum load, and it turned into looking at the entire complex’s energy supply. He explained that this feasibility study is phase one (1). If the study reveals that it does not make financial sense, then this would be the

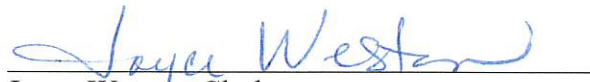
last step. If the process does reveal feasibility, there would be a second phase. CA Dorsett answered questions from the Committee.

**MOTION:** Rep. Greeson moved to authorize Grafton County to utilize \$40,000 in American Rescue Plan funding for the expenditure of line item #10 for the campus wide Micro Grid feasibility study for \$40,000. Rep. Egan seconded the motion. Rep. Weston called the roll. Rep. Abel “yes”, Rep. Egan “yes”, Rep. Greeson “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”, Rep. Weston “yes”. With the vote being five (5) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

CA Dorsett asked if the committee be open to meeting in October to address the rest of these requests. The Committee discussed it and agreed to meet October 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:00am.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:24

Sincerely,

  
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Joyce Weston, Clerk