

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
January 23, 2023

PRESENT: Reps., Sykes, Simon, Baldwin, Murphy, Greeson, Bolton, Sellers, Morse and Stringham. Commissioners Piper, and Ahern, County Administrator Libby, Administrative Assistant Norcross

OTHERS PRESENT: Mascoma Community Health – Scott Berry, Mike Samson, Sandra Hayden, Register of Deeds Monahan, Treasurer Hill

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00am and began with the Pledge of Allegiance

Rep. Sykes stated that Rep. Thomas Cormen has resigned from the Executive Committee and Rep. Stringham would be taking his place. Rep. Sykes explained that the Executive Committee could appoint a replacement on the committee.

**MOTION:** Rep. Murphy moved to appoint Rep. Stringham to the Executive Committee. Rep. Greeson seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Mascoma Community Health ARPA Request – Scott Berry - Executive Director, Sandra Hayden – Board of Directors Chairman, Mike Samson – Finance Director**

S. Berry thanked the committee for their \$125,000 in funding in September and wanted to explain what they have done with those funds. Their goal was to use those funds to keep them going until the first of the year when they thought their affiliation with HealthFirst would be completed. He stated that unfortunately, this deadline keeps being pushed out. He explained that they were able to take the \$125,000 and went to DHMC, where they received \$70,000; they went to Northern Borders where they had already received a \$154,000 infrastructure grant and were able to switch that to an operational grant. They received \$16,000 from Fuji Corporation and they received \$10,000 each from two (2) different foundations. They ran their normal annual giving and received \$35,000 in small donations. The charitable foundation, knowing the need, have agreed to fund \$30,000 transition costs of this. He explained that the \$125,000 from the county has opened up to almost \$450,000. S. Berry stated that they have been working every angle to make sure they can keep their doors open. What has been problematic is that they started their discussions with HealthFirst in June of last year and have met weekly with them to push this through. HealthFirst started their conversations with the state in August with the Commissioner at the time and the head of CMS and everyone agreed that this affiliation needed to happen. S. Berry explained that due to a number of changes happening since then they have not been able to finalize the affiliation. The status of the discussions between the state and HealthFirst is that they are at the core agreement and the issue at hand is the state has insisted that they will provide funds for the transition, as there will be losses in the first eighteen (18) months of operations. The state has agreed to provide those funds for \$775,000, HealthFirst is required to pay back \$275,000 without question, and the remaining \$500,000 is based over a period with some forgiveness over the years. S. Berry explained that the state has insisted on a

five (5) year claw back clause, which makes it unpalatable for any organization. HealthFirst and the state are still currently going back and forth, on what that agreement will look like.

S. Berry reported that Mascoma Community Health continues to provide services to their patients during all of this and even added a provider because the need is there. He further explained the affiliation details with the committee and answered questions.

Rep. Greeson asked why the initial request was for \$250,000 and the Commissioners are recommending \$200,000. Commissioner Piper explained that Commissioner McLeod believed that there should be other funding available for Mascoma Community Health. The Endowment for Health has normally provided money for this purpose and she wanted this organization to go through the regular channels. She felt like HealthFirst was being taken care of as the larger organization and that Mascoma needed more financial help. M. Samson stated that HealthFirst is getting support through the Endowment for Health. HealthFirst has to convince their board to put \$1 million in the pot for this affiliation. There is an institutional preference to invest in FQHCs because of the cost effectiveness. M. Samson stated that he understands why the Commissioners recommended \$200,000 but they will work with anyone to make this work, as they believe this game plan is sound.

Rep. Sellers stated that Mascoma Community Health mainly provides services to five (5) towns in Grafton County. He asked if there would be funds available to the other remaining towns in the county. Commissioner Piper stated that she would further discuss that in her report but the majority of the Board of Commissioners hopes to provide money to communities.

Rep. Simon stated when they were discussing the option of whether to fund them \$200,000 or \$250,000 it was with the idea that Mascoma Community Health could look for other funding opportunities but it appears as though they have explored their other options. Commissioner Piper stated that Commissioner McLeod was finding it hard to believe that there was not funding through the Endowment for Health. Commissioner Piper stated that it was an observation on her part, that HealthFirst was getting all of the support and it should not be that way. The Commissioners feel confident enough that HealthFirst funds are going to be granted by the state and noted that Executive Councilor Warmington and Senator Prentiss are all hands on deck trying to make this work. The Commissioners concern is not that the agreement will not go through but how long will that take.

**MOTION:** Rep. Simon moved to approve the ARPA for Mascoma Community Health for \$250,000. Rep. Sellers seconded the motion.

Discussion – Rep. Sellers stated that Mascoma Community Health has searched for other avenues of funding and the full \$250,000 is needed.

The committee voted on the motion and all were in favor.

Rep. Sykes stated that the minutes from the November 21<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee and the December 12<sup>th</sup> Delegation meeting need approval. Rep. Sykes stated that the only members on

the Executive Committee that were committee members last term would vote for the November 21<sup>st</sup> minutes.

**MOTION:** Rep. Simon moved to approve the minutes from the November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Rep. Greeson seconded the motion. Reps. Greeson, Murphy, Simon and Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being four (4) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Rep. Sellers moved to approve the minutes from the December 12<sup>th</sup> Delegation meeting. Rep. Simon seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Treasurer Hill gave the following Treasurer's Report via Teams: (\* see attached)**

**MOTION:** Rep. Morse moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Rep. Murphy seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Commissioner Piper gave the following Commissioner's Report: (\* see attached)**

Commissioner Piper stated that the question was asked if there would be ARPA funding left for other communities. She explained that the money they have set aside for the septic system sounds as though it is not going to be a viable expense for the county. There is \$1 million left in ARPA funds and the Commissioners have heard the Executive Committee's frustrations and concerns regarding these funds being used to assist local communities.

Rep. Simon asked, in regards to the wells and septic, if the county's rates are the same as other WW&L customers. CA Libby stated that WW&L has a rate structure and the county may be higher rate because of the amount that they use. She noted that the county is 25% of WW&L's sewage plant capacity. She does not know what the county's rates are but Supt. Oakes is looking into that and once they receive the information she will sent it to the Executive Committee. Rep. Sykes stated that in regards to HB 186, the reason why the New Hampshire Municipal Association is opposed to this bill is that the bill, as it is currently structured, would allow anyone to say they do not want to be a part of an enterprise and install their own septic system. The existing ratepayers in those enterprises would then have to pick up the slack and that could have a cascading effect, which could cause many issues for these sewer companies. He explained that with the county being 25% of WW&L's capacity, the remaining users would have to make up that 25% or the company could potentially go out of business. DES does not support it because of environmental concerns.

Rep. Sellers asked what the payment per month is for water and sewer. CA Libby stated that she does not have that broken down but the county pays roughly \$60,000-\$70,000 per month to WW&L for sewer, water and electricity with the biggest piece of that being for electricity.

Rep. Sykes stated that there are twenty-four (24) towns and cities and one (1) county who are going to be participating in the Community Power Structure that will likely be going live in April. It is anticipated that the rates would be roughly 5% less than current rates. He stated that he hopes the county will look at this. Commissioner Piper stated that she had a conversation with

former the County Administrator regarding this and she would have to look at her notes to see what the obstacles were for the county. Rep. Sykes stated that many things have changed in the last year and they are much more organized at this point. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is interested in Slightly Used Nuclear Energy as an opportunity for the State of New Hampshire to be able to provide its own electricity. There is money available in a special fund in Washington DC for this. He explained that there was a committee set up to study this and he plans on following up on the work. Rep. Bolton asked about the solar energy. Commissioner Piper explained that when the former county administrator was here he had talked about a Microgrid project but the problem was WW&L does not allow net metering. The committee and commissioners further discussed the topic and agreed to start conversations about community power.

Rep. Sellers stated that the county is looking at renovating or building a new courthouse. He asked if there is documentation on the build estimate and/or the renovations that were said are needed. CA Libby stated that she would get him a copy of the report that was done, which outlines all of the issues with the building and noted that it includes significant structural issues as well as interior issues.

**MOTION:** Rep. Greeson moved to accept the Commissioner's Report. Rep. Murphy seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**CA Libby gave the following County Administrators Report (\* see attached)**  
**(\* see attached)**

CA Libby answered questions from the committee.

**MOTION:** Rep. Murphy moved to accept the County Administrators Report. Rep Bolton seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Committee Reports:


Rep. Sykes explained that in the past they have established Committees to study larger subjects. He would suggest that members think about this for next meeting if there are any issues that they may want to create a subcommittee for.

Next Meeting – 3/20/23 at 9am.

Commissioner Piper thanked the committee for working with them on the ARPA funding for Mascoma Community Health. She stated that a lot of work and conversation went into that decision. She wanted to note that it was unanimous and bipartisan for both the Commissioners and Executive Committee.

11:04 AM with no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Heather Baldwin, Clerk

**TO:** GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
**FROM:** KAREN LIOT HILL, TREASURER  
**SUBJECT:** TREASURER'S REPORT  
**DATE:** JANUARY 23, 2023



2

CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 12/31/22)

**Grafton County General Fund**

Checking Account (ICS @ 4.80%)	\$23,789,398.50 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Investment Account (ICS @4.00%)	\$ 1,014,730.10 (Mascoma Savings Bank)
Investment Account Money Market (4.09%)	\$ 1,002,374.37 (NH Public Deposit Investment Pool)
Investment Account – ICS (4.25%)	\$ 1,013,106.43 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Investment Account – Re-Purchase (4.00%)	\$ 1,003,250.42 (Bank of NH)

**Grafton County Committed Accounts**

Deeds Surcharge ICS (1.00%)	\$233,848.65 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Deeds Surcharge Money Market (.05%)	\$ 9,130.78 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Dispatch Capital Reserve (.75%)	\$ 76,484.30 (Service Credit Union)
Nursing Home Capital Reserve (1.00%)	\$571,383.66 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)

RECENT TRANSACTIONS of NOTE

- The Combined Accumulated interest in the current fiscal year (7/1/22-12/31/22) is \$46,250.59
- The County did not need to borrow any money in anticipation of taxes during FY 23. In fact we had three (3) \$1,000,000 investments from FY 22 that we did not use during the year. This provided additional funds available for investing this year.
- Taxes were due on December 19, 2022. Taxes have all been paid, we did have one town who was late. We have received that payment and interest that was accrued. We collected a total of \$26,532,050 in tax revenue for FY 2023.
- Investment letters were sent to all banks that have a branch located within Grafton County. These letters were sent out on December 12<sup>th</sup> with bids due back by the close of business on Friday, December 16, 2022. We received proposals from nine (9) banks. We invested money at all banks that responded with at least a 4.00% interest rate. All monies have been invested as of the first week in January.
- The following Investment Plan was approved by the Commissioners on December 20, 2022:
  - Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank – Insured Cash Sweep – 4.80% - All funds remaining in the County's possession after the investments below are made. This would be approximately 23,600,000.
  - Mascoma Savings Bank – 26 Week CDARS – 4.00% - \$1,000,000

- Bank of NH – Insured Cash Sweep - 4.00% - \$1,000,000
- Claremont Savings Bank – 26 Week CDARS - 4.25% - \$1,000,000
- NH Public Deposit Investment Pool – 4.09% - \$1,000,000
- TD Bank – 6 Month CD – 4.00% - \$1,000,000
- Northway Bank – Money Market – 4.00% - \$1,000,000
- Interest rates have increased dramatically since last year. Interest income will far exceed the \$50,000 that was budgeted.
- I am investigating higher interest rate options for both the Nursing Home Capital Reserve account and Deeds Surcharge account. I have spoken with Woodsville Guaranty Savings bank regarding the ICS accounts that they are currently in and they cannot offer higher than the 1% but they do have options for a 9-month Certificate of Deposit at a higher rate that I will likely be moving monies into.

Commissioners' Report  
January 23, 2023

We would like to welcome the new Representatives to the Executive Committee. In addition, we would like to introduce and welcome Commissioner Martha McLeod who began her term on January 4, 2023.

Staffing continues to be a great concern and challenge. We have vacant positions in most all departments across the campus. You will see details in each department that is included in this report, but there are also vacancies in Maintenance, Dispatch, Alternative Sentencing, Deeds and the County Attorney's office. We are continuing recruitment efforts and advertising, but very few applicants are applying for positions. We have implemented sign-on bonuses and referral bonuses in some departments for specific positions.

**Nursing Home:**

- The census at the nursing home is currently 85. Admissions have been on hold over the past few weeks due to a widespread COVID outbreak on both our Maple and Profile units. Combined there have been over twenty-five (25) residents that have tested positive. In addition to residents, we currently have fifteen (15) staff members out of work due to COVID, this has also contributed to admissions being on hold during this period. The Maple unit is re-opening as cases have cleared on that unit. The Profile unit saw nearly every resident on the floor test positive. The nursing home is hoping that unit will be cleared by the middle of the week. All residents that had COVID are doing okay. Many experienced cold symptoms, some worse than others, but the isolation period has been the worst part for many. The staff will work on appropriate admissions as quickly as they can be done, now that we are hopefully on the other side of this outbreak.
- Staffing shortages continue to be a significant issue; we currently have the following vacant positions: Assistant Director of Nursing, 34.95 LNA's, 17.05 RN/LPN's, FT and PT Dietary Aides, and FT and PT Housekeepers. This in combination with the COVID absences has made for a challenging start to 2023.

**Department of Corrections:**

- The current in-house census is 57 with another 15 on pretrial services and 2 being monitored electronically. The inmate population continues to be largely pre-trial leaving the DoC with few options for inmates to work outside the facility.
- We continue to face significant staffing shortages with 15 vacant full-time positions out of 43. There are also one (1) full-time officer on Family Medical Leave and one (1) full-time officer away on Military Leave – leaving the jail down 17 full-time positions.
- The jail has implemented an “all hands on deck” protocol. Community Corrections and Programs personnel who are trained Correctional Officers will be pulled from their normal job responsibilities to work inside the jail until such time as additional correctional staff is hired.



**Farm:**

- Herdsman Ben White has assumed the role of Interim Farm Manager as of January 1, 2023.
- There continues to be a great collaboration between the farm and jail, and even though Farm and Community Project Sergeant Anthony Griffin has been called to work inside the facility more. The jail is sending him out to assist on the farm as they can. He is able to supervise a couple of inmates to be able to help with chores.
- Staffing issues continue to plague the farm as well. We have vacancies for two (2) full time positions. Currently the farm is staffed by Ben White as the only full-time employee and two (2) part time employees. In the past few months there has been several inmates available to work on the farm. This has helped with staffing.
- During August and September the farm reduced the size of the herd. We are now currently milking 55 cows as opposed to 80, and we have also reduced the number of young replacement animals. This has also helped ease the staffing burdens some.
- The Committee that was formed by the Commissioners, which includes Farm staff, DoC staff, Extension, Conservation, Administration staff and the Commissioners, to look at the mission and purpose of the farm will continue to meet to accomplish its goal.

**Courthouse**

- The Commissioners have held the first planning meeting regarding the Grafton County Courthouse. There was an Architectural and Engineering Assessment report completed in May, 2021 on the condition of the building. There were two (2) options:
  - Build a new building at an estimated price of \$34,590,660
  - Renovate and update existing building – estimated price - \$36,032,138
- The first meeting included representatives from Bureau of Court Facilities; the county is assessing whether to build a building that includes space for the court system. The State of NH has made it clear that it will not be able to contribute to the costs of construction and cannot enter into a long-term lease agreement without going through a lengthy process that does not guarantee a favorable outcome. Therefore, the county is left to decide how to move forward.

**Broadband Committee Update:**

- The Broadband Committee has applied for the NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) Middle Mile grant. Award notifications will be made in March, 2023. There were a significant amount of applications submitted. The design of the middle mile is complete and the project is shovel ready if grant funding is awarded. EX2 Technology continues to finalize last mile plans for individual communities.

### **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:**

- Grafton County received \$17.4M in ARPA funding. Thus far there have been four (4) rounds of funding approved by the Commissioners and Executive Committee. The projects that were approved in the first four (4) rounds are in different phases and being worked on. The list of approved projects thus far is attached. All funds are required to be obligated by December 31, 2024.
- We worked with Representative Stavis to have HB 186 created to help with the issue that we have with the Feasibility Study for a Municipal Septic for the County Complex. This HB has raised concerns with DES and the Municipal Association. We are currently talking with DES and the Municipal Association to see if any amendments can be made that would alleviate their concerns. We have received the Preliminary Engineering Report which does indicate that it would be a more financially beneficial model to have our own on-site subsurface sewage disposal system; however, there are a number of obstacles to overcome regarding the legality of being able to do so.
- The Commissioners are in the process of reviewing ARPA needs for the County Complex. The Board would like to reserve anticipated funding that would be needed for the Municipal Wells should that feasibility study find that putting in our own municipal wells would be financially beneficial, the estimated price for this is \$2.5M. We would also like to reserve funding for the sewage disposal system should we be able to overcome the existing hurdles with that project. The estimated costs for construction of that are \$1.1M. The last large reserve the Commissioners are considering is for an Architectural and Engineering design of a new courthouse. We are estimating a reserve of \$1.5M for that project. Reserving ARPA funds for these campus projects in conjunction with the funds that have already been obligated would leave approximately \$1,000,000 in unobligated funds. The Commissioners will have further discussions as to how to best use these ARPA dollars. This discussion will include potentially making funding available to additional outside organizations throughout the county. We expect to have this piece of ARPA funding ready for a recommendation to the Executive Committee in March.
- Mascoma Community Health was given \$125,000 in ARPA funding in September, 2022, to help them with operational costs until their merger with HealthFirst went through. A number of delays in the governmental process required for the merger have occurred and Macoma Community Health approached the Commissioners for an additional \$250,000 in funding for another six (6) months of operational funding until the merger can be completed (the request is attached.) The Commissioners have had several thorough conversations regarding this, including conversations with Executive Councilor Cinde Warmington and Senator Suzanne Prentiss. After very careful consideration, the Board has approved and is recommending to the Executive Committee to give Mascoma Community Health an additional \$200,000 in funding payable in two (2) installments, February 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>.

County Administrator's Report  
January 19, 2023

Financial Reports

- ❖ Cash Management Report – This report shows where all of the county's funds are invested. This includes operational monies and reserve accounts. Our current cash position is very strong. We are currently \$3,167,333.18 ahead of January, 2022's position. Interest rates are also very favorable and will lead to increased interest income.
- ❖ 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 six (6) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 YTD Actuals
Medicaid	73	65
Medicare	2	2
Private Pay	22	16
Veterans	3	1
Total	100	84

- The census at the nursing home continues to have a significant impact on the revenue. The chart above is as of December 31, 2022. We are below our budgeted census in all payer sources except for Medicare. Our current census is 85. As you heard earlier admissions have faced many challenges. Total revenue for the nursing home is currently showing a negative variance of \$779,299.09. Our Medicaid reimbursement rate did increase \$14.58 per day effective, January 1, 2023. This was not calculated in the budget projections. That will help offset losses as will the higher Medicare census as this is our highest payer source. We will continue to monitor.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received all at once in June. Bed Tax is paid quarterly, these reports reflect the first six (6) months of the fiscal year. However, only one (1) bed tax payment has been

received for the first quarter. The second quarter payment will be received in mid-February.

- The Department of Corrections is showing a negative variance currently. We have had no federal inmates through December. We do currently have one (1) federal inmate. The DoC is also below revenue in both their general revenue and Community Corrections. Community Corrections is down due to staffing issues, the numbers of inmates involved in these programs is limited as staff is working inside the facility.
- The farm is showing a positive variance, this is due to the selling of livestock and farm stand revenue.
- County Attorney/Victim Witness. These grants are direct reimbursement for expenditures. Reimbursements are requested quarterly.
- The Register of Deeds revenue continues to be up in the in FY '23. They are at 58.8% collected through six (6) months.

#### Expenses

- Through six (6) months we have a few departments that are showing negative variances. They are all minimal and should fall back in line as the year goes on. The bonded debt line shows a negative variance due to all bond payments for the fiscal year being made.
  - The Nursing Department is showing over-expended at this time. Contract Nursing line was budgeted at \$1,911,000 through six (6) months we have expended \$1,996,676.58, this line is already over-expended by \$85,676.58. This is unprecedented spending on agency staff and is due to the severe staffing shortages within the nursing department. We are on track to spend \$4,000,000 this year, which is double any previous years' expense. There will be some funds within other salary lines to cover some of the over-expenditure. We will continue to monitor.
- ❖ 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.
- 50% 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 December reports we are at 48.56 % which is below revenue by \$645,713.54 and at 46.43% or under expended by \$1.8M. At the present time this is reducing the amount of the unassigned fund balance.

- ❖ Over Expenditure Report – This report shows any line item that is over-expended at month-end.
  - We have some over-expended line items at this point. There is nothing out of the ordinary, other than contract nursing that was previously discussed. There are several COVID expense lines showing over-expended in the nursing home, these are lines we receive reimbursement for.