

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
January 3, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Atty. Hornick, AS Director DePalo, HR Director Clough, Director of
Communications Andross, Sheriff Stiegler, Supt. Oakes and Farm Manager Nelson.

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

County Attorney's Office – Marcie Hornick

1. Atty. Hornick stated that she is requesting a new Assistant County Attorney. She explained that their office would be better equipped to handle the backlog of cases from Covid-19. She noted that although it would initially be a temporary job, it may be one that meets the growing needs of the office following the end of the budget years that these monies are accessible. The total cost would equal the full time pay of a step 7 or 8 prosecutor plus benefits and retirement and other personnel costs, approximately \$310,000 (for three (3) years or \$104,000 per year.)
2. Atty. Hornick stated that her second request is for a full-time investigator to work particularly on cases involving sexual assault and domestic violence. A dedicated investigator would help catch up on the backlog of requests they regularly have to make to the different law enforcement agencies. She stated that they need to help victims get to justice more quickly. The probable cost with salary and benefits is roughly \$100,000 per year, up to \$300,000 for three (3) years.
3. Atty. Hornick stated that her final request is for new laptops for all employees. She explained that this would benefit overall in terms of greater morale and ability to be more efficient if they had better technology and equipment to allow them to do the work from anywhere. If the power goes out, if there is another lock down or on an ongoing regular basis, this would provide benefits of an increase in greater morale by saving wear and tear on employees from less travel, and less money paid out by employees for travel to and from work. She explained that this request would include appropriate software and online meeting platforms, scanners, dedicated printers, cameras, big screen monitor for training and meetings, a projector for such meetings and trainings, and spot wireless cards for working in different parts of the county where internet connections are challenging. There is an estimated onetime cost of \$45,000 with continued support and maintenance of an unknown amount.

Atty. Hornick further explained her requests with the Commissioners and answered questions.

NH/DoC – PPE Supplies – CA Libby

CA Libby explained that this request is to allocate funds for COVID supplies such as PPE for Nursing Home and Department of Corrections staff. Supplies could include masks, gloves, gowns, face shields, cleaning supplies and any other supplies or equipment needed to protect staff, residents and inmates from the spread of COVID.

Alternative Sentencing – Director DePalo

AS Director DePalo stated she is requesting Closed Circuit Cameras and Panic Buttons throughout the Alternative Sentencing Building. She stated that their building has no safety measures in place to protect their staff or clients. She explained that their program has been working towards increasing programming to include Batterer’s Intervention. As part of the NH State Standards for BIP, they must have safety precautions in place. Commissioner Lauer stated that the request was short and to the point and she supports it.

HR Director Clough

HR Director Clough explained that this request is to fund COVID Relief Pay of up to 14 days for employees of Grafton County. This would be the fund that would pay an employee if they were out of work due to testing positive to COVID or a child under-age of 18 tests positive and needs to be cared for and would also pay for quarantine time required for an employee or if they or under the age of 18 needs to quarantine. She noted that they have budgeted \$1,002,734.88 and this is if every single employee were to use the max amount of COVID pay days.

Sheriff’s Department – Sheriff Stiegler

1. Sheriff Stiegler stated that he is requesting premium pay for their essential workers while they continue to face heightened risks each day and while they work to boost employee morale in an effort to retain staff. He submitted a letter that broke down his requests as well as a letter of support written by a member of his staff for the request. He stated that the total cost for this request is \$234,000.

Commissioner Piper commented on the tone of the document created by Sheriff Department staff in support of the request for premium pay and said that she understood and appreciated the Sheriff’s stated intention in his letter as an effort to soften or change the tone. She said that she wished that the letter from his staff member did not imply a lack of fairness, consistency and poor leadership on the part of BOC.

2. Sheriff Stiegler stated that he is requesting replacement of their in-car cameras. Sheriff Stiegler explained that the company that they currently use (WatchGuard) has been purchased by Motorola and that Motorola has asked the County to sign a new contract with them. The contract was sent to Primex for liability review and Primex noted a number of areas that they suggested be revised. The revisions have been sent to Motorola and they have never responded. Sheriff Stiegler informed the Commissioners that if they were comfortable signing the Motorola contract he could reduce his request to \$100,000.00. Commissioner Piper stated that the Commissioners had not seen the contract or the comments from Primex. They will review and get back to the Sheriff.

After not hearing back from Motorola Sheriff Stiegler began looking at what else was available. He explained that a majority of their in-car cameras are 8-10 years old and becoming obsolete. Currently they are unable to get replacement parts or repairs from their current vendor. They are looking to collaborate with AXON Taser to provide a new modernized system. The total cost for this project is \$432,260.53. He noted that Axon anticipated a 1% - 1.5% percentage price increase on all products on January 1st 2022. This would increase the cost \$6,483.90.

Dispatch – Director Andross

1. Director Andross explained that his first requested project would install emergency backup power at the Mann Hill radio site in Littleton. This tower site has become a critical part of their public safety dispatch infrastructure and the equipment there is not supported by off-grid power. This project would be a cooperative effort with the State of New Hampshire, Division of Emergency Services and Communications and they would provide ongoing maintenance of the generator. He explained that this project fits within the revenue lost category of ARPA. The total cost is \$35,546.00

2. Radio Consoles – Director Andross stated that this project would incorporate additional radio consoles into their dispatch radio system. Included with the implementation of dispatching the Lancaster area public safety agencies was the acquisition of their existing system infrastructure. As this infrastructure was incorporated into their existing system, two additional radio dispatch positions have become available for integration and this project will upgrade those positions to be compatible with their existing systems. The additional radio consoles would be utilized to supplement and enhance their existing console systems by equipping their new overflow position. Additionally, they anticipate once the county broadband project is in place, they should be able to locate backup dispatch capabilities anywhere along the backbone and will work with municipal partners to facilitate that work. This investment will incorporate the DHS funded console system into the remainder of the existing infrastructure. The total cost is \$58,979.42.

3. County Telephone System – Director Andross reported that this project would replace the existing county telephone switching and infrastructure, providing reliable and redundant capabilities that do not exist today, as well as affording the opportunity for improved and efficient remote work capabilities and critical continuity of operations support.

He explained that there are currently three separate and distinct telephone systems on their county campus serving the various offices and departments. A failure in any one of these system switches affects a large number of users and although the systems are similar in brand and configuration, they do not have the capability to provide redundancy or failover to the other systems on campus. Each of these systems carries one of the 24/7 county departments. Additionally, all three systems are fed outside connectivity by one PRI that provides all outbound dialing capability and more importantly, all of the telephone capability for department receiving requests and contact from the public and outside agencies. Implementation of a modern VOIP or similar system will afford the 24/7 departments the ability the ability to maintain operations either on campus or remotely as necessary, and support telework and other remote work operations as necessary for individual departments needs now and in the future. This total cost is \$76,200.00.

Maintenance – Superintendent Oakes

1. Supt. Oakes stated that he is requesting a stipend program to pay employee premium pay for all employees within the department. He reported that he is proposing \$300 per week for all full-time staff who work 35-40 hours per week. Employees must work their regularly scheduled hours and the stipend is paid on productive hours only. If a full-time employee is on prescheduled earned time but works at least 24 hours in the week, they may be eligible to receive \$150 stipend. This stipend would last six (6) months or when funding runs out, beginning with the pay period that starts January 30, 2022. He explained that the maintenance department staff are essential employees who cannot work remotely to distance themselves from potential contact with the coronavirus. The housekeeping staff are handling trash, cleaning bathrooms and constantly touching various high contact surfaces that are touched by others. The maintenance staff work in environments where they encounter COVID patients in both the DoC and Nursing Home to address maintenance issues in these locations. He stated that essentially the maintenance staff are in regular contact with some of the vilest conditions that expose them to viruses and diseases. He noted that the department has had a vacant position since April 2021 that they have been unable to fill.

2. Supt. Oakes stated that he is looking to replace the main sewage pump station grinder assembly (Chicago Pump) with a new Muffin Monster assembly. This piece of equipment grinds all foreign material in the waste stream prior to entering the pump station well wet. From there, the pump station pumps send the waste effluent to the Woodsville Sewer Treatment Plant. If the grinder assembly does not work properly and the foreign material makes it through to these pumps, the foreign material may jam up or ruin a pump. He explained that the existing Chicago Pump grinder is obsolete. Spare parts are available, but the supply is dwindling and very expensive. He noted that the existing grinder needs a new lower cutting head assembly due to wear and was quoted at \$24,859 and does not include shipping. The cost of this request is \$28,500.

Farm – Manager Grant Nelson

FM Nelson stated that he is looking to purchase a new tractor for the farm. He explained that much of the Grafton County Farm equipment requires significant money spent on repairs. Hopefully by purchasing a new tractor, lost time from breakdowns and monies spend on expensive repairs would be greatly reduced. He stated that he would be trading in their 2006 John Deere and the estimated cost of the new tractor after trade in is \$70,162.10.

11:49 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk

