

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
January 4, 2023

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Mascoma Community Health – Sandra Hayden, Scott Berry, Mike Sampson, Melinda Gehris, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Human Resources Director Clough, Maintenance Supt. Oakes

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Commissioners were sworn in prior to the meeting for the 2023/2024 term. The first order of business was the reorganization of the board.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern nominated Commissioner Piper as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper nominated Commissioner Ahern as Vice Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern nominated Commissioner McLeod as Clerk of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Piper 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**

Commissioner Piper stated that they have received a letter and new application for a second round of ARPA funding from Mascoma Community Health. S. Hayden thanked the Commissioners for the funds they granted Mascoma Community Health Care in September in the amount of \$125,000 to get them from September through December 2022 in order to finalize the affiliation with HealthFirst. S. Hayden explained that Mascoma Community Health Care is a nonprofit that serves 5,400 patients in the Mascoma River Valley and they serve their patients regardless of their patients' ability to pay. She explained that they had expected their affiliation with HealthFirst to be completed by December; however, they have had issues with delays by the Governor's Office. The Director of Health and Human Services retired and there have been different delays over the last 60 days and HealthFirst has not been able to gain approval to go through with this affiliation. They are coming to the Commissioners again to request ARPA funds for \$250,000 in order to see them through the next six (6) months of operation until they finalize the affiliation with HealthFirst. The delay of the state approval of the HealthFirst affiliation has put them in the position to request additional ARPA funds. Commissioner McLeod asked what the affiliation is with the Governor, DHHS and this agreement. S. Berry explained that Mascoma Community Health has been working with HealthFirst since June. HealthFirst met with the Commissioner and the head of CMS and at that point, DHHS and CMS had said they wanted to support this affiliation. HealthFirst requested additional funding to support the first two (2) years of operational losses. S. Berry stated that HealthFirst is ready to do this affiliation and have stated they can be successful but they need some help. HealthFirst has applied for grants through the state. They had the commitment from the Commissioner and the head of CMS and they gave their first presentation to the Governor, who said it was a good program to support. He explained that HealthFirst and the state have since gone back and forth, as to what that agreement will

look like. With the original ARPA request, Mascoma Community Health had asked help to get through to the beginning of the year because that is what they thought was reasonable but there have since been many delays. S. Berry noted that they meet with HealthFirst every Thursday morning to receive updates and where they are at now is, rather than a grant, the state wants to give them a loan in the form of an advance that has no interest. At first, the state said that if this were to fail within seven (7) years, HealthFirst is responsible for all of it, which HealthFirst did not agree with. S. Berry explained that HealthFirst has been negotiating with the state and believes that they are at is to say if this were to fail within three (3) years but prorate the cost. They will know more at their next Thursday morning meeting. He stated that no one at Mascoma Community Health or HealthFirst anticipated this delay. Commissioner McLeod asked if their Executive Councilor Cinde Warmington has been involved in helping to move things along and if Mascoma has gone to any of the health foundations in the state. S. Berry stated that Councilor Warmington is aware and they have gone to the health foundations. He explained that they were able to take the original \$125,000 from the county and were able to use that to go to other entities for funding and have secured \$275,000 in total. M. Samson stated that both Mascoma Community Health and HealthFirst are looking for funding. Mascoma is trying to survive while the rest of the pieces come together. HealthFirst went to the state and said that their board wants to make this deal but they want to make sure they are adequately capitalized to make it through the first two (2) years, which would be \$1 million. M. Samson explained that if HealthFirst were to take over the management of Mascoma Community Health today, it would still be a year before the federally qualified healthcare money kicks in. He noted that Mascoma Community Health's worst operating year was around a \$400,000-\$500,000 loss. The FQHC money runs between \$500,000-\$700,000 annual revenue from federal sources. They will be sustainable once this affiliation takes place but they need to get there first.

Commissioner Ahern asked how much the attorneys are paid. M. Sampson stated that he is an attorney and has drafted the contracts for the lease and the equipment. He explained that Mascoma Community Health needs an attorney to oversee everything and HealthFirst needs an attorney to oversee everything on their end. Their total cost for legal right now is capped at \$40,000. He noted that the amount was originally \$65,000-\$70,000 but were able to lower that because they drafted the court documents themselves. They are trying to keep those costs as low as possible.

Commissioner Piper stated that she does not believe anyone needs to be convinced of the need for this funding. The Commissioners need to weigh the risk of investing and the health center not being able to sustain itself. Commissioner Piper reported that Grafton County's ARPA funds are dwindling. There are large infrastructure projects coming in the future and they need to review those. She stated that she understands this request is a need Mascoma Community Health. M. Sampson noted that he believes the risk of the deal not going through with HealthFirst is low and they are asking that the county join a group of other agencies that are helping them stay afloat. Commissioner Piper thanked the members from Mascoma Community Health for coming in and stated that the Commissioners will have a thorough discussion regarding this request.

**Melinda Gehris arrived via Teams and the Commissioners went into nonpublic session.**

**MOTION:** \*10:45 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (c) Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner McLeod "yes", Commissioner Ahern

“yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** \*11:15 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner McLeod “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

**NHA Labore arrived and gave the following report: (\* see attached)**

1. State Survey – NHA Labore reported that the survey has been completed and the nursing home received two (2) administrative deficiencies. The first deficiency was due to their quality improvement meeting attendance. He explained that there have been instances where meetings were scheduled but due to the staffing challenges, those individuals needed to be on the floor. He stated that he was not shocked when they were cited for it but it is something they will work on to navigate around. NHA Labore noted that the survey team was overall supportive and impressed by the building. The second deficiency was on their scheduling of fire drills. NHA Labore stated that this was an oversight on his part and they have a good system in place now and knows this will not be an issue going forward. NHA Labore stated that a plan of correction has been written, submitted and accepted. He thanked the staff who have done a fantastic job as well as the Maintenance Staff who, despite their staffing shortages, have made sure that everything in the nursing home is taken care of.

2. NHA Labore reported that the nursing home received their new medicate rate which is an increase of just under \$16 per day. The new total is \$253.54. He thanked the MDS team and stated that because of their hard work, Grafton County Nursing Home has the third highest reimbursement rate in the state.

3. NHA Labore stated that he has a scheduled call with representatives from Senator Hassan’s office tomorrow to encourage support for a bill that is being introduced by a US Senator from Oregon to expand the nurse practitioner capabilities under Medicaid and Medicare rules. He is hoping that they might introduce an amendment to have this legislation tie into nursing home rules, specifically in regards to functioning within the walls of the nursing home, serving administratively in positions such as Medical Directors. He noted that right now that still is required to be a Medical Doctor. COVID has increased the issue of not having enough doctors in long-term care. This is a great opportunity to try to expand that role. Nurse Practitioners provide great care to residents of long-term care facilities. NHA Labore stated that he had given an update to the Commissioners over the summer in regards to workforce development ideas that he presented to Representative Kuster’s Office. He reported that it did not go anywhere and he has since presented it to the State’s Commission on Aging. He has a conversation scheduled with Rep. Campion, chair of the Commission on Aging, to try to get the message across that the federal government needs to be involved more than what they are.

**HR Director Clough arrived and gave the following report: (\* see attached)**

**Maintenance Supt. Oakes arrived**

Supt. Oakes stated that he is looking to implement a \$2,000 hiring bonus for the Master Electrician position as well as a referral bonus if the new hire is referred by a county employee. CA Libby stated that

she would like to propose the same hiring bonus for the Farm Assistant position and noted that these are the same bonuses currently implemented at the DoC.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to offer a \$2,000 sign on bonus for the Master Electrician and Farm Assistant positions and a \$500 referral bonus. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor

**Agenda Items:**

1. The Commissioners signed check registers 1085-1089; 2022-12.23.2022.

2. Mileage Rate – CA Libby stated that the new federal mileage rate is .655 and noted that the county has always adopted that rate.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to set the mileage rate to .655. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

3. 2023 Holiday Schedule – CA Libby requested that the Commissioners approve the following 2023 holiday schedule:

New Years Day		Sunday	January 1, 2023	
New Years Day Observed by Admin Offices		Monday	January 2, 2023	*
Martin Luther King Jr./Civil Right's Day		Monday	January 16, 2023	
President's Day		Monday	February 20, 2023	
Memorial Day		Monday	May 29, 2023	
Independence Day		Tuesday	July 4, 2023	
Labor Day		Monday	September 4, 2023	
Columbus Day		Monday	October 9, 2023	
Veterans' Day observed by Admin Offices		Friday	November 10, 2023	**
Veterans' Day		Saturday	November 11, 2023	
Thanksgiving		Thursday	November 23, 2023	
Day after Thanksgiving		Friday	November 24, 2023	***
Christmas Day		Monday	December 25, 2023	

\*Administrative Offices Observation of New Year’s Day

\*\*Administrative Offices Observation of Veteran's Day

\*\*\*Day after Thanksgiving is a Floating Holiday for UE Bargaining Unit Members

24/7 Departments will observe actual holiday on 01/01/23 and 11/11/23

CA Libby noted that Juneteenth is not on this list but is now a federal holiday and is observed by the courts. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner McLeod both stated that they would like to commemorate Juneteenth and add it to the holiday schedule for 2023.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to add Juneteenth to the 2023 County Holiday schedule. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Ahern stated that he is not fully aware of what this holiday is. Commissioner Piper explained that this is the date that enslaved African Americans in Texas were told they were free. Commissioner Ahern stated that this is going to cost the county more money for employees to take the day off. Commissioner McLeod stated that there is a cost to people seeing the county not recognizing this holiday as well. It is about emancipation and all of us being equal citizens of this country. Commissioner Piper stated that we recognize Civil Rights Day, she wants to recognize and commemorate the holiday by recognizing all of their citizens. Commissioner Piper stated that they recognize veterans and asked how they cannot recognize people that were marginalized and did not share in the benefits that other enslaved people in the United States did when the government order was put through. Commissioner Ahern asked about discrimination across other groups of people that are not recognized. Commissioner Piper stated that this was a purposeful disservice that was done to a portion of their population.

The Commissioners voted on the motion. Commissioners Piper and McLeod were in favor and Commissioner Ahern was opposed. With the vote being two (2) in favor and one (1) in opposition the motion passes.

Commissioner McLeod left the meeting

CA Libby requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \*12:16 PM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a). Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes", Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** \*12:25 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes". Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to accept the recommendation for the interim Farm Manager salary. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Agenda Items:**

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Piper had a couple of edits.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Commissioner Issues:**

1. Commissioner Piper stated that she wanted to discuss two (2) Legislative Bills that she questioned whether they pertain to Grafton County or not.

- HB 44 – Commissioner Piper stated that this bill pertains to unincorporated areas. Any county that has oversight of an unincorporated area, the bill allows for multi-units in areas zoned for single dwelling. She further discussed the bill and CA Libby stated that she does not think this pertains to Grafton County as Livermore is almost 100% White Mountain National Forest and does not have any residents.
- HB107 – Commissioner Piper stated that this bill prohibits a person convicted of certain sexual assault offenses from being hired or otherwise engaging in any other employment or volunteer service, which provides direct services to a minor or supervision/oversight of a minor. She stated that this new legislation makes current law more restrictive. CA Libby noted that they would never entertain hiring anyone with felonious sexual assault charges. Commissioner Piper stated that she questioned whether the Commissioners should discuss this bill because of the previous discussions they have had regarding hiring farm staff. The Commissioners further discussed the bill and agreed that Grafton County would not take any position on the bill.

2. CA Libby asked if Commissioner Piper has talked to Kate Horgan from the Dupont Group regarding the sewer bill (HB 186.) Commissioner Piper stated that the bill should be on the list they are monitoring.

3. Commissioner Piper stated that they would finish the rest of the agenda items next week when Commissioner McLeod was there.

4. CA Libby stated that she has the list of future ARPA requests almost finished and will be giving the Commissioners for their review. She stated that the list is large and is more money than what they have left in ARPA funds. She stated that the sewer, wells and the courthouse account for all of the funds that are left and there are a number of smaller requests as well. CA Libby noted that those three (3) large projects would save the county money in the end. Commissioner Ahern asked if there would be a county home in six (6) years. CA Libby stated that she hopes so. Commissioner Piper stated that this is extremely important to remember. Given the cost and problems, post COVID, they may be out of business. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is unsure how much longer they can continue to increase salaries and that it may come crashing down. The Commissioners further discussed the challenges facing county government. CA Libby stated that she would get the final list of ARPA requests for the Commissioners for their review.

1:14 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Martha S. McLeod". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

Grafton County Human Resources Report  
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director  
 January 4, 2023

**HR Activity Report (12/06/2022-01/03/2023)**

- ***New Hires***

Department	#	Position(s)
Nursing Home		
DOC	1 (1 FT)	1 FT CO
Sheriff's Dept	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Deputy

***Separations***

Departments	#	
Nursing Home	3 (1 FT, 2 per diem)	1 FT Housekeeper, 2 Per Diem LNA's
DOC	2 (1 FT, 1 PT)	1 FT CO, 1 PT CO

***Reasons:***

- Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 1
- Termination – 1
- Vaccine Mandate -
- New job/career change – 1
- Relocated –
- School –
- Retirement –
- Not Reappointed -
- Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements - 2

- ***Status Changes/ dept transfers:***

***Active Leave of Absences between December 6, 2022 to present***

Department	#	
Nursing Home – Nursing	11	(10 are intermittent, 8 for self, 3 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	5	(4 are intermittent, 4 for family, 1 self)
DOC	3	(1 intermittent, 2 self, 1 family)
Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch.	2	(2 intermittent, 2 family)
County Atty's Office	3	(2 intermittent, 3 self)
HR Department	1	(1 intermittent, family)
Alternative Sentencing	1	(1 intermittent family)
Maintenance	2	(2 intermittent 1 self, 1 family)

**TOTAL: 28**

**Current Jobs posted/advertised**

- LNA's (34.95 FTE's vacant)
- RN/LPN (17.05 FTE's vacant combined)
- ADON
- Assistant County Attorney
- RN Per Diem DOC
- CO's (14 FTE's)
- Cook DOC (2)
- Housekeepers (FT and PT)
- Dietary Aides (FT and PT)
- Dispatcher
- Skilled Maintenance Assistant
- Farm Assistant



# Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: January 4, 2022

## Census

Medicare: 4  
Medicaid: 76  
VA: 1  
Hospice: 0  
Private: 18  
Total: 99

## FY '22 Budgeted Census:

Medicare: 3  
Medicaid: 89 (Daily rate= \$212.62)  
VA: 1  
Hospice: 0  
Private: 22  
Budgeted Census: 114

## Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 1 (1/04/2022)  
Deceased Residents: 1  
Discharges: 0

## Other Topics:

- 1) Commissioner Memorandum Requests
- 2) State of New Hampshire Presumptive Eligibility Agreement
- 3) CMS Mandatory Vaccination Update
  - January 7, 2022 hearing before United States Supreme Court