

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
November 30th 2021

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

OTHERS PRESENT: County Attorney Hornick, Finance Director Libby, Heather Porter – SNS, Register of Deeds Monahan

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

Commissioner Ahern participated electronically according to RSA 91-A: 2 with the reason being he was unable to attend the meeting in person. Electronic participation was at his request. It was noted that all votes must be taken by a roll call.

County Attorney Hornick arrived to discuss the contract with the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association.

Atty. Hornick reported that they have had intermittent air quality and heating/cooling issues in the Courthouse. She went on to explain that every year, Supt Oakes performs a walk through for safety purposes. There is currently an electrical system issue and Supt. Oakes has suggested that one possible culprit was the space heaters. She stated that she is working with Supt. Oakes to discuss possible options to address the heating situation. CA Dorsett stated that he met with Supt. Oakes yesterday to understand how the system in the Courthouse works and Supt. Oakes is willing to try some different solutions and will discuss them with the Commissioners at a further date.

Atty. Hornick then discussed the contract with the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association.

Commissioner Ahern requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 9:13 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter non-public session for the purposes of the hiring of any person as a public employee according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (b) and 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “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.

* 9:28 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer 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 Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to accept the Prosecutorial Services Agreement between Grafton County and the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association as amended this morning. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

Finance Director Libby arrived and gave the following report: (*see attached)

FD Libby reported that she has received the draft FY21 audit and she hopes to have the final audit in mid-December. The auditors are going to have to audit two major programs this year due to the types of funding that the County received. She noted that there will be an additional \$4,000 charge to complete this additional audit.

FD Libby submitted a New Hampshire Alliance Regional Development Corporation (NHARDC) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) drawdown request for Commissioner Piper to sign.

Social Services Application – FD Libby discussed the application with the Commissioners and stated that she will send out the applications today.

Agenda Items

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the November 16th meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the minutes from the November 16th meeting. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

2. The Commissioners signed Check Registers 1067, 1072-1078.

3. IT Contract Authorization – CA Dorsett explained that following the BoC and Executive Committee approval of the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address IT infrastructure and security changes, the County released an RFP. At the November 16th meeting

the Commissioners reviewed the response to the RFP and awarded the project to SNS. A contract has been reviewed and is ready for authorization to execute.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to authorize CA Dorsett to execute the contract with Secured Network Services for Cyber Security and IT infrastructure improvements on behalf of Grafton County. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

4. COVID Policy – CA Dorsett stated that this is the policy they have looked at before. One of his concerns was that they were potentially creating liability by creating two classes of employees in terms of how they are paid if exposed or testing positive for COVID. He indicated that a compromise was made and reviewed the policy changes with the Commissioners. They discussed the following language change to the policy:

If unvaccinated the first 5 days of quarantine will be paid out of the earned time bank and remaining days out of extended sick leave bank. If all accrued time has been exhausted, time will be unpaid.

If an unvaccinated employee tests positive and has provided proof of a positive test, the first three days out will be paid out of earned time and the remainder will be paid out of extended sick leave. If all accrued time has been exhausted or in an unbenefited position the leave would be without pay.

If a fully vaccinated employee tests positive and provides proof of vaccination they will be paid immediately out of their extended sick leave bank. If a fully vaccinated employee has a child under 5 who tests positive they will also be allowed to use time out of their extended sick leave bank to care for child as this age group is not yet eligible to receive the vaccine.

CA Dorsett noted that in the instance of Nursing Home employees, all situations must be reviewed by Nursing Home administration and the amount of time for quarantine will be determined based on separate guidelines for long-term care facilities. He discussed the policy further with the Commissioners and answered questions

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to accept the Grafton County COVID Policy as read. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “no” Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being two (2) in favor and one (1) in opposition the motion passes.

Heather Porter from SNS arrived to give an update on IT.

H. Porter discussed the IT Infrastructure and Cyber Security project timeline. She reported that the first items they will address are the firewalls and by the first of the year, they plan to start

migrating employee emails to Microsoft 365. She reported that after service surveys showed a high level of county employee satisfaction with IT services. She answered various questions from the Commissioners and stated that next month they will have a more in-depth report for the Commissioners once the project starts.

Agenda Items:

ARPA Round Two – CA Dorsett said that the Board of Commissioners established ARPA priorities and process timeline on July 13th for Round One of department ARPA requests. Those requests are now implemented, in process, or in planning. Since that time, there have been a few proposals/inquiries from departments for consideration. To provide BoC and the Executive Committee with information he requested consideration and authorization to move forward with Round Two.

CA Dorsett presented a process that would have the guiding priorities remain the same as previously approved. The proposed timeline would require department heads to submit applications to the CA by December 23rd, the proposals would be compiled and reviewed and submitted to the Commission by January 3rd for consideration with recommendation being submitted to the Executive Committee on January 24th for consideration.

The Commissioners discussed the next round of ARPA requests. Commissioner Lauer noted that she likes this timeline and thinks their priorities from last time continued to be in order. The Commissioners were in agreement to have CA Dorsett move forward with ARPA Round Two.

NHA Labore & HR Director Clough arrived to discuss the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

NHA Labore reported that a court in Missouri ruled in favor of the ten states that sued against the vaccine mandate. CMS is barred from enforcing the vaccination mandate on healthcare workers in New Hampshire and nine other states. He stated that he thinks they should pause the mandate that was put into place but still encourage employees to get vaccinated and noted that roughly 86% of staff are vaccinated. Commissioner Lauer stated that she initially voted in favor of the policy, as she believes that is what is best for the health and safety of the staff and residents, but shortly after, CMS lifted the restrictions allowing all visitors into the Nursing Home. NHA Labore stated that he does not want to have to come back in ten days and ask to implement the policy again if it is put back in place. He does not want to create confusion; but he wants to support the staff. He wants to be transparent with them in what they can do. The Commissioners are in agreement to pause the mandate pending further guidance from CMS.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to temporarily pause the Mandatory COVID -19 Vaccination Policy pending court rulings. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion.

Discussion: NHA Labore stated that he would like to be the one to relay this information to his staff members. HR Director Clough stated that she wants to be transparent with the employees that this policy is not gone, there is the possibility that it can come back.

The Commissioners voted on the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

NHA Labore noted that in regards to the Caledonian record article that was published, he wanted to inform the Commissioners that everything is under control. The Nursing Home is going to continue to be here and they will continue to care for the residents. Commissioner Piper explained that there was an article published in the Caledonian that caused a great deal of confusion, stress and fear within the Nursing Home. She stated that going forward, all communications will go to the Nursing Home Administrator and she does not see any reason for anyone other than him to contact the press or make a comment outside of what is in the minutes, or what is factually correct.

Commissioner Piper requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 11:00 AM 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “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.

* 11:21 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer 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 Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Ahern reported that on December 8th Renee DePalo is going to be his guest at the Plymouth Rotary Club to discuss the Alternative Sentencing programs.
2. Commissioner Piper stated that DoC Supt. Elliott’s evaluation needs to be completed. They agreed to have their individual evaluations done for next Tuesday.
3. Commissioner Piper reported that the NHAC had an emergency Executive Committee meeting on Friday and the purpose was to decide on the venue for the 2022 conference. She explained that given the rates at the Mount Washington, they would be holding the 2022 NHAC

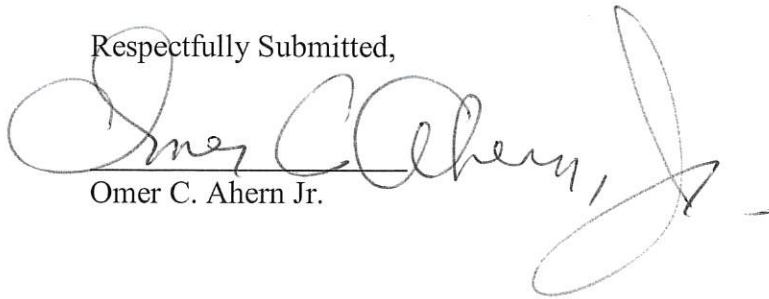
Conference at the Double Tree in Manchester. She noted that there is an Officer's meeting on Friday where they will talk about renewing all three (3) contracts with Jim Monahan's organizations.

4. Register Monahan arrived to inform the Commissioners that US Imaging has arrived to begin the scanning project.

5. CA Dorsett gave an update on administration topics and projects the County is working on.

11:40 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Omer C. Ahern Jr.", written in black ink. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line, which is placed above the printed name "Omer C. Ahern Jr.".

Omer C. Ahern Jr.

Finance Director Report
November 30, 2021

1. FY 2022 Tax Invoices out – Due 12/17/21 – Collected \$5,562,956 from six (6) communities.
2. Payroll Coordinator Update – Still searching
3. HealthTrust Return of Surplus - \$418,538.75 was received on 11/19/21 – Returns were issued to employees (\$48,739.50) and retirees who pay for their insurance (\$21,011.59) last week. The County will retain \$348,787.66 which is an unanticipated revenue for FY '22.
4. Stipends to Nursing Home and Corrections employees – \$339,704.62 paid out through November – program began on October 3rd and will continue through March 31st. We are currently averaging about \$48,500/week in stipend costs.
5. COVID Funding Updates
 - a. Nursing Home received \$635,921.90 in Provider Relief funding directly from the federal Health and Human Services department in Phase 4 of their funding allotments.
 - b. GOFERR – COVID 19 Impact Long Term Care Program - \$167,500 has been awarded to the nursing home – this program gave applicants \$2,500 per Medicaid occupied bed as of September 30, 2021.
6. FY 2023 Budget Information
 - a. Health Insurance – Guaranteed Maximum Rate increase 2.3%
 - b. Workers' Comp – Not-to-Exceed – 6.0% Increase (\$13,214)
 - c. Property/Liability – Not-to-Exceed – 5.0% Increase (\$7,187)