

GRAFTON COUNTY FARM COMMITTEE MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
December 6, 2022

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer and Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross, Heather Bryant, Jim Frohn, Glenn Libby, Ben White, Pam Gilbert, DoC Supt. Elliott

G. Libby reported that he and J. Frohn walked along the riverbank and it was determined that there is not much feasibility in his timber harvest to include the riverbank. They will have to figure out another alternative to clearing that area. He stated that they are also trying to think of other ways to get the cows out of the dry barn in better weather. G. Libby stated that he also discussed burning fields to help reclaim the fields with J. Frohn and possibly looking into Christmas trees. Inside the barn, they are waiting for their big inspection and have been working on cleaning. He stated that the staff have talked about consolidating some feed and they are trying to figure out a way to empty the manure pit to spread it by the timber harvest and down on the meadow.

Commissioner Piper announced that B. White has been named Interim Farm Manager effective January 1st. G. Libby stated that he believes the county needs to develop policies for hiring people with records. They had an opportunity to hire two (2) people with records, but thought it would have caused controversy on the complex. He stated that they do not receive many applications but they include either no farm experience or people with records. Commissioner Ahern stated that they need to establish those policies as soon as possible. We are in a unique position; the interim farm manager has a lot of experience dealing with those inmates. G. Libby noted that come January 1st he can only work 24 hours per week because of his retirement. He explained that prior to taking on the interim role he was only working as needed and therefore he was able to work more hours towards the end of the year. B. White stated that they currently have three (3) very good inmates. G. Libby thinks the farm can move forward if they can hire one (1) good full time employee. They have other part time staff that help; they have to balance expenses with revenues.

Commissioner Piper asked if they should think about putting a mobile unit on the property for housing to help attract people and asked if that would be cost effective. CA Libby stated that if they are looking to hire someone, they are hopeful the successful candidate is local. They have only had one individual relocate here for the farm and living on campus would not have been ideal for him. G. Libby asked if they are going to find housing for one (1) farm employee when the county has all these vacant positions in the nursing home and Department of Corrections. CA Libby questioned if immigrant labor would be feasible for the county if they have housing on campus. Every farm up and down the river valley has immigrant labor. H. Bryant stated that if the county were to have housing in place, getting immigrant workers would be much easier. Commissioner Piper stated that she thinks they should keep this question on the table. P. Gilbert suggested trainings that inmates could complete for a certificate that they could then present as a


way of being hired. G. Libby stated that he thinks they need a policy that all department heads are on board with.

G. Libby stated that the long range planning for ARPA funds has come and passed and reported that there were no requests from the farm. A lot of that reasoning was because he is wondering if they spend money on an ARPA request, when they are unsure how the farm is going to look moving forward. H. Bryant noted that ARPA funds were allocated previously for the farm and were not used and asked what happened to that money. The Committee talked about different ideas for the farm using ARPA funds. The Commissioners and CA Libby agreed that G. Libby submit the requests.

G. Libby reported that they have all of their corn seed for next year and they have partnered with Hatchland. Some benefits of collaborating with Hatchland is that they learned a lot of what their corn looked like vs what Hatchland's corn looked like. There was a difference and there are things they will be changing next year to see better yields. He noted that they would be doing soil samples for potatoes as well.

12:25 with no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk