

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
February 14, 2023

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

OTHERS: Bethlehem Energy Commission – Mary Lou Krambeer, Jim Fitzpatrick, David Van Houten, Maintenance Supt. Oakes, Interim Farm Manager White, Nursing Home Administrator Labore

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 11:00AM.

**Bethlehem Energy Commission (BEC) - Mary Lou Krambeer, Jim Fitzpatrick, David Van Houten**

M. Krambeer reviewed the following document outlining their request (\* see attached)

D. Van Houten explained that people tend to overlook the fact that all the money the BEC is planning to spend will be going to projects that will reduce costs in the future.

Commissioner Ahern asked if the BEC has looked into slightly used nuclear fuel. D. Van Houten stated that they have looked into it but explained that that program is under developed at this point and they are looking to act now.

The BEC answered various questions from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Piper stated that this project is very worthy and is what ARPA dollars are for and she is happy that the BEC came back. Counties are doing a lot to help communities and get funding out to them. She stated that the County has had an internal challenge with capacity. They are working on that actively and gathering information on what has been done in other counties in New Hampshire to assist their administrators to get these funds out into the communities. She explained that the Commissioners are in the process of thinking how they would implement an RFP process to provide funds to the communities and she plans to request a discussion on this with the Commissioners next week. D. Van Houten asked how much ARPA funding is available and asked if the County will be in charge of distributing Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Infrastructure funding. Commissioner Piper stated that the County has a good amount of ARPA funds left and the Commissioners need to discuss how they want to go about allocating those funds. CA Libby noted that the County is not in charge of distributing IRA and Infrastructure funding. The Commissioners thanked the BEC for coming in. Commissioner Piper stated they would have a conversation next week and be back in touch with them.

**Interim Farm Manager White arrived and gave the following report (\* see attached)**

Commissioner Piper asked for an update on the chickens and noted that former Interim Manager Libby discussed selling the chickens due to the labor involved. Interim FM White reported that many people go to the farm for eggs and it does not bother him to keep the poultry operation going. Commissioner Piper stated that with staffing being a challenge, if Interim FM White feels as though they are able to keep that portion of the farm going that is fine. She stated that if the Farm does not have the labor to make it work then maybe this is an area they need to look at. Interim FM White explained that having Sgt. Griffin back and more inmates, they are able to make the poultry operation work.

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

- 1) Decommission of COVID Unit – NHA Labore reported that the Nursing Home would be decommissioning the small COVID unit off the Maple Unit based off staffing and experience with dealing with COVID on the floor. They are able to handle cases on the floor and it allows the Nursing Home to run more efficiently from a staffing standpoint. He stated that they would then turn that area into a short-term rehab and try to admit some short-term referrals for rehab. He stated that they would be setting aside three (3) rooms to start and see how it works. NHA Labore explained that this is one of the reasons why they are having greater discussions on the admissions. They need to be proactive and get these types of referrals as they are given by the hospitals. The Commissioners and NHA Labore discussed admissions and Commissioner Ahern asked if they advertise in the newspapers. NHA Labore reported that they do not and he does not have a line item in the budget for advertising. He explained that their Social Services department reaches out to hospitals to let them know of the availability at the Nursing Home and word of mouth is a main source of advertising for them.
- 2) End of Federal Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023 – NHA Labore reported that he participated in a webinar yesterday where the CDC, CMS and the Federal Health and Human Services discussed what May 11<sup>th</sup> – May 12<sup>th</sup> going forward will look like. They released a broad roadmap of what will change and what will continue. There is an expectation that the FMAP match will phase out over the remainder of the calendar year. There are going to be changes in regards to the amount of paperwork the Nursing Home will have to do, some flexibilities will be granted on the reports the Nursing Home is required to complete every week. NHA Labore explained that there would be changes on guidelines for how the Nursing Home handles COVID going forward. There were not many details released but more details would be provided the closer they get to May 11<sup>th</sup>. NHA Labore believes that this will say that CMS and the CDC have given the Nursing Home the tools and information they need to navigate. For right now, the Nursing Home will continue to receive antigen tests based on the national stockpiles. There may also be flexibilities in testing going forward. NHA Labore stated that as he learns more, he would keep the Commissioners informed.
- 3) GCNH Assistance to GCSCC Meals on Wheels Program – NHA Labore explained that the Upper Valley Senior Citizen Council in Lebanon has been without a cook for a couple of months. He is on the Board of Directors for the Upper Valley Senior

Citizen Council and the Executive Director emailed the board to see if anyone could chip in with the meals. He explained that he, personally, was unable to help but he stated that the Grafton County Nursing Home will prepare 100 meals for the Meals on Wheels program. He noted that the Nursing Home staff is cooking today, and the meals will be picked up tomorrow. There will be cost associated with 100 meals and he is trying to get an idea of what that would look like. He stated that the cost is \$1.36-\$2.76 per meal and he is looking at the lower end of that cost. He explained that they are not making meals based off the Upper Valley Senior Citizen Council's menu. The Nursing Home is purchasing extra food that they normally purchase and are making the meals with that.

- 4) Commissioner Memo Dated 2/1/2023 – NHA Labore requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \*12:22 PM 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 Ahern “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\*12:38 PM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** 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 McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner McLeod “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 Nursing Home Administrator's request for the imposition of the requested liens on real property at the address and book and page numbers listed in the Memo for Requested Action by Commissioners, submitted on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion for discussion purposes.

Discussion: Commissioner McLeod stated that she understands the reason for doing this, to protect the county taxpayers; however, she is also concerned about the families involved and does not have enough information on the surviving spouses to know that she could support this. Commissioner Ahern stated that there are other ways that families can receive help. Commissioner McLeod stated that she would like to see us do more outreach to let these families know of the resources.



The Commissioners voted on the motion. Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “no”. With the vote being two (2) in favor and one (1) in opposition the motion passes.

**Supt. Oakes arrived with a bid waiver request regarding the second test water well.**

Supt. Oakes stated that the Commissioners and Executive Committee approved the ARPA request to drill the 2<sup>nd</sup> test well and he is still waiting on the DES wetland permit. Jon Warzocha from Horizon’s engineering stated that there is a provision in there, where, if the ground is frozen and the permit has not been done yet, they could bring in a timber mat to drive over the ditch rather than having to install the culvert, which is what the permit gives permission for. Supt. Oakes explained that if the ground is frozen the County does not need that permit and they save on that expense. He reached out to Tri State Drilling and Boring, who drilled the first well, and asked if the Commissioners were to agree to waive the bid and sole source to them, would they charge the same price as the first well. Supt. Oakes stated that they agreed to honor the same price of \$32,700. The cost of the timber mat is an extra cost of \$500, as it is outside of the original scope of work making the total cost \$32,700. He is requesting that the Commissioners waive the bidding process and accept Tri State Drilling and Boring’s quote.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved waiving the bidding process and to accept Tri State Drilling and Boring’s quote of \$33,200. Commissioner McLeod 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 February 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Piper had a couple of grammatical edits.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the February 8<sup>th</sup> minutes. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers: 1108 & 1110.

3. DMV Licensing Lease Renewal – CA Libby stated that she has heard back from the State of New Hampshire, and they have accepted the \$300 a month for rent. She explained that the Commissioners previously gave her permission to enter into agreement if the state were to accept but she needs a new motion with today’s date to allow her to enter into the agreement.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to authorize the County Administrator to sign the agreement for the DMV Licensing Lease Renewal. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

4. Proclamation Request – National Therapy Animal Day – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners received a proclamation request for a National Therapy Animal Day. The Commissioners discussed the proclamation and agreed to support the request.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to support a proclamation celebrating April 30<sup>th</sup> as National Therapy Animal Day. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

5. Woodsville Meeting Date – CA Libby stated that WW&L has proposed a meeting date with the Commissioners on April 4<sup>th</sup> and Commissioner Ahern has stated that date would not work for him. The Commissioners discussed possible meeting dates and CA Libby stated that she would see if there was an off Tuesday in April or later March that WW&L could do.

6. Audit Recommendations – CA Libby stated that she reviewed the two (2) audit proposals that were received last week. The proposals were \$35,000 per year for the three (3) years from Vachon Clukay and \$45,000, \$47,000 and \$49,000 from Marcum. She reported that five (5) counties are currently with Vachon Clukay, of which one (1) county is new with them and the other four (4) had high remarks. The other five (5) counties are with Marcum. CA Libby stated that based on the price, her recommendation would be to switch auditors and accept Vachon Clukay's bid.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to accept the bid from Vachon Clukay for \$35,000 per year. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

7. CA Libby requested a nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \*1:25 PM 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 Ahern "yes", Commissioner McLeod "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\*1:39 PM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** 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 McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner McLeod "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes". Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and the motion passes.

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

\*2:15 PM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** 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 McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner McLeod “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

7. Courthouse Discussion – CA Libby stated that she spoke with Sarah Lineberry from the State Division of Administrative Services in regards to the Courthouse. CA Libby stated that S. Lineberry and the Division of Administrative Services were a part of the Courthouse meeting in November, and they were going to have a Court Accreditation Council meeting, and that was held in January. S. Lineberry stated that Grafton County is not on the state’s priority list and is not going to be for at least next two (2) years, as the state has other facilities that need much more attention than they feel Grafton County’s Courthouse needs. CA Libby stated that the courts are not going to commit to anything, and she feels that in the near future, the Commissioners, herself and Supt. Oakes need to have a serious conversation about the Courthouse. The County had a study done two (2) years ago and the building is not getting any younger. Department Heads want direction and to know what is happening. The Commissioners and CA Libby further discussed the issue of the Courthouse and Commissioner McLeod asked if they should reach out to Executive Councilor Warmington to inform her about the issues and see if she can look into it and help the County in any way. The Commissioners agreed and CA Libby stated that she would reach out to Councilor Warmington to explain to her what their situation is. Commissioner Ahern stated that he would like to inform the Bar Association and let them know what is going on with the state as it relates to the County Courthouse.

8. ARPA funding to the Communities – CA Libby outlined the ARPA funds, what the County currently has, what the County has spent and interest that has been earned on the funds. CA Libby noted that the COVID Relief Pay was approved in December of 2021, which gives every employee fourteen (14) days of COVID relief pay if they are out of work due to COVID. She explained that through January 2023 the County has only spent \$162,000 and have \$840,000 of that left. They will need to have a conversation in the near future to discuss how long the County continues to offer the COVID relief pay, as they do not offer relief pay for any other illnesses that keep employees out of work. She stated that there would be a large portion of that money left, which will go back into the ARPA funds and there are other projects that will do the same.

CA Libby reviewed Merrimack County’s RFP process for their non-profit sub awards using their ARPA funds. She explained that she feels it is very well written and detailed. She has Hillsborough County’s as well. CA Libby stated that she would like the Commissioners to be thinking of a dollar amount of how much money they want to allocate for non-profits.

CA Libby explained that her goal would be to complete this step in the next three (3) to four (4) weeks, give it to the Executive Committee for their approval in March and she would hope to have the RFP out April 1<sup>st</sup>. She stated that there will be many different parts to this process and explained that Merrimack County has four (4) officials listed to score the applications and how they will be scored. There are decisions that need to be made regarding the process and how it will be carried out. CA Libby stated that this process is different from what the Bethlehem Energy Commission is talking about; this is helping non-profit agencies who have been affected by COVID. She stated that if the Commissioners wanted to engage with the BEC on energy assistance, it would need to come out of the lost revenue. She is not in favor of sending every town in Grafton County money. If that is something the Commissioners are interested in, she would suggest that the County let the towns know the money is available to apply for. CA Libby noted that the County is also eligible for Energy Efficiency Block Grant and their allocation is \$78,000. It has broad uses for them as a county and they have until January of 2024 to apply for that.

CA Libby explained that the sub awards that Merrimack and Hillsborough Counties have set up are all through non-profits as are non-profits are eligible under ARPA to receive the funds. Commissioner McLeod stated that there are many municipalities that did not receive a large amount of ARPA funding and she would encourage the connection between non-profits and municipalities.

CA Libby stated that there are other projects and items within the county complex that are priorities as well. Commissioner Piper stated that she would like to be conservative at first with how much funding they will be making available. CA Libby noted that Merrimack County has allocated \$2 million with a maximum of \$150,000 per agency. She asked the Commissioners to review the Merrimack RFP and they will further discuss this next week.

### **Commissioner Issues:**

1. Commissioner McLeod stated that she had a call from a constituent in Bath who called Service Link's Littleton office three (3) days in a row, numerous times. He then drove to the office where it said they were open, but the office was locked, and no one was there. Commissioner McLeod stated that she tried calling and got a call back from the Plymouth Office who had explained that they were having phone issues as well as staffing issues across the various offices.

2. Commissioner McLeod received a call from a business in Littleton who had been in contact with CGI and had received a letter from the County regarding CGI and the video project that is taking place. CA Libby explained that CGI is a company that the County has worked with for a number of years and they provide video tours that are located on the County's website. The videos highlight different aspects of what Grafton County has to offer, for people who may be looking to relocate. She stated local businesses and they are given the option to display their business in the videos as advertisement for a fee. Commissioner McLeod stated that the business that contacted her felt the \$500 was a lot of money for a 60-second video, which is misleading and did not display their business. Commissioner McLeod stated that she feels the County should

ask CGI for a copy of their rates so the Commissioners are informed on what they are asking businesses for. CA Libby stated that she would reach out to CGI.

3. Commissioner Piper reported that she attended the NACo Conference in Washington DC. She stated that this is a legislative conference and primarily consists of agencies giving reports and updates on the status of programs, grants, and availability of programs. The presentations are primarily agencies from the federal government and there are working committees as well. The meeting focuses on the intergovernmental relationship and advocacy. She further discussed the conference with the Commissioners.

3:30 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha S. McLeod". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk



To: Grafton County Commissioners  
From: Bethlehem Energy Commission -- Mary Lou Krambeer, Chuck Phillips, and David Van Houten  
Re: Funding support for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Projects for Grafton County Towns  
Dt: February 14, 2023

*Jim Fitzpatrick, Franconia*

Thank you for speaking to us today. We last attended your meeting on May 17, 2022. Today we'd like to discuss investing Grafton County ARPA dollars to advance energy resilience and sustainability on the municipal level.

### **Grafton County Energy Resilience Initiative**

We believe Grafton County is in a unique position to establish itself as a leader among counties in the State by strategically directing a portion of its ARPA funds toward energy efficiency, energy renewables, and energy resiliency efforts. We would like to suggest putting aside \$2-\$3 million dollars for Grafton County towns for such pursuits. There are many ways to structure such a project. Here are a few ideas:

1. Distribution of Funds for Energy Resilience projects  
Send \$50,000-\$75,000 to each of the 38 Grafton County towns specifically for use on energy efficiency, energy renewable, or energy resilience projects (request a 1:1 municipal match).
2. Distribution of Funds *specifically* to Town Energy Committees/Commissions  
Support energy leadership in towns by sending \$50,000-\$75,000 to each of the Grafton County towns, who have set up, or after they have set-up, an energy committee/energy commission to address energy resiliency in their town (request a 1:1 municipal match).
3. Targeted Technical Assistance  
Contract with an energy organization to provide targeted technical assistance to Grafton municipalities for the next 5 years. (Coos County and the Monadnock Region now receive exceptional assistance from energy circuit riders through the nonprofit Clean Energy NH. These 2 highly trained professionals know about energy systems *and* state and federal funding programs. They attend energy committee and selectboard meetings and talk through town energy needs/plans and introduce funding opportunities. In the past 3 years the Coos County Clean Energy NH Circuit Rider has helped attract over \$1m in funding for Coos municipalities.)
4. Establish an Energy Resilience Fund  
In the event that Grafton County wants to offer grants of varying sizes over the course of a few years -- set-up an Energy Resilience Fund with a non-profit experienced in grant administration (e.g. New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Grafton County Economic Development Council...). This will alleviate the need for Grafton County to set-up a vetting process.
5. Other

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. We look forward to our discussion and we are ready to provide or research any additional information you may need to help advance this work. Below you will find a preliminary strategy statement to begin framing this effort.

## February 2023 Farm Report

1. There are currently 54 cows milking, averaging 80 pounds per cow. We produced 124,591 pounds of milk for the month of January. Components were 4.43% butterfat and 3.23% protein. The milk pay price in November was \$25.87 for Grafton County Farm.
2. We have 2 sows that are due this coming weekend. Also, have one due next month and two due in April. Chickens are still here. Looking to change them out if we are to keep selling eggs.
3. We have four inmates assisting us with everyday farm work. Along with Sgt. Griffin, Glenn and Gordon things have been going smoothly. Still searching for potential help.
4. Meeting with Tom Beaudry next week to go over Ph levels and potential crop plan.
5. Last week our JD 6415 engine went. It is currently at United AG to replace motor. Also, still actively searching to replace 7520. Looked at a JD 4455 in MA and was sent a video of a JD 4255 in IA. Both were sold however. Currently looking at some local equipment that is for sale.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben White

Interim Farm Manager

# Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: February 14, 2023

## Census

Medicare: 3  
Medicaid: 58  
VA: 3  
Hospice: 2  
Private: 16  
Total: 82

## FY '23 Budgeted Census:

Medicare: 2  
Medicaid: 73  
VA: 3  
Hospice: 0  
Private: 22  
Budgeted Census: 100

## Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 7  
Deceased Residents: 9  
Discharges: 1

## Other Topics:

- 1) Decommission of COVID Unit
- 2) End of Federal Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023
- 3) GCNH Assistance to GCSCC Meals on Wheels Program
- 4) Commissioner Memo Dated 2/1/2023