

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

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

OTHERS: Employee Council – Andre Sanders, Tiffany LaPointe, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Register of Deeds Monahan, Interim Farm Manager White

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

Employee Council – Andre Sanders, Tiffany LaPointe

A. Sanders presented the attached document to the Commissioners outlining the Employee Council's request for the upcoming fiscal year and answered questions from the Commissioners and CA Libby.

Commissioner Piper stated that the idea presented by the Council of providing wage increases through a set dollar amount rather than as a percentage of the salary is an innovative idea and she appreciates it. Commissioner Ahern thanked A. Sanders and T. LaPointe for all of their dedicated work to the county. CA Libby stated that she would run the numbers for the cost of the Employee Council's request and once the Commissioners have discussed the costs, they would be back in touch with the Employee Council.

NHA Labore arrived with a memo for consideration

MOTION: *9:23 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 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.

Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: *9:28 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 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 off-cycle merit increase for the Grafton County Nursing Home Dietary Supervisor, as outlined in the Memo for Requested Action by Commissioners, submitted on March 7, 2023 effective March 12th, 2023. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Agenda Items:

1. **MOTION:** *9:30 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the 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.

Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: *9:39 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 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

2. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 7th meeting. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner Ahern had a few edits.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the March 7th meeting as amended. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

3. The Commissioners signed check registers 1122 & 1124.

4. 28:10-a Hearing Procedures – The Commissioners reviewed the procedures and CA Libby answered questions.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the 28:10-a Hearing Procedures. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Register of Deeds Monahan arrived with a Memo for Consideration:

Register Monahan stated that she has submitted her Memo for Consideration for the restructuring of positions and a part time records clerk position and asked if the Commissioners needed any additional information regarding the request for a part time records clerk. Commissioner Piper stated that in order to review the positions they need position analysis forms filled out. Register Monahan explained that her team is working on the PayPoint surveys and that is an ongoing process separate of the request for the part time hire. She stated that with the delay as well as how long it would take to score the positions, it would be about two more (2) weeks for that request and right now she is requesting the approval for the part time position only.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the request of the Register of Deeds to hire an unbenefited part time records clerk as outlined in the memo dated March 6th 2023. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

MOTION: *9:57 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the 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.

Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: *10:01 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 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

Agenda Items:

1. Mortgage Discharge – CDBG – CA Libby stated that this mortgage dates back to 2002 and all of the requirements have been fulfilled. She explained that this is an old performance mortgage from a property in Littleton and the note has expired. This discharge is cleaning up paperwork.
2. ARPA – Community Funding
 - a. Municipality Draft – The Commissioners reviewed the draft and CA Libby answered questions.

b. Executive Committee Request – The Commissioners reviewed and made changes they felt were necessary. CA Libby explained that she would send this document to the Executive Committee and the end of the document states that the Commissioners ask the Executive Committee to approve an expenditure of \$2 million in ARPA funding. This gives the Commissioners the ability to implement and carry out this project without the Executive Committee needing to approve each individual expenditure. CA Libby stated that trying to get all of these three programs--municipalities, nonprofits and small businesses--going during the same time as the budget would be difficult so she plans to stagger the timeline and that would put them a couple of weeks apart. The Commissioners discussed advertising for this funding. CA Libby stated that she would like the Commissioners to approve this document and she would send it to the Executive Committee and if approved, they can then discuss the rollout of it.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve sending the ARPA Community Funding Request for \$2 million to the Executive Committee. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

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

Commissioner McLeod asked what the next step was for the cow monitoring system. Interim FM White stated that he spoke with two (2) vendors for the system as well as Sarah Allen from UNH. He stated that he and S. Allen broke down the proposal he presented to the Commissioners last week and looked at leasing vs. buying. A lease is up-front. CA Libby explained that a lease does not allow the County to use ARPA funds, as the lease is not up until outside of the ARPA deadline for spending. Interim FM White stated that the second vendor he spoke with installed six (6) tie-stall systems in Maine and then decided they no longer want to do it as of February 1st. S. Allen is convinced that the best option to go with is the option Interim FM White presented. He is waiting on some more information before he brings his recommendation back to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he is concerned if there is going to be food. He knows that the County has the ability to grow its own food but does not have the labor. He stated that he knows the Farm has not decided what it is planting for seeds yet. Interim FM White stated that he has ordered the potato seeds but noted that he cut back on the red potatoes because of the poor outcome last year. He noted that the only trouble he can see happening is if Sgt. Griffin is unable to be outside of the DoC as much, as the DoC has needed him inside the facility. Commissioner Ahern asked if the squash and pumpkins would be under plastic. B. White stated there are different plastics that they have discussed and they will be looking into it.

Agenda Items:

1. ARPA – FY2024 – CA Libby stated that the County has applied for County Emergency Equipment funds through GOFFER for the washing machine at the Nursing Home. She explained the washing machine was included in this list for the Nursing Home Capital Reserve, but if that were funded through GOFFER, it would be removed. There will be up to \$161,500 to come out of the capital reserve and if the washing machine is funded through GOFFER, it will be

less. CA Libby stated that the landscaping project would be on the Executive Committee agenda for Monday for ARPA funding approval. Supt. Oakes would like to have the Nursing Home parking lot paving approved so he can get the RFP out to get on a list and he would like to get the boom lift approved as well. CA Libby noted that the paving project has been put off for many years and now the cost has increased significantly due to the conditions of the parking lot worsening, as well as inflation. The Commissioners further discussed the ARPA requests that total \$655,887.99.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to recommend \$ 655,887.99 in ARPA funds to the Executive Committee. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2. CA Libby requested two (2) nonpublic sessions.

MOTION: *11:13 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the 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.

Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: *11:17 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 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: *11:17 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 and 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 (a) & (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.

*11:43 AM 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.

Commissioner Issues

1. Commissioner McLeod stated that Franconia Town Meeting is tonight and several warrant articles are being proposed.

2. Commissioner Piper updated the board on the NHAC Executive Committee meeting regarding Governor’s proposed budget. Jim Monahan gave an update stating that this is the highest revenue he has ever seen. She explained that this includes federal money, revenue streams and a \$500 million surplus in the state budget. She reported that the Governor’s budget is a \$15 billion budget. Commissioner Piper stated that there was discussion regarding the Medicaid rate increase. The Governor’s budget proposes a 3% increase, the Senate is going to propose a 6% increase and the NHAC is going to propose a 15%. She noted that the County Cap has a 2% increase at this point.

11:53 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

Grafton County Board of Commissioners,

The Employee Council would like to submit our request for the FYB of 2023/2024.

C.O.L.A to be given as a \$ across the board vs. % across the board.

Attachment from website Corrections1.com

C.O.L.A 10%. Take the total employee wage budget.

The idea would be to take the entire employee wage budget, times that by 10% and then divide that by the number of positions.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us.

Employee Council

Andre Sanders & Tiffany LaPointe

'We aren't losing nearly as many COs': Ga. gov.'s pay raises help recruit, retain COs

Instead of giving 2% or 3% raises, Gov. Brian Kemp and lawmakers approved an across-the-board \$5K raise last year and are proposing \$2K in 2023

Jan 30, 2023

By James Salzer
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA — After years of giving out raises that often provided the biggest boost to top brass, the state has been trying something different in hopes of holding onto frontline workers who have been fleeing government work in droves for more than a decade.

Instead of giving 2% or 3% raises — which allocated the most money to those already earning the highest salaries — Gov. Brian Kemp and lawmakers approved an across-the-board \$5,000 raise last year. Kemp is calling for an additional \$2,000 boost this year.

With annual turnover rates approaching 90% in some state agencies, the math was simple. A 2% raise gives more money to the \$150,000-a-year administrator than the \$35,000-a-year prison guard. But \$7,000 over two years raises that administrator's pay by 4.6%. It boosts the prison guard's by 20%.

Kelly Farr, the governor's budget director, said Kemp — who once ran the secretary of state's office — and his staff understood that difference. And why the state needed to make a change.

"There was a lot of discussion that people working at McDonald's could make more than a (Georgia) prison guard," Farr said.

He said the last time the state gave a 3% raise it amounted to about \$600 more a year for some workers. "By the time you take out taxes they are just not going to see a difference in their checking account. We thought about what we could do for the low-wage employees, the people we are having trouble getting into the state (government) and keeping."

Kemp proposes \$2,000 state employee pay raise, \$1 billi...



In what has become an annual lament, one agency head after another streamed through House and Senate budget meetings during the second week of the 2023 General Assembly session, telling lawmakers they couldn't hold onto employees.

The agencies help educate students, provide health care coverage and child welfare checks, treat mental illness and substance abuse, patrol highways, investigate crimes, imprison offenders and operate courts. They need workers to fulfill their missions.

TURNOVER SPIKED

Several factors have been at play.

The state stopped allowing new employees to join the traditional pension system during the Great Recession in the late 2000s. The argument had long been that state workers traded lower-than-market pay for the promise of a good pension.

Department heads say the plan for newer workers — which includes a 401(k) — is portable, so staffers can take the money with them to other jobs. They don't have to stick around to accumulate years of service for a traditional pension.

The Great Recession impacted state finances for many years, so pay for those who performed difficult frontline work — such as juvenile justice guards, social workers and the Georgia State Patrol — often lagged.

Lawmakers recognized the issue in law enforcement and eventually granted percentage raises to boost salaries, as they did in some other areas.

The turnover rate wasn't helped by the COVID-19 economy, with inflation and low unemployment rates driving up wages and creating more and better opportunities for workers. The most common refrain from state department heads during the budget hearing was that keeping workers is tough when they can easily earn far more with other governments or in private industry.

"It is absolutely crucial we find ways to make these jobs more attractive, and making them more financially attractive is one of the important ways to refill the depleted ranks of state employees," said state Sen. Nan Orrock, D-Atlanta, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "It is a glaring, top-line issue to hire and retain talent to work for the public as state employees."

Tyrone Oliver, commissioner of the Department of Corrections, said the turnover rate for prison guards last year was 47%. That's an improvement over past years, when the department was losing almost as many officers as it was hiring.

"The pay raise helped a lot," Oliver said of last year's \$5,000 increase. "We are not losing nearly as many (correctional officers) as we were before the pay raise."

The raise brought the starting salary up to about \$52,000 for state patrolmen, but Col. Chris C. Wright, head of the Department of Public Safety, said that hasn't increased his pool of applicants.

"Our goal is to be the safest state for our citizens, but unfortunately recruiting and retaining employees is making this a challenging feat," he told lawmakers. "This is a difficult and dangerous job, and it becomes more dangerous as manpower diminishes."

He said state patrol pay in Georgia ranks 37th in the country.

"Young people are not interested in it," he said. "They are not interested in it because they can telework from home and make six-figure salaries, they can drive a commercial vehicle from point A to point B, Monday through Friday and make six-figure salaries."

Attorney General Chris Carr asked legislators for more merit-pay money after describing losing a senior human trafficking prosecutor who got a \$45,000 pay bump by joining the DeKalb County District Attorney's Office.

"Our starting attorney salary is \$65,000 (a year) while many private-sector firms are paying over \$200,000 base, plus bonuses," he said. "We are regularly losing attorneys to other state government positions, in addition to federal and local governments and the private sector because our salaries have not kept pace and are not competitive."

That, he said, means spending millions of dollars more to hire private-firm lawyers to represent the state in court.

Danny Kansa, director of legislative strategy and senior fiscal analyst at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute — an Atlanta think tank — said the number of state agency employees has dropped from 83,000 to less than 60,000 since the start of the Great Recession. The median pay, if Kemp's \$2,000 raise proposal goes through, would be about \$47,000, he said.

"It makes sense that some drastic intervention was needed," Kansa added.

Lt. Brenda Monroe, a corrections officer at the Department of Juvenile Justice's Augusta Youth Development Campus, said last year's raise made a big difference.

"It meant a lot to me," said Monroe, 56. "I recently became the sole provider for my household. Before the raise, I had issues of robbing Peter to pay Paul. Do I buy groceries or pay this bill?"

"The raise has gotten me out of that line of thinking."

Monroe, an almost nine-year employee with the department, said she now makes more than \$50,000 a year. She started out at \$24,000.

"I feel like we are finally being recognized for the work we do," she said. "I have heard people say they can now buy a higher quality of food.

"When you have to decide, do I pay this bill or buy food ... that's a heavy decision."

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- 3 Rikers CO wins \$125K settlement after claims of harassment, attacks by inmates
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March 2023 Farm Report

1. There are currently 50 cows milking, averaging 80 pounds per cow. We produced 111,801 pounds of milk for the month of February. Components were 4.41% butterfat and 3.18% protein. The milk pay price in January was \$24.93 for Grafton County Farm.
2. Two of the sows both have 8 piglets that were born in the last couple weeks. There are 5 more sows due and have most of spoken for.
3. Currently, there are 4 inmates helping on the farm. However, three are going home in the next month.
4. I met with Tom Beaudry last week. Sgt. Griffin and I talked to him about future crop locations and other things. Tom is going to test soils that I map out for him.
5. JD 6415 is still being put back together. Hopefully, will get it back by next week. Awaiting the delivery of the JD 4455.
6. Met with Sarah Allen last week. Showed her the cows because she has heard several people say how nice the cows look. We also looked at options for monitoring cow activity.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben White

Interim Farm Manager