

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
March 2, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Register Monahan, Craig Labore, NH Administrator and Karen Clough,  
HR Director.

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM 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.

**NHA Labore arrived and gave the following report:**

COVID-19 Update – NHA Labore reported that they have three (3) active cases on their Granite  
Unit. He stated that one (1) resident continues to test positive after the isolation period. He is  
hopeful that they would test negative today and if all goes well, today and Friday will be the last  
isolation days.

Facility COVID Procedure Updates – NHA Labore explained that their experience over the last  
six (6) weeks with the outbreak is much different from what it would have been if this outbreak  
happened earlier in the pandemic. The procedures and systems put in place at the Nursing Home  
were put into place thinking the residents would be in bed and sick through the duration of their  
isolation. The vaccine and booster have helped and the residents weathered their Covid  
experience better. NHA Labore explained that the residents have had a head cold for a few days  
and then spent the last eight (8) or so days wandering the isolation unit. He stated that the  
Nursing Home will be revisiting their policies and have activities in place to make the isolation  
period better for the residents.

CMS Mandatory Vaccination Implementation – NHA Labore reported that the Nursing Home is  
on track for compliance. The staff who will not receive the vaccine have submitted their  
resignation letters. The Nursing Home is set to be in compliance on March 15<sup>th</sup>. They will be  
working on handling vendors that need to come into building.

Average Daily Census for FY23 Budget –NHA Labore reported that he would be proposing a  
daily census of 99 in his FY23 budget. He explained that his reasoning for this is his concern  
regarding the potential vaccine booster mandate. 52% of staff at the Nursing Home have had  
their booster dose. The other employees who have not had their booster have been clear that they  
do not want to receive it. NHA Labore feels they will be back in the same situation with losing  
staff members due to a mandate but the next time it will be larger numbers. He stated that he

does not want to put the Nursing Home in a position with a higher census and not have the staff to handle it. He explained that another reason for decreasing the census is the agency nursing. He explained that they are below budget on the hours compared to this time last year but running 25% over expended due to the increase in rates and does not see that slowing down. He reported that there is a big push from the American Healthcare Association and another national group, to get the Federal Trade Commission to put some oversight over the contract nursing agencies, who are setting very high rates for nurses. Commissioner Piper stated that decreasing the census is a wise decision and she appreciates NHA Labore's forethought on the issue.

Pending CMS Regulations – NHA Labore stated that there would be regulations coming from CMS. CMS is going to conduct a year-long study for minimum staffing levels for Nursing Homes to adhere to. He explained that they already submit a payroll-based journal reporting quarterly. There will be a project to study Nursing Home staffing patterns and then CMS will come up with a formula to determine what the minimum staffing requirements will be going forward. NHA Labore explained that there is a potential to have new metrics tied to their value-based purchasing program. This is an initiative CMS put in place to financially incentivize Nursing Homes for going above baseline or penalizing for not meeting certain metrics. The staffing would be tied to that. They are looking at penalizing Nursing Homes for going under minimum staffing levels. He stated that he is not as concerned with the staffing requirements because they are very well staffed compared to the state and national average. He is concerned about RN staffing. There is a requirement right now that a Nursing Home must have eight (8) hours per day of RN coverage and they are meeting that but there is talk of it going to sixteen (16) hours per day and they will not meet that. NHA Labore stated that they would be monitoring those possible changes.

NHA Labore stated that right now there is going to be a focus over the next year to phase out triple and quadruple occupancy rooms in Nursing Homes. Grafton County does not have those rooms right now, but he believes this will be the starting point to wanting single occupancy rooms only in Nursing Homes. This is in part to help reduce spread of infection. He stated that right now, if you were to build a new nursing home, CMS regulations state it has to be single occupancy only. Grafton County has 18-22 private rooms in the building and the remaining are semi-private.

NHA Labore stated that these increased regulations are going to continue. He does not know if they will ever be able to get back up to a census above 130 due to these regulations. He stated that they might need to have that conversation at some point to discuss what the future of the nursing home is going to look like.

Commissioner Ahern reported that at the Plymouth Rotary Club, Pemi Baker Hospice of Plymouth gave a presentation. He stated that this organization has had some informal conversations regarding a couple of clients being placed at Grafton County. He asked if there could be an opportunity for Pemi Baker Hospice to work with the County to bring some of their clients, who might need Nursing Home care, to the Nursing Home. He stated that they need to look outside the box and do things differently.

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

1. HR Director Clough stated that they have been contacted by a nurse recruitment agency called Trova Healthcare. She noted that the county entered into a recruiter agreement a couple of years ago but never hired anyone from that recruiter. This company says they have a Grafton County nurse and would like to share that information with them. HR Director Clough stated that she has spoken with NHA Labore and they agree that it does not hurt to entertain the information and receive the application. She explained that this does not obligate Grafton County to anything. She stated that when they did this a couple of years ago the cost of the agency was 20% of the first year's salary if they were to hire the person on permanently, they negotiated it down to 15% and they have been able to do that with this company as well. They have also added in some guarantee information stating that if an employee does not work out the County would get a prorated return of their money. She stated that she is looking for authorization to enter into agreement with Trova Healthcare to look at any applications they may have.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he would like to review this contract and asked if they are looking for approval today. HR Director Clough explained that they do not always have much of a heads up if one of these companies has someone available. She stated that she could send Commissioner Ahern the contract and follow up with the Commissioners on Monday. Commissioner Piper stated that she is acknowledging that HR Director Clough is doing a great job getting the County to where she has on an issue that is crucial. HR Director Clough has got the payment down to 15% and prorated as well. She is getting the best deal for the county that she can. Commissioner Lauer suggested that because there is no obligation to hire a person, they could gain the three (3) days on potentially getting this person in by approving the contract today.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to enter into agreement with Trova Healthcare for nurse recruitment. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Ahern stated that he is hesitant to sign anything he has not had a chance to read. He agrees with Commissioner Piper's comments about the hard work the HR Department is doing but noted that he was not here when the previous contract was signed and he needs to do his due diligence. Commissioner Piper stated that her intention is not to praise the HR Department for its hard work but rather its effectiveness and problem solving.

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.

2. HR Director Clough reported that Mascoma Savings Bank reached out to HR to discuss an Emergency Loan Program to see if the County would like to offer this to their employees. She explained that if an employee were in a situation where they need fast cash, they would be able to apply for up to a \$1,500 small loan through Mascoma Savings Bank. The County would set up payroll deduction that would go to Mascoma and the employee can have access to their money within 24 hours. If the employee leaves, the county is not responsible. The employee would need

to authorize the updated information to go to Mascoma if they were to leave. HR Director noted that the County does not need to process any work for this loan, the County only needs to sign off that the person is a county employee. Register Monahan was present at the meeting and asked what the interest rate is. CA Libby stated that she believes it is 0% but she would check and confirm that. HR Director Clough answered questions from the Commissioners.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to allow the income advanced loan program through Mascoma Savings Bank to employees and authorize Julie Libby to sign the MOU. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

HR Director Clough noted that the Commissioners have their meeting on Monday with PayPoint HR and they will be presenting the final report for the wage study. She stated that she is hoping to have the final report to give the Commissioners before they leave for them to review.

### **Agenda Items:**

Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Commissioner Piper had a couple of edits.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”, Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

The Commissioners signed check registers 1126; 1129-1130; 2022-02.18.22.

### **ARPA Requests**

CA Libby gave the Commissioners copies of the ARPA requests from Department Heads and stated that there were 31 requests totaling \$6.4 million. She stated that this is not what she asked for from the Department Heads. She asked them to think about one-time purchases that they would be putting in their FY23 budget. She noted that there are four (4) new positions included and she feels that if a department has a justification for new employees that should go through the normal budget process. Commissioner Piper stated that she feels they should send out a memo repeating what the criteria is and they would not be accepting applications outside that criteria. The Commissioners further discussed the topic and agreed to request that CA Libby send out a memo asking for prioritization, given the time limit of the meetings, and resubmit the requests to follow the criteria they have set.

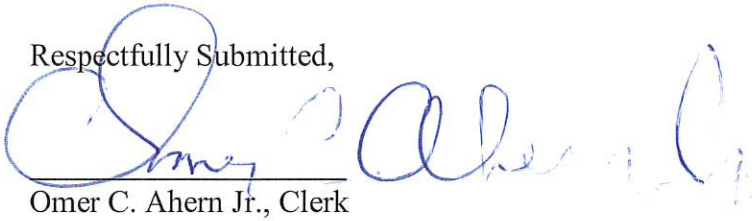
CA Libby reminded the Commissioners that next week’s meeting is on Monday in the UNH Extension Conference room. They will take care of their normal business from 9-10 and the PayPoint meeting is at 10am. The department heads will be invited as well. CA Libby also noted that the Commissioners need to set a meeting date to review and discuss ARPA requests. The Commissioners agreed to March 10<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

**Commissioner Issues**

1. Commissioner Ahern mentioned that the Grafton County Farm might be sitting on a potential gold mine because of their bovine residual materials. He has been listening to reports from different groups as to why the Ukrainian situation is happening. There are three (3) elements used in making fertilizer and some are not controlled by the US. Some are used in various emissions that are used in the Ukraine. He stated that what they have in the manure pit will be very critical to their operations.

10:55 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Omer C. Ahern Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk

# Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: March 2, 2022

## Census

Medicare: 1  
Medicaid: 73  
VA: 2  
Hospice: 0  
Private: 20  
Total: 96

## 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: 0  
Deceased Residents: 2  
Discharges: 0

## Other Topics:

- 1) COVID-19 Update
  - Facility COVID Procedure Updates
- 2) CMS Mandatory Vaccination Implementation
- 3) Average Daily Census for FY '23 Budget
- 4) Pending CMS Regulations

Grafton County Human Resources Report  
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director  
 March 2, 2022

**HR Activity Report (02/01/2022-02/25/2022)**

- ***New Hires***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home	3 (2 FT, 1 PD)	1 FT Unit Aide, 1 FT Dietary Aide, 1 PD LNA

***Separations***

<u>Departments</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home	3 (1 PD, 1 PT, 1 FT )	1 PD RN, 1 FT Activity Aide 1 PT Dietary Aide

***Reasons:***

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

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

- 

***Active Leave of Absences as of February 1 - present***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Nursing Home – Nursing	16	(11 are intermittent, 13 for self, 3 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	2	(2 are intermittent, 2 for family)
DOC	3	(2 intermittent, 3 self)
Maintenance	1	(1 intermittent family)
Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch.	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
County Atty's Office	3	(2 intermittent, 3 self)
HR Department	1	(1 intermittent, family)

**TOTAL: 27**

**No scheduled orientations**

**Current Jobs posted/advertised**

- LNA's (15.05 FTE's vacant)
- RN/LPN (15.85 FTE's vacant combined)
- RN Per Diem DOC
- CO's (11 FTE's vacant)
- Housekeeper (FT and PT)
- Evening Clinical Asst.
- Dietary Aide (FT and PT)
- Night Watchman (Spare)
- Activities Aide

OTHER BUSINESS – Nurse Recruitment Contract, Mascoma Savings Bank Income Advance Loan Program