

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
March 24, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: HR Director Clough, Alternative Sentencing Director DePalo,  
Conservation District - Pam Gilbert, Linda Brownson, Bart Man

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

### **Human Resources – HR Director Clough**

1. HR Staff – HR Director Clough stated that she is requesting a new position in her budget. She explained that over the last couple of years it has become apparent that they need to shift the structure of the HR department and focus in on recruitment and retention. They need someone who can dedicate their attention to that piece of HR. Her current staff do not have the time or specialty to dedicate to this. Her hope is this new position would be fully responsible for recruiting and retention, developing relationships with local trade schools, colleges, universities, marketing the positions and working with departments one on one. This position would be responsible for sourcing out employees who may be a good fit for a position that may not be actively looking for a new job rather than only putting an ad in the paper for someone who may be looking for a job. She stated that her department does what they can with recruiting and retention, but they do not have a lot of time to dedicate to this and this new position would help. HR Director Clough stated that this position would be a Grade 5 on the wage charts starting at \$22.65 and maxes out at \$31.68.

Commissioner Piper stated that HR Director Clough is doing her homework by figuring out best practices and doing the County a good service in proposing this request. She asked HR Director Clough, that given the current employment climate, does she think this would help. She stated that she learned at the NHAC meeting the other day that across the state, Nursing Homes are at 70% occupancy and there is a universal staffing shortage. HR Director Clough stated that she thinks it is important to have someone dedicated to working with the departments to look into things such as getting clinical sites on campus for nursing, or getting students here for internships, focus on what is available to them here.

2. Recruitment & Retention – HR Director Clough explained that she increased this line by \$2,800. There are many plans in the works right now for retention. She also noted that if she receives the new position, there would be more happening with recruitment and retention. She stated that they are looking to combine the benefits fair into an Employee Appreciation Day. She noted that they are also looking to implement some stress relieving tools for employee which will be an added cost.

4. Education & Conference – HR Director Clough stated that she is looking to get back out to trainings this upcoming year that they have not been able to attend due to COVID. Commissioner Piper asked if it were a possibility that they may not be able to attend trainings again this year, if this line could be cut. HR Director Clough stated that they have resources available to them if this line were to be cut. She explained that they take advantage of Primex, Healthtrust and UKG. She discussed the line with the Commissioners and stated that she could cut \$2,000 out of this line.

3. Contracted SVC – This line decreased back to \$2,900 and this is for their RDS Actuarial Expenses through Healthtrust.

4. Office Supplies – This line has an \$800 increase for a desk if the new position is approved.

5. Dues, License & Subscriptions – HR Director Clough explained that this line has increased mainly due to the Motor Vehicle Record Checks that they are now required to do as a part of the County's Prime Certification.

5. Advertising/PR – This line has increased \$5,000 based on usage. The length of vacancy of positions is causing them to spend more in advertising for those positions.

HR Director Clough stated that her budget has a 13% increase.

### **Alternative Sentencing - Director DePalo**

#### *A. Revenue*

1. Program Fees – AS Director DePalo stated that she is still working with the Attorney's Office and program referrals as they are experiencing a backlog from COVID. They have not collected as much as they normally collect in program fees. She explained that some of this is because they are required to have a federal sliding scale fee for anyone who falls under the income guidelines and because of COVID many people lost their jobs, therefore falling under that category. She noted that they also do not have the cliental that they had prior to COVID. She is decreasing this line by \$5,000, as they will not meet that \$15,000 next fiscal year.

#### *B. Expenses*

1. CA Libby explained that the BDAS grant is significantly different from how it used to be and to make things easier they have broken the Alternative Sentencing budget out into two (2) sections. The first is all non-substance use treatment programs and the second is substance use treatment programs. She stated that they have to submit all expenses for substance use treatment even though they only use \$27,000 in funding from the BDAS grant and therefore breaking the budget out into sections makes that process easier.

2. Treatment Services – AS Director DePalo explained that with the backlog with mental health agencies, she wants to have funds available to use in case they need assistance.

3. COVID-19 Expenses – The Commissioners asked if this line could be covered using ARPA funds. They discussed it with CA Libby and agreed to take it out of the budget and work on an ARPA request for the next round to cover these costs.

4. Travel Expenses – AS Director DePalo explained that she would be seeing an increase in this line now that satellite offices are open again. Her office does not have a county car and therefore they will be paying mileage.

5. Substance Abuse Testing – This line for the purchase of instant cups for drug testing.

### **Commissioners' Office/Misc. – County Administrator Libby**

#### Commissioners' Office

1. Education & Conference – This line includes NHAC conference registrations for the Commissioners, conference registrations for the County Administrator and trainings for employees.

2. Consultant – CA Libby stated that she has removed the \$50,000 contract with NCIC from this line.

3. Audit Services – CA Libby stated that this line has a slight increase. She explained that because of the federal money the County has received, they are now required to have a second major program audit. The proposal they accepted from Melanson and Heath only includes one (1) major single program audit. A second program is hourly charge, and she has budgeted for that.

4. Postage – CA Libby stated that she has increased this line based off their six (6) month figures.

5. Equipment Repair and Maintenance – CA Libby explained that one of the cartridges they have to purchase to print checks is very expensive and therefore she has increased this line to account for that.

#### Misc. Revenue

1. Abandon Property/PILT – CA Libby stated that these figures are based off a ten (10) year average.

2. Interest – CA Libby stated that she has increased this line by \$25,000. They have collected over \$35,000 this year and she hopes the County will not have to borrow money again next fiscal year.

3. Rental Income – This line has increased based off lease agreements in place.

#### Regional Planning Commission

CA Libby stated that the former County Administrator wanted to wait a year to review these. She stated that she does not know what the County receives from these commissions and is ok with doing away with them. The Commissioners agreed to zero out the lines.

#### Wage & Benefit

1. Retiree Health Insurance – CA Libby stated that the County received a guaranteed maximum rate increase of 2.3% for FY23 health insurance and rates were set at a .2% increase. The number of retired employees covered under this line changes and that counts for the fluctuation in dollar amount.

2. Wellness – The Commissioners agreed to cut to \$500.

3. Earned Time Buyback Program – CA Libby stated that this program was not in place last year and they have not paid out for this year yet. It will pay out in June and she does not know what the cost will be. She explained that she did the calculation based off current salaries and earned time banks. This accounts for every employee who is eligible, and she does not believe everyone will apply for it. She stated that she wants to leave this for now and may be able to adjust it later depending on what buyback requests come in at in June.

4. Employee Benefit Payout – CA Libby stated that this is budgeted at \$85,000 and the line is currently \$20,000 overspent. Many of the long-term employees are retiring and they have large balances in their earned time accounts. She has increased this line to account for that.

#### T.A.N Interest

CA Libby stated that she left this line with \$5,000 based on cash position and proshare money. She hopes to not borrow money again but she does not want to get rid of this line in the event she does have to borrow.

#### Bonded Debt

CA Libby noted that this budget has the last bond payment on the Nursing Home.

#### Contingency

1. Outside Counsel – CA Libby stated that this line would be over expended at the end of the current fiscal year. There have been legal issues this year that have used these costs and currently have ongoing issues that are not covered by Primex.

2. County Government Promo – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners have talked about holding an Open Barn Day in 2023 and she has budgeted for that. This line also includes the Employee Recognition Dinner and the jackets for employees.

#### Unemployment Insurance

CA Libby stated that the County is a reimbursable employer and reimburse for unemployment expenses. She explained that there are no expenses shown this current fiscal year because during the State of Emergency, the County did not have to reimburse those expenses. The County has resumed reimbursing those expenses and she has budgeted for that.

**Grafton Regional Development Corporation**

GRDC is asking for \$45,000, which is level funding.

**Treasurer – County Administrator Libby**

CA Libby stated that the Treasurer’s budget is level funded.

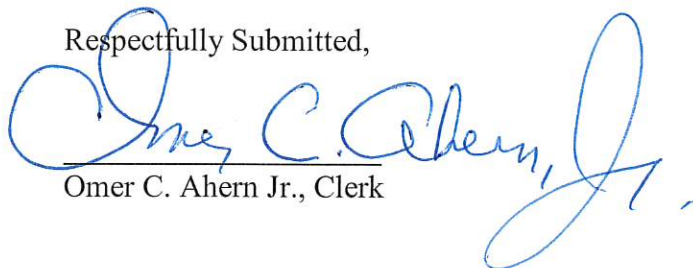
**Conservation District – Pam Gilbert, Linda Brownson, Bart Man, Treasurer**

The County supports the Administrative Assistant position for the Conservation District. The increase in this budget is directly related to that position, mostly associated with the increase in the County’s health insurance premium.

Other materials were provided for the Commissioners review.

11:31 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Omer C. Ahern Jr.", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk