

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
March 29, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Donna Lee- UNH Extension, DoC Supt. Elliott, Maintenance Supt. Oakes,
Farm Manager Nelson, Sheriff Stiegler, Director of Communications Andross, Office Assistant
Paronto.

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

UNH Cooperative Extension – Office Administrator Donna Lee

Telephone – D. Lee stated that they would be switching phone systems. She explained that
before the pandemic, UNH had switched over phone systems in six (6) of the ten (10) counties to
Ring Central, which is an internet and cloud based system. Because it has been very successful,
UNH is switching over the rest of the counties, and this eliminates the \$1,500 expense in her
budget.

Department of Corrections – Superintendent Elliott

A. Revenue

1. Dept. of Corrections – Supt Elliott stated that this line consists of Coos County female
inmates, employee meals, social security and inmate phones. He has budgeted \$107,080.00.
2. Community Corrections – Supt. Elliott stated that the DoC receives revenue for inmates out on
the electronic monitoring, work release or pre-trial services.
3. Federal Inmates – Supt. Elliott stated that they receive \$85 a day for a federal inmate. He
noted that he has lowered his estimation this year due to only receiving one (1) for a short time
so far this fiscal year.
4. BDAS Funding – The DoC is budgeting \$200,000 in BDAS funding to provide substance
abuse and life skills services for all inmates within the facility.

B. Expenses

Department of Corrections

Supt. Elliot reported that the entire budget is up \$37,359 or .065%. The largest increase is the
health insurance line. He explained that personnel and benefits account for 87% of this budget.

Education and Conference – Supt. Elliott stated that he would be sending four (4) employees to the academy and sending officers to trainings that have not happened in two (2) years due to COVID.

Community Corrections

Supt. Elliott stated that there is an increase of \$34,242 or 6.3% in the Community Corrections budget.

Salary – Supt. Elliott explained that this line is up \$19,496 due to filling a vacant Corporal position and moving another employee from a salaried position to a non-exempt status.

Health Insurance – There is an increase of \$7,107 due to adding a family plan and deleting a single plan.

Governors Commission Grant

Supt. Elliott stated that the DoC currently receives \$200,000 in BDAS funding that they utilize through substance abuse counseling as revenue.

Supt. Elliott stated that the entire DoC budget has an increase of .98%. He noted that there are no capital outlay requests.

Commissioner Ahern asked if FarmDOC was implemented further, could the meals line could be reduced. Supt. Elliott stated that he does not know the answer to that question; he does not have the information right now to be able to answer that. Commissioner Ahern stated that a part of his hope is to be using resources on the farm to bring this line item down. Supt. Elliott stated that his cost per inmate is \$1.75 per day, and it used to be \$3.50. He noted that in most facilities he has spoken to over the last few years, the cost per inmate is over \$5.00 per day.

Commissioner Piper reminded Commissioner Ahern that he could request at any time the follow up discussion on FarmDOC. G. Libby was asked to provide the report to the Commissioners and they have not yet had a follow up in terms of decision-making. It is expected that Commissioner Ahern will put the issue back on the table for further discussion. Commissioner Ahern stated that the Commissioners approved this over a year ago and the Department Heads should be putting it together. He stated that from what he heard today, the Department Heads are not acting on it. Commissioner Piper stated that nothing has been done because the Commissioners did not give any guidance after receiving the report. The report did not conclude whether these items are cost effective. The Commissioners as a board will need to revisit the question. Commissioner Lauer stated that it would appear that based on the information they were given, the dairy trailer would not be a good financial decision. Commissioner Lauer stated that in looking at the Farm budget she sees a request for refrigeration for potato storage; therefore, Department Heads are working on certain aspects of FarmDOC. Commissioner Piper stated that the board was given a lot of information and they have not made any decisions yet regarding implementation. Commissioner Ahern requested that FarmDOC be put back on the agenda.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 22nd meeting. Commissioner Piper had a few edits.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the minutes from March 22nd as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2. Commissioner Lauer attended the County State Finance Committee meeting yesterday in Concord. According to Henry Lipman from DHHS, they plan to cover Covid testing reimbursements for Long Term Care facilities through at least December. She reported that they also expect the federal health emergency declaration to be extended, which means the enhanced FMAP, through September or December. She stated that they also discussed the Strike Teams that were created, to try to get people out of hospitals and into nursing homes. They streamlined some of the Medicaid admission processes. Of the 93 residents that they put into County facilities, 17 potentially lost some paid Medicaid days. She explained that DHHS had stated some of the changes they incorporated to speed up the transitions, they are hoping to incorporate some of these changes permanently. Commissioner Lauer reported that one of the items that came up was the question as to whether there a way that Medicaid reimbursement can be adjusted to account for the spiraling labor costs due to traveling nursing because the increased labor cost is affecting private and county nursing homes.

Commissioner Piper reported that at the last NHAC Executive Committee meeting, George Maglaris affirmed what NHA Labore has talked about, that local nurses are opting to work for contract agencies; they then come back to work for the nursing home through the travel agencies. Nursing homes are getting the same nurses but paying them significantly more.

4. Commissioner Piper stated that she has been working on a letter of recommendation for the transportation contract with the state of NH for the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council. She is also working on social service applications as well as corresponding with the State of NH Commission on Aging. Jim Monahan and she attended a meeting with a task force of the Commission on Aging. They discussed ideas such as the PACE program, to serve elders at home rather than having them in Nursing Homes.

Farm – Manager Nelson

A. Revenue

1. Sale of Milk – FM Nelson reported that milk prices are forecasted to increase. He has budgeted \$22 per hundredweight.

2. Sale of Wood – County Forester Jim Frohn is anticipating doing a harvest in late summer-winter. FM Nelson budgeted \$25,000.

3. Sale of Produce – FM Nelson stated that he has budgeted \$30,000 and he feels this is on the conservative side. He increased this line \$5,000 due to the fact they had a good potato harvest this past year.

4. Misc. Farm Revenue – FM Nelson stated that this line includes manure and hay sales.

Commissioner Ahern stated that they met with members from the Conservation District NH Volunteer AmeriCorps possibility for a volunteer to help with vegetable gardens.

B. Expenses

1. Veterinary Fees – FM Nelson stated that he has increased this line \$3,500. It is \$180/hour to perform herd health. A large piece of this is medicine and it is expensive.

2. Gas & Oil – There is a 40% increase due to the recent trends in pricing.

3. Seed Fertilizer & Spray – FM Nelson stated that fertilizer is 100% more than last year.

4. Custom Cropping – FM Nelson stated that he increased this due to the cost of fuel as well as looking at a reduced work force and getting the work done in a timely manner. He may be utilizing Hatchland Farm more with chopping and grass cutting.

5. Feed – FM Nelson stated that their sales representative is projecting a 25-30% increase in dairy feed this year and he has budgeted accordingly.

C. Capital Outlay

FM Nelson stated that he is looking to install refrigeration for the potato/winter vegetable storage area. The Maintenance Department has put together a couple of proposals and he is requesting \$6,500. This would keep the potatoes and vegetables longer as well as allow them to harvest the potatoes earlier in the season.

Maintenance – Superintendent Oakes

A. Expenses

1. Wage & Benefits – Supt. Oakes explained that this line has increased based on hiring one new full-time Maintenance Assistant and giving merit increases to eligible employees. He explained that he currently has one (1) maintenance assistant that covers all grounds work and interior/exterior painting. The workload far exceeds one (1) person's ability. He has been using other higher paid employees to help with the mowing and grounds work. He explained that he has also not been able to adequately train his assistant for the past two (2) years because he has been too busy trying to keep the place running due to a manning shortage. This position would alleviate these problems.

2. Education & Conference – There is an increase due to an influx in 2-year licenses and certifications coming due.
3. Contract Maintenance (accounts 291 – 299) – Supt. Oakes stated that inflation is up across the board; biennial Preventative Maintenance (PM) requirements skew this in some cases.
4. Electricity (accounts 619 – 627) – Supt. Oakes explained that GV rates are up slightly and G rates are down slightly due to ongoing tariff structure changes. The kW demand and kWh usage have varied throughout.
5. Sewage (accounts 639 – 647) – Supt. Oakes explained that Woodsville Fire District projected a 5% increase in FY22 but the actual increase was 15.5% higher than projected, thus in FY22 will be in the red. In FY23 they project another 10% increase that goes into effect January 2023, so when he factored these two things together he is looking at a 24% increase.
6. Fuels (accounts 649 – 658) - Due to inflation, fuel cost have risen dramatically. Supt. Oakes explained that the overall cost increases are attributed to topping off the in-ground heating oil tanks to hedge against possible fuel shipment disruptions and a highly unpredictable economy.

B. Capital Outlay

1. Line Striping at the DoC & Entrance Drives – Supt. Oakes stated that the existing traffic flow and parking lines at the DoC and entrance drives are becoming undistinguishable and therefore need to be redone.
2. Heat Pump – Supt. Oakes explained that the existing heat pump at the DoC is grossly undersized and does not heat staff locker/bathroom well. The cost to replace the pump is \$6500.
3. Nursing Home Capital Reserve Requests – Supt. Oakes stated that he wanted to explain two (2) capital reserve requests that NHA Labore will be presenting in his budget.

Sprinkler Work – Supt. Oakes explained that NFPA 25 states that sprinklers manufactured using fast response elements that have been in service 20 years shall be replaced or representative samples shall be tested and then retested at 10-year intervals. He stated that this is a destructive test/replacement of 20-year-old QR sprinkler heads. He noted that they may not spend the full \$92,000 depending on the results of the test.

Agenda Items:

1. The Commissioners signed check registers 1142 & 1144.
2. Motorcycle Training Renewal – CA Libby explained that there has been an amendment to the contract because they are going to increase the number of classes by 1, which will increase the County's revenue to \$700. She stated that the Commissioners approved this on January 4th and

needs Commissioner Piper to sign a letter stating that the renewal has not been revoked and is still in effect.

3. Victims of Crime Act Grant – CA Libby stated that the VOCA grant has been renewed. The County Attorney’s Office will receive \$159,127 towards the Victim Witness Program.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to accept the VOCA grant and authorize the County Attorney to enter into agreement on behalf of the Commissioners. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

4. CA Libby submitted an MS535 for Livermore for all three (3) Commissioners to sign. She explained that this is a reflection of expenses for Livermore for calendar year 2021.

Human Services – County Administrator Libby

CA Libby stated that their current County cap is budgeted at \$190,000 below what their current cap is due to an issue that happened last year. She explained that she needs to increase the budget by \$190,000 to reach the cap and then by statute the cap goes up 2%. She broke out two (2) possible scenarios for the Commissioners. The first scenario uses the current 6.078% and the 2% increase, which would bring the cap to \$7,737,822.27. The other scenario is if she were to increase the county’s percentage by .05%, which would bring the cap to \$7,803,747. She stated that both are substantial increases to the budget. She stated that she wanted to give the Commissioners both scenarios to review and they will discuss further as they move along in the budget. She stated that she would prefer to go with a higher estimate to eliminate having to play catch up every year.

Dispatch – Director Andross & Thayer Paronto

A. Revenue

Dispatch Fees – Director Andross explained that they used an estimate in their proposed budget. They will be setting their dispatch fees soon and will then have the actual figure for the FY23 budget.

B. Expenses

1. Dispatcher – Director Andross is requesting one (1) new full time dispatcher position. He stated as he has discussed previously, the lack of part time resources to cover shifts on a regular schedule or emergency basis, has become a problem. He stated that he has budgeted for part time help that that they not fully utilized and will be carrying those funds over to the new full time position. He noted that he is also reducing the part time hours.

2. Education & Conference – Director Andross stated that he increased this line to \$14,000, which is what he had budgeted last year before it was cut during the budget process. He is requesting the \$14,000 this year as he feels that is what they need.

Commissioner Piper asked Director Andross about the consequences if they were not to receive the new dispatch position. Director Andross stated that he and his office assistant are filling in with dispatch, which takes away from what they need to be doing. He stated that they can do this occasionally but not on a regular basis.

Commissioner Piper stated that she is looking to pare down where they can, as there will be increases in county costs due to inflation and fuel prices that are out of their hands. She asked if Director Andross could decrease his education and conference line. Director Andross stated that he could get by with \$12,000.

3. Telephone – There is an increase due to an increase in fees and the projected new telephone system.

4. Remote Storage – Director Andross stated that he budgets \$15,000 for remote storage in the event that they need to rent storage. He stated that we could take this out but there is a risk in doing so.

C. Dispatch Capital Reserve

Director Andross stated that they have included their three (3) standard items in the capital reserve.

1. MDT Replacement – Director Andross stated that he has increased this to \$48,000. He explained that this is for the computer equipment in the cars and in fire apparatus and he has increased it slightly because he is anticipating more interest in their program due to their recent upgrades.
2. IT Costs
3. Chair Replacement

CA Libby stated prior to last fiscal year they always contributed 10% of the Dispatch Fees into capital reserve and asked Director Andross what he was looking to do this year. Director Andross stated that he would recommend contributing 10%.

Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Stiegler

Sheriff Stiegler stated a retired Lt. from Troop F is trying to collaborate an effort to gather outdated ballistic vests that are still usable to send over to Ukraine. He stated that he has twelve vests that he would like permission to send to the California National Guard who will then transport them to Ukraine.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to donate the County's outdated ballistic vests to the California National Guard to transport to Ukraine. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

A. Revenue

1. Dept. Fees – Sheriff Stiegler noted that he has been receiving more letters from attorneys and suspect they will see an increase in services. He has increased this line by \$20,000.
2. Court Bailiff – The Bailiffs will receive another small increase based on the union contract. There is a \$40,000 increase in this line.
3. Transports – Sheriff Stiegler stated that they are seeing more juvenile transports and have increased this line accordingly.
4. Sale of Cruisers – Sheriff Stiegler stated that their old cruisers have more value than in the past and therefore are selling for more. He has increased this line to \$27,000.
5. Contracted Special Details – Sheriff Stiegler stated that he does not foresee that the need for Deputies to cover special events will slow down.
6. District Court Prisoner Security – There is a \$15,000 decrease based on current law.

B. Expenses

1. Deputies OT – Sheriff Stiegler stated that he had discussed requesting a new full-time deputy to assist with warrants. He stated that he has decided rather than requesting a new position, due to the other increases in the budget, he is requesting \$10,000 in additional overtime to assist with the warrants. He is also requesting an increase of \$9k in the special deputies' line.
2. Reference Materials – Office Assistant Paronto explained that this increase is due to a shifting of costs. They have a metered contract with WB Mason that has been paid for out of their supplies line. They are moving the costs for that contract to the Reference Materials line.
3. Cruiser Repair & Maintenance – Sheriff Stiegler stated that this line was reduced last year and he is not able to buy tires because of this reduction. He is looking to increase this line \$5,000 to what it used to be funded at.
4. Fuel – There is an increase in this line due to the increase in fuel prices. Sheriff Stiegler stated that he is unsure of what the cost is going to be. Office Assistant Paronto stated that they may have a better idea of what the monthly cost will be once they receive the February bill.

C. Capital Outlay

1. Cruisers – Sheriff Stiegler stated that he is looking to purchase three (3) hold-over cruisers. He noted that the price has decreased \$85 per vehicle. He has budgeted \$112,350 for three (3) cruisers and \$34,500 to outfit the new cruisers with the safety equipment.

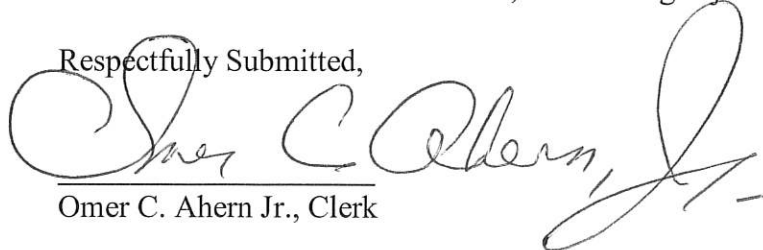
Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Ahern asked CA Libby to put FarmDOC on the agenda for an upcoming Commissioner meeting.

2. CA Libby asked the Commissioners their thoughts on four (4) year terms for the Register of Deeds, County Attorney and Sheriff. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is against it. The people need to be able to have their say every two (2) years. CA Libby stated that the argument for four (4) year terms is continuity. She noted that part of the testimony the NHAC Strategic Planning Committee heard was that New Hampshire is the only state in the country to have two (2) year elected terms for those positions. The question is why it should be right for one (1) county and not the other nine (9) counties. Commissioner Piper stated that there were strong arguments for and against this at the last NHAC meeting. She would be in favor of this change, to be decided on a county by county basis. Commissioner Lauer stated that she has mixed feelings. If the Senate, Governor, State Representatives and Commissioners have to have two (2) year terms, why not these three (3) positions as well but she feels, it is important that all ten (10) counties do the same thing.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk