

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
March 30, 2023

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

OTHERS: HR Director Clough, Conservation District - Pam Gilbert, Linda Brownson, Alternative Sentencing Director Mitchell, County Attorney Hornick, Office Administrator Evans, DoC Superintendent Elliott, UNH Extension – Office Administrator Lee, Interim Farm Manager White, Sheriff Stiegler, Office Assistant Paronto, Director of Communications Andross

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

Human Resources – Director Clough

Expense

1. Advertising – HR Director Clough noted that there is a \$5,000 increase in this line based on the FY23 six (6) month figures. The increased number of vacancies requires more advertising. Commissioner Piper stated that they are facing a bad market for recruiting employees and they are not able to be successful despite all of their efforts. She would like to allot money to make the County as successful as possible and not put money into something that is not working. HR Director Clough gave an example of this from this year of attorneys. She explained that they have needed to advertise a lot for those vacant positions and those types of positions are expensive. Commissioner Piper asked if this line could be reduced given the lack of success, how much could HR Director Clough reduce it by. HR Director Clough stated that the majority of their applicants now come through search engines such as Indeed, which is free. She stated people are searching for jobs more through search engines now rather than the papers but she noted that the problem they have is that her department hears a lot from employees if they do not see ads in the papers for the vacant positions and ask why they are not being advertised. She stated that it depends on the direction the Commissioners would like to go but certain positions require more advertising. CA Libby noted that with certain positions you want the contact with the local community by running ads in the newspapers so they are reaching the local people who may not be using Indeed. It is very important to keep some presence in print ads even if it is not their primary source of applicants. HR Director Clough stated that there are certain positions that people will not travel for and those would be advertised in local papers.

2. Travel Expense – HR Director Clough stated that she has reduced this line but travel is starting to pick back up so she does not want to cut her department short.

3. New Equipment – HR Director Clough stated that they had an ergonomic assessment done and she has one desk in their office that is taped together in spots, which is roughly thirty (30) years old. That desk needs replacing and then with the ergonomic assessment that was done, in order for one office to be ergonomically correct it needs a right hand return on the desk and the current desk is not designed to have a right hand return. She noted that they are also in need of a new office chair. HR Director Clough explained that they have seen an increase in shredding but it is not enough to outsource to a company. She stated that would like to upgrade to a higher volume shredder.

CA Libby noted that the HR budget has a 3.33% overall increase.

Conservation District

The County supports the Administrative Assistant position for the Conservation District. The increase in this budget is directly related to that position.

Other materials were provided for the Commissioners review.

Alternative Sentencing – Director Mitchell

A. Revenue

1. Program Fees – AS Director Mitchell explained that she reduced the program fees because the current figures do not reflect what was brought in.

2. Insurance Reimbursement – This line item was reduced as well because the current budget was a high estimate that has not come through as they thought.

3. BDAS Funding – AS Director Mitchell noted that she increased the BDAS funding revenue due to the current figures.

B. Expense

1. Education and Training – AS Director Mitchell noted that one staff member is taking their exam to receive their LADC and she wants to make sure they have the money in the budget for that.

2. Travel Expense – AS Director Mitchell explained that when she came on as Director, other staff members were not given the same privileges as her when it came to travel. Some people were not reimbursed for their travel and she has since changed that which has increased that line item. She stated that they are getting a new car that was approved through ARPA, and this is going to offset some of those costs. She noted that she is trying to figure out other ways to reduce the travel.

C. SUD Treatment

CA Libby explained that the Alternative Sentencing program is broken out into two (2) budgets for reporting purposes for the BDAS grant. The SUD Treatment budget is monies that are attributable to the BDAS funding received.

County Attorney's Office – Attorney Hornick & Office Administrator Evans

A. Revenue

Atty. Hornick explained that there are seven (7) attorneys in their office, herself and then two (2) additional attorneys under their umbrella that are fully paid for by the Circuit Court Prosecution agreements in place that fall under their revenue.

B. Expense

County Attorney's Office

1. Clerical – Atty. Hornick stated that she is working on restructuring the legal assistants on the wage scale. She is looking to move them one grade up so all legal assistants are on a grade 10. There are currently four (4) legal assistants at grade 9 and one at grade 10. This \$12,000 increase reflects that restructuring but noted that the process is still going through the scoring process in HR.

2. Investigative Services – Atty. Hornick explained that the Investigator position is being slowly incorporated into the budget. It was an ARPA expense but because it is a permanent position, the first year it was paid 75% out of ARPA and 25% out of the County budget. This year it is 50% split between each and eventually will be fully incorporated into the budget.

3. Expert Costs – Atty. Hornick explained that there are times where their office needs to rely on experts to help them prepare for trials, which can be expensive and therefore they have a placeholder in the budget for this expense.

4. SVP – Atty. Hornick explained that this is also a placeholder as well. These cases involve different types of experts that can be very expensive. She stated that they do not have any upcoming cases that she is aware of but that could change at any point.

5. CAC Initiative - Atty. Hornick explained that this is money the County provides every year to offset the costs of those who work interviewing children who are victims of various crimes.

3. Dues & Licenses – Atty. Hornick explained that they been working the last four (4) years to go as paperless as possible. With the use of body worn cameras across the state with all law enforcement agencies and now the State Police as well, she is concerned about complying with

the internet. Evidence.com is a program that different police departments are using with respect to their body worn cameras in order to download and upload footage. It provides a platform to share that information seamlessly and confidentially. She noted that for the County Attorney's Office, Evidence.com would allow their office to upload and download much quicker, taking away much of the time spend waiting for that information to download. This software will also transcribe the information from those cameras as well, which will streamline the process. She stated that right now they do not have a certified transcriptionist in their office and have to hire someone for that.

There is a 2.35% overall increase in the County Attorney's budget.

VAWA Grant

Assistant County Attorney – Atty. Hornick explained that this increase is due to this attorney moving to the lead position this year. She noted that the County receives \$30,000 from the VAWA grant that covers a portion of these costs.

Medical Referee

Atty. Hornick explained that this line covers the Medical examiners that attend untimely deaths within Grafton County. This line has increased because the costs have increased.

Farm – Interim Manager White

A. Revenue

1. Sale of Milk – Interim FM White reported a decrease of \$140,000 in this line due to reducing the herd.
2. Sale of Live Stock – Interim FM White stated that he left this line item level funded. He explained that the reason for the increase in revenue this year was due to selling of a portion of the herd.
3. Sale of Produce – This year did not meet the revenue projection due to the issues with the potato crop.

B. Expenses

1. Interim FM White explained that the testing line is not a new expense. It used to be included in the breeding and registration line but he has broken it out to its own line.
2. Feed, Dairy – Interim FM White stated that this line shows a \$40,000 decrease due to reducing the herd.

C. Capital Outlay

1. Mower – Interim FM White explained that the current mower is rusted and he is worried about parts falling off and getting in the feed. There is a local farm holding a like new mower and is asking \$20,000.

Department of Corrections – Superintendent Elliott

A. Revenue

1. Department of Corrections – Supt. Elliott explained that this line item includes revenue from Coos County female inmates, employee meals, Social Security Incentives and inmate phone calls. He noted that the Coos County female rate is increasing to \$60/day.

2. Community Corrections – This line item is revenue the DoC receives for inmates out on electronic monitoring, work release or pre-trial services.

3. Federal Inmates – Supt. Elliott stated that he is decreasing this line and budgeting for one (1) federal inmate in the next fiscal year.

Supt. Elliott noted that the projected revenue is down \$21,000.

B. Expenses

Department of Corrections

1. Supplies – Supt. Elliott stated this line is up \$20,000 from last year due to inflation.

2. Education & Training – This line includes training for all departments in the facility. Supt. Elliott stated that he is investing \$3,101 for Special Response Team gear. He noted that this team was implemented in January. Supt. Elliott added that he has nine (9) uncertified officers and has included the cost send them all through the academy, which is \$500 each.

4. Meals – Supt. Elliott stated that due to inflation he has had to increase the cost per meal to \$2.02.

5. Dues, Licenses & Subscription - Lexis Nexus, law library that is required has increased significantly.

6. Prisoner Clothing/Supplies – Supt. Elliott reported that have not replaced these in years and are in need of replacement.

7. Medical – Supt. Elliott explained that he has one (1) inmate in the jail who has been there six (6) months and is going to cost the County \$55,000 for one (1) generic medication. Supt. Elliott stated that he has increased this line item to compensate for that inmate, as he does not know how long this inmate will be there.

8. County Vehicle – Supt. Elliott explained that there is an MOU in place as of July 1st with a taxi company to provide transports for inmates if they are in need once they are released. He has increased this line \$5,000 to cover for that.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he does not agree with spending \$200,000 on meals and in his mind, he believes that it is a crime that inmates are eating better than most of his constituents. Supt. Elliott stated that he recently did a poll with all county jails and the average cost per meal is \$2.85, with some as high with \$5. He reported that Grafton County’s cost per meal is \$2.02. CA Libby noted that the County did use beef from the farm but it was more expensive than using the beef from Sysco and the decision was made to go back to purchasing from Sysco.

Community Corrections

1. Travel Expense – Supt. Elliott stated that there is an increase in this line as they will need to purchase new tires for at least three (3) of their vehicles.

2. Security Equipment – This increase includes the software for the Axon body cameras that were just approved through ARPA.

UNH Cooperative Extension – County Office Administrator Lee

1. Salary – Support Staff - COA Lee stated that the County funds the two (2) administrative assistant positions in their office.

2. Salary – Professional Staff – COA Lee explained that the County pays 25% of the field specialist positions and 75% for program manager position.

3. Longevity – COA Lee stated that she wanted the Commissioners to know how appreciated that the longevity is to her staff and it is a very nice way to say thank you to the employees.

Sheriff’s Department & Dispatch – Sheriff Stiegler, Director of Communications Andross, Office Assistant Paronto

A. Dispatch Revenue

1. Dispatch Fees – Director Andross explained that these are the fees they receive from the agencies they provide services for and they are based off usage. There is an increase of \$60,000.

2. Alarm Monitoring Services – Director Andross explained that this revenue line is the eight (8) to ten (10) paying customers that the County provides this service for. Commissioner Piper stated Director Andross had reported that this service was predicted to be a revenue source but they have been informed that it is breakeven. Director Andross explained today they use an analog system but once the new equipment, which was approved through ARPA, is installed, they will be going digital. Commissioner Piper asked if this service is worth continuing. Director Andross stated that if they were to discontinue the alarm monitoring services, the cost would

show on the county campus. He explained that part of this service includes alarm monitoring for the complex. This costs \$400 a year and would cost more for the county as there are multiple buildings to monitor.

B. Sheriff's Department Revenue

1. Sheriff Dept. Fees – Sheriff Stiegler explained that bill is moving through the House and Senate that would lead to an increase in this line and he noted that he is also seeing more activity as Covid is in the rearview. He has increased it by \$35,000.
2. Court Bailiff's – Sheriff Stiegler explained that the state is in the process of negotiating a new contract with the union in the Supreme Court and from what he understands the Bailiffs should be seeing a couple of dollars an hour raise. The increase is \$33,000.
3. Dist Court Prisoner Sec – There is an increase of \$5,000 due to an uptick in moving people to and from court.
4. Grants – NH Drug Task Force – Sheriff Stiegler stated that this increase in revenue more accurately covers costs of this employee.

C. Dispatch Expenses

1. Dispatchers – Director Andross stated that he has included a new full time dispatch position. This request has been discussed before and he stated that they continue to struggle with part-time staff being available to cover necessary hours regularly, noting that all of the part time staff have full time jobs outside of Grafton County.
2. Deputy Director – Director Andross explained that this is a migration of a Communications Supervisor position to the new title Deputy Director of Communications. This position will allow the Deputy Director to learn, practice and perform the Director position, which would allow for succession planning. He stated that the future administration can decide the longevity of this position but it creates a path for career advancement within the center.
3. Lease Communication Equipment – Director Andross reported that this increase is anticipation of the new Code Red system.
4. Equipment Repair & Maint – Director Andross explained that his six (6) month figures are low because Homeland Security replaced two (2) of their systems and during the first year they do not pay for the maintenance and he did not factor that into the budget. He stated that these expenses would start back up.

D. Capital Reserve

1. Director Andross explained that the Dispatch Capital Reserve is funded through a portion of the Dispatch billing they receive each year. He reviewed the requests and noted that each year they fund MDT replacements, dispatch chairs and IT costs.

E. Sheriff's Department Expenses

1. Clerical – Sheriff Stiegler stated that they are proposing a new Office Manager. This position will encompass the duties of the current Office Assistant that support the Communications and Operations Divisions. The Office Manager will also have the primary responsibility for development of the New Hampshire Police Accreditation system and operation of the new Axon wearable and vehicle video systems while also providing support and fill in duties of the Civil and Administrative Assistants.

2. Deputies – Sheriff Stiegler stated that they are requesting a new full time Deputy Sheriff position. He explained that it has been close to 25 years since another full time deputy has been added and this is needed, as they do not have the part time help they have had in the past. This position will allow the department to serve warrants in a timely manner. He is proposing the position be funded halfway through the fiscal year, in January 2024, and if approved, he could make a reduction in the part time deputy line item in the fiscal year 2025 as well.

F. Sheriff's Dept. Capital Outlay

1. Three (3) Cruisers – Sheriff Stiegler stated that they are looking to purchase two (2) F-150 responders as well as a more spacious vehicle to replace the 2019 Ford Escape. He explained that to replace the Ford Escape, he is looking to allocate \$47,920.00, which is higher because this is not a standard government vehicle purchase, rather a vehicle that blends into monitoring traffic. It is also used frequently for transporting an inmate and his or her attorney along with two (2) deputies who have to go to jury viewings without prejudicing or creating an assumption of guilt against the person in custody.

1:43 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha S. McLeod, Clerk