

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
April 4th 2023

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

OTHERS: Judith Hull – Master Gardener, HR Director Clough, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Sal Steven – Hubbard – Lakes Region Community Developers

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

Commissioner McLeod participated electronically according to RSA 91-A: 2 with the reason being she was unable to attend the meeting in person. Electronic participation was at her request. It was noted that all votes must be taken by a roll call.

Judith Hull – Master Gardener

J. Hull arrived and presented the attached document outlining a request that the Master Gardeners have for Grafton County regarding the Memorial Garden at the Nursing Home. She discussed the request with the Commissioners and answered questions. Commissioner Piper thanked J. Hull for coming in and stated that the Commissioners would discuss this request.

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

Commissioner Ahern stated that he believes the County could fill some of the vacant positions if they were to have on campus housing. HR Director Clough stated that she understands that piece of it but she thinks housing is going to create a bigger expense to the County and will not solve their issue. There are not people to fill these positions, which is the reality; the number of job openings is so much higher than the people seeking jobs. Commissioner Piper stated that the cost effectiveness of something like this is important to find out. There are counties that have purchased apartment buildings for contracted nursing staff. That might help them to cut down on that cost. Commissioner Piper asked HR Director Clough if there are any conversations among the other nine (9) counties regarding the issue of housing in general. HR Director Clough stated that there are no conversations that she is aware of but she has not asked the question. Commissioner Piper stated that at the last NHAC Executive Committee meeting, there was talk about the demand for housing for employees and it was suggested that state money could be employed to target populations. Commissioner Piper stated that a question that has come up during budget season is if the County should raise the salaries of the nurses to make them more competitive for permanent nurses rather than travelers. She asked if the county could compete with the agencies. HR Director Clough stated that she would recommend putting money into their employees to better compete rather than provide something to travel nurses. NHA Labore noted that providing housing for contract nurses would cause many morale issues. HR Director Clough noted that another aspect to think about is if the County wants to take housing

opportunities away from the local population, where housing is an issue to begin with, for short term contract nursing. Commissioner McLeod stated that the healthcare industry has done temporary housing for employees, it is not all bad of an idea but there are things they would need to work out. She feels the County needs to raise the salaries but wonders in some ways would people then just shop around based on who is raising salaries. Commissioner Ahern stated that they need to be unique in their thoughts.

NHA Labore arrived and gave the following report: (* see attached)

1. Revised CMS Regulatory Guidance Changes

- Infection Control Deficiency Penalties – NHA Labore explained that a lot of discussion has taken place regarding abuse and crimes that take place in long-term care settings. The federal level does not feel CMS is doing their best in ensuring safety in long-term care settings and therefore CMS is updating their rules and regulations. In regards to infection control, CMS is doubling down on infection prevention in long-term care facilities. Going forward, there will be a separate penalty, anything related to infection and prevention depending on the severity. NHA Labore explained that if a facility were cited two (2) years in a row, they could get a \$10,000 fine; the 3rd year in a row could be \$20,000. He went on to explain that he wanted to make sure that the Commissioners are aware that there is an increased potential of fines that could come their way with these updates. In doing so, there is the discussion of whether to continue to work with quality improvement organizations to help Nursing Homes to help improve their operations. He is not concerned now but any number of things can happen during the survey. This is an FYI for the Commissioners.

2. Landscape Project Update – NHA Labore stated that he continues to work with Jay Miller from J. Miller Landscaping and he is looking to set up a meeting to further discuss the process. Commissioner McLeod asked if the Master Gardener’s proposal that was presented earlier in their meeting could be incorporated into this project. NHA Labore explained that this project is separate and in a different location, but if the Commissioners wanted to look into that they could. Commissioner Ahern stated that he would like to see fruit trees and bushes planted as a part of this project. NHA Labore explained that they do have a modest garden they created in the activities courtyard. He had approached CA Libby about the idea of utilizing space across the street that is not being used currently by the farm to have a bigger garden for the residents. He has support from the Nursing Home and 4H for this project. He asked the Commissioners if the Nursing Home could use some of the space across the street. The Commissioners were in support of it. CA Libby noted that Interim FM White has stated that he will plow the area of the field that the Nursing Home is looking to use.

3. Elizabeth Burke (Rep. Kuster’s Office) and Ellen Flaherty (Dartmouth Health) Planned Visit 11, 2023 – NHA Labore stated that E. Flaherty is looking to highlight the nursing home and great care the staff gives. She wants to highlight this to Elizabeth Burke and chose the Grafton County Nursing Home. NHA Labore stated that he is hopeful that one or more of the Commissioners would be available to join the tour. Commissioner Ahern and Commissioner Piper stated that they are available to attend.

Sal Steven – Hubbard – Lakes Region Community Developers

S. Steven Hubbard introduced herself and explained that Lakes Region Community Developers is hoping to complete a project in Ashland, The Village at Mill Pond, and is looking for Grafton County to support a CDBG application. She explained that this project is 34 acres and is located at the former site of a paper mill that was torn down in the 80s. It has good proximity to Route 3 and the town as well as access to interstate 93. She explained that the project consists of three (3) phases. The 1st phase, which is what the CDBG application is for, consists of 60 units of family workforce housing townhouses. The 2nd phase will be 26 elder units and the 3rd phase will be through the Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity, which will consist of four (4) family lots. S. Steven – Hubbard answered questions from the Commissioners. Commissioner McLeod stated that she believes this sounds like a great project and appreciates that they are working on this. She noted that she likes the different phases focusing on the different populations. Commissioner Ahern stated that there is a great need for this type of project they are proposing. The Commissioners are in support of this project and agreed to support the CDBG application. CA Libby stated that they would work on setting a date for the public hearing.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 21st and March 28th meetings. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner Ahern had a few edits in each.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the March 21st meeting as amended. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the March 28th meeting as amended. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1131-1135; 2023-03.31.2023

3. CA Libby submitted a CDBG Drawdown from NCIC for \$30,000 for Commissioner Piper to sign.

4. Question regarding Municipality Applications – CA Libby stated that she received a phone call from Plymouth Water and Sewer District asking if they alone could apply for the \$50,000 or if they had to go through the Town of Plymouth. She stated that she thinks all applications should funnel through the town and be a coordinated effort. The Commissioners agreed.

5. CA Libby submitted the DoC Superior Court Report for the month of March.

6. Commissioner Ahern had a scheduling conflict with their April 18th meeting. The Commissioners discussed it and agreed to meet at 2:00pm that day.

MOTION: *10:35 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of the hiring of any person as a public employee according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (b). 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.

*10:50 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

10:52 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

Commissioners meeting 4. April 2023

Thank you for inviting me to your meeting. My statement will, I hope, be brief.

I am representing the Master Gardeners of Grafton County who designed, laid out and have long maintained the garden to the south of the Nursing Home. The Memorial Garden is an important amenity for the nursing home, the Grafton County complex, and the people of Haverhill NH.

During the past few years – especially since the Pandemic, but also since the retirement of Joan Pushee, Master Gardener participation has diminished. There are many reasons for this – new directions in individual lives, a break in the continuity of our work, aging, and few Master Gardeners in the area.

As you know, there have been four or five Master Gardeners who have been active in working at the site. Last year, they attempted to obtain a new design for the garden that would benefit growing conditions and make maintenance easier. They succeeded in raising \$2000 from the NH Master Gardener Alumni Association for materials. However, the volunteer who offered to make the design did not come through and the funds were never spent. The recommendation at that point was to find a professional whom we could pay to make the design and report recommendations.

This year, Master Gardener Jane O'Donnell has been in touch with two Master Gardeners who are also professional landscape gardeners. The first lives in Hollis and came highly recommended. She made several recommendations but could not travel to Haverhill to see the site and produce a design. The second person is willing to make a site visit, take photos, create a measured drawing (which we do not have), and issue a report for \$1500-2000.

To date the recommendations are:

1. Remove the beds nearest Route 10
2. Replant with grass and or shrubs
3. Dig up and divide the perennials elsewhere on the site to renew the garden beds.

This would allow for the Master Gardeners to maintain the beds near the gazebo – where the greatest use occurs.

As you know, the Master Gardeners' mission is to educate the public about research-based approaches to horticulture. They get their hands in the dirt in order to further this mission and do not usually take on maintenance projects. So the Memorial Gardens is a bit unusual.

The Master Gardener program hopes to launch a virtual training in the Fall of 2023. With significant recruiting in the Haverhill area, I am hopeful that we can

1. Use the Memorial Gardens as a lab during the training
2. Augment our numbers to facilitate maintaining the gardens
3. Realize our mission as educators by opening the garden to greater public participation.

Grafton County Human Resources Report
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
 April 4, 2023

HR Activity Report (03/06/2023-04/04/2023)

- ***New Hires***

Department	#	Position(s)
Nursing Home	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Health Info Support Tech
DOC	2 (2 FT)	1 FT CO, 1 FT Admin. Asst.
County Attorney	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Asst. County Attorney
Maintenance	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Maintenance Asst.

Separations

Departments	#	Position(s)
DOC	2 (2 FT)	1 FT CO, 1 FT Cook
County Attorney	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Legal Asst.
Sheriff's Dept.	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Deputy

Reasons:

- Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 3
- Termination –
- Vaccine Mandate -
- New job/career change – 1
- Relocated –
- School –
- Retirement –
- Not Reappointed -
- Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements -

- ***Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 FT CO to part time***

Active Leave of Absences between March 6, 2023 to present

Department	#	Details
Nursing Home – Nursing	14	(10 are intermittent, 9 for self, 5 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	5	(5 are intermittent, 4 for family, 1 self)
DOC	2	(1 intermittent, 1 self, 1 family)
Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch.	4	(4 intermittent, 2 family, 2 self)
County Atty's Office	4	(3 intermittent, 4 self)
HR Department	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
Alternative Sentencing	1	(1 intermittent family)
Maintenance	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)

TOTAL: 32

Current Jobs posted/advertised

- LNA's (36.95 FTE's vacant)
- RN/LPN (17.05 FTE's vacant combined)
- ADON
- RN Per Diem DOC
- CO's (14 FTE's)
- Cook DOC (2)
- Housekeepers (PT)
- Dietary Aides (1 FT and PT)
- Assistant County Attorney
- Skilled Maintenance Assistant
- Nightwatchman PT

Deputy Sheriff

Other: WHS Job Fair, Norwich University and PSU, Health Insurance rate revisit will stay at 5.5% increase

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: April 4, 2023

Census

Medicare: 6
Medicaid: 61
VA: 3
Hospice: 4
Private: 16
Total: 90

FY '23 Budgeted Census:

Medicare: 2
Medicaid: 73
VA: 3
Hospice: 0
Private: 22
Budgeted Census: 100

Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 7
Deceased Residents: 3
Discharges: 1

Other Topics:

- 1) Revised CMS Regulatory Guidance Changes
 - Infection Control Deficiency Penalties
- 2) Landscape Project Update
- 3) Elizabeth Burke (Rep. Kuster's Office) and Ellen Flaherty (Dartmouth (Health) Planned Visit April 11, 2023