

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
April 6th 2023

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

OTHERS: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Finance Director Jurentkuff, Maintenance Supt. Oakes, Register of Deeds Monahan

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

Commissioner Piper 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.

Nursing Home – Administrator Labore & Finance Director Jurentkuff

A. Revenue

NHA Labore stated that he is projecting an average daily census of 93.

1. Private Pay Increase – NHA Labore reported that they are increasing their private pay rates \$20/day to \$335.00/day and semi-private will be \$315.00. Those rates will still be very competitive with the surrounding facilities in the area.

2. NHA Labore reported that he feels the \$253.54 Medicaid rate will continue as there is a 3.1% increase projected from the state. He stated that he has good faith that their rates will not decrease come July due to their case index score.

3. Veterans – NHA Labore explained that the Nursing Home could see an increase in their rates depending on the level of care the veteran needs. The cost for a veteran is \$422.75/day

4. Medicare – NHA Labore stated that he is projecting an average Medicare census of six (6)

B. Expense

Nursing Home Admin

1. Employee Immunizations – NHA Labore stated that he has increased this line due to the anticipation of the end of the public health emergency in May. The County may have to pay for COVID vaccines for staff members and therefore he has increased this line by \$5,000 in anticipation of those expenses.

Dietary

1. NHA Labore stated that they are proposing a shift differential increase of \$1. The total cost of that is \$10,556. NHA Labore stated that the real opportunity to make advancement with the employees is in the hourly wages for staff. He explained that they are asking LNAs to do very demanding jobs for \$16/hr. when they can go to Walmart or McDonalds for \$18.00/hour.

2. Food Service – This line shows a decrease due to the removal of the Food Production Manager position. NHA Labore explained that they have not had success in maintaining longevity with that position and has gone vacant for long periods. With the departure of the last employee he decided that based on the census, he did not need that position.

Nursing

Contract Nursing Services – NHA Labore noted that there is a \$2 million increase in this line. He does not foresee the situation with contract nursing coming to an end. He explained that the Nursing Home has not had success in getting LNAs to go through the class because they have not had people coming in who are interested.

NHA Labore noted that there are decreases in the wages lines for LNAs and LPNs based on where they are right now with staffing. Commissioner McLeod asked if NHA Labore knew how much contract nurses and LNAs make from these agencies. NHA Labore stated that they are billed at a set amount but they are unaware of how much the employees take home. They have looked at different ways with HR to bring in their employees.

Nursing Supplies – Gloves – NHA Labore reported that the State of New Hampshire has been very aggressive in getting all of the state PPE supplies distributed because if they do not get them out by a certain date they will be responsible for the cost. The Nursing Home has now has a good inventory on gloves and therefore he was able to reduce this line.

Restorative Nursing

1. NHA Labore stated that this department has been without a full time coordinator since June 2022 and they have had someone filling in over the course of the weekends. He stated that he has a feeling she may go on full time and therefore left this line as is.

2. Restorative Aids – This line has a decrease, due to not having the staff.

Therapeutic Recreation

Life Enrichment Coordinator – NHA Labore stated that this position was not filled this year given the census and he is recommending not filing that position in the next fiscal year. Commissioner Piper noted her appreciation on those decisions.

Housekeeping

Supplies – NHA Labore stated that in talking with the Environmental Services Director, this \$15,000 increase is reflective of inflation costs.

Pharmacy & Physician

Med A RX – NHA Labore stated that this line reflects the medications for and Medicare A residents with the higher projected census they increased this line.

Contract Services

1. Medical Director – The contract that is now in place is \$4,000 a month.
2. Contract Physicians – NHA Labore explained that this line is zeroed out as it is now reflected in the Medical Director Line.

C. Capital Reserve

1. NHA Labore stated that he is asking to replace the convection gas steamer units in the kitchen. He explained that the current units were purchased roughly ten (10) years ago. They have become very problematic and have created a lot of work for the maintenance department to try to fix. They have had down time.
2. Bladder scanner – The current scanner is at the end of life. This is an upgrade to the newest unit on the market. NHA Labore stated that at end of this calendar year, they will no longer be servicing the current scanner and this is needed for bed side resident care.
3. Tubs –NHA Labore explained that he is looking to upgrade the two (2) remaining Apollo tubs in the Nursing Home. He stated that they cannot get parts for these tubs and they can no longer be fixed. The other tubs they have are the Penner model and it is very reliable. The budget is for two (2) additional Penner tubs.

NHA Labore thanked FM Jurentkuff for her work in putting the budget together and carrying the heavy load.

Maintenance – Superintendent Oakes

A. Expense

Supt. Oakes gave the following summary on the FY23 budget:

FY24 MAINT. DEPT. REPAIR & MAINTENANCE BUDGET – SUMMARY

FY23 Budget Request (before allocations & COLA) - **\$2,563,754**

FY24 Budget Request (before allocations & COLA) - **\$2,997,396**

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(Difference \$433,642 / Overall Increase 16.91%)

Wages & Benefits (accounts 001 – 130) Higher cost health insurance and step increases are the catalyst for this small increase.

Contract Maintenance (accounts 291 – 299) The following services have increased in cost due to inflation or due to long-interval preventative maintenance requirements that will be due:

- Generators are due a major service this year
- Trash & recycling increased 19%
- Elevator services increased 44%
- Water tank is due 5-year inspection

Electricity (accounts 619 – 627) In the first 3-months of FY24 GV rates will be up slightly and G rates will be down slightly due to ongoing tariff structure changes. However, in November Woodsville Water & Light will implement a new Purchased Power Adjustment (PPA) that will double our KWh costs, much like other utilities did this current year. **The PPA will account for a 14% increase in the department's overall budget.**

Water (accounts 629 – 638) Water & meter fees will increase 7% January 2024.

Sewage (accounts 639 – 647) Sewage fees will increase 8% January 2024.

Fuels (accounts 649 – 658) Woodchip prices have risen while propane and diesel costs have gone down. Commodity price changes are listed below:

Fiscal Year →	FY23	FY24	Change
Woodchips	\$59 per ton	\$71.80 per ton	\$12.80 per ton
Propane	\$1.756 per gallon	\$1.55 per gallon	(\$0.308) per gallon
Diesel	\$3.545 per gallon	\$3.36 per gallon	(\$0.185) gallon
Heating Oil	\$3.448 per gallon	0	

Our heating oil tanks are close to full, so I don't anticipate needing to purchase any oil in FY24.

Repair & Maintenance (accounts 805 – 838) are up slightly due to inflation.

New Equipment & Small Tools (accounts 970 -971) are up slightly due to inflation and one larger new equipment request.

The Commissioners and Supt. Oakes discussed what they would like to accomplish during their meeting with WW&L next Tuesday about the County's water and septic systems.

The Commissioners and Supt. Oakes also discussed the need for the county to go on their own with water and sewer and possibly looking into alternative energy sources or net metering.

New Equipment – Supt. Oakes stated that his custodians have requested a floor scrubber like what is at the Nursing Home for stripping and waxing the floors. Commissioner Ahern asked if this is something, his staff needs to have. Supt. Oakes stated that it is a need. Right now, they clean the floors with a mop. He explained that his staff got permission from the Nursing Home to

try their machine out and what they discovered was how much more thorough of a job that floor scrubber does. His staff feels that if every other department has one for their floors they should be able to have one for the floors in this building.

B. Capital Outlay

1. Standing Seam Roof – Supt. Oakes stated that he is looking to replace the roof on the Alternative Sentencing building with a standing seam roof. The current roof is the original roof from 1990. He explained that he would prefer to install a standing seam roof rather than shingles because they last roughly 50 years.

2. Gazebo – Supt. Oakes stated that a number of shingles blew off the gazebo rood during high winds over the winter. He stated that he would prefer to replace this with standing seam as well.

3. 1 ½-ton dump body truck – Supt. Oakes stated that he is looking to replace the current 12-year-old 1 ton dump body truck. He explained that the existing truck is starting to rust in a number of places from heavy exposure to road salt. He would like to purchase a 1 ½-ton truck as it would withstand the weight of the sander better. Commissioner Piper asked CA Libby if this could be an ARPA expense. CA Libby stated that they could have that discussion but they have already had conversations about limiting the rest of the ARPA spending on County related items going forward. She stated that they are getting to the point where, if the County does decide to put in a water system, that is \$2.5 million and they may not have ARPA money left at that point. Commissioner Piper stated that CA Libby is right; they did have these discussions and asked to hold off on these smaller purchases through ARPA. She wanted to see the community-funding portion of ARPA taken care of first and that has been done. Commissioner McLeod stated in her opinion, the capital budget needs to be maintained, rather than putting it all in ARPA. She stated that would lead to a large increase once the ARPA funds are not available and she thinks they need a stable expectation of what a capital budget looks like. Commissioner McLeod stated that their issue is around personnel and salary rather than the capital budgets.

Information Technology – County Administrator Libby

1. Contract Services – CA Libby explained that the County contracts with SNS for their IT services. The agreement with SNS for FY24 is \$482,658.00. This includes the Artic Wolf Cyber Security Software, licenses for Outlook email accounts as well as fees they pay to SNS for staff time. She stated that the reason that the contract services line shows \$313,686 is because the County is enrolled with USAC in a subsidy program. The County has contracted with NETC and they helped do the RFP to enroll in the subsidy program. As a result, the County receives 65% for their healthcare associated IT fees back as a subsidy. The SNS contract is broken out into two (2) separate contracts, one (1) for the healthcare services and one (1) for the rest of the County. Through USAC, the County is given a subsidy for 65% of those services. 15% of that subsidy is then paid to NETC for their administrative services. \$221,161 is the total amount the County should be receiving from the USAC program. CA Libby stated that the County has not been approved for the subsidy as of yet but noted that she has been told that they do not foresee it not being approved. It would be retroactive to July 1st of this fiscal year so there should be a credit back if approved.

2. Workers Comp – CA Libby explained that these charges are still occurring because the rates as based off payroll data from two (2) years ago when the county still had its own IT staff. She stated that this should be the last year for these charges.

3. New Equipment – CA Libby stated that there are only a handful of computers/laptops that need to be replaced next fiscal year, therefore there is a large decrease in this line.

CA Libby stated that the customer service and departments frustration with SNS has not gotten any better. She explained that the subsidy piece makes it hard for her because it is a lot of money but she feels it may be time to look into phasing out SNS and bring back their own in house IT Department. She stated that may look like hiring a new IT manager who then works with SNS over a period and that IT Manager would then decide how many support people they would hire. She noted that there are many frustrated department heads, who would like to see the County bring back their own in house IT department.

Register of Deeds – Register Monahan

A. Revenue

Register Monahan reported that activity is down from this time last year. She explained that last year she had asked to wait until after the April numbers came in to see what was happening with the spring market and she would like to do the same again this year. She left revenue fairly flat and would like to see where things go.

1. Transfer Tax – Register Monahan explained that this is the 4% the County receives out of the state's portion.

2. Postage – Register Monahan noted that postage revenue is a wash with the expense.

3. Tapestry – Register Monahan explained that Ava is the free search system for the public and Tapestry is the specialized system for the title industry. She stated that they generally bring in \$1,500 a month with Ava and \$2,500 with Tapestry.

4. Online Fees – Register Monahan explained that this is the Laredo service, the high-end search legal and real estate utilizes.

5. Interest – Register Monahan stated that she wanted to clarify this line item with the Treasurer after securing the better CD interest rate, in regards to her surcharge account and the \$255,000 that is in that account. CA Libby stated that this line does not include the interest from the Surcharge account. Surcharge interest is in a separate fund and stays in there. This line is what the bank gives for their daily account and payout account. Register Monahan stated that she questioned the large increase and stated that CA Libby could adjust that line if she needed to. CA Libby stated that she would look at it.

B. Expense

1. Clerical – Register Monahan stated that she has hired someone for her part time unbenefited position. She stated that she does not know how long this project will take them to complete and therefore she has included \$40,000 in this line for overtime, remote or part time work. She stated that the new employee will start next Thursday and they will see how it goes.
2. Education & Conference – Register Monahan stated that she does not travel across the country anymore for conferences but has kept her membership for the white papers and all the education she gets from them.
3. Travel Expense– Register Monahan stated that she will be traveling a little more and has increased accordingly.
4. Postage – There is a \$1,000 decrease in postage as they are seeing more E-Recording.
5. Computer Software – Register Monahan stated that she decreased this line as they are seeing a reduction in document count. She noted that some of the prices are fixed and the bulk of the cost is per document.

C. Surcharge

Register Monahan stated that she is not looking to make any large purchases this year. She is keeping the \$5,000 for miscellaneous expenses in the event they need it.

Human Services, Social Services, Commissioners' & Misc. – CA Libby

A. Misc. Revenue

1. Abandoned Property - CA Libby stated that any abandoned property that goes to the state that is within Grafton County after seven (7) years, the County is paid a percentage of those funds on a yearly basis. She explained that she has a running total that the County receives and uses an average to budget for as she does not know what that revenue total will be each year.
2. Federal PILT – CA Libby explained that this line is revenue the County receives from the federal forestlands that are located within Grafton County. This is also an average that she uses based on previous years.
2. Interest – CA Libby stated that there is a \$350,000 in this line, which is a \$300,000 increase over the current fiscal year. She noted that in the current fiscal year they would exceed \$500,000. There was a dramatic rise in interest rates last fall and rates are projected to stay the same or slightly decrease.
3. Surplus to Reduce Taxes – CA Libby stated that she has done the first projections for surplus for the end of FY 23 and is comfortable using \$5 million and may be able to increase that.

Expense

Human Services

Nursing Home Expenses – CA Libby stated that the cap for FY24 that is in the Governors' Proposed Budget is \$134,486,652.00. There is then a \$5 million credit back to the ten (10) counties. She explained that the way the cap is distributed among the counties is based on three (3) rolling average of expenses that the state tracks. Grafton County's percentage of the cap has grown since FY20. She noted that she does not know what that percentage will be each year. The last two (2) years she has come up short with what was budgeted and this current year they were \$220,000 below the cap and they were able to encumber those funds to cover that shortfall but that will now need to be made up when they budget for the new cap. CA Libby presented two (2) figures for the County Cap for FY24. The first figure is based off the FY23 percentage and that is a \$384,942.75 increase. She explained that the second figure is based off a .1% increase to the 6.25% increase from FY23 and that would account for a \$519,429.40 increase. She stated that this second figure is the number she used in the budget. She discussed these figures with the Commissioners and stated that this line is an area they can go back to and discuss again.

Commissioners' Office

1. Assistant County Administrator – CA Libby explained that this line shows an increase because during the last budget process the Executive Committee cut this position back to six (6) months from the previous year, while they decided what they wanted the position to look like and therefore this year it is showing a large increase.
2. Consultant – CA Libby stated that she had left \$5,000 in this line last year in case they needed a consultant but has decreased it to \$3,500 for next fiscal year.
3. Audit Services – CA Libby noted that the Actuarial Attestation on their Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) needs to be done every other year and will need to be completed in FY24. She noted that the yearly audit costs are split with the Nursing Home.

CA Libby stated that the total increase in her budget is \$75,267.00 and noted that is mainly due to budgeting the other six (6) months for the Assistant County Administrator position.

Wage & Benefit

1. Education Assistance – CA Libby stated that this has not been used in a few years but she recommends the Commissioners keep this line funded in case an employee were to utilize it.
2. Earned Time Buyback – CA Libby stated that this would be the second year the buyback program has been available. The first payout was June of 2022. One (1) of the things they will be proposing is to increase the buyback to twice a year. Currently the buyback is 40 hours once a year. She and HR Director Clough are going to be advocating that the County allow employees to buyback forty (40) hours twice a year, once in June and once in December.

3. Outside Counsel – This line has an increase due to this year’s usage.

Grafton Regional Development Corporation

CA Libby stated that GRDC is requesting level funding of \$45,000.

Social Services

Commissioner Piper explained that she and Commissioner McLeod split the agency applications and reviewed them. She noted that two (2) agencies did not request funding this year. She is recommending level funding agencies and not recommending that they take on any new agencies.

Commissioner McLeod stated that one (1) thought was that these agencies could apply through the ARPA nonprofit application to request the increase that they were looking for through the budget process. Commissioner Piper stated that this year federal funding is available for these nonprofits but she would not support new agencies through the budget process. Commissioner McLeod stated that the housing situation is in a crisis and this area needs the most support.

CA Libby reviewed a budget comparison spreadsheet with the Commissioners and stated that as the budget stands the amount to be raised by taxes is at a 2.09% increase.

MOTION: *1:56 PM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a). 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.

*2:42 PM 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

MOTION: *2:42 PM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such

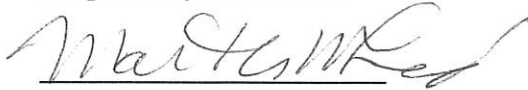
person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (c). Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. This motion requires 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.

*3:13 PM 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

3:14 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha S. McLeod, Clerk