

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023

PRESENT: Reps. Sykes, Baldwin, Bolton, Sellers, Morse, Stringham, Commissioners Piper, and Ahern, County Administrator Libby, Administrative Assistant Norcross

OTHERS PRESENT: Treasurer Hill – via Teams, Register Monahan

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 3:00pm and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rep. Sellers

Rep. Sykes stated the minutes from the March 20<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting needed to be approved.

**MOTION:** Rep. Stringham moved to approve the minutes from the meeting. Rep. Morse seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse, Sellers, Stringham, Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**Treasurer Hill gave the following Treasurer’s Report via Teams: (\* see attached)**

Rep. Sellers asked if the Treasurer could look into asking Bank of New Hampshire if they could increase their interest rate of 4.45% to match Woodsville Guaranty’s 4.8%. Treasurer Hill stated that she would follow up on that question.

**MOTION:** Rep. Sellers moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Rep. Bolton seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse, Sellers, Stringham, Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**Commissioner Piper gave the following Commissioner’s Report: (\* see attached)**

**MOTION:** Rep. Morse moved to accept the Commissioner’s Report. Rep. Sellers seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse, Sellers, Stringham, Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**CA Libby gave the following County Administrators Report (\* see attached)**

CA Libby answered questions from the committee.

**MOTION:** Rep. Bolton moved to accept the County Administrators Report. Rep. Morse seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse,

Sellers, Stringham and Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

### **New Business:**

#### ARPA Requests

1. Employee Retention Bonuses – Commissioner Piper stated that the Employee Council requested \$3/hour COLA. She explained that the majority of the Board supported providing a \$2 COLA, as well as increasing the shift differential by \$1, increasing the earned time buyback program from once a year to twice a year, and providing basic life insurance coverage for all employees.

Commissioner Piper reported that the total average increase for employees with this COLA and the 3% step increase is 11.51% or a \$5,084.51 annual average salary increase. The highest increase is 17% and the lowest is 6%. She stated that she and Commissioner Ahern felt this was reasonable considering the needs and challenges that taxpayers are facing. She went on to state that the Commissioners do recognize the difficulty the employees are having and so they agreed they would request an additional bonus for them, noting that this bonus is not at the Grafton County tax payer expense. They are asking for \$2,000 for full time employees and \$1,000 for part time employees.

Commissioner Piper explained that the Commissioners previously requested an ARPA stipend program and an ARPA bonus for everyone that worked on site during the stay at home order. There is \$448,000 remaining from those programs that was not spend and the Commissioners are requesting an additional \$177,000, which would bring it to a total of \$625,000 for these bonuses.

Rep. Sykes expressed concerns with the Executive Committee getting in the middle of the County's labor negotiations with the Union at the Nursing Home. He does not want to mix this ARPA request with negotiated settlements. CA Libby stated that the Executive Committee is not involved with negotiations and explained that this is an ARPA request that the Commissioners are bringing forward to the Executive Committee for their approval.

Rep. Stringham commended the Commissioners for bringing in a tax decrease with an average 11.5% increase in salaries. He asked if there is a way, since this is called a retention bonus, to say that employees have to stay for another year to receive the bonus. He gave an example of paying out half of the bonus in December of 2023 and the other half at the end of the next fiscal year. He noted that he also thinks the union should feel good about this contract with or without the ARPA bonus.

Commissioner Piper stated that in her time spent at the NHAC; this is nationwide problem with staffing. She does not believe, given the geriatric population, \$3 would solve the problem. Because it would not solve it, she did not want to put that on the taxpayers. A tremendous amount of thought, research and consideration went into this request. Commissioner McLeod stated that she did not vote for this piece of the budget. Retaining people is important but the County also has many open positions. She explained that she researched market based

information and the \$3 requested was in line with the market. The employees would have been happy with the \$3 without some of the other items. She noted that everyone gets a step increase so to use that in the argument is not valid. Commissioner McLeod stated that the County is spending \$4 million on contract nursing that goes to out of state corporations and she thought they could put a dent in the issue by paying market value for positions. She feels that the impact of staffing shortages is rough on employees who have to work all of the overtime to make up for it.

**MOTION:** Rep. Stringham moved to approve \$177,000 in ARPA funding for an employee retention bonus with up to 50% of the funds expended by December 31<sup>st</sup> 2023 and the all funds being spent by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2024. Rep. Morse seconded the motion.

Rep. Morse stated that she is concerned setting a timeline for these funds would not line up with agreements that have already been made. Commissioner Piper explained that this is beyond the Commissioners at this point, in terms of what was told to the employees. It is up to the Executive Committee as to whether they approve this or not. She stated that this is not what the Commissioners asked for but it is up to the Executive Committee. Commissioner Piper noted that she is confident in the package for the union. CA Libby stated that this was a bonus for retention for employees who have been here. Rep. Sykes stated that he would be happier if the Executive Committee approved this money and let the Commissioners decide how it is paid out to the employees. Rep. Stringham stated that he feels good about the 11.5% average increase. He noted that this bonus is described as a retention bonus and his preference is to structure it as a retention bonus. Rep. Morse noted concerns that in doing so, it puts the Executive Committee into negotiations. Rep. Sykes stated that the Executive Committee has never told the Commissioners when they can spend money and when they can cut checks. Commissioner Piper stated that she would want to support what Rep. Stringham is suggesting because their problem is retention and she appreciates the suggestion.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Stringham was in favor. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse, Sellers, Sykes were in opposition. With the vote being one (1) in favor and six (6) in opposition the motion fails.

**MOTION:** Rep. Morse moved to approve \$177,000 in ARPA funds as presented for retention bonuses. Rep. Sellers seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Stringham stated that this still gives the Commissioner authority to set timelines for the allocation of funds.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse, Sellers, Stringham and Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

2. Register of Deeds Restoration ARPA – Register Monahan stated that she is seeking approval to use ARPA funding for their plan restoration and digitization of restored plans project. This is a one-time project and the estimate comes out to \$836,000. Register Monahan noted that there is

room for movement in that quote as the team that came up and looked at the books, did not look at every page and therefore she requested additional funding. She explained that the vendor is comfortable that the project will be completed by the December of 2026 ARPA timeline. Rep. Sellers asked if this project would take place onsite. Register Monahan stated that the vendor, Kofile, is a large company but they have a facility in Vermont and that is where these books would be sent. She explained that this is a very large project and they will work out the details with the vendor as to how many books they will send out at a time.

**MOTION:** Rep. Stringham moved to approve \$950,000 in ARPA funds for the Register of Deeds Plan Restoration and Digitization or Restored Plans project. Rep. Bolton seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Reps. Baldwin, Bolton, Morse, Sellers, Sykes were in favor and none were in opposition. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.


Budget Meeting Dates: June 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> if needed. The Delegation vote on the FY24 budget will be June 26<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

3. ARPA Small Business Applications – Rep. Sykes stated that he was inclined to have the Executive Committee review the spreadsheet that was given to them, allow time to ask for follow up documentation if need by and set a date for an additional meeting to review these applications. CA Libby explained the process the Commissioners took with the applications and how they came up with the spreadsheet they presented to the Executive Committee. She stated that the Commissioners ruled out any applications that were incomplete and there were seven (7) of those. The Commissioners then funded all application requests below \$16,000 in full and anyone who applied for the full \$20,000 will would receive \$17,125 if they qualified for funding.

The Executive Committee will meet on June 7<sup>th</sup> at 9am to further review the Small Business Applications.

5:16 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Heather Baldwin, Clerk

**TO:** GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
**FROM:** KAREN LIOT HILL, TREASURER  
**SUBJECT:** TREASURER'S REPORT  
**DATE:** MAY 22, 2023



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CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 04/30/23)

**Grafton County General Fund**

Checking Account (ICS @ 4.80%)	\$11,940,208.47 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Investment Account (ICS @4.00%)	\$ 1,028,152.30 (Mascoma Savings Bank)
Investment Account Money Market (4.86%)	\$ 1,017,868.42 (NH Public Deposit Investment Pool)
Investment Account CD (4.00%)	\$ 1,013,982.11 (TD Bank)
Investment Account – ICS (4.25%)	\$ 1,028,018.21 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Investment Account – ICS (4.00%)	\$ 1,011,568.26 (Bank of NH)
Investment Account -Money Market (4.00%)	\$ 1,012,315.28 (Northway Bank)

**Grafton County Committed Accounts**

Deeds Surcharge ICS (2.80%)	\$ 245,619.97 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Deeds Surcharge Money Market (.05%)	\$ 7,436.37 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Dispatch Capital Reserve (.75%)	\$ 76,614.11 (Service Credit Union)
Nursing Home Capital Reserve (2.80%)	\$ 575,559.42 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
American Rescue Plan Funds (4.45%)	\$10,645,263.71 (Bank of NH)

RECENT TRANSACTIONS of NOTE

- The Combined Accumulated interest in the current fiscal year (7/1/22-02/28/23) is \$400,422.04.

Commissioners' Report  
May 22, 2023

Staffing continues to be a great concern and challenge. We have vacant positions in most all departments across the campus. You will see details in the department included below.

**Nursing Home:**

- The census at the nursing home is currently 91 with three (3) planned admissions this week.
- Staffing shortages continue to be a significant issue; we currently have the following vacant positions: Assistant Director of Nursing, 38.85 LNA's, 17.05 RN/LPN's, FT Cook, FT and PT Dietary Aides, and PT Housekeepers.

**Department of Corrections:**

- The current in-house census is 59 with another 18 on pretrial services and 1 being monitored electronically.
- Superintendent Tom Elliott has submitted his retirement notice and will be retiring on August 31, 2023. The search for a new Superintendent is currently on-going.
- We continue to face significant staffing shortages with 11 vacant full-time security positions out of 43. There is also (1) full-time officer away on Military Leave – leaving the jail down 12 full-time security positions. They are also short a Cook and PT Nurse.

**Fiscal Year 2024 Budget:**

- The Commissioners have finalized their proposed budget. The Public Hearing on the budget will be this evening at 6PM.
- The Commissioners are pleased to bring forward a responsible budget that for the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year in a row shows a slight decrease in the amount to be raised by taxes.
- The fiscal year 2024 budget recommendations show an overall budget of \$52,006,086, which is an increase of 4.30% or \$2,146,261 from fiscal year 2023. The amount to be raised by taxes is \$26,519,737 or a decrease of .05% or \$12,313 from fiscal year 2023.

**Broadband Committee Update:**

- At the end of September, 2022, the Broadband Committee applied for the NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) Middle Mile grant. NTIA anticipates announcing awards made under the Middle Mile Grant Program on a rolling basis during calendar year 2023. We have not received any notification to-date regarding the status of our application. The project design is complete and the project remains shovel ready should we be awarded funding.

**Woodsville Water & Light Update:**

- The Commissioners met with Woodsville Fire District Commissioners on Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> and discussed water and sewer. We had a good conversation and are hoping to work toward an inter-agency agreement. We did briefly discuss the possibility of Net Metering and they told us that they are not permitted under their current contract to allow net metering. We discussed their upcoming contract renewal and the anticipated rate increase, as they have told us that we could see up to a doubling of hour per kilowatt rate beginning in November. This is the dollar figure we used for budgeting purposes.
- In addition, we have reached out to Community Power Coalition of NH several times and have yet to make contact with them to have discussions regarding what benefits the County complex might achieve if we were to go that route.

**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:**

- Grafton County received \$17.4M in ARPA funding. Thus far there have been seventy-four (74) ARPA projects approved by the Commissioners and Executive Committee, for a total of \$14,642,230.44. These projects are in different phases, many have been completed and others are on-going. All funds are required to be obligated by December 31, 2024.
- The Commissioners have ARPA requests for your consideration and approval today, which would bring the total approved projects to \$15,769,230.44.
- The Commissioners also have their recommendations for Small Business Pandemic Relief funding for your approval today.

County Administrator's Report  
May 22, 2023

Financial Reports

- ❖ Cash Management Report – This report shows where all of the county's funds are invested. This includes operational monies and reserve accounts. Our current cash position is strong. We are currently \$1,463,604 ahead of April, 2022's position. Interest rates are also very favorable and have resulted in increased interest income.
- ❖ Monthly Variance Report compares the budget on an equal monthly basis to actuals and looks at the positive (black) or negative (red) variances. These reports represent ten (10) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2023 Budget	FY 2023 YTD Actuals
Medicaid	73	63
Medicare	2	3
Private Pay	22	17
Veterans	3	1
Total	100	85

- The census at the nursing home continues to have a significant impact on the revenue. The chart above is as of April 30, 2023. We are below our budgeted census in all payer sources except for Medicare. Our current census is 91, with three (3) planned admissions this week. In the past six (6) weeks there has been a steady increase in the census. Total revenue for the nursing home is currently showing a negative variance of \$1,061,303.65.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received all at once in June. We have received very preliminary information that our Pro-Share payment will be more than the \$2,500,000 budgeted, which will help offset the operating losses. Bed Tax is paid quarterly, this report includes the first two (2) quarters payments. The third quarter payments was received on Friday 5/19 and the Bed Tax revenue continues to have a positive variance.



- The Department of Corrections is showing a negative variance currently. We have received some monies for a federal inmates, however, it is far below what was budgeted. The DoC is also below revenue in both their general revenue and Community Corrections. Community Corrections is down due to staffing issues, the numbers of inmates involved in these programs is limited as staff is continuing to work inside the facility.
- The farm is showing a negative variance. The reduction in the herd was done after the budget was prepared. We will come in below revenue projections for milk revenue. The sale of livestock is up considerably to help offset the reduction in milk.
- County Attorney/Victim Witness. These grants are direct reimbursement for expenditures. Reimbursements are requested quarterly.
- The Register of Deeds revenue continues to be up slightly in FY '23. Revenue has slowed significantly since February.

#### Expenses

- Through ten (10) months we have several departments that are showing negative variances. They are all minimal and should fall back in line as the year goes on. The bonded debt line shows a negative variance due to all bond payments for the fiscal year being made. The Medical Referee line will likely be over-expended at year-end. The Capital Outlay over-expenditure is a result of
  - We continue to monitor the Nursing Department. The Contract Nursing line was budgeted at \$1,911,000 through ten (10) months we have expended \$3,457,465.09 this line is over-expended by \$1,546,465.09. This is unprecedented spending on agency staff and is due to the severe staffing shortages within the nursing department. We are on track to spend over \$4,000,000 this year, which is double any previous years' expense. There will be enough funds within the nursing home budget to cover.
  - The Pharmacy department is over-expended due to higher Medicare census than anticipated. This is a good thing for the revenue.
  - The Social Services department is also going to be over-expended at year-end. This is due to staff changes after the FY '23 budget was prepared and there will be funds within the nursing home to cover this.
- ❖ Pro-rated Report: This report looks at the % of the year complete and then pro-rates revenues and expense based on known variates on revenues and expenses.

- 83.33% of the fiscal year completed. On the pro-rated report I factor in the revenue and expenses that are either over or under at this point in the fiscal year. Based on the April reports we are at 81.85% which is below revenue by \$664,120 and at 78.22% or under expended by \$2.55M. I do project that we will see a decrease in our overall fund balance at the end of the fiscal year.
- ❖ Over Expenditure Report – This report shows any line item that is over-expended at month-end.
  - We have some over-expended line items at this point. There is money within the budget to cover these.