

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
May 3, 2023

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

OTHERS: Register Monahan, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Sheriff Stiegler, Director Andross, HR Director Clough

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Director Andross and Sheriff Stiegler arrived**

Sheriff Stiegler stated that with respect to the Commissioners' decision to cut the Office Manager position and half Deputy position, he understands they are looking for cost effectiveness but it has been twenty five (25) years since the County has added a full time deputy to the Sheriff's Department. As the profession continues to evolve, they are at a tipping point where they will not be able to sustain the status quo of what is expected and what is required of them. Sheriff Stiegler stated that he would respect the Commissioners' decision, but he respectfully asks that they reconsider. He explained when he arrived here four (4) years ago; one of their deficiencies is not reviewing in car camera footage, as they should. There are not enough hours to review all of the footage and he wants to be able to say in court that they have reviewed all of the footage. State accreditation also comes into play; they do not prove their standards, as they do not have the time or work force to do so. He stated that state accreditation is not mandated at this time but he believes it will be in the future.

Sheriff Stiegler stated that he is also looking at succession planning in the office in terms of the Office Manager position. Commissioner Ahern stated that it is difficult in these times to put together a budget and if state accreditation is not yet mandated, the need for this new position may not be necessary in this upcoming budget cycle.

Sheriff Stiegler explained that the job of the Deputy Sheriff is changing. There are more requirements; it is a position that requires a lot more than in the past. The training requirements and vetting process to bring someone in the door is much more involved. He stated that he has struggled with part time deputies. He has ten (10) on the books but has three (3) that actively work. He commends the three (3) he has but they will not be around forever. In order to maintain staffing levels, it is time to look at getting another full time person in the door as part time employees start to retire.

Director Andross asked for reconsideration for full time Dispatcher position. The need revolves around their lack of part time people to cover shifts they used to cover. This issue has been growing for 5-6 years. He explained that there are currently five (5) part time dispatchers but each of them has another full time position. He thinks it is not about money, it is the view of how and where they will go to work. Their full time people get generous time off and when they take

time off, they have to be replaced. The result of that is himself and the Office Assistant having to spend a lot of time dispatching and it is not cost effective. This is not a new issue and he does not have another solution. If the Commissioners would consider funding it half the year it would be better than nothing. Commissioner Piper asked if Director Andross thought he could fill the position this year if it were approved. Director Andross stated that he is hopeful they could. Sheriff Stiegler added that the Commissioners should look at the morale piece in the Communications Center. They took on a lot more work a few years ago, the Dispatchers know the County is receiving more revenue and wonder why they cannot get a new dispatcher position. Commissioner Piper asked if the increase in revenue offsets the cost of a new position. Director Andross stated that it does.

Director Andross thanked the board on their work for the COLA and shift differential proposals.

**Nursing Home Administrator Labore and HR Director Clough arrived and requested a nonpublic session.**

**MOTION:** \* 2:39 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.

\*3:39 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:** Commissioner Ahern moved not to fund the new positions in the dispatch or Sheriff’s Department. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Piper stated that she does not support the Deputy Sheriff or the new Office Manager. She stated that the Commissioners did support the succession planning in the Dispatch center for \$3,000. Commissioner Piper noted that CA Libby supported the Dispatch position. CA Libby stated that the County has excellent Dispatchers but do the Commissioners want the Director and Office Assistant dispatching frequently. She stated that Director Andross made a good argument last year and the need for the position has not changed. He offered to budget it for half the year, start it in January, if that is more financially attractive to the Board. He is willing to work for the

positions but he has clearly demonstrated a need. Commissioner McLeod and Commissioner Piper were in agreement to add the Dispatcher position back to the budget. The Commissioners further discussed the request.

Commissioner Ahern withdrew his motion and Commissioner McLeod withdrew her second.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to put the Dispatch position back in the budget. Commissioner Ahern seconded for discussion purposes.

Discussion: Commissioner Piper stated that it is good stewardship to their communities to adequately staff the Dispatch Center. She thinks that it is unfortunate that they helped a neighbor by increasing their workload

Commissioners voted on the motion. All were in favor.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved not to change their decisions on the Sheriff's Department budget. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Commissioner Piper requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \* 4:01 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.

\*4:30 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 Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner McLeod "abstained" Commissioner Piper "yes". Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to give a \$2 an hour COLA as well as a \$2,000 bonus for full time employees and \$1,000 bonus for part time bonus to be paid through ARPA, \$1 increase in each shift differential, extending the earned time buy back to twice a year and basic life insurance coverage for all employees. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion.

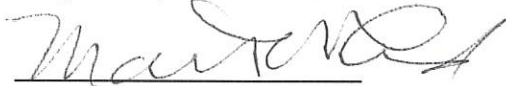
Discussion: Commissioner McLeod stated that she would not support this motion and believes they should be offering the employees \$3/hr. as this would be a market-based solution that would provide an hourly wage that would both retain current employees as well as recruit new employees to the many open positions. It would reduce the \$4 million used to pay travel nurses and save a much larger amount in the budget. This would also potentially provide the staffing needed to increase the census and the revenue at the nursing home.

The Commissioners voted on the motion. Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “no”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being two (2) in favor and one (1) in opposition the motion passes.

CA Libby stated that she would have the final budget numbers for tomorrow and the Commissioners can vote on the budget next Tuesday. She stated that there will be room to make adjustments if need be once the union negotiations are done.

4:47 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Martha S. McLeod', written over a horizontal line.

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk