

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
June 5, 2023

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

OTHERS PRESENT: DoC Superintendent Elliott, Interim Farm Manager White, HR Director
Clough, Supt. Oakes

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00am and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by
Rep. Sellers

Department of Corrections – Supt. 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. He explained how the Coos Females are integrated into their facility. Supt. Elliott stated that these inmates participate in the FIRRM Program, work details and the County generates revenue from these inmates through Electronic Monitoring and the inmate phone calls. Supt. Elliott noted that the DoC also generates revenue from employee meals, social security incentive and inmate phone calls.

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.

4. BDAS – Supt. Elliott explained that the largest source of revenue is through the BDAS grant. This is received for substance abuse and life skills services that the facility provides. The County receives \$200,000 a year through this grant.

The total projected revenue for FY24 is \$319,617.00.

B. Expenses

Department of Corrections

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

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

CA Libby explained that Supt. Elliott is retiring at the end of August and therefore the Superintendent line includes an overlap of pay for the first two (2) months of the fiscal year with the new hire.

Rep. Simon asked what two (2) positions have been cut. Supt. Elliott stated that they have removed two (2) correctional officer positions. CA Libby explained that they did not cut two (2) positions. They removed the funding for two (2) positions because the reality that they have seen over the last few years is they are not able to fill all vacant positions. If they were ever able to get back to full staffing levels, they would need those positions. She stated that they will not be fully staffed come July 1st and therefore if they were able to fill positions throughout the year the money would be in the budget.

Rep. Stringham stated that it costs \$283 a day for Coos County female inmates and the County is charging \$60. He asked why the County is charging 20% of the cost. Supt. Elliott explained that those beds would be open regardless. Coos County covers the medical costs for these inmates. Other facilities would take those inmates and come in less than the \$60 to get them. He stated that no facility would pay \$200 a day for an inmate. Rep. Simon asked if the DoC is raising expenses to have these inmates here. Supt. Elliott stated that the only fixed costs associated with these inmates is \$5.25/day to feed them. Coos County pays for everything else associated with them.

Community Corrections

Supt. Elliott reviewed various statistics from the Community Corrections Department and stated that the overall budget has an increase of \$30,000 and \$21,000 of that is an increase in health insurance and the proposed \$2.00 COLA.

Governor's Commission Grant

Supt. Elliott stated that this is the budget associated with the BDAS Grant. These employees provide substance abuse treatment programming for the inmates. There is an increase of \$16,000, which the BDAS grant offsets.

Night Watchman

Supt. Elliott explained that these employees watch over the campus from 7pm – 3am. There is a \$10,000 increase due to salary increases.

Supt. Elliott answered questions from the committee.

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 – The reason for the increase in revenue this year was due to selling of a portion of the herd. Interim Manager White answered various questions from the committee regarding the livestock on the farm.

Rep. Stringham stated that 70% of the sales from the Farm are milk. He asked Interim Manager White to explain what it is they do. Interim FM White stated that their milk goes to either Hood or Cabot Creamery. Their hauler is Mountain Milk out of North Haverhill. He explained that the base price of milk is \$17/hundredweight, which is low, but the County Farm is getting almost \$23/hundredweight due to the quality and butterfat content.

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.

Interim FM White answered questions from the Committee.

Rep. Simon stated that the Farm is budgeted for a \$250,000 deficit. He stated that he has requested a vision from the Farm that makes sense Countywide as to why they are able to run the farm every year at a \$250,000 deficit when every other small farm in the state is not able to do so. He asked what benefit the county as a whole is getting from the Farm and if they could spread those funds across the county to other for farming educational opportunities.

Maintenance – Superintendent Oakes

Supt. Oakes presented the following budget summary:

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 Committee discussed the large increase in electrical rates and the issue the County has regarding Woodsville Water & Light. CA Libby stated that legislation was brought forward that allowed the County to go out on the open market for their electricity but when they did that, the load from the County was not big enough to attract any providers. Rep. Sykes asked if the County wants to see if there is a new legislative change to allow the County to look into solar power. CA Libby stated that Woodsville Water & Light has a contract with their provider that states they cannot purchase power from any other source. She does not believe WW&L is in any position, even with new legislation, to do anything with solar power. The committee further discussed the issue and Rep. Sykes stated that the general consensus that the Delegation should be looking into legislation to give the County more options for electric than what they have.

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.

Human Resources – Director Clough

1. Nurse Practitioner – HR Director Clough explained that the Nurse Practitioner handles the staff physicals and pre-employment screenings. She explained that due to rules in the Medicare funding, the position could not fall under the Nursing Home budget and because she handles pre-employment items, it is able to fall under the HR budget.

2. Education & Conference – HR Director Clough explained that her department participates more in webinars than in person trainings and therefore she has reduced this line item.


3. HR Director Clough explained that 80% of her budget is allocated to the Nursing Home for the services that HR provides.

4. Advertisement –HR Director Clough stated that she has increased this line by \$5,000. She explained that most of their applications come through indeed but there is still a need to run ads in the local papers as well.

New Equipment – HR Director Clough explained that she has one desk in their department 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.

Rep. Sykes stated that they heard from a constituent at the Commissioners proposed budget public hearing, about how something needs to be done with contract nursing costs and questions about how staff at the nursing home are being paid. He stated that the premise was why is the County not paying the nursing staff the money they need and relying on the contract agencies where those employees are not seeing all of the money the County is paying out. HR Director Clough stated that she feels that the contract agencies have a monopoly over the nursing industry right now; they have facilities like nursing homes pushed up against the wall. The only option is to look at paying staff what these agencies are paying but explained that it is hard to figure out what those rates are because there are multiple things incorporated into what the county pays agencies. HR Director Clough stated that the County needs to offer these nursing home services to the community members. If the County were to get to the point, where the County is paying comparable wages and still do not have the staff, is it reasonable to think they can cut back the travelers. She feels targeted increases for those types of positions is worth trying. She stated that the Grafton County Nursing Home is one of the best in the state in terms of care and the staff to resident ratios. If they can make it so the County is the most competitive employer in the area in terms of wages, the staff will come here. HR Director Clough stated that she has heard that there are some Nursing Homes in the area that are doing this. She noted that Grafton County had a travel LNA come in and apply saying they were having a hard time finding shifts because facilities were increasing their pay and phasing out of travel LNAs.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk