

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
June 6<sup>th</sup> 2023

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

OTHERS: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Director of Communications Andross, Office Assistant Paronto, HR Director Clough

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM 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.

**Director of Communications and Office Assistant Paronto arrived to discuss Dispatch Billing for FY24**

Director Andross reviewed the proposed Dispatch Billing for FY24 with the Commissioners and answered questions. The total proposed Dispatch Billing revenue for FY24 is \$702,561.00.

Director Andross explained that the County has been dispatching Fire and EMS for the Town of Jefferson for two (2) years. The Town of Jefferson employs three (3) part time police officers. They do not respond to 911 calls; NH State Police handles their emergencies. They go to traffic details at the tourist attraction in Jefferson on Rte. 2 and occasionally will handle dog violation type cases. The Police Department does not have anyone to check in with when they go to these calls or a way to maintain their records. They asked if the County would be interested in helping them with dispatching services. They would become a part of the Jefferson agreement that the County already has. The Jefferson Police Department estimated that they have less than 50 calls a year. Therefore, this addition would make almost no impact on the operations of the Dispatch Center. Director Andross stated that they have asked for a more formal proposal than the draft he gave them on the phone. He will create that proposal and further discuss it with the Jefferson Police Department.

Director Andross reported that the County has an agreement with the Town of Benton that was created roughly 20 years ago. The former part time police chief created an agreement that the County agreed to because of the Glencliff Home for the Elderly. The buildings are in Benton but it is not accessible through Benton. Warren generally services the Glencliff Home for Police and EMS services. He explained that the issue at that point was that the Lakes Region Fire Mutual Aid, who services everyone from that point to the east within Grafton County, would not take the 911 calls from the Glencliff Home because it is not physically located in one of their towns. Grafton County agreed to take those calls and still do. Director Andross explained that the Dispatch Center takes roughly 130 calls a year from the home and they then take the information

from NH 911 and give it to Lakes Region so they can Dispatch. He explained that from a dispatch operational standpoint, it is inefficient. Director Andross noted that most of their 911 calls are controlled and they have a handle on what it is going on and the County does the same with Benton's police calls as well. He went on to explain that over time, these numbers have been included in their billing system for Twin State Fire because until last year, Warren belonged to Twin State Fire Mutual Aid. Up until the last couple of years, the numbers had not been very high and therefore no one noticed where they were. The only place he now has to put those numbers is under the Town of Benton because Warren no longer belongs to Twin State Mutual Aid and he feels it is now time to clean this up. He stated that Benton is going to get a bill that is capped at a 30% increase. In their case, that is a couple hundred dollars but if they get the bill and have questions, this is why and he wanted the Commissioners to be informed. He stated that the rest of the Town of Benton they have no troubles with. The Town of Haverhill covers all of Benton for Fire and EMS and the NH State Police handles all of those calls outside of the Glencliff Home.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the Dispatch Billing for FY24. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes", Commissioner McLeod "yes", Commissioner Piper "yes". With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**Nursing Home Administrator Labore arrived and gave the following report: (\* see attached)**

1. Landscape Project Update: ARPA Approved Construction Phase – NHA Labore reported that he is hopeful that the RFP will be completed and ready to send out for this project by the end of the day.
2. GCNH Meals on Wheels Assistance: Temporary Suspension of Program – NHA Labore explained that due to staffing struggles with cooks in the Dietary Department, they are not able to generate the food needed for this program. He hopes they will be able to resume over the next six (6) weeks or so but as of right now they have had to suspend the program.
3. Discussion on FY '24 Targeted Wage Increase for Nursing Staff - NHA Labore explained that what made him look further into this was the public hearing and the comment from a member of the public regarding this topic. He stated that there was support from Executive Committee members on increasing wages for the nursing staff to try to address the contract nursing problem. He explained that he is looking for an additional \$4 an hour on top of the \$2 that is already being proposed for a total of \$6 per hour. He stated that the cost for this increase is \$1.9 million. NHA Labore went on to explain that he is proposing to decrease the contract nursing line by \$500,000 as well as adding three (3) residents to the census: one (1) Medicaid, one (1) Veteran and one (1) Medicare. This would increase revenue by \$1,107,196 and leave an overall increase of \$300,000 after all of the numbers are balanced out. Commissioner Piper stated that she requested that targeted increases be looked at in the last Commissioners meeting, and she wanted to make it clear that there is not one person in Nursing Home Administration and the Commissioners that does not acknowledge this problem with staffing. She feels that a targeted increase is fairer and she is very much in support of this. She stated that a representative from NANA had come to the

Commissioners after the public hearing and said they could help the County with this issue. She stated that the Commissioners had asked CA Libby to reach out to that representative from NANA and asked if CA Libby could report on that conversation.

CA Libby stated that the biggest thing NANA did was give control back to the employees. They asked their employees what they liked or disliked and implemented some of those changes. They also took what they had in surplus over revenue and gave it back to the employees so they were more invested in what the company made. CA Libby asked about contract nursing as the representative told Commissioner Piper that they were able to stop using contract nursing. The representative from NANA noted on top of the hourly wage that contract employees receive they are given a housing and food stipend, which is not taxed, and this stipend is factored into living wages.

NHA Labore stated that this increase would bring the LNA starting wage to \$22.75 and that is better than one (1) facility within the geographical area and \$1.50 short of another facility in the area. In addition to the shift differential increase, this will be a very attractive move on the County's part. He feels this proposal could really have the potential to help with the LNAs, which is currently their largest struggle. Commissioner McLeod stated that she really appreciates the Commissioners willingness to look at this targeted increase. She feels this is the right way to go and thanked NHA Labore for working on this. Commissioner Ahern stated that he agrees and appreciates this proposal. Commissioner Piper responded and stated that she thinks this is a very good idea.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve moving the proposal for the nursing targeted wage increase forward to the Executive Committee. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes", Commissioner McLeod "yes", Commissioner Piper "yes". With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

CA Libby stated that she feels that if the County is going to advocate doing a targeted increase for nursing staff they should for Correctional Officers as well. She stated that Supt. Elliott has suggested a total of \$5. The jail does not have the option to reduce contract lines or increase revenue to offset this but she would like the Commissioners to consider it. Commissioner Piper stated that she was pleased when the County used ARPA money to target these two (2) departments. She is glad that this was brought up at the public hearing; this is an effort in the right direction. CA Libby stated that the starting wage for Correctional Officers in Belknap County is \$26.13. She stated that if the County were to add the \$3 to the \$2 that has already been proposed, it would bring our officers to \$25 starting pay. Commissioner Ahern expressed concerns that this is going to do away with the decrease in taxes and CA Libby responded that increasing the Nursing Home wages has already done that. Commissioner Ahern went on to explain that these two (2) departments are very important but he feels that the rest of the employees will want to be treated the same way. CA Libby stated that this proposal is meant to help departments that have been struggling the most for years. Commissioner Piper stated that the budget she voted for was for no tax increase and she wants this new one to be the same. She's thinking that there is always more revenue added in with the Executive Committee and she is thinking that will be the same this year. She was pleased with the cut in contract nursing.

There will be employees that will be upset but thinks it is important that the Human Resources Director and the County Administrator stand with the Commissioners in a united front regarding wage decisions. Wage decisions are ultimately the Commissioners decision to make. The Administration and Commissioners are targeting increases to these departments for a reason.

HR Director Clough noted that in regards to the DoC she feels that if the County were bringing in more staff they would be reducing the amount of overtime. This will also reduce the amount of money for the retirement system and other payroll related items. She stated that she thinks it is important to bring Supt. Elliott in on this conversation. He has said he thinks this will work.

Commissioner Ahern stated that the County is still at the high end of the percentage range for surplus and he would like to look into tapping into that further.

CA Libby stated that if this proposal goes through, the County would need to do heavy marketing everywhere to get the word out. She stated that she would get this number and talk more with NHA Labore. She noted that the surplus is very healthy right now and her concern is the day when that is not the case and they will have a very large tax increase. Commissioner Ahern stated that the County is in a unique situation and thinks they need to try something new and noted that he does not like how the Correctional Officers are being treated.

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

**Agenda Items:**

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the May 22<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing and the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the May 22<sup>nd</sup> public hearing. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the May 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes”, Commissioner McLeod “yes”, Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1159-1165; 2023-05.23.2023; 2023-06.02.2023.

3. CA Libby explained that last year, the Commissioners voted to apply for the NTIA grant for the Broadband project. She stated that as of May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Broadband Committee had not heard anything and on Memorial Day, she was contacted and asked to have a conversation with NTIA. CA Libby stated that next Tuesday she met with Nik Coates, Katelyn Robinson and NTIA. There are a number of issues with the NTIA application but she stated that if the County can get

through the issues on the application, they could receive \$12 million. The size of the project would have to be scaled down significantly. She noted that this grant does require 30% match from the County, which would be \$3.6 million. Therefore, it would be a \$15.5 million project. Ex2 is working on some of the issues with the application. CA Libby explained that some of the maps show duplicative projects in the past and NTIA will not provide funding for projects that have been federally funded. The Broadband Committee is trying to identify ways to still accomplish a majority of the goal with the money they may receive. CA Libby noted that the Commissioners previously made a motion to come up with the \$7.5 million match and the Broadband Committee stated that they would continue to look for ways to raise money for the match but nothing has happened. She stated that she would be following up on that with the Committee when they meet again.

Commissioner Piper asked if the Broadband Committee knew about the restrictions when they submitted the application, the fact that there were areas included in the funding request that were previously funded. CA Libby stated that the Committee was not aware of that and these issues are items they would not have known until NTIA pointed them out. Commissioner Piper asked CA Libby to contact former Rep. Egan to inform him about the meeting, as he was an active participant in those discussions.

#### 4. Municipal and Nonprofit ARPA Applications

Nonprofits - CA Libby stated that the County received 27 applications for a total of \$499,318.00, which is within the budget they have set for funding. One (1) agency has asked for \$50,000 and the max is \$20,000. She would recommend only funding them the \$20,000, which brings the total request to \$469,318.00. She reported that all applications are complete and they have received everything they need.

CA Libby pointed out two (2) organizations that are not 501 (c) 3s. The Elks Club in Littleton is a 501 (c) 8 organization. She explained that they have applied but stated that it was not due to financial loss due to COVID but explained that they are looking for funding for a dental program for Veterans who were unable to get dental services during COVID. Commissioner McLeod stated that she would be concerned the County would be criticized for not funding a Veterans program. Their application said that they did not provide these services due to the pandemic. They wanted \$20,000 to provide dental care to those who did not seek it during of the pandemic. Commissioner McLeod explained that the Elks Club would have spent that \$20,000 during that timeframe and would have been out that money but put it off instead. She wonders because the Commissioners gave some leeway to others to correct or submit things that may have been missing, if they should make a call to any of these nonprofits before they take it to the Executive Committee. She feels that they should give the Elks Club the opportunity to state whether that was the correct answer to that question or not. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner Ahern agreed. CA Libby stated that she would reach out to them.

CA Libby reported that the second organization is the Lisbon Lions Club and they are a 501 (c) 4 which is a social welfare designation She stated that these are all nonprofits under the 501 (c) status. Commissioner Piper asked if the County required them to be a 501 (c) 3 organization. CA

Libby explained that the application asked for proof of 501 (c) 3 status but everywhere else only mentions being a nonprofit. It does not state that being a 501 (c) 3 is required, but they asked for proof of that. She stated that they do have the funding available for all that applied. She told the Commissioners they can take the time to review all of the applications and she will follow up with the Littleton Elks Club regarding the Commissioners concerns.

Municipalities - CA Libby stated that the County has received \$1.7 million in applications and only have \$1 million to spend. She looked at towns that had duplicative submissions that were over \$50,000 and when those are removed; the total request is \$1,379,010.00. The Town of Haverhill did not apply but Mountain Lakes District that is a precinct within the Town of Haverhill did apply. CA Libby stated that the Commissioners have the option to prorate the requests to fall within the \$1 million or go back to the Executive Committee and ask for an additional \$379,000 in funding. She noted that the Town of Campton's application was received four (4) days late and Woodsville Water and Light just submitted an application last week.

CA Libby noted that there is \$1,762,340.68 remaining in the Lost Revenue category of ARPA funding. The County has \$10 million in lost revenue available and what is going to happen is that the County will end up with ARPA money beyond that \$10 million that will not be able to be used except for specific projects. She stated that the County allocated just over \$1 million in COVID Relief Pay for employees and to-date they have spent \$189,000. She explained that with those funds there would be \$813,000 left over that was dedicated to public health that they are not going to spend. She wanted the Commissioners to know that there might be roughly \$1 million left over in ARPA funds that does not fall under lost revenue and will need to be spent directly on the targeted areas listed.

Commissioner McLeod asked if they should reduce the cap to \$40,000 for municipalities and then ask the Executive Committee for what the difference was. CA Libby stated that she would run those numbers.

Commissioner Ahern stated that based on what he heard at the Executive Committee meeting and his understanding of what may be able to be done and the opportunities that this purchase could do on many levels, he feels the County should spend money on purchasing a dairy processing trailer where they could process their own milk and other dairy products. He stated that there is an educational opportunity in this as well and he believes the law in New Hampshire would allow the County to use pasteurized milk to use at the DoC. He noted that he does not want to do anything to hurt Hatchland Dairy, as they have been good neighbors. The cost of a dairy processing trailer would be around \$100,000.

5. CA Libby submitted the following CDBG documents for Commissioner Piper to sign and initial:

- Drawdown – GRDC Micro - \$895.00
- Drawdown – GRDC Micro - \$950.00
- CDBG Revision – BEDC/WEDCo
- CDBG Agreement – NHARDC 2023 Grant

11:29AM Commissioner McLeod left the meeting

6. The Commissioners signed a joint letter to the Delegation regarding Sheriff's Fees.

7. CA Libby submitted the DoC Superior Court Report for the month of May for the Commissioners to review.

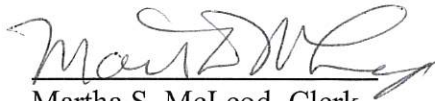
**MOTION:** \* 11:34 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with anybody or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph. according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (e). 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.

\*11:49 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.

11:50 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

# Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: June 6, 2023

## Census

Medicare: 4  
Medicaid: 63  
VA: 4  
Hospice: 4  
Private: 18  
Total: 93

## FY '23 Budgeted Census:

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

## Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 6  
Deceased Residents: 2  
Discharges: 2

## Other Topics:

- 1) Landscape Project Update: ARPA Approved Construction Phase
- 2) GCNH Meals on Wheels Assistance: Temporary Suspension of Program
- 3) Discussion on FY '24 Targeted Wage Increase for Nursing Staff



Grafton County Human Resources Report  
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director  
 June 6, 2023

**HR Activity Report (05/04/2023-06/05/2023)**

• ***New Hires***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home		
DOC	2 (2 FT)	1 FT CO, 1 FT Cook
County Attorney	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Asst. County Atty.

***Separations***

<u>Departments</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home	3 (3 FT)	1 FT Activity Aide, 1 FT Dietary Aide 1 FT Unit Aide
Corrections	4 (2 FT, 2 PT)	2 FT CO's, 1 PT CO, 1 PT Nightwatchman
Alternative Sent.	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Case Manager

***Reasons:***

- Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 1
- Termination – 1
- Vaccine Mandate -
- New job/career change – 2
- Relocated – 1
- School –
- Retirement – 1
- Not Reappointed -
- Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements - 2

• ***Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 FT Dispatcher to FT Admin Asst. in Sheriff's Office***

***Active Leave of Absences between May 4, 2023 to present***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home – Nursing	12	(11 are intermittent, 8 for self, 4 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	7	(3 are intermittent, 3 for family, 4 self)
DOC	2	(2 intermittent, 2 family)
Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch.	2	(2 intermittent, 2 self)
County Atty's Office	2	(2 intermittent, 2 self)
HR Department	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
Alternative Sentencing	1	(1 intermittent family)

**TOTAL: 27**

**Current Jobs posted/advertised**

- LNA's/Unit Aides (39.85 FTE's vacant)
- RN/LPN (17.05 FTE's vacant combined)
- ADON
- RN/LPN DOC (1 FT and per diem)
- CO's (12 FTE's)
- Cook DOC (1)
- Housekeepers (1 FT and PT)
- Dietary Aides (2 FT and PT)
- Nursing Home Cook (1 FT)
- Nightwatchman PT
- Deputy Sheriff
- Dispatcher

Corrections Supt.  
Assistant County Admin  
Activities Aide  
Alternative Sentencing Case Manager  
Community Corrections Lieutenant