

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
June 7th 2023

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

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Small Business ARPA Applications

Rep. Stringham stated that the application from Bold Everything was submitted incomplete. He explained to the committee that he showed up unannounced to that business and asked to see their application. The owner got her laptop and when he saw the application, all of the areas that are blank on her application had a check mark in them. It was completed and when she printed it, it was complete as well. He stated that he then asked her to email him a copy. When she emailed him a copy, all of the boxes that had a check mark were blank, which is the same as the copy the County received. He went on to explain that he had her change the check marks to "x" and when that copy was emailed to him, the x's all appeared along with the check marks. He stated that it appears that there was a glitch in the system somewhere when she emailed her application. He noted that another concern was that the business did originally start in Massachusetts but they are completely a New Hampshire business and is operating out of Grafton County. Rep. Stringham stated that he would recommend that due to the circumstances, that the Executive Committee reconsider funding this application.

CA Libby stated that originally the Commissioners recommended funding all applications that were \$16,000 and below at the full amount requested. The Commissioners then recommended funding any application that requested above \$16,000 at \$17,125. She explained that if the Committee were to add Bold Everything back into the funding list that drops that price from \$17,125 down to \$16,604 for a total of \$499,995.00 out of the \$500,000 that was allotted for the program.

Rep. Sellers asked the Commissioners how they went about the criteria for where a business is located. He explained that Self Reliance Hypnotherapy has a business address in Bridgewater but the address they do business from is Meredith, which is not located in Grafton County. Commissioner Piper stated that she thinks it was a good decision that the Executive Committee is involved with this and noted that the Commissioners were attentive to their businesses in their district. She stated that if the business is a Grafton County taxpayer, then she is interested in helping them. Commissioner McLeod stated that the Commissioners had discussed concerns that there are a number of businesses that are located in Grafton County but do online business. CA Libby stated that they did not want to make the application criteria that difficult. Rep. Sykes stated that he does not feel that they have to hold up the entire list of applications based on one question. He stated that this question is a good one that Rep. Sellers has brought forward.

Rep. Sellers stated that the business Women Inspiring Women does work throughout the state and does not know how much work is done in Grafton County. He explained that he looked up their website to find out this information. Rep. Sellers stated that if no one investigates how they know these businesses are telling the truth. He does not mind approving all of these but has some concerns. Rep. Murphy stated that they trust the individuals who went through a very difficult time but to verify every loss would be very difficult and impossible in the timeframe they have had.

Rep. Sykes stated that his original thought was to help businesses in a streamlined way. These businesses are attesting to this information and thinks it is unreasonable that the Commissioners could audit every application. He asked if the committee could find a list of these businesses that they would be comfortable with and make a motion to approve the funding.

Rep. Murphy stated that the Commissioners have looked through the applications and have seen the tax returns.

The Committee went through the attached list of businesses as proposed by the Commissioners and took the time to speak or ask questions about each business.

Free Public – Rep. Sykes stated that the Commissioners did not recommend funding this applicant, as they are not in good standing with the Secretary of State. He stated that he is not comfortable funding this.

McGinty's Auto Parts – Rep. Sellers expressed concerns on the information provided regarding their current financial status. Commissioner Ahern noted that he saw some potential thin ice with the information he was given but did not look any further into it. Rep. Sellers stated that he would like to take a second look at this. Rep. Stringham questioned if this money going to be enough. Rep. Simon stated that regardless of what situation this business is in now financially, they are looking at what happened to them through COVID. He asked if these funds are going to be taxable. CA Libby explained that these grants are being paid through the lost revenue ARPA category and they do not have the same strings attached as the other categories do. CA Libby is not sure if these businesses will have to pay taxes on it but she stated that these businesses have tax professionals who they would need to speak to and confirm the details of these grants. Rep. Stringham stated that it is his intent to support this application and is sympathetic to their situation. Rep. Murphy agreed, noting that this is a grant to help offset money that was lost during COVID. Rep. Simon noted that he brought up the question about taxes because as state reps they can do something about it if these businesses were to have to pay taxes on this income.

MOTION: Rep. Simon moved to approve the Commissioners recommendation for businesses 1-6, 8-14, 16-20, 22-29, 31, 33, 41 with the condition that any applications that do not have checked boxes on the Certification page be verified before receiving payment. Rep. Morse seconded the motion and all were in favor.

CA Libby reported that the Commissioners met yesterday and discussed the nonprofit applications. She stated that they are almost complete and hope to have them finalized on Tuesday along with the municipality applications. She stated that the Executive Committee has

June 19th set aside as an “if needed” day for the budget and she would recommend they meet that day to review those budgets since it is an already noticed meeting. The Committee discussed it and a few members expressed concerns about not being able to attend. The Committee agreed to extend their meeting on the 16th and review these applications after the budget has been set.

10:03 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather P. Baldwin, clerk for
Matthew Simon, Vice-Chair