

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
June 9, 2023

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Finance Director Jurentkuff, Sheriff Stiegler, Director of Communications Andross, Office Assistant Paronto, UNH Extension County Office Administrator Lee, Alternative Sentencing Director Mitchell

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

Rep. Sykes stated that Rep. Greeson has submitted a letter of resignation from the Executive Committee, stating that due to his work schedule he is unable to attend the meetings.

MOTION: Rep. Baldwin moved to accept the Rep. Greeson's letter of resignation. Rep. Murphy seconded the motion and all were in favor

MOTION: Rep. Simon moved to nominate Rep. Rochefort to the Executive Committee. Rep. Stringham seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Nursing Home – Administrator Labore & Finance Director Jurentkuff

A. Revenue

NHA Labore explained that he would not be using the Nursing Home budget in the Commissioners' Proposed Budget book. He stated that he has submitted a revised revenue projection as well as a revised nursing department budget that includes a targeted wage increase for the nursing staff of an additional \$4 on top of the already proposed \$2, for a total of \$6.

1. NHA Labore stated that in an effort to help offset some of the costs associated with the targeted wage increase, he has increased the census projection to 98. This adds one (1) resident to the Medicaid census, one (1) Veteran, and one (1) Medicare. This increases the original revenue projection by \$1,107,196.29
2. NHA Labore stated he is proposing to implement a private pay rate increase of \$20 per day, noting that the last time private pay rates were increased was roughly six (6) years ago.
3. The anticipated Medicaid rate was \$268.73 and the rate that has been set for July 1st is \$267.05, which is a \$1.68 difference from what they originally thought. NHA Labore thanked the Executive Committee for passing the state budget. In doing so, that has opened up additional funding opportunities for Nursing Homes, specifically it affords the Department of Health and Human Services the opportunity to pay rates out at their discretion. NHA Labore stated that it is

their expectation that DHHS will be making a supplemental payment at some point before December 31st, which should bring the Nursing Home back to where they are supposed to be.

4. Medicare – NHA Labore stated that he is projecting an average Medicare census of seven (7). He explained that the Nursing Home has taken a portion of the Maple Neighborhood and turned it into a short-term rehab wing. In doing so, they have been able to maintain that census.

5. Veterans – NHA Labore reported that the Nursing Home entered into a new agreement with the Veterans Administration with updated rates and reimbursements to the Nursing Home as an approved skilled nursing facility. Their rates have increased by \$65 per day and \$422.75 is now the average rate for Veterans. He noted that they are increasing the referrals from the Veterans Administration and are hoping for a solid Veteran census.

NHA Labore answered questions from the Committee. He explained that with the end of the public health emergency there is an expectation that people who have left the work force will come back and he believes these targeted wage increases will help attract them to the Nursing Home. In theory if the Nursing Home has more staff it may help with the waiting list as well.

B. Expenses

NHA Labore provided the attached report outlining details regarding the proposed targeted wage increase. He reported that with the proposed targeted wage increases the net increase to the Nursing Home budget is \$308,693.71.

2. NHA Labore noted that they are proposing a \$1 increase to the shift differential and these costs are incorporated into the budget as well. NHA Labore explained that they also based this budget on realistic staffing levels. Historically, the Nursing Home has presented its budget based on available FTEs but have budgeted it for actual positions in the FY24 budget. In doing so, they shifted those funds into the contract nursing line, which was why the original department request showed \$4.1 million. NHA Labore noted that with this proposal they have decreased the contract nursing line 500,000 in hopes that this wage increase will be implemented.

3. Education and Conference – NHA Labore explained that even though the six (6) month figures are low, he requests that the Executive Committee not cut this line as this includes the quarterly LNA classes. The hope that is if the targeted wage increase is approved it will attract people to take this LNA course.

Rep. Simon asked how NHA Labore came to the \$6 increase. NHA Labore explained that they looked at area employers. He noted that with these proposed wage increases, the LNA starting wage is \$1 more than one area facility and \$1.50 less than another is. He is hopeful that this being a solid starting rate, coupled with the reputation that the Nursing Home has and the County's benefits package that this will help attract employees.

Rep. Stringham asked if there anything they need in the budget to help with employee retention and morale. NHA Labore explained that the Nursing Home received a grant from the North Country Health Consortium, which was left over money from the IDN program. He stated that

the Nursing Home has been utilizing that for morale purposes. The budget presented helps them maintain what they have been doing.

Rep. Sykes stated that he appreciates the work that has been done to try to address this problem.

C. Capital Reserve

1. NHA Labore stated that he is asking to replace the convection gas steamer units in the kitchen. He explained that the current units were purchased roughly twelve (12) years ago. They have become very problematic and have created a lot of work for the maintenance department to try to fix. They have had down time.

2. Bladder scanner – The current scanner is at the end of life. This is an upgrade to the newest unit on the market. NHA Labore stated that at end of this calendar year, they will no longer be servicing the current scanner and this is needed for bedside resident care.

3. Tubs –NHA Labore explained that he is looking to upgrade the two (2) remaining Apollo tubs in the Nursing Home. He stated that they cannot get parts for these tubs and they can no longer be fixed. The other tubs they have are the Penner model and it is very reliable. The budget is for two (2) additional Penner tubs.

4. Mattresses – NHA Labore stated that this is part of an ongoing mattress replacement project.

Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Stiegler

A. Revenue

1. Sheriff Dept. Fees – Sheriff Stiegler reported that a law, which was put in place last year, has been amended and fees will be going up by 7%. He stated that he would need to increase his revenue more to reflect this.

2. Court Bailiff's – Sheriff Stiegler explained that a new bill was passed that will require more training and their compensation will also be increased if the Governor signs off on the state budget.

3. Dist Court Prisoner Security – Sheriff Stiegler stated that there is an increase of \$5,000 in this line due to an uptick in moving people to and from court.

4. Sale of Equipment – Sheriff Stiegler noted that they did very well last year with the sale of their used cruisers and therefore have increased this line for next year.

Rep. Sellers asked how much the County pays Special Deputies. Sheriff Stiegler stated that the average is around \$30/hr. Rep. Sellers stated that when you add benefits to that pay it is probably \$45/hour. He went on to state that if the County is charging \$30 an hour for contract services but it is costing the County \$45/hr. to send a Special Deputy, plus fuel for the cruisers, the County should be charging around \$60 per hour. CA Libby noted that there is a special detail rate of pay

for Deputies that work these events that fall under the contract services. Sheriff Stiegler explained that the County bills out \$85 per hour for these details. The Deputies are paid \$50 and then \$30 goes back to the County to offset the cost of fuel, etc.

B. Expenses

1. Special Deputies – Sheriff Stiegler stated that significant portion of this line is grant funded through the NH Drug Task Force.
2. Forensic Investigations – Sheriff Stiegler explained some of the more expensive licensing that they utilize has been picked up by federal and state funding sources and therefore he was able to reduce this line item significantly.
2. Cruiser Repair and Maintenance – There is a slight increase due to increased costs.
3. Fuel – Sheriff Stiegler explained that last year he had requested an increase in this line that was not approved and was level funded. This year the line is now over expended and therefore he is requesting the increase again.

Rep. Rochefort asked why the Commissioners reduced the clerical line. Sheriff Stiegler explained that he had requested a new Office Manager to assist in handling the items involved with State Accreditation and the Commissioners did not approve that position.

C. Sheriff's Dept. Capital Outlay

1. Cruisers – Sheriff Stiegler stated that he requested three (3) cruisers and the Commissioners approved two (2).

Sheriff Stiegler answered questions from the Committee.

Dispatch – Director Andross & Office Assistant Paronto

A. Revenue

1. Dispatch Fees – Director Andross explained that these are fees the County receives from the agencies they provide services for and they are based off usage.
2. Alarm Monitoring Services – Director Andross explained that this line is a breakeven with expenses. It does not make the County money but he stated that the benefit of providing this service is that Dispatch provides the alarm monitoring services for the entire County complex. Therefore, there are not individual charges in each department for this service. Director Andross explained that they provide service for a few commercial accounts as well as any public safety agencies that would like the service.

Rep. Simon asked if the County is providing services outside of Grafton County. Director Andross stated that they do provide services outside of Grafton County and have for many years.

Rep. Simon asked if they could have a breakdown of what those agencies pay. CA Libby stated that she would sent that information to the Committee.

B. Expenses

1. Dispatchers – Director Andross stated that he has included a new full time Dispatch position in this budget. This request has been discussed before and he stated that his department continues to struggle with part-time staff being available to cover necessary hours regularly, noting that all of the part time staff have full time jobs outside of Grafton County.

2. Lease Communication Equipment – Director Andross reported that this increase is anticipation of the new Code Red system.

Director Andross answered questions from the Committee.

C. Capital Reserve

1. Director Andross explained that the Dispatch Capital Reserve is funded through a portion of the Dispatch billing they receive each year. He reviewed the requests and noted that each year they fund MDT replacements, Dispatch chairs and IT costs.

UNH Cooperative Extension – County Office Administrator Lee

1. Salary – Support Staff - COA Lee stated that the County funds the two (2) administrative assistant positions in their office.

2. Salary – Professional Staff – COA Lee explained that the County pays 25% of the field specialist positions and 75% for program manager positions.

COA Lee reviewed the various programs what they provide through UNH Extension and answered questions from the committee.

Alternative Sentencing – Director Mitchell

A. Revenue

1. Program Fees – Director Mitchell explained that the expected revenue had to be decreased due to a change in their programming. They were planning to start a group that was self-pay but one of the staff members who was trained for that program is no longer here. The program has been restarted and is up and running now but they have decreased the revenue.

2. Insurance Reimbursement – Director Mitchell stated that she is currently pending with Medicaid and therefore they are unable to be reimbursed at this time.

3. BDAS Funding – Director Mitchell explained that they utilized all of the funding they were awarded this past year and have applied for more in the next fiscal year.

1. Education and Training – AS Director Mitchell noted the increase in this line is due to an increase in the number of staff who will need to maintain their licensing.
2. Telephone – Director Mitchell stated that there is a \$1,500 increase in this line due to a large increase in the cell phone costs and the need to install Wi-Fi at one of their satellite offices.
2. Travel Expense – Director Mitchell explained that the Mental Health Coordinator does a lot of work in the community, which involves travel. She noted that she was approved through ARPA to purchase a new car, which will help reduce this cost.

C. SUD Treatment

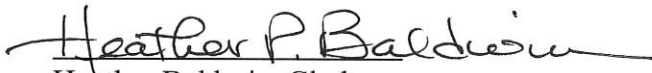
CA Libby explained that the Alternative Sentencing program is broken out into two (2) budgets for reporting purposes for the BDAS grant. The SUD Treatment budget is monies that are attributable to the BDAS funding received.

1. Travel Expense – Director Mitchell noted that this line has increased as well due to increased travel.

Director Mitchell answered questions from the Committee.

11:20 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk