

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
July 12, 2022

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer and Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: Farm Manager Nelson, Howard Hatch, Dennis Ward, County Attorney Hornick, DoC Supt. Elliott, Alternative Sentencing Director Mitchell, Maintenance Supt. Oakes.

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

FM Nelson arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

Commissioner Piper stated that the Farm is facing challenges concerning future operations. Commissioner Ahern stated that he made phone calls to former Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Taylor and former NH Farm Bureau President Denis Ward and passed that information on to CA Libby. He explained to them that two (2) of the Commissioners want to close the farm down and asked what S. Taylor and D. Ward's thoughts are. Commissioner Ahern reported that both S. Taylor and D. Ward indicated that the farm is a very good resource and closing down would not be a good idea. Commissioner Lauer noted that the indication that they want to shut the farm down is inaccurate. She stated that they do not want to shut down the farm. The inmate situation is such that they have no reliable labor source and the alternative is to hire an additional employee. The farm would be then operating at a larger loss and asked how they justify that to the taxpayers. Commissioner Lauer stated that there are benefits to the farm but do the benefits outweigh the loss to the taxpayers. Commissioner Piper stated that she wishes Commissioner Ahern would not represent the position of herself and Commissioner Lauer in such a stark way when that is not what was intended. Commissioner Ahern apologized.

Commissioner Piper explained that FarmDOC was thoroughly researched and vetted. It was determined to be not cost effective. The county would be paying more to feed inmates than they currently pay. She explained that legislation would have to be passed to enable the county to slaughter and process its own meat and noted that staff on the farm do not want to slaughter animals. The two (2) department heads that would be most involved with this process have also consistently given them the feedback that they do not have the labor to accomplish the tasks. Commissioner Piper stated that Bail Reform and COVID had destroyed the labor force at the farm. The county now has a Farm Manager who they respect and trust who is leaving for professional and personal reasons and they are sad to see him go. She noted that she has spoken with Steve Taylor extensively in the past and knows his feelings regarding the farm.

Denis Ward was present for the discussion and stated that he never got the impression from Commissioner Ahern that they wanted to shut the farm down. He knows Commissioner Lauer is a supporter. He stated that his concern is that once you shut it down, it is gone, and he thinks

there should be further discussion. He noted that when the Farm Advisory Committee used to meet, they consistently discussed downsizing the herd. UNH Extension would like the opportunity to use more farmland and do projects where they can invite farmers in. He stated that he knows labor will not get better. He knows that the Commissioners need to do what they need to do but feels they can stay open as a farm in some capacity and hopes the Commissioners will not make an abrupt decision.

Commissioner Lauer asked what the labor pool is like out there for farms, as it seems like finding help has been an issue. Howard Hatch attended the meeting as well and stated that the lack of help is all over. H. Hatch stated that they have all the licensing to process dairy products at Hatchland Farm and he would be willing, to some extent, to have the County be in conjunction with Hatchland. He wants to see the farm continue. H. Hatch also noted that there are farmers who have an interest in helping. The Commissioners further discussed the issue with H. Hatch and D. Ward. Commissioner Piper stated that this is a very difficult conversation. D. Ward stated that he believes that the farm is a great asset, but the county needs to get out of the mindset of running it as a commercial farm and take the pressure off. Commissioner Piper thanked H. Hatch and D. Ward for coming in. She stated that hopefully they will be able to meet with UNH Cooperative Extension and continue the conversation. The county will continue to research all the options that are available

County Attorney Hornick arrived

Atty. Hornick requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 9:37AM 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

* 9:42 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer 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 Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

Atty. Hornick stated that the county has contracts with the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association and the Plymouth Jurisdictional Association to provide Circuit Court prosecution. Mariana Pastore started with the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association and they negotiated a

rate of pay, which mirrors what they have with the Plymouth Jurisdictional Association. Atty. Hornick explained that the only town in the UVPA that is on the same fiscal year as the county is Hanover, the others in that association are on a calendar year. This year after the contract was sent to the Hanover to sign she was told that Hanover was giving up being the financial officer town. Hanover paid in advance because they are on a fiscal year like the county but because they turned it over to Enfield, Enfield is wondering, how they are going to pay it because they are on a calendar year. Atty. Hornick stated that she believes UVPA can only pay the county \$20,000 right now and then the other \$119,000 by March 2023 because the towns are all on the calendar year. She stated that Enfield will be including it in their upcoming budget but will not have the funds until January. She stated that she has made an amendment to the agreement and is asking for Commissioner approval. Atty. Hornick answered questions from the Commissioners. Commissioner Lauer stated that she believes they can trust the towns to come through; the issue of having calendar year and fiscal year will always be there.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the amendment to the prosecutorial services contract between Grafton County and the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association to modify the payment schedule as outlined in the agreement. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Piper stated that they had an in-depth conversation about the towns wanting to be under the county umbrella. This gives another opportunity for county operations and services to help local communities as other county departments do.

The Commissioners voted on the motion and all were in favor.

Opioid Settlement Funds Discussion – Alternative Sentencing Director Mitchell, DoC Supt. Elliott, County Attorney Hornick.

Atty. Hornick stated that in regards to Drug Court, there was a meeting yesterday with national representatives to discuss Drug Court numbers. They had received low numbers from the last few years. Their numbers reflect that nine (9) people participated in Grafton County Drug Court from 2018-2020. She stated that her staff is going through their case management system to correct those numbers.

CA Libby stated that as of right now, the county has \$80,000 in opioid settlement funds, and they will continue to receive funds. One settlement is for eighteen (18) years. They are still working on other settlements as well. She explained that the municipalities that filed suit, which Grafton is one of, get 15% of the settlement based off the population. Twenty-three (23) municipalities filed a direct suit, which includes all ten (10) counties and the money received has to be used towards opioid abatement purposes.

Supt. Elliott stated that it costs \$2.61 for inmates to be on the MAT program, which is a total of \$3,000-\$5,000 per year to provide those services. He stated that he would like these funds to cover those expenses with a cap of \$5,000.

AS Director Mitchell stated that the biggest challenge she sees is recovery capital and explained that you have to bring good things into the life of a recovering addict to allow them to succeed. She stated that this includes recovery-based activities such as group hiking or camping trips, meetings that are not AA based but rather adventure-based therapy. She further discussed her thoughts on adventure-based therapy with the Commissioners and answered questions. CA Libby stated that the county can also apply to the opioid abatement trust fund to receive additional funding if they were to create a program that costs more than what they have.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to set aside \$5,000 of the opioid settlement funds for the MAT program at the Department of Corrections. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the July 5th meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the minutes from the July 5th meeting. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1001-1002; 1004.

3. CA Libby submitted the following four (4) CDBG Drawdowns – MicroCredit for Commissioner Piper to sign:

- WREN - \$15,000
- WREN - \$1,483.40
- NCIC - \$1,483.40
- BEDC - \$5,552.05

4. Employee Recognition Dinner – The Commissioners discussed the Employee Recognition Dinner and set a date of September 21st.

5. NH Division of Historical Resources – CA Libby read a letter stating that 471 Daniel Webster Highway Plymouth would be considered for nomination to the NH Division of Historical Resources.

6. NHAC Conference – CA Libby asked the Commissioners if they were planning to attend the NHAC Conference. Commissioner Piper stated that she would attend. Commissioner Ahern and Commissioner Lauer will not attend.

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

8. PH – Broadband CDBG 8/16/22 – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners will need to hold a public hearing on August 16th and requested that they move that meeting to the afternoon. The Commissioners agreed.

9. Appropriation Transfers – CA Libby submitted a list of appropriation transfers totaling \$1,508,643.00. She explained that they are mostly all standard but noted that HR, Farm, Contingency, and County Attorney’s Office are bottom line over expended. There is money elsewhere in the budget to transfer and cover those budgets.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the appropriation transfers totaling \$1,508,643.00. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

10. Next round of ARPA funding – CA Libby asked the Commissioners if they want to open another round to be prepared for the September Executive Committee meeting. The Commissioners agreed.

Supt. Oakes arrived with quotes for a generator and a bid waiver request.

Supt. Oakes had the following three (3) bids:

- Royal Electric Propane Generator - \$85,666.00
- Royal Electric Diesel Generator - \$79,977.00
- Electric Propane Generator - \$78,500.00

He explained that total cost of the project includes the owner’s scope of work which part of those costs would be subcontracted out to an abatement firm for asbestos that needs to be removed.

The combined costs for the three options are as follows:

- Royal Electric Propane Generator - \$100,391.19
- Royal Electric Diesel Generator - \$98,623.14
- Giguere Electric Propane Generator - \$96,998.44

CA Libby stated that the Executive Committee already approved the project and the cost has increased due to inflation, but there are extra funds available from other approved ARPA projects that finished under their budget that they can use to cover the additional costs.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to award the generator replacement project to Giguere Electric based on the lowest cost and longest run time for \$78,500 and that they redistribute \$26,998.44 of unused ARPA funds for this project. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor

Supt. Oakes stated that during the budget process, he had mentioned that at the DoC they have a UPS system that is a battery backup for many of their lights throughout the building. He stated that they should have had this inspection and maintenance work done at the five (5) year mark of being in the facility and it was not. He explained that as far as he knows this is the only company that can do this work and they installed the original UPS Controls. The total cost is \$26,317.60.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer moved to sole source the inspection and maintenance of the UPS System at the Department of Corrections to Eaton Corporation based on them being the original manufacturer and installer of the equipment. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

CA Libby requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 11:06 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

* 11:08 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer 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 Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

MOTION: * 11:08 AM 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

* 12:11 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Lauer 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 Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Piper read a card from Voices Against Violence thanking the county for their funding.

2. Commissioner Piper stated the Valley News contacted her last week to get her take on the budget that the Delegation approved. It was a thorough article that was printed a couple of days ago.

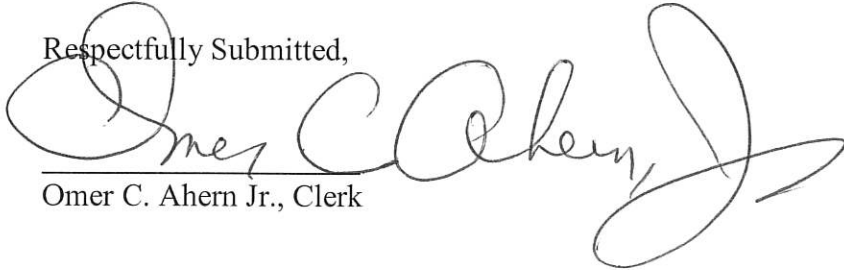
3. Commissioner Piper stated that she wanted to check in with regards to the idea of using ARPA funds to help with energy projects. She asked if they know that the only way to fund that is through the lost revenue category of ARPA funding. CA Libby stated that is correct.

4. Commissioner Ahern stated that Steve Curtis from Waste to Energy Now is going to be speaking at the NHAC Conference so he may change his mind on his attendance and will let CA Libby know.

4. Commissioner Ahern stated that the Little Antlers Grand Opening is being held July 28th in Plymouth.

12:19 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Omer C. Ahern Jr.", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the typed name and extends across the line.

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk

July 2022 Farm Report

1. The Grafton County Farm has 90 total cows. Currently there are 76 cows in milk averaging 75 pounds per cow per day. Milk components are 3.76% butter fat and 3.14% protein. 11,400 pounds of milk are being shipped every other day. Grafton County Farm received \$27.57 per hundred weight for June milk.
2. The DOC has one inmate available for milking chores. There is one inmate available the farm staff to supervise for other chores.
3. A good average yield of second cut hay was harvested as silage July 4-6. Potatoes, pumpkins, squash, and sweet corn are looking good. Hopefully rain is the near future as field conditions are quite dry.
4. 1,368 square bales were made on Bancroft in early June.
5. We will be emptying the manure pit and making some mechanical repairs on potato harvesting equipment in the next couple weeks.

Respectfully Submitted,

Grant Nelson

Farm Manager