

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper and McLeod, County Administrator (CA) Libby, Assistant County Administrator Burbank, Administrative Assistant Norcross.

EXCUSED: Commissioner Ahern

OTHERS: Human Resources (HR) Director Clough, Nursing Home Administrator (NHA) Labore, Helen Mrema– American Civil Liberties Union

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

**HR Director Clough arrived and gave the following report:**

Benefits Review Committee – HR Director Clough stated that during the budget season, a discussion was had regarding establishing a committee that consisted of employees, union members, and administration to look at the County's benefits and get feedback on what might be a better selling point for prospective employees or what employees may be looking for. She stated that she would like to start these meetings before the end of September and have ideas in place for the next budget.

**Agenda Items:**

Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Piper had a few grammatical edits from the August 29<sup>th</sup> minutes. She and Commissioner McLeod then had the following corrections:

Page 6, Item #3 – The sentence “CA Libby stated that it is essential to ensure these people are segregated and that the people who work here continue to be safe as well” was changed to “CA Libby stated that it is essential to keep residential and administrative facilities separate.”

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the minutes from the August 29<sup>th</sup> meeting as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Grant – CA Libby reported that the County has been awarded \$11,969,000 in NTIA grant funding for the middle mile broadband grant program. There is a \$5,129,571.43 match required from the County for a total project cost of just over \$17 million. She stated that she has reached out to the Broadband Committee to let them know this has been awarded and to have them convene a meeting immediately to discuss the next steps. CA Libby explained that the County has thirty (30) days to accept the grant, and if they were to use the surplus for the match funds, a full Delegation meeting would need to be convened to approve the supplemental appropriation. The Commissioners and CA Libby further discussed the broadband project and steps that would need

to be taken if this grant were to be accepted. CA Libby stated that she wants to have a very good feeling that it is an investment that will benefit the residents of Grafton County. The middle mile does not necessarily do that, as it delivers the network to the towns, and it is then up to the towns to get the internet into the homes. She wanted to note that the Broadband Committee has done a tremendous amount of work in getting this grant and has put a lot of volunteer time into this project. She said she would inform the Commissioners of the grant status as she finds out more.

**Nursing Home Administrator (NHA) Labore arrived and gave the following report:**

1) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Mandatory Staffing Regulations – NHA Labore explained that CMS has been in discussion over the last year and a half about performing a study for analyzing staffing ratios and developing a national baseline for long-term care facilities to ensure the quality of care. This was supposed to be released in April, but the deadline was not met. NHA Labore stated that there was a report that CMS commissioned that made it onto the internet, which was quickly taken down. It was a report that analyzes the fact that there are no set staffing ratio levels across the nation that will ensure quality of care. NHA Labore reported that President Biden has been a vocal advocate to make sure that there is a mandatory staffing ratio. The number that has been put out there is four (4) hours of direct care from nursing staff per day, and President Biden agreed that was the number that was needed. Up until April, CMS was going to put this new requirement in, which did not happen. NHA Labore stated that last Wednesday, this report contradicted what President Biden and CMS had been saying all along, that there is no set standard to ensure the quality of care. As of Friday morning, there is a mandatory staffing regulation in effect. There is a 5-year phase-in for this new regulation, and NHA Labore explained that it is an extensive regulation that will take time to work through. He stated that the standard they are now aiming for is three (3) hours of direct care, and NHA Labore noted that the Grafton County Nursing Home is currently at that level. The part of the new regulation concerning him is that they will be required to have a Registered Nurse in the building 24/7/365. The requirement right now is eight (8) hours a day, and they have been able to make that work, but 24/7 will be difficult, as they do not have that coverage across all shifts. NHA Labore reported that less than 1% of nursing homes across the country would meet that requirement. There are not enough RNs in long-term care. NHA Labore stated that they have five (5) years to come into compliance and will work through these new rules.

2) DHHS RFP County Pilot to Delay or Defer Institutional Care Update – NHA Labore explained that he had a discussion with CA Libby and Assistant CA Burbank regarding Grafton County looking at this concept. From a county standpoint, based on what he saw at the last Nursing Home Affiliate meeting, there were three (3) nursing homes, Coos – Berlin, Strafford, and Rockingham, that were interested in this RFP and the rest agreed there was not enough time. NHA Labore thinks there is an opportunity for Grafton County if they want to look at this, but not within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) timeline. He asked about the possibility of a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of funding, and DHHS stated that they could not comment because the current application round is still open. NHA Labore stated that Strafford County is going to go forward with this current RFP; they have done the research and have been planning to be able to make “a go” at this. There will be more money available, but NHA Labore is unsure if a second round of funding will be available. He asked if there is willingness from the Board of Commissioners to allow him to connect with the Senior Citizens Council and Dartmouth Health



about setting up a mini base center in Lebanon to see what the potential for pulling something together would look like. NHA Labore stated that he would like to have the initial series of discussions, and this would allow them to see if there is any interest, so if there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> round of funding that becomes available, the County would be in a better position to apply. Commissioner McLeod and Commissioner Piper both agreed to allow NHA Labore to reach out and set up those meetings.

3. NHA Labore reported that the bid period on the landscape project closed last week, and they did not have any bidders. He explained that Maintenance Superintendent Oakes feels that based on the type of summer they have had with the rain, landscapers are behind on other projects and are trying to get them completed. NHA Labore stated that they would be going back to the drawing board.

### **Agenda Items:**

1. The Commissioners reviewed the Superior Court Report for the month of August.

2. July Financial Reports

- Revenue - CA Libby reported that the County typically starts the fiscal year out slowly in revenue and noted that almost all departments are currently behind.
- Expense – CA Libby explained that some departments are showing over-expended due to paying service contracts upfront at the beginning of the fiscal year, which skews the numbers for the rest of the fiscal year.

CA Libby stated that the County is scheduled to receive the draft financial audit on Friday. She noted that most of the Department of Revenue Administration forms are done, and the County should have tax rates set by the end of the month.

**MOTION:** \* 10:05 AM Commissioner McLeod moved to enter into a non-public session for the purposes of the hiring of any person as a public employee according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (b). Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. 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.

\*10:27 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod 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 Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner McLeod “Yes,” Commissioner Piper “Yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes,” and the motion passes.

10:29 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Martha S. McLeod". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

Grafton County Human Resources Report  
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director  
 September 5, 2023

**HR Activity Report (07/31/2023-09/05/2023)**

• ***New Hires***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home	12 (1 PD, 11 FT)	1 FT / 1 PD RN, 5 FT Dietary Aide (LNA Program), 4 FT LNA, 1 FT Activity Aide
DOC	6 (5 FT, 1 PT)	4 FT CO, 1 PD RN, 1 FT Cook

***Separations***

<u>Departments</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home	3 (1 FT, 1 PD, 1 PT)	1 FT LNA, 1 PT Dietary Aide, 1 PD LNA
Corrections	3 (3 FT)	1 FT CO, 1 FT RN, 1 FT Superintendent

***Reasons:***

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

***Status Changes/ dept transfers: 2 per diem LNA's to ft, 1 PT Dietary Aide to per diem LNA, 1 PT Unit Aide to PD LNA***

***Active Leave of Absences between July 31, 2023 to present***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home – Nursing	10	(9 are intermittent, 5 for self, 5 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	6	(5 are intermittent, 4 for family, 2 self)
DOC	3	(1 intermittent, 2 self, 1 family)
Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch.	3	(2 intermittent, 3 self)
County Atty's Office	3	(2 intermittent, 3 self)
HR Department	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
Alternative Sentencing	1	(1 intermittent family)
Maintenance	1	(1 intermittent family)
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>28</b>	

**Orienting Sept. 6th:**

**1 FT LNA**  
**1 FT RN**  
**1 FT Dietary Aide**  
**1 PT Dietary Aide**  
**2 LNA Program/Dietary Aide**

**Current Jobs posted/advertised**

LNA's/Unit Aides (30.65 FTE's vacant)  
RN/LPN (16.25 FTE's vacant combined)  
ADON  
CO's (11 FTE's)  
Housekeepers (1 PT)  
Dietary Aides (1 FT and PT)  
Nursing Home Cook (1 FT)  
Deputy Sheriff  
Dispatcher  
Corrections Supt.  
Alternative Sentencing Case Manager

Other business: LNA program to begin 9/16 and class is full with 8 students. It is a 120 hr. program, Benefits review committee, handbook updates

# Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: September 5, 2023

## Census

Medicare: 1  
Medicaid: 67  
VA: 5  
Hospice: 0  
Private: 26  
Total: 99

## FY '24 Budgeted Census:

Medicare: 7  
Medicaid: 68  
VA: 4  
Hospice: 0  
Private: 19  
Budgeted Census: 98

## Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 3  
Deceased Residents: 1  
Discharges: 0

## Other Topics:

- 1) CMS Mandatory Staffing Regulation
- 2) DHHS RFP County Pilot to Delay or Defer Institutional Care Update