

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
September 26th, 2023

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

OTHERS: Ed Wargo – SNS, Interim DoC Superintendent Kendall, John Adams, Don McFarlane, Ex2 Technologies – Kyle Hildebrand, Jake Loghry, Broadband Committee – Ed Morris, and Register Monahan.

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

Ed Wargo – SNS arrived and gave the following report: (* see attached)

Interim Superintendent Kendall arrived and gave the following report: (* see attached)

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the September 19th meeting. Commissioner Piper had one (1) small grammatical edit.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the minutes from the September 19th meeting as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1040-1041.

3. Petition for Certification – Teamsters (Sheriff/Dispatch) – CA Libby stated that last week, the County received a Petition for Certification from the Public Employee Relations Board for the Teamsters to form a new bargaining unit at the Sheriff's Department. CA Libby then requested a nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 9:31 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into a non-public session for the purposes of Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (1). 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.

*9:53 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 Ahern 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.

CA Libby noted that the County received a Petition for Certification from the Teamsters to create a union at the Sheriff’s Department. The paperwork was signed off on by Sheriff Stiegler, and the County has concerns about him signing the petition as the public employer and not allowing the County to discuss the composition of the bargaining unit. CA Libby explained that the County has sought legal counsel, and CA Libby has a proposal for legal services from Tom Closson, who is an attorney who specializes in Collective Bargaining Agreements. Atty. Closson would be assisting the County in the certification process as well as negotiations that take place if, in fact, a union is voted in at the Sheriff’s Department. CA Libby requested that the Commissioners approve the proposal for legal services.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the legal agreement with Attorney Closson. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner McLeod asked why the bargaining unit is a concern and asked who is included in this. CA Libby explained that the bargaining unit composition included in the petition is all positions within the Sheriff’s Departments, including Dispatchers, Administrative Assistants, and all sworn deputy personnel, from the rank of Captain through Deputy Sheriff, as well as the Dispatch Supervisors. The concern is including supervisory positions, so there will be people who supervise others in the same bargaining unit.

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

4. Dairy Trailer – Commissioner Ahern explained that when he first submitted his FarmDOC proposal, one of the items that he wanted to see at the County was a dairy trailer allowing the County to process its own milk, ice cream, cheese, and butter. It will not homogenize the milk, but it will pasteurize it. Commissioner Ahern stated that if the Commissioners approved the purchase of this trailer, it would have to go out to bid. The purchase of the dairy trailer would give an opportunity to the residents of the DoC to learn skills they may use in the real world. They may also learn more about dairy processing. He stated that he would like the Commissioners to consider the purchase of the trailer. He explained that there are a couple of size options for the trailer, and the County could process 300 gallons of milk in a day, although they would not need to process that much. A 45ft trailer would cost around \$96,000-\$100,000, and Commissioner Ahern noted that if purchased, a federal agency would have to come in and inspect it before it can begin operating.

Commissioner McLeod asked what the return on investment would be if they purchased this trailer. CA Libby explained that when the research was done for this trailer, it was determined

that the DoC spends roughly \$22,000 a year on dairy products. Commissioner McLeod noted that this cost of roughly \$100,000 does not include the staff time to run the trailer. CA Libby added that the price does not include the electricity, water, or other items needed to set up the trailer initially. She then added the County would have operational costs. She stated that this is not just buying a dairy trailer. She also noted that if the County ran into an issue with the milk supply, they do have access to milk right down the road at Hatchland Farm. Commissioner McLeod asked if this investment makes sense for Grafton County when they have a resource for milk that they could tap into if need be. Assistant CA Burbank added that people can survive without dairy if it were a worst-case scenario. Commissioner Piper stated that she and Commissioner McLeod would have to read through the FarmDOC proposal for the dairy trailer thoroughly. The Commissioners agreed to discuss this subject further in November once the new DoC Superintendent is on board and can be part of the conversation.

5. **MOTION:** * 10:26 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into a non-public session for the purposes of Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (l). 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.

*11:15 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 Ahern 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.

6. The Commissioners discussed their meeting schedule and agreed to change the start times to of their meetings to 10:00 am. There will also be no meeting on October 24th.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Piper attended the Dartmouth Health Geriatric Center of Excellence conference on September 14th. She explained that it was a briefing by representatives from Senator Shaheen’s Office. Commissioner Piper gave feedback to the representatives about the mandatory staffing change regarding the number of direct contact hours between care providers and residents and the requirement to have an RN on sight 24/7/365 and explained the hardships Nursing Homes will face. She also commented on the passage of SB36 to strengthen the community service aspect of elder care.

2. Commissioner Piper reported that she attended the NHAC Executive Committee meeting. There was a presentation given by a representative from NACo on the NACo Edge Program, a

program for voluntary benefits that can be available for employees and can be used as a recruitment tool. CA Libby noted that the County offers these voluntary benefits.

3. Commissioner Ahern had some constituents contact him regarding the Broadband NTIA Grant with feedback. He has asked John Adams from Orford to meet this morning to have questions answered by the Broadband Committee.

4. Commissioner McLeod stated that “everyone belongs” has been discussed frequently in her district. She reported that several of her towns have passed resolutions where they are making sure that they welcome all people regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other variable that makes them who they are. She stated that she feels they will see more communities doing this and suggested that at some point, the County may want to consider this themselves and ensure everyone understands they are welcome in Grafton County.

NTIA Broadband Grant Discussion – John Adams, Don McFarlane, Ex2 Technologies – Kyle Hildebrand, Jake Loghry, Broadband Committee – Ed Morris

The Commissioners had a discussion regarding the NTIA Broadband Grant that the County was awarded and whether the County would be accepting the grant. Members of the public, Ex2 Technologies, and the Broadband Committee were in attendance and gave their feedback to the Commissioners. The Commissioners had a thorough discussion regarding the project. They asked questions of those in attendance and were asked questions as well.

Commissioner Piper reported that the Commissioners received several letters in support of this grant. (* see attached letters)

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved that Grafton County accept the National Telecommunications and Information Administration grant of \$11,969,000 in federal funding and provide the match funds of \$5,129,571.43. The Commissioners will request a Supplemental Appropriation from the Delegation to provide these match funds from the Undesignated Fund Balance. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion.

Discussion: Commissioner Ahern asked if the County could impose any conditions on this grant, noting that he wants to ensure the County is protected. CA Libby explained that the Commissioners cannot impose any conditions on NTIA. Today, they are making a motion to accept the grant, but what the Commissioners can do is if they want to set any specific conditions to the Broadband Committee, they should do that. There will be RFP processes that will be discussed with the Commissioners. This will be a working relationship going forward. This motion today is to accept the grant, and the County will work within the conditions set by NTIA. Any conditions that the Commissioners would like to set moving forward with who is involved in the grant administration will be welcomed.

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

Register Of Deeds ARPA Project Procurement Process Update

Commissioner Piper explained that the procurement process for the Deed’s Historic Plan Record Restoration and Repackaging project to be funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”) was faulty. She wanted to report back to Register Monahan on where the payment to Kofile currently stands. Commissioner Piper explained that the Federal and County regulations for procurement were not followed, which puts the County at risk. These projects stand the chance of being audited by the Federal Government, and if a project was not put out to bid or a bid waiver was not requested and approved, then that can put the County at risk for a fine. Commissioner Piper explained that the Commissioners have a series of questions that they will need detailed responses from Register Monahan, and depending on those answers, they might be able to pay Kofile. Register Monahan stated that the Commissioners asked for the paper trail, which she provided. Commissioner Piper stated that the paper trail was not sufficient. She stated that they would correspond with Kofile and inform them of the problem the County is having, but the Commissioners are not safe, legally, to retroactively approve the bid waiver without further responses. She explained that there is a question about whether the contract with Kofile is valid because of the lack of a proper procurement process. Register Monahan explained that this project went through two (2) unanimous votes, where it was never discussed what the process was by the Executive Committee, Board of Commissioners, or Administration. CA Libby stated that the project was approved for \$950,000 by this Board of Commissioners and Executive Committee, but a bid waiver or an RFP process was never presented to this Board of Commissioners. Register Monahan questioned why this Board of Commissioners did not question her about this then. She stated that she has rarely been asked for an RFP in the twelve (12) years she has been here because there was trust involved. Register Monahan stated that she has been here a long time, dealing with the differences between Grafton County and other counties regarding the sophistication of anything to do with internet technology. She stated that she has tried to explain the Fidlar contract to the Executive Committee, and she has been told they do not want to go down the rabbit hole. Her judgment as a constitutional officer has been trusted all these years. Commissioner Piper asked that CA Libby address Register Monahan’s comment about why the Board of Commissioners did not question her. CA Libby explained that the Commissioners do not request bid waivers from Department Heads or Elected Officials. They bring the requests to the Board of Commissioners seeking permission to use a specific vendor. The federal regulations and federal law pertaining to federal money state that the only way the County can sole source a project is if there is inadequate competition, and Register Monahan needs to establish that. The Commissioners presented Register Monahan with the list of questions and requested detailed written responses.

12:37 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

*-Vice Chair
for Commission
Martha S. McLeod*

09/26/2023

IT department update

Service desk

8/1/2023 – 8/31/2023

260 help desk tickets created

401 hours of time spent on those tickets.

361 million data points investigated for the month of August

11 potential events were identified that warrant further investigation

None of the events investigated caused a breach or compromise.

The new password policy was implemented.

(11 character minimum, 90 day maximum password age, 12 password history and complexity requirements)

Overall, the changes went well. There were very few calls made to the helpdesk for assistance. This is a very positive step towards improving the security in the county complex.

2FA will be implemented soon. We are working up a plan to be approved by Julie. It will be enabled in phases. Phase one will activate MFA for anyone logging in from outside of the county complex (from home, other states, etc)

Anyone logging into a workstation from within the Grafton county complex will not have to enter an authentication code. The act of being inside the county network will act as their second authentication factor. This will cause the least impact to employees while improving the overall security. There are only a few employees who access resources from outside the building.

An application has been submitted for the hardware 2FA tokens. When/if this is approved, we can move to phase two which will require employees to use their token to enter an authentication code to log into their workstations (once per 24 hour period).



September 26, 2023

Commissioners report

1. Population In house: 56

F Unit: 19

E Unit: 10 (3 Coos Inmates)

D Unit: 9

C Unit: 11

Intake: 7

Out of Facility: 24

Total Population: 80

Intake Since 7/1/2023: 244

Males: 159

Females: 85 (18 Coos)

2. Community Corrections:

A. Electronic Monitoring: 2

B. Daily Work release: 0

C. Pre-Trial Services: 13- 4 on GPS Monitoring

D. Operation Impact:

Cpl. Balch is covering shifts inside the Facility. He has school and Jail tours scheduled upon his return from scheduled time off in October.

E. Community Work Detail:

Sgt. Griffin is assisting the Farm with their duties with his Inmate workers that he has available. He currently has corn stalks, potatoes (red and white), buttercup squash, butternut squash, blue Hubbard squash, pumpkins, and eggs for sale at the Farm stand.

Sgt. Griffin is also working one to two shifts per week inside the Jail to help cover necessary shifts.

Transports:

- 1 transport to a treatment facility
- 1 medical transport for inmate medical needs/ Doctor's appointment
- 6 Courtesy rides home for Inmates being released that could not find a ride themselves.

FIRRM Program (Focused Intentional Re-entry and Recovery)

2 Current participants

Level 1: 1

Level 2: 0

Level 3: 1

Program department Report:

For the Month of August 2023 Programs department provided various services to over 27 different Inmates for approximately 414 hours. Services include SUD Groups and individual counseling, HISET along with volunteer services such as Self-Help groups, Individual bible study, Church Services and parenting classes.

Individual Counseling: 9 total hours

Females: 4 hours

Males: 5 hours

SUD Treatment Groups: 315 total hours

Females: 72 hours

Males: 243 hours

Parenting class conducted with male and female Inmates (separate classes) two – five-week classes.
Two Volunteers from the Whole Village Family Resources.

Parenting Education hours: 49

Females: 10 hours

Males: 39 hours

Medical/ Mental health Report:

For the Month of August there were four Psychiatric clinic days with a total of 59 Patient encounters, and two medical clinic days with a total of 16 patient encounters.

General

- 1) One Officer Graduated from 120th NHAC Corrections Academy on September 15th. Another Officer started 121st NHAC Corrections Academy on September 25th.

Are there any Commissioner concerns?

MASCOMA VALLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT - SAU #62

547 US Route 4 - P. O. Box 789, Enfield, NH 03748

Telephone (603) 632-5563 (TDD & Voice) mascomaschools.org

FAX (603) 632-4181

Amanda Isabelle, Superintendent

Chris Beeso, Special Education Director/504 Coordinator

Debra Ford, Interim Business Administrator

Angel Burke, Director of Curriculum

Craig Suttie, Director of Technology

Diane Adam, Title IX

Cynthia Collea, Social Worker

Grafton County Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy Ste 1,
North Haverhill, NH 03774

Dear Commissioners,

September 25, 2023

It is exciting news to hear that Grafton County has received a grant from the NTIA to enhance broadband capability by extending broadband infrastructure into the more rural portions of our County. I understand that to accept this grant the county must provide approximately 5 million dollars in match. I am sure an unplanned 5 million dollar expenditure is a hard decision. I am writing to ask you to support the expansion of broadband in Grafton County by accepting this grant opportunity by explaining the importance of broadband access in education.

Here in SAU 62, as with many other school districts across Grafton County, we struggled with the lack of broadband for many students, and teachers, when the entire world shut down. Students were unable to communicate with teachers, classmates or access homework. We learned very quickly that access to quality internet access is important and the changes in education that have taken place over the past few years continue to make broadband access a challenge in our rural communities. Quality internet has now become a necessity in education and provides:

1. **Equal Access to Education:** Broadband ensures that students in rural areas have the same educational opportunities as their urban counterparts. It allows them to access online educational resources, take online courses, and participate in virtual classrooms. Without broadband, rural students may be left behind in terms of educational opportunities.
2. **Homework and Research:** Many assignments and research projects require internet access. Without broadband, students in rural areas may struggle to complete their homework or access necessary research materials, putting them at a disadvantage.
3. **Distance Learning:** Broadband is crucial for enabling distance learning, especially during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. It allows students to attend classes remotely, ensuring continuity of education when in-person attendance is not possible.
4. **Digital Literacy:** As the world becomes increasingly digital, students need to develop digital literacy skills. Broadband access at home allows them to learn how to use technology effectively, which is essential for their future careers.
5. **Access to Educational Resources:** Broadband enables students to access a wide range of educational resources, including online textbooks, video lectures, and educational websites. This access enhances their learning experience and provides them with more diverse and up-to-date information.

Mascoma Inspires! Build the path you want to take.

"We are a community that values creativity, curiosity and the pursuit of excellence, cultivating our strengths and interests to inspire partnerships in the district, community and the world beyond."

Equal Opportunity Employer * Equal Educational Opportunities

6. Collaborative Learning: Many educational platforms and tools support collaborative learning. Broadband allows students in rural communities to engage in group projects, discussions, and online forums, fostering teamwork and communication skills.

7. Preparation for the Job Market: In today's job market, digital skills are highly sought after. Broadband access ensures that students in rural areas can develop and hone these skills, making them more competitive when entering the workforce.

8. Access to Support Services: Broadband also enables students to access support services, such as online tutoring, counseling, and career guidance, which can be especially important for those in rural areas where physical access to such services may be limited.

9. Reducing Educational Disparities: The lack of broadband in rural areas can exacerbate educational disparities, widening the gap between rural and urban students. Ensuring broadband access for all students helps reduce these disparities and promotes equity in education.

10. Community Development: Broadband infrastructure in rural areas not only benefits students but also the entire community. It can attract businesses, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life, making rural areas more appealing places to live and work.

In summary, broadband access is essential for students in rural communities to receive a quality education, develop essential digital skills, and prepare for the challenges of the modern world. Closing the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to broadband is crucial for the educational and economic well-being of these communities. Because of this I urge you to invest in the expansion of broadband throughout Grafton County by accepting the NTIA grant.

Thank you,

Amanda Isabelle
Superintendent SAU 62

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"We are a community that values creativity, curiosity and the pursuit of excellence, cultivating our strengths and interests to inspire partnerships in the district, community and the world beyond."

Equal Opportunity Employer * Equal Educational Opportunities

Julie Libby

From: Cheryl Stanion <forms@grafton-county.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 6:54 PM
To: Julie Libby
Subject: Internet in Grafton NH

Your Name

Cheryl Stanion

Your Email

Sender.stanion@comcast.net

Subject

Internet in Grafton NH

Your Message

I'm a self employed photojournalist. It is impossible to transmit my images from my house in Grafton NH. I end up driving to Enfield where the closest Dunkin Donuts is to use their free internet. When I try to do simple things using the internet at home I have to reboot multiple times a day and or simply use my cellphone as a hotspot. I don't understand why Comcast is in Canaan and Danbury but not Grafton which is in between the two towns. Having reliable internet is not a luxury, it's a necessity.

Julie Libby

From: Elaina <forms@grafton-county.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 7:27 PM
To: Julie Libby
Subject: NTIA funds for broadband in Grafton???

Your Name

Elaina

Your Email

elaina.bergamini@gmail.com

Subject

NTIA funds for broadband in Grafton???

Your Message

I recently heard about the NTIA funds and match that needed to be provided by the county. These funds, applied to rural communities like mine, have an opportunity to impact my life and my communities in profound ways.

I am a mom of three young children adopted from foster care in Grafton. During pandemic, they were doing remote learning and my husband was learning to work from home as an IT professional for Dartmouth college. We had a bonded DSL service- all that was available for us. Every morning, I had to go and figure out everyone's Zoom schedules. Our DSL could not handle more than 2 Zooms at a time, so if one of my kids had free time at the same time as 2 other zoom sessions, I could not have them watch a streaming video or it would impact the zoom sessions. Which meant juggling 2 kids with ADHD while supervising behavior of the third kid on a zoom session.

In addition to this very personal account of how lack of broadband has effected me personally. I have interest for my community. I am the President of the Friends of Grafton Library (FOGL) and I'm on the board of Mascoma Valley Preservation (MVP).

FOGL was formed to support the operations and programming of the library. Much of the service provided to the town is related to internet. We have many residents who are not able to get any internet because the dated copper equipment that the internet providers maintain is completely full. So if you want internet, you have to wait until someone moves out or hit the library (which also only has DSL service.)

MVP has 2 properties in Grafton and one in Dorchester, one of which will be a store. The store will need internet to perform basic tasks that are necessary for surviving the post pandemic market we find ourselves in. A market which requires an internet presence.

The short story is that this money which has negligible impact on the tax payers has the potential to HUGELY improve our lives and I urge you to commit the funds to secure this substantial investment in our infrastructure which allows families like mine to continue investing in our towns.

Thank you.

Julie Libby

From: Susan Tresch Fienberg <forms@grafton-county.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 8:12 PM
To: Julie Libby
Subject: Federal Funds for Grafton Broadband

Your Name

Susan Tresch Fienberg

Your Email

stfienberg@gmail.com

Subject

Federal Funds for Grafton Broadband

Your Message

I am writing to urge the Commissioners to vote to appropriate the required \$5M match to qualify for \$17M in federal funding that would increase broadband access for Grafton County residents.

Here in the Town of Grafton, many folks have little or no internet access, and those of us who do cope with unreliable connectivity and inadequate bandwidth. For my husband and me, this means that we cannot simultaneously participate in work-related Zoom meetings, and we've even been cut off in the middle of presentations due to unstable internet. My husband has also been unable to upload videos of press conferences to his employer's website, which was a job requirement, and had to travel to Dartmouth College to do so. If Grafton wants to attract more residents like us -- people who work remotely and have the means to contribute significantly to the tax base -- we need to have better internet service.

We also need better internet for current residents, regardless of their means, to access educational and employment resources and opportunities that require fast and reliable internet service. I often see people huddled outside the library when it's closed (even in winter) to access its free WiFi.

In short, I believe that the improvements in internet access that this federal funding would support are essential to Grafton's future. I understand that the county has the required match in its fund balance, so I urge the commissioners to approve their allocation for this purpose.

Thank you.

Julie Libby

From: Daniel A. Bergamini <forms@grafton-county.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 8:20 PM
To: Julie Libby
Subject: Support for expanded broadband in Grafton County

Your Name

Daniel A. Bergamini

Your Email

daniel.bergamini@gmail.com

Subject

Support for expanded broadband in Grafton County

Your Message

My name is Daniel A. Bergamini. I live in Grafton with my wife Elaina and three young children. Since the pandemic I have been working fully remote in an IT Infrastructure Engineering role.

I am writing because I was informed that our county received \$17 million in federal grant money and needs to have a \$5 million match from county funds. The county has 5 million in their undesignated reserves, and it is only half of their total reserves. I am requesting that you move in favor of allocating the funds and using them for continued broadband expansion into the underserved communities.

Grafton continues to struggle with outdated copper based DSL service from a single provider, Consolidated Communications. Many residents cannot get service at all, others that are within a serviceable area must wait until someone cancels service to free up ports before they're able to get connected. Very few residents in town, if any, have actual broadband according to the FCC definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up. Ours is arbitrarily capped at 20/1.5 even though our specific pairs could support higher speeds.

We've had multi-week outages in the past, at least two that I can think of this year. It caused us to consider and ultimately choose to add Starlink Satellite service as a redundant connection option. In general, it is faster bandwidth wise, but more variable than the DSL service. The two services combined exceed \$200 per month and it takes some expertise to set up multiple internet connections to function seamlessly. I consider it the cost of doing business but many in town can't afford the luxury.

Daniel A. Bergamini
364 Turnpike Rd.
Grafton, NH 03240
603-513-2244
daniel.bergamini@gmail.com

Julie Libby

From: Martha McLeod
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 9:18 AM
To: Julie Libby
Subject: Fw: Broadband Middle Mile Grant

Martha McLeod
Grafton County Commissioner, District 2
Grafton County Commissioners Office
3855 Dartmouth College Highway
North Haverhill, NH 03744

603-491-0542

From: Martha McLeod <mmcleod823@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 8:52 PM
To: Martha McLeod <mmcleod@grafftoncountynh.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Broadband Middle Mile Grant

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Shaun Mulholland** <Shaun.Mulholland@lebanonnh.gov>
Date: Mon, Sep 25, 2023 at 4:23 PM
Subject: Broadband Middle Mile Grant
To: wpiper@grafftoncountynh.gov <wpiper@grafftoncountynh.gov>, omer.ahern.jr@gmail.com <omer.ahern.jr@gmail.com>, mmcleod823@gmail.com <mmcleod823@gmail.com>

Commissioners

It is my understanding that the County has been presented with a grant for the expansion of broadband, more specifically middle mile fiber. The City of Lebanon completed the "last mile" connections with Comcast last fall providing coverage to all residential and business structures in the City. Many or most of the municipalities around us in Grafton County do not have that level of service. Many of the employees who work for businesses in the City live in these towns. Internet connectivity is critical to the economic vitality of the region. Expansion of broadband would allow remote work and allow communities around the City to absorb more of the housing needs for the region.

The City supports this effort by the County to address this critical economic need for the region. I hope you will consider approval of the matching funds and accept this grant. Thank you for consideration in this matter.

Shaun Mulholland
City Manager
City of Lebanon, NH
51 N. Park St.
Lebanon, NH 03766
603-448-4220

Andrew Cushing
88 Turnpike Road
Grafton, NH 03240

September 25, 2023

Grafton County Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774

Dear County Commissioners:

It is my understanding that the Commission is deciding on whether to match federal dollars to unlock a \$12 million investment in broadband connectivity in Grafton County. As a Grafton native and current resident, I hope that such an investment is prioritized.

In my various capacities as a resident of the Mascoma Valley, I know how important high speed internet access is to a modern society. As a library trustee, president of the regional nonprofit Mascoma Valley Preservation, member of the Mascoma Valley School District budget committee, and a homeowner who occasionally works remotely, I strongly believe in creating a livable and desirable community for residents of all ages. Increasingly, such communities need reliable and speedy internet. Without it, our area is not as competitive or attractive for families and businesses.

Several friends of mine who were considering moving to the area instead opted to invest in communities like Danbury – a town that benefitted from broadband connectivity during the pandemic. I like Danbury, but I would rather have those friends in *my town* and joining *our* volunteer ambulance and paying *our* property taxes. Others I know who did move to Grafton have since reconsidered, partly because they cannot reliably work from home...especially at the same time as their spouse.

Having a corridor through these rural Grafton County towns would create opportunities immediately. Just like telephone lines and rural electrification a century ago, if we want our rural areas to thrive, we must invest in them, especially when there is an offer as good and as hard fought as this one before you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Cushing

Julie Libby

From: Russell Poitras <forms@graffton-county.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 6:41 AM
To: Julie Libby
Subject: High speed internet

Your Name

Russell Poitras

Your Email

russellpoitras@gmail.com

Subject

High speed internet

Your Message

Julie,

I just wanted to reach out to the office prior to. You're meeting about high speed internet and possible federal funding. I would like everyone to know that I speak for all my constituents in Grafton when I say any help from the board to get high speed into this rural area is greatly appreciated. We thank you for your work and look forward to seeing better internet as soon as possible.

Respectfully,
Grafton Selectman
Russell Poitras.