

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
November 7th, 2023

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

OTHERS: Ed Wargo – SNS, Register of Deeds Monahan, HR Director Clough, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Helen Mrema, Susan Moore

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Ahern participated electronically, according to RSA 91-A: 2, with the reason being he was unable to attend the meeting in person. Electronic participation was at his request. It was noted that a roll call must take all votes.

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

Register Monahan was present for the meeting and reported receiving an email from E. Wargo questioning the Fidlar contract and when it would expire. He asked for background information and why the Register of Deeds is not with Grafton County IT. She stated that she feels there is a misconception regarding how the transition happened with the IT department. Register Monahan explained that the Register of Deeds is connected to the County's IT. They use the County's email system, and their hardware was purchased with County funds. The only place that the Register of Deeds is independent is the backup hard drive of their reports. Fidlar handles information systems and how they process data, and that is separate from the IT Department of the County. Her department does have a small maintenance contract with Fidlar for minor things because Fidlar is able to get into their systems remotely to work within the programs. Register Monahan stated that she had questioned why her department was not included in the prompt to change their passwords, as the rest of the County was. She was informed that this was because the Deeds Department was not on the County's network. Register Monahan stated that she wants to eliminate the misconception that her department is not included with the County's IT and clarify where the Register of Deeds office would need Grafton County IT. She wanted to ensure everyone was on the same page with what Fidlar provides and what her department expects from Grafton County IT.

E. Wargo explained that the Register of Deeds employees are logging into their computers as local users, not domain users, which must be corrected. A local login should be used as a failsafe. It should not be used for daily activities, but since it has been used that way, the files are saved locally and not to the domain. He explained that when SNS moves these users to the domain, they will have to be careful to ensure all files and settings get transferred over. E. Wargo stated that he would contact Register Monahan to discuss this further and when it would occur.

Register of Deeds Monahan

The Commissioners, CA Libby, Assistant CA Burbank, and Maintenance Supt. Oakes toured the Deeds Basement Vault with Register Monahan, Executive Asst/Sr Deputy Register Wyman, and Deputy Register Dodge to discuss temporary space requirements for the Register of Deeds re-packaging project. Register Monahan explained that according to Supt. Oakes, there needs to be 36 inches of clearance between rolling rack units to be in compliance with the OSHA for safe egress. Register Monahan explained that to complete this project, her department needs room to work and is requesting that the Maintenance Department move the rolling racks according to their needs, noting that this will create an issue with the 36 inches of clearance that is required. She stated that she is looking for a window of about six (6) months to properly repackage and relocate the historic books and would request some leniency from the Maintenance Department during that time. Supt. Oakes explained that the County does not fall under OSHA guidelines but follows the requirements of the State of New Hampshire Department of Labor. Supt. Oakes stated that if this request is temporary, his department can work with Register Monahan to accommodate it.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the October 31st meeting. Commissioner Piper had a couple of minor grammatical edits.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the minutes from the October 31st meeting as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes,” Commissioner McLeod, “yes,” Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1058-1060 and 1062-1063.

3. The Commissioners reviewed the DoC Superior Court Report for the month of October.

4. CA Libby stated that the Teamsters Election in the Sheriff’s Department will be held November 15th from 3:00-4:30 in the Commissioners’ Conference Room.

5. Housing and Community Development Plan – CA Libby explained that this is a CDFA document that the County must review and adopt every three (3) years. Three (3) years ago, the Board went through it very thoroughly. It is time to review that document and approve it again. She asked the Commissioners to review the document, and they would discuss it later.

HR Director Clough arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

1. HR Director Clough explained that within the employee handbook, the definition of per diem nurses specifies Nursing Home nurses. She stated that the Department of Corrections part-time nurses need to be added to that definition, and she is requesting that the Commissioners make that change.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the per diem definition change in the handbook to include all nurses. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes,” Commissioner McLeod, “yes,” Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

Nursing Home Administrator Labore arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

1. JLMC Request to Form Committee to Study Campus Safety –NHA Labore explained that at the last Joint Loss Management Committee meeting, a discussion was had about campus safety. He explained that Primex, the County’s insurance carrier, had previously made a comment regarding cameras being placed throughout the complex. This sparked a more in-depth conversation, and the JLMC would like to request to form a Campus Safety Committee to present recommendations to the Board of Commissioners, who can then handle those recommendations as they see fit. CA Libby added that the County has been discussing this for years. She stated that security cameras were in the budget the year the in-house IT was transitioned out. That project was lost in the shuffle, and administration feels that more needs to be done with security and safety with the Administration Building.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to form a Campus Safety Committee. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes,” Commissioner McLeod, “yes,” Commissioner Piper “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

CA Libby asked what the make-up of the Committee is going to be. Commissioner Ahern stated that he feels a Commissioner should be on the board and volunteered to be on it. CA Libby stated that this committee should meet before the next JLMC meeting in January.

2. NHA Labore reported that the Grafton County Nursing Home had received nine (9) referrals from the Blue Spruce Inn in Bradford, VT. Residents were given 60 days to find a new location as they were closing. He stated that Grafton County will be taking two (2) of those residents next week, but he is unsure how many they will be able to take, noting they still have people in their local community.

2. Comment Period on CMS’ Proposed Staffing Rule – NHA Labore reported that the comment period ended on November 6th. He filed a comment on behalf of Grafton County and is one of 24,000 people who comment. He believes over the next month or so, CMS will finalize their intent. He will keep the Commissioners updated.

3. State/County Finance Discussion on Ownership changes – NHA Labore explained that one of the things that the counties should be prepared for, are the wage increases that have been factored into the budget. When the State starts to prepare its next biennium budget, there will be discussions about who will be funding portions of that. Right now, there will be a \$30 million increase to the budget to maintain that level of wage funding. DHHS was trying to open the door for the conversation because they must plan for their budget. The other piece that was discussed

was the amount of ownership changes that have taken place since the start of the state fiscal year. NHA Labore reported that there have been nine (9) sales of Nursing Homes in the state. One (1) of the things DHHS is struggling with is the methodology for rate calculations for nursing homes. The new companies are real estate investment trusts that are buying nursing homes and are trying to capitalize on certain costs from the previous owners. These companies are trying to get a higher Medicaid rate, and DHHS is trying to figure out how to put controls on that to limit it. The counties should be watching because of their role as a payor. If there are no controls placed on this, facilities will continue to change hands, and that is not good for quality and safety. NHA Labore stated that this would not be good for the counties because they will be looked at to admit people from these settings with negative outcomes and the counties do not have the capacity to meet this need. If this is not controlled, the counties will see increased referrals from people trying to leave these facilities.

Agenda Items:

1. Inclusivity Statement – Commissioner Piper stated that the original discussion regarding this statement was that the Commissioners did not agree upon the previous document. She stated that CA Libby crafted this new statement from the statement that was made in Franconia. Commissioner McLeod read the following proposed statement:

Whereas, Grafton County welcomes all people regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other variable that makes us who we are.

Whereas, Grafton County has a responsibility to all its residents to keep them safe from discrimination, harassment, or from those who want to marginalize others for being different than themselves through prejudice and bigotry.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Grafton County Commissioners that the Grafton County will welcome all to our county and that our county services, amenities, and properties are available to all who live here and to our visitors passing through, following guidelines and policies that apply equally to all persons.

We are committed to promoting a secure, welcome, and safe environment.
We are committed to modeling respectful dialogue.”

Susan Moore from Franconia was present for the meeting. She stated that she was the one who requested that the Franconia Selectboard review and approve the resolution that the County is modeling after. She stated that she is very pleased to hear the County is discussing this, adding that it is important that people understand the County welcomes everyone. H. Mrema was also present at the meeting and added that the Town of Easton voted unanimously to adopt an inclusivity statement. She stated they also passed a warrant article to be voted on in March.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he is trying to make an important decision, with only a week to review it. He explained that there are a lot of people who are coming into their Country illegally, and he does not want something with language that would mistakenly welcome these people who

are looking to inflict harm. He stated that he does not feel he has been able to talk with all the people he would like to regarding this and would like more time to review.

Commissioner Piper reported that she has done a good amount of research, talked to several people on both sides of the “proverbial” aisle, and she is ready to decide. A concern that has come up that gets her attention is that this is throwing down the gauntlet based on a particular ideology. She stated that S. Moore had made the comment that the County wants to make sure that folks are welcome. Commissioner Piper stated that the people she has spoken with, from all different backgrounds, have asked how is it clear that everyone is *not* welcome. Franconia, Easton, and Bethlehem voted to support this but there was a different reaction in Whitefield. Commissioner McLeod noted that Whitefield was not in Grafton County, it is in Coos County, which is not their concern. She thinks they must understand the degree to which this is political. She is not convinced that a reason that someone might not be welcome has to be based on prejudice or bigotry but rather is based on religious beliefs. This is a glaring example of how this is an ideological statement. She wants everyone to understand that this is a difficult decision and having done her research and thought hard, she cannot support this. She does not see herself supporting another document that works further with language.

Commissioner McLeod responded by stating that it was a shame. She stated that what is going on in her district needs to be pushed back on. It will destroy the Town of Littleton and the economic benefit that exists from the arts community and younger population, noting that Berlin will invite them to Coos County. She stated that this is important for Northern Grafton County, for people to feel welcome and safe. Right now, people do not feel safe here, and there is one person who is using their religious and fundamental background to destroy the arts community. Corporations, communities, and organizations are all adopting statements to ensure people understand where they stand. Not everyone reads as much into this as she has heard this morning. Commissioner Piper stated that she hoped they could agree to disagree. She added that Commissioner McLeod verified her fear that religious belief is being construed as prejudice and bigotry. Commissioner McLeod responded by stating that was incorrect. Commissioner Piper stated that she has reached a decision on this. She has had her conversations and experience, too, and she will not support an inclusivity statement.

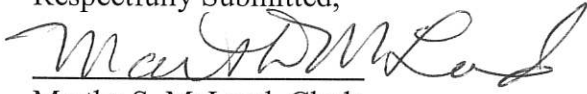
MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to adopt the Inclusivity Statement. There was no second to the motion.

Commissioner Piper asked if there were any comments from the public. H. Mrema stated that she hopes no one ever must deal with the indignity of having their safety and sense of belonging taken away. S. Moore stated that she was sorry to hear that Commissioner Piper had chosen what she did. She stated that there is current prejudice all throughout the United States, and she feels they need to pay more attention to not letting those things get in their way.

Commissioner McLeod left the meeting. There was no longer a physical quorum, and therefore, the meeting adjourned.

12:05 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha S. McLeod". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

10/24/2023

IT department update

Service desk

9/1/2023 – 9/30/2023

171 help desk tickets were worked on. (Opened/closed/updated)

306 hours of time spent on those tickets.

375 million data points investigated for the month of August

13 potential events were identified that warrant further investigation

None of the events investigated caused a breach or compromise.

We are seeing some traffic originating from the campus bound for Russia. We are investigating this currently and may implement a block if the traffic is considered to be “non work related”

We are working with Tom Andross on the new phone system. Joey has been testing and installing new devices and helping with this transition. We have engaged the networking team as well to help set up new traffic and priority rules to ensure the voice traffic does not experience delays as it traverses the campus network.

A large order of new computers and laptops has arrived to replace aging devices. Joey and Nate have been installing security patches and software on these devices in preparation for deployment to the end users.

The CIST security expert delivered his summary of findings. We have some action items to work on based on his findings. Overall, Grafton was given a higher score than it's neighboring counties. He was impressed with the steps we have taken so far.

Nashua and Lebanon have been attacked and compromised. We need to keep our efforts at risk mitigation in the forefront.

There are a few older systems still in use on the network. Most of these are in the DOC. Extra work is required to find current information on vendors who still support these. One is the door locking software. We continue to work on bringing these systems up-to-date to alleviate the security concerns associated with running older and vulnerable software.

Grafton County Human Resources Report
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
 November 7, 2023

HR Activity Report (10/03/2023-11/06/2023)

• ***New Hires***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home	7 (3 PD, 4 FT)	2 FT LNA, 1 FT LPN, 1 FT RN, 2 PD LNA's, 1 PD RN
DOC	2 (2 FT)	2 FT CO
Alt. Sentencing	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Case Manager

Separations

<u>Departments</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home	5 (4 FT, 1 PD)	2 FT Dietary Aide (LNA Program), 1 FT Cook 1 FT LNA, 1 PD RN
DOC	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Training Sergeant
Alt. Sentencing	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Case Manager
Sheriff's Dept.	1 (1 PT)	1 PT Deputy

Reasons:

- Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 5
- Termination –
- Deceased -
- New job/career change – 1
- Relocated – 2
- School –
- Retirement –
- Not Reappointed -
- Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements -

Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 per diem LNA to FT MNA, 1 Student Dietary Aide to Student Unit Aide, 1 FT LNA to PD, 1 PT CO to FT, 1 FT DOC RN to PT, 1 PT RN (Nursing Home) to FT

Active Leave of Absences between October 3, 2023 to present

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home – Nursing	12	(11 are intermittent, 7 for self, 5 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	9	(6 are intermittent, 6 for family, 3 self)
DOC	3	(2 intermittent, 1 self, 1 family)
Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch.	2	(2 intermittent, 2 self)
County Atty's Office	2	(2 intermittent, 2 self)
HR Department	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
Alternative Sentencing	2	(1 intermittent, 1 family, 1 self)
Maintenance	1	(1 intermittent family)

TOTAL: 32

Orienting Nov 15th:

2 FT LNA

1 FT LPN

1 FT Corrections Superintendent (11/13)

Current Jobs posted/advertised

LNA's/Unit Aides (27.85 FTE's vacant)

RN/LPN (12.65 FTE's vacant combined)

ADON

CO's (9 FTE's)

Housekeepers

Dietary Aides

Case Manager

Deputy Sheriff

Dispatcher

Activity Aide

Deputy Communications Director

Other business: Sheriff's Department Union vote scheduled for November 15 in Commissioners' Conference Room, change of per diem definition to include DOC Nursing staff.

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: November 7, 2023

Census

Medicare: 3
Medicaid: 70
VA: 5
Hospice: 0
Private: 21
Total: 100

FY '24 Budgeted Census

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

Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 6
Deceased Residents: 4
Discharges: 1

Other Topics:

- 1) JLMC Request To Form Committee To Study Campus Safety
- 2) Comment Period on CMS' Proposed Staffing Rule
- 3) State/County Finance Discussion on Ownership Changes