

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
September 25, 2023

PRESENT: Reps. Sykes, Baldwin, Sellers, Morse, Stringham, Murphy (via Teams), County Administrator Libby, Assistant County Administrator Burbank, Administrative Assistant Norcross

OTHERS PRESENT: Treasurer Hill, Register of Deeds Monahan

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rep. Morse.

Rep. Sykes stated the minutes from the June 16th Executive Committee meeting and the June 26th Delegation meeting needed to be approved.

MOTION: Rep. Stringham moved to approve the minutes from the June 16th Executive Committee meeting. Rep. Sellers seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

MOTION: Rep. Stringham moved to approve the minutes from the June 26th Delegation meeting. Rep. Morse seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

Treasurer Hill gave the following Treasurer’s Report: (* see attached)

Treasurer Hill answered questions from the Committee.

MOTION: Rep. Baldwin moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report. Rep. Sellers seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

Commissioner Piper gave the following Commissioner’s Report: (* see attached)

The Commissioners answered questions from the Committee.

MOTION: Rep. Sellers moved to accept the Commissioner’s Report. Rep. Morse seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

CA Libby gave the following Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Recap and County Administrator's Reports (* see attached)

MOTION: Rep. Morse moved to accept the County Administrators Report. Rep. Stringham seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being six (6) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

New Business

1. Small Business ARPA Request – Rep. Stringham stated that he would like to approve this request for funding as presented in the Commissioners’ Report.

MOTION: Rep. Stringham moved to approve the small business ARPA grant application from Free Public LLC in the amount of \$16,604.00. Rep. Morse seconded the motion.

Discussion– Rep. Stringham stated that Free Public LLC seems like a legitimate Grafton County business affected by COVID-19. He understands the troubles in keeping up with paperwork, and this business took care of the issue. He stated that he would ask that everyone vote in favor.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “no”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being five (5) in favor and one (1) in opposition, the motion passes.

2. Comments from the Delegates – Rep. Stringham asked how Mascoma Health Center is doing since receiving the APRA funding from the County. Rep. Morse reported that Mascoma Community Health is in the final stages of merging with Health First and should be wrapped up in October. Health First will be taking over the building on October 2nd. Health First has hired a dentist and a dental assistant. They will bring on two (2) mental health care providers. Rep. Morse reported that everything is progressing well, and it looks like Mascoma Health Center is on track not to need any more assistance from the County.

Rep. Sykes stated that the problem of homelessness continues to be an issue in the County. Normally, there is one PIT (Point in Time) count; a subsequent count was done in July, and it went from sixteen (16) to twenty-two (22) unhoused individuals. Of the twenty-two (22), sixteen (16) come from the City of Lebanon. The City of Lebanon is engaged in a process to open a shelter and contracting with the Upper Valley Haven to run the shelter. Rep. Sykes stated that Lebanon is taking this very seriously but also believes it is a county issue. The Committee further discussed the issue of homelessness in the County.

Rep. Sellers stated that some towns and areas in the County already have broadband, and the County is asking to spend \$17 million to build out the middle mile when there are hubs throughout the County that already have broadband. He asked how the County would keep that equitable. Rep. Sykes stated that making high-speed internet available to many rural areas has a

huge impact on jobs, and jobs lead to people being secure in their housing and transportation. Rep. Morse noted that there is the Affordable Connectivity Program for those struggling to pay for their internet and are at the poverty level. Rep. Stringham added that broadband is a fundamental infrastructure. Rep. Sellers stated that many towns have already paid for their broadband, and the County is charging them again. He explained that he understands that the need is there elsewhere, but he is concerned about the towns that already have it. CA Libby stated that by committing the \$5 million out of surplus, there is no direct tax impact as these funds have already been raised over the years. Rep. Sellers stated that the \$5 million is still taxpayer's money.

Next Meeting Date - November 20th at 9 a.m.

Audience Comment – Register Monahan stated that she had emailed the officers of the Committee a couple of weeks ago asking to be heard. She stated that she would start at the end to retain their attention and explained that she believes there is an overlooked revenue stream. She noted that she would go back to the beginning and explained that when she decided to take this office 13.5 years ago, there was a major storm, and the Governor asked where the overall map was of who owned everything. She said that did not exist, and the Governor ordered that UNH look at this, and a net was cast to search for data. To accommodate this, the Registers were contacted by UNH for all their data to stream to DRA. Register Monahan explained that when she took office, she held up this project until she got clarification and scaled it down. She stated that they funded this and streamed it. It is a very little-known fact that the state's equalization program, which sets the tax rate for every town, is based on the free data that the County taxpayer pays to their software vendor to stream this data to the Department of Revenue to enable this. She explained that the state is then allowed to do what she calls "make jewelry" being mined by the County for free and streamed at the cost of their expense to the software. The County has never been compensated for this. Register Monahan explained that when they were notified to stream their data to a new email this spring, she and a few other Registers questioned it, and she eluded in her budget presentation that they would be having a conflict with the DRA. She stated that people in the conception stages at UNH went off and started their own business, aggregated the data, and are selling it back to the State of New Hampshire DRA for \$2 million. They are gathering the data from the County for free, on the back of what their software vendors' contracts are, the labor from all the County offices, and they are getting it all for free. She stated that if the Legislators want to offset the burden on the taxpayers, they need to talk about raising the percentage of real estate transfer tax the County receives and opening some compensation to the counties for this service.

Commissioner Piper requested a nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 10:06 AM Rep. Stringham 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 and matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall

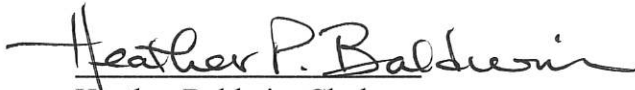
extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) and (c). Rep. Morse seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. Rep. Baldwin stated that a majority of the Executive Committee voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

*10:29 AM Rep. Sykes declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Rep. Morse 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 Executive Committee. Rep. Baldwin seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Murphy “yes”, Rep. Sellers “no”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. Rep. Baldwin stated that a majority of the Executive Committee voted “yes” and the motion passes.

10:33 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk

TO: GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FROM: KAREN LIOT HILL, TREASURER
SUBJECT: TREASURER'S REPORT
DATE: SEPTEMBER 25, 2023



CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 08/31/23)

Grafton County General Fund

Checking Account (ICS @ 4.80%)	\$ 8,191,624.48	(Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Investment Account (ICS @4.00%)	\$ 1,314.16	(Mascoma Savings Bank)
Investment Account Money Market (5.43%)	\$ 1,035,803.65	(NH Public Deposit Investment Pool)
Investment Account CD (4.00%)	\$ 1,028,520.66	(TD Bank)
Investment Account – ICS (4.25%)	\$ 1,042,786.29	(Claremont Savings Bank)
Investment Account – ICS (4.00%)	\$ 1,025,294.84	(Bank of NH)
Investment Account -Money Market (4.00%)	\$ 1,026,045.04	(Northway Bank)

Grafton County Committed Accounts

Deeds Surcharge ICS (2.80%)	\$ 245,938.68	(Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Deeds Surcharge Money Market (.05%)	\$ 5,785.87	(Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Dispatch Capital Reserve (.75%)	\$ 56,605.44	(Service Credit Union)
Nursing Home Capital Reserve (2.80%)	\$ 792,601.18	(Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
American Rescue Plan Funds (4.45%)	\$ 6,129,103.59	(Bank of NH)

RECENT TRANSACTIONS of NOTE

- The Combined Accumulated interest in the current fiscal year (7/1/23-08/31/23) is \$120,781.92. The FY '24 budget is \$375,000.
- The Combined Accumulated interest for the previous fiscal year (7/1/22-06/30/23) is \$533,968.11. The budget was \$50,000.
- The Bank of NH has raised the interest rate on the ARPA Account to 4.80% effective September 1, 2023, to match the rate in the General Fund from Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank.

Commissioners' Report
September 25, 2023

We are pleased to introduce Holly Burbank, who was hired as the Assistant County Administrator and began with us in July.

We have focused on the lack of staffing for many months; for our report this month, we would like to give an update on the positive impacts of the targeted increases given to the nursing and corrections staff and the cost-of-living increase approved as part of the FY 2024 budget.

We have hired a total of 35 employees: 4 per diem nurses, 3 FT Nurses for nursing home, 1 FT LPN for DOC, 5 FT LNAs, 6 FT LNA Program employees, 3 PT Dietary Aides, 1 FT Dietary Aide, 1 FT Cook Nursing Home, 1 FT Cook DOC, 1 PT Unit Aide, 4 FT CO's, 1 FT Activity Aide, 1 FT Asst. CA, 1 FT Case Manager, 1 FT Legal Asst., 1 PT Deeds Recork Clerk. Of the new hires, we have had one (1) FT LNA program employee and 1 FT CO leave.

We have had 7 per diem LNAs transfer to FT and 1 per diem LNA to 24 hours per week.

In July, we had 39.85 LNA FTEs vacant; as of today, we have 27.85. We had 17.05 vacant RN/LPN positions, and that is down to 15.35.

We did begin a LNA class on 9/14/23 with seven (7) enrolled. The participants should be licensed by December. That will reduce the FTE vacancy for LNAs by an additional seven (7).

We do intend to have another LNA class in the spring.

At the Nursing Home, since July 1st, we have reduced the LNA contracts by eight (8), and we have one additional contract LNA leaving next Thursday, the 29th. For nurses, we have reduced the contracts by (1) one, and we have a second contract nurse who will be leaving us next Saturday, the 30th.

We currently have 11 FTEs open for Correctional Officers, with two (2) scheduled to begin in October.

We are regularly receiving applications for LNAs, RNs, and LPNs, as well as Correctional Officers. This is a significant change and encouraging.

Nursing Home:

- The census at the nursing home is currently 101, with a planned admission tomorrow bringing it to 102. This is above our budgeted census of 98.

Department of Corrections:

- The current in-house census is 58, with another 13 on pretrial services, 4 being monitored electronically, and 1 in the FIRRM program.

- Superintendent Tom Elliott retired on August 31, 2023. We are pleased to announce that Timothy Lethbridge has accepted our offer and will begin on November 13th as the new Department of Corrections Superintendent. Mr. Lethbridge will be relocating to NH from Florida, where he is employed as a Jail Administrator for the Highlands County Sheriff's Office.

Broadband Update:

- Grafton County has been awarded an \$11,969,000 grant from NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) for the Grafton County Middle Mile project. The grant has a required match of \$5,129,571.43. The Commissioners have met with the Broadband Committee for an update on the project and will be making a decision soon as to whether to accept the grant. If the Commissioners accept the grant, the Delegation would be asked to do a Supplemental Appropriation for the match, and those funds would be taken from the County's fund balance. The FY '23 ending fund balance is \$10,144,994.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:

- Grafton County received \$17.4M in ARPA funding. Thus far, there have been seventy-seven (77) ARPA projects approved by the Commissioners and Executive Committee for a total of \$15,862,177.88. These projects are in different phases; many have been completed, and others are ongoing. All funds are required to be obligated by December 31, 2024. The Finance staff is currently evaluating the ARPA projects that have been approved and completed to see where the County stands on a balance of ARPA funds. There is just over a year to make final obligations on these funds.
- The Commissioners do have a request for a Small Business ARPA grant. The business had submitted an application during the application process and supplied all necessary documents except for a Certificate of Good Standing. During the application process, the business owner was unaware he had no Certificate. Once he was made aware, he worked with the Secretary of State's office to understand what had happened with his Certificate and supplied the SOS with all requirements, and this Certificate of Good Standing has been re-issued. Last month, the Commissioners voted to give him a grant of the \$16,604 that was given to all other businesses that qualified. Today, we are requesting that you grant final approval for the grant. The business is Free Public LLC. Their application is attached for your reference.

Request for a Non-public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) & (c)

FISCAL YEAR 2023 FINANCIAL RECAP

Revenue: The County finished the year-over revenue projections by \$3,313,628. This was partly due to ProShare and Bed Tax revenues being over \$2,350,622. Additionally, due to the CARES Act, the County received \$1,134,327.06, in Enhanced FMAP payments to reimburse for the reduction in the non-federal match for Medicaid.

Other departments finishing the year above revenue projections were:

- Sheriff's Department - \$73,265.99
- Register of Deeds - \$55,406.89
- Interest Income - \$484,325.10
- Abandon Property \$136,241.35; Federal PILT \$36,503;

Departments finishing below Revenue Projections are as follows:

- Department of Corrections - \$70,244.59 due to reduced inmate population and limited Federal Inmates' income.
- Farm - \$37,062.84 – due to the herd reduction in August.
- Alternative Sentencing - \$19,907.19 – due to lower than projected revenues.
- Nursing Home - \$928,995 actual operating revenue loss due to lower than budgeted census.

Expenses: The County finished the year under expended by \$2,697,757. Most departments finished the year within their approved budgets. The only area of the budget that was bottom-line over-expended was:

- Medical Referee - \$603.76 – unpredictable expense.

Overall, the Nursing Home budget was under-expended by \$525,061.38. There were some large over-expenditures within the nursing home. The largest over-expenditure was Contract Nursing. A total of \$4,280,891.32 was spent in FY 2023, and the budget was \$1,911,000, over-spending the line by \$2,369,891.32. The following Nursing Home departments were over-expended:

- Nursing - \$20,988.20 – Contract Nursing
- Pharmacy - \$22,962.54 – high Medicare census
- Social Services - \$25,370.87 – staff changes

Summary – Despite challenges faced by all departments, Fiscal Year 2023 was favorable for the County. We finished with an extremely healthy Undesignated Fund Balance of \$10,144,994, which is 18.87%. The overall fund balance grew to \$19,132,470. Of note, the undesignated fund balance decreased from the prior fiscal year due to the increase in the usage of the Amount used to reduce taxes. The overall fund balance for the County did increase.

County Administrator's Report
September 25, 2023

Financial Reports

- ❖ Cash Management Report – This report shows where the county's funds are invested. This includes operational monies and reserve accounts. Our current cash position is strong. We are currently \$1,102,777 ahead of August 2022's position. Interest rates continue to be very favorable, resulting in increased interest income.
- ❖ Monthly Variance Report compares the budget on an equal monthly basis to actuals and looks at the positive (black) or negative (red) variances. These reports represent two (2) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2024 YTD Actuals
Medicaid	68	64
Medicare	7	5
Private Pay	19	23
Veterans	4	5
Total	98	97

- The census at the nursing home has risen dramatically in the past several months and, through the first two (2) months of the fiscal year, is averaging right on –target. We see some deviation in the payer sources, but the census remains strong. The chart above is as of August 31, 2023. Our current census is 101, with a planned admission this week. Total revenue for the nursing home is currently showing a favorable variance of \$32,857.86.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received in June. Bed Tax is paid quarterly.
- The Department of Corrections is showing a negative variance currently. This is primarily due to the timing of Bureau of Drug and Alcohol (BDAS) grant funds.
- The farm is showing an unfavorable variance.

- County Attorney/Victim Witness. These grants are direct reimbursements for expenditures. Reimbursements are requested quarterly.
- The Register of Deeds revenue shows a favorable variance of \$65,470.63.
- Interest Income is showing a favorable variance of \$58,231.92.

Expenses

- Through two (2) months, we have a few departments that are showing negative variances. They are all minimal and should fall back in line as the year progresses. These are due to sizeable annual service contracts paid at the beginning of the fiscal year. The bonded debt line shows a negative variance because the only bond payment for the fiscal year was made on July 1st.
- ❖ Pro-rated Report: This report looks at the % of the year complete and then pro-rates revenues and expenses based on known variates on revenues and expenses.
 - 16.67% of the fiscal year completed. On the pro-rated report, I factor in the revenue and expenses that are either over or under at this point in the fiscal year. Based on the August reports, we are at 16.90%, above revenue by \$107,962, and at 14.64% or under-expended by \$1.1M.
- ❖ Over Expenditure Report – This report shows any over-expended line item at month-end.
 - There are three (3) accounts on the report – two (2) of them are posting errors, leaving only one (1) account over-expended.