

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024

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

EXCUSED: Commissioner McLeod

OTHERS: Interim Farm Manager White, Maintenance Superintendent Oakes, Terry Martin – Nursing Home, Tom Cheski, ENTrust Solutions Group

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

**Interim Farm Manager White arrived and gave the following: ( see attached)**

Commissioner Ahern asked what crops the farm will be planting this season. Interim FM White stated that at this point the plan is to plant the same crops as last year, noting that the inmate labor is unreliable.

Commissioner Piper stated that she feels putting the custom cropping out to bid is a good idea and cost effective for the County.

**Agenda Items:**

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner Ahern had a few small clarification edits.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1133 & 1134.

3. Commissioner Piper signed the following CDBG Amendments:

- BEDC
- CEDC
- GRDC
- WEDCO
- WREN

4. Commissioner Piper signed a CDBG Drawdown from CEDC for \$17,500.

5. Memo for Requested Action – DOC Vehicle – CA Libby explained that in early 2022, former Superintendent Tom Elliott submitted a request to purchase a 2022 Ford F150 Police Responder vehicle from ARPA funds. The Commissioners and the Executive Committee approved this request, but the Department of Corrections was never able to find a 2022 F150 vehicle. Last year, a 2023 model was made available to the DoC at an increased cost as the price of the vehicles increased significantly. At that time, former Supt. Elliott decided to forgo the purchase.

Superintendent Lethbridge has identified the need to replace two (2) 2015 Ford Taurus vehicles that the Department of Corrections has. CA Libby explained that both vehicles have over 100,000 miles, and the staff feels they are unreliable. These are the only two (2) vehicles that the DoC has that have cages in them, which means they are the only vehicles they can transport inmates in. Superintendent Lethbridge was going to include the request for both vehicles in his FY 2025 budget request, but they have discussed the previously approved ARPA request, and the possibility of purchasing one (1) of the vehicles using those funds. The DoC has found a 2023 Ford Explorer Police Edition vehicle at McFarland Ford, located in southeastern NH. The price of the vehicle is \$47,100. CA Libby explained that police vehicles are very difficult to find currently, especially to find a 2023 holdover and she is requesting that the Commissioners waive the competitive bid process and let McFarland Ford know today that the County will take this vehicle. There would be an estimated additional \$14,000 in costs to outfit the vehicle with safety equipment, which would most likely come from Ossipee Mountain Electronics.

CA Libby answered questions from the Commissioners.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to waive the competitive bidding process and purchase a 2023 Ford Explorer Police Edition for \$47,100 from MacFarland Ford using previously approved ARPA funds and approve the additional costs to purchase the new cage to outfit the vehicle as well. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

### **Supt. Oakes – Maintenance Department**

The Commissioners opened bids for Off Road Diesel for FY25. One (1) bid was received as follows:

- Dead River - \$3.2649 per gallon.

Supt. Oakes stated that the price from Dead River is less than what the County is currently paying.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to accept the Dead River's bid of \$3.2649 per gallon for Off Road Diesel. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Supt. Oakes stated that the County has existing 3-year contracts with Alliance Building Automation and Powers Generator that end on June 30<sup>th</sup>. He has received updated 3-year contracts from both vendors and would request Commissioner approval. He explained that he

would like to continue the relationships with both of these vendors as they were both the cheapest in the past and the County has established relationships with them both. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is concerned about the need to put things out to bid. He believes they have an obligation to try and get the lowest responsible price. Supt. Oakes stated that he can go through the process with Powers Generator, but he would request the Commissioners approve the contract with Alliance Building Automation. He stated that if he were to bring in a new contractor, the County would end up paying more because a new contractor would have to be brought up to speed on the building automation system, which would also pull some of his staff away from their jobs, to help the new vendor. This contract is more comprehensive than the Power Generator contract and is a more difficult vendor to find. Commissioner Piper asked how long he has been doing business with these vendors. Supt. Oakes stated roughly fifteen (15) years with Powers Generator and roughly six (6) years with Alliance Building Automation. Commissioner Piper stated that she wonders if they could balance the possibility of a worst-case scenario that Commissioner Ahern is concerned about with the experience Supt. Oakes has with these vendors. She would support Supt. Oakes' request. Supt. Oakes discussed the request further with the Commissioners and answered questions.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the request to contract with Alliance Building Automation and Powers Generator for three (3) years. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

#### **Terry Martin – Activities Aide, Nursing Home**

T. Martin stated that he would like to take a two (2) acre swamp on the County property and turn it into a fishing pond for residents at the Nursing Home. He noted that this swamp used to be a spring that fed the old farm. T. Martin explained that this project would be funded through fundraising and volunteers from the Home Association. Commissioner Ahern asked if T. Martin had spoken with the County Forester about this. T. Martin stated that he was looking to see if the Commissioners are on board with this first before he speaks with the others who would be involved. The Home Association will maintain the pond and stock it. He explained that when they take the Nursing Home residents fishing, they bring the fish back and the kitchen will cook the fish for them. T. Martin stated that he would speak with DES and the County Forester to discuss any possible permits that would be needed. The Commissioners discussed the project and agreed to give T. Martin approval to take the next steps to discuss this fishing pond but stated they would like him to speak to Forester Frohn first. The Commissioners felt it was a great idea and gave their support.

#### **Tom Cheski, ENTrust Solutions Group**

T. Cheski stated that he appreciates the County selecting ENTrust Solutions as the Owners Project Manager for the Broadband Project. He explained that his job is to be the County's voice with eX2. He stated that his job this week while he is in New Hampshire, is to introduce himself and he will be driving the entire route of the project. He asked of any concerns or issues moving forward about the project. Commissioner Piper stated that this is an enormous project, and she is pleased the funds allow the County to be able to work with a project manager. She stated that she does not have any questions at this time. Commissioner Ahern noted that there are many people

looking forward to this project. CA Libby explained that she and Asst. CA Burbank will be meeting with T. Cheski after their meeting to further discuss the project.

**Agenda Items:**

1. CA Libby reminded the Commissioners that next Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> is the first budget meeting and they will be receiving the first set of budgets at their meeting next week.
2. Comments from the Public – There were none.

**Commissioner Issues:**

1. Commissioner Ahern requested a nonpublic session,

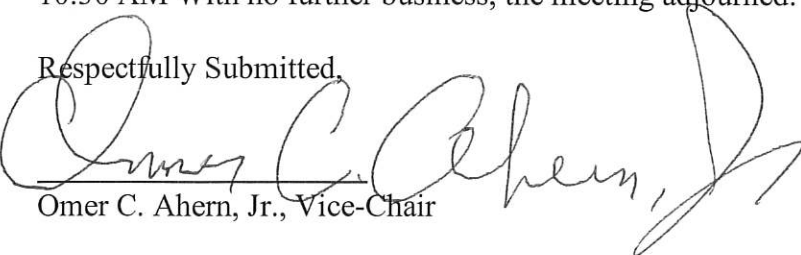
**MOTION:** \* 10:20 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purpose's of consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of 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 Piper seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "yes and Commissioner Piper "yes. " Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\*10:25 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern 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 Ahern "Yes," Commissioner Piper said, "yes." Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes," and the motion passes.

10:30 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Omer C. Ahern, Jr., Vice-Chair

## March 2024 Farm Report

1. There are currently 55 cows milking, averaging 79 pounds per cow. We produced 124,263 pounds of milk for the month of February. Components were 4.76% butterfat and 3.34% protein. The milk pay price in February was \$22.79 for Grafton County Farm,
2. Chickens are producing about 8-10 dozen per day. Customers are buying from us on a regular basis. We are also supplying the jail about 40-50 dozen per month.
3. Piglets are now starting to be born. We have one litter on the ground now and seven more sows due in the next couple of months.
4. We are working on putting out bids for custom cropping for our grass and corn harvest for this season. Cost of replacing our old equipment with new equipment is very expensive.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben White

Interim Farm Manager